

# The Tenth Muse



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# The Tenth Muse

“Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth  
Than those old nine which rhymers invoke.”

— Shakespeare

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*The Tenth Muse* is dedicated to Mrs. Jackson, the inspirational leader of the Science Park High School English Department. We thank her for devoting countless years to the cause of academic and moral excellence.

# The Moral

(Dedicated to June Wigfall)

by Mrs. Jackson

There was a guy, let's call him – F  
Unmotivated, lazy did nothing for himself.  
Grinding out an unachieving F life,  
Fathered five F children with his F wife.

Then there was a girl, we'll call – D  
Always doing as little as possibly.  
Functioning on the D get by plan,  
Ended up with get by kids and a D type of man.

To this day I don't understand this girl, A.K.A. – C.  
Truly pretty, talented and intelligent was she.  
Just enough was her method to operate.  
Average man, average child, average life was her fate.

A and B are two people who were simply extraordinary.  
Aspiring, achieving never accepting the ordinary.  
Always doing, always diligent, always demanding,  
Now their spouses, children and lives are outstanding.

Well, the moral of this ditty is quite self-explanatory,  
A-B-C-D-F life – it's up to you to write your own story.

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# Unstitch

by Pamela Huzar

The open road is no place for you, kid,  
Your hands are much too soft for winter frost.  
Though you may not remember all he did,  
You skipped behind him long, but now you're lost.  
He speaks the dialect of earth and sky,  
And colors spring from colors where he's been.  
You claimed he sang a thread of lullaby  
That stitched you to him like some caustic sin.  
But lo, where is he now to gather flowers  
And praise you, wicked temperament and all,  
And whisper to you, play guitar for hours,  
Enchanted by the sugar in your call?  
  
Along a ribbon stretch of highway now,  
You say you'll catch him someday, but not how.

# Those Perfect Days

by Alan Leal

The morning mist and summer breeze have stopped,

So have pleasant sounds of birds thus chirping;

Therefore, as winter's plans are being draught,

The cold air does ignite the stove's burning.

The skies turn grey as snow covers the street,

But soon the sun peaks through the calming storm,

And the cold winter's day is now complete,

As every school must then follow the norm.

The fresh wet snow is easily molded,

And laughter, chatter does invade the block,

But as some children are being scolded,

Cold air moves in, and the snow turns to rock.

While snow days aren't as frequent as before,

They still are perfect days forever more.

# Imbroglia

by Rico Taveras

Many clichés to live up to, for you,

An empty canvas is what I now see.

These hopeful words might seem a bit askew;

Love, no laughter comes from an empty sea.

Intricate, your beauty that makes winds bow;

The wrath I take for watching from afar.

Seconds past, so much for the afterglow,

For when you speak, at heart and mind, I scar.

Muttering words, the doves speak about your face;

Your sincere smile grazes the weeping sun,

For when it looks upon you, it meets true grace.

Without you, this weary world seems undone.

To tell you the truth, I say what's the use.

Even these words won't reach your ears, my muse.

# Young Love

by Rossana Gallegos

He takes her hand with sweet serenity;

She's calm and stares into his shiny eyes.

He says he'll love her for eternity,

And when they kiss, they swear that they can fly.

Their love does mean it all at their young age,

And so vowed their love in silent secrecy.

Together, the white altar was their stage;

Love so strong it will stay in history.

She meant more in the world to him than life.

He was her only one, her only guy,

And she was more than glad to be his wife.

To take their love away, you dare not try.

Till their last breath, their love will never die;

Until both get to say their last goodbye.



# MTAG

by Jerry Arruda

It feels like one big battlefield, the ice.

The other team does look at us with great fears.

It's cold, it's hard, it's rough, that ice ain't nice.

More than a game—it's blood, it's sweat, and tears.

It was the second time we played this team.

While on the ice, we felt the tension rise.

It was now or never, win with our steam.

Throughout the game, we had those fearless eyes.

The game was just so cold and really rough.

All the players had to fight through the pain.

Because it was getting harder and tough,

It is a crazy game, you'll go insane.

The game was long, was hard and neared its end.

All their broken pieces they had to mend.

# How Hard Can It Be?

by Trisha Kiston

You should be warned before you read this line,

My sonnet skills are really out of date.

This sonnet should have never been assigned,

Even Shakespeare himself of it would hate.

You can give me some paper and a pen,

But do not think that you will get the beats,

For every line will fall short of ten,

And you will not think I am John Keats.

Though I question this sonnet so quickly,

How hard can it be? I stand corrected.

A few rhymes and thoughts would not hurt frankly,

With sixty sonnets Keats did perfect it.

I start with thoughts that linger endlessly;

Again I stand here thus dejectedly.

# Intellect

by Kadidiattou Ouedraogo

Pad on my lap and a pen to the sheet,

Just words and thoughts, some words get so caught.

Can I be happy or will this repeat?

So many memories and tears were brought.

About the things that explain me today,

My mind wonders about the things I missed,

The goals and achievements I left astray,

My mind is a puzzle; can it be fixed?

My brain shall swell till no more knowledge can fit,

Until the teachings drip from ear to ear,

I am a smart cookie you must admit,

Ignorance will never reside here.

Knowledge my understanding of reality

Has yet to prove that it will surprise me.

# The Feelings of Spring

by Nassim Hamami

The blue sky up high, where all the birds fly,

The glowing sun next to the bright white clouds.

With the beautiful nature there up high,

The days of spring make me so very proud.

As I walk past the gorgeous field of spring,

I feel all nature and wind blow at me;

Happiness is felt as I hear it sing,

Spring is the only one that is to be!

The sights of the city as you walk through;

The cars drive by with all their windows down;

You can do anything you want to do;

The beauty of the world, you will not frown.

Although spring is the best when there is rain,

It takes away the fun and makes it drain.

# An Encounter

by Tania Lopez

A ray of sunlight strokes our face,

But no bell has rung as we awoke.

Suddenly our heart has lost its pace.

Millions of thoughts provoke.

We walk, we run, we leap, we fall,

Our bodies could not halt;

Our reflection was the most beautiful of them all,

We stare with delight and exalt.

Suddenly, we hear footsteps come near,

Hiding in the bush we wait.

We see the Golden One appear,

Then we knew it was fate.

We look back and reminisce,

Sealing the scene with a kiss.

# Writer's Block

by Gabriela Alulema

Forever lasting words upon this sheet,  
But no apparent sign of any hope.  
A place where words and paper cannot meet;  
It's difficult for my feelings to cope.  
Pitiless pen upon my anxious hand  
With arrogance, repudiates to write.  
A state in utter madness I must stand,  
Spread out its wings; let words go out in flight.  
Strap down my arm and make it fly, but then,  
Eager ideas rupture out of my mind.  
A sudden burst of words spume from my pen,  
Full words the paper is happy to find.  
  
An inspiration found, there is no doubt;  
It's finally my time to write it out.

# My Brother

by Samantha Crespo

He is extremely small and also smart;

He's in the room and shines just like a star.

You can compare him with a bitter sweet tart,

And he can eat a peanut butter jar.

He is annoying like many brothers;

Although very lazy, I still love him;

He is one of a kind like no other;

He is no Michael Phelps; he cannot swim.

His ways are like a mirror shining back,

But please do not be fooled by his cute looks.

Try not to make him mad, he will attack;

He can go quiet once he hits the books.

His name is Bryan, the annoying one;

I know that I'll always love him a ton.

# Your Letter

by Lorraine Jones

I found a letter lying on the floor;

I wanted to and had to look inside.

After this, I did want to read much more.

I thought you left it there for me to find.

I looked upon the words on that whole page;

You loved me and did not know what to say.

I felt my heart was set free from its cage;

Then, finally my dreams came true that day.

You know you never gave me any sign;

You kept the sweetest secret from my heart,

But I was waiting for you to be mine,

Now I just wish that we would never part.

I saw a name I didn't recognize,

Then my sad tears came rolling down my eyes.



# A Long Drive

by Nicole Barnes

A comfortable seat next to the window,  
While I rest, I watch the images pass.  
When all the troubling thoughts seem to let go,  
The issues harboring me are my past.  
Resting my head back, then raising my eyes,  
The moving car leaves my troubles behind.  
Sitting in silence gazing at the sky,  
Tension is released clearing my packed mind.  
The window now down, wind touching my face,  
Fully relaxed in my own world and free.  
Now, my head is clear, in a better place,  
In peace of mind and now free to be me.  
My relaxing drive lets me get away.  
Helps me to prepare for another day.

# The Game

by Joseph Milord

The tension of the game is felt by all,  
With the game winding down and in dead heat,  
And with all spectators edging their seats,  
The refs have made up their minds; there'll be no call.  
The score will be decided by pure skill;  
The coaches have done everything they can;  
The players know exactly what's the plan,  
But what it boils down to is sheer will.  
The fans begin to roar and also scream;  
The players start to come out on the court;  
The point guard begins to set up the play,  
A play that stands between him and his dream.  
The player puts a shot up of some sort,  
And because it went in it made the fans' day.

# The Athlete

by Rameel Johnson

The athlete within me will never stop,

Playing the game of basketball is life.

Continuous play will put me on top,

Not playing the game will leave me in strife.

Life without basketball is a big change,

Change in which I would hate to have to do.

My head spins in thought of loosing the game;

These thoughts are bad, please come to my rescue.

Basketball, basketball how much I love

Basketball the best sport I ever played.

No sport can amount to it or be above

When it's all over, I just wished it stayed.

Athletes are born, they are never made,

But what's a great athlete who has no grades.

# A Flower's Love Lost

by Shakeerah King

My flower is a pretty little thing;

Oh, you sweet little thing how I love thee.

You shine so bright during the time of spring,

No one can be more beautiful than he.

Spring is the season that you mostly shine,

With my love you blossom so big and tall,

I do love you flower because you're mine,

For you my flower, I would give it all.

Flower you have peddles so soft and red,

When you shed, I beg flower stay with me;

After you shed, I lay you on my bed,

And when you died I say how could this be.

How could you just leave me to cry and sigh?

I thought our love would go beyond the sky.

# Unpaid Debt

By Angel Sampedro

I sit and play my guitar for money,

Yet try to avoid the music,

For the sweet sounds produce sadness.

The remembrance of my muse still lives

As people pass by on the streets,

And each face is a reflection of you.

I play an encore, silently,

Never really knowing its end.

They give me money to continue playing,

Yet I refuse to pay the toll for my own suffering.

This you must do, alone.

# Elemental Haikus

by Halina Henry

## Fire

Flames sputter to life,  
Each flame dances eagerly,  
Rising smoke billows.

## Massive Red Oak

In the yard silent  
Stands a massive red oak tree,  
Shields me from the heat.

## Summer Ocean

Summer blue ocean,  
A cool respite for people,  
Home to marine life.

## Stars in the Night Sky

As the sun descends,  
Milky-white stars are in view.  
In the light, they hide.

# I Am

by Yasmine Thomas

I am beautiful because I am me, and never pretend to be anyone else, but me.

I wonder how my life would be like in the future, and what people think about me.

I hear people being judgmental and degrading typically because of their own insecurities.

I see qualities of what I want to explore in the world and see what else there is outside of Newark.

I am a compassionate, respectful person who listens and thinks of others most of the time before myself.

I pretend that it's my responsibility to positively influence my peers to help them make smart, wise decisions that will benefit them when necessary.

I feel alone when no one understands my way of thinking.

I touch the lives of others with my reliability.

I worry about school all the time. Even when I know my grades are what are expected I just worry about not performing to my ability.

I cry when I'm stressed about my family and school and no one makes an effort to comfort me when I need support. It feels as if no one cares.

I am a mystifying person. People sometimes think of me one way, but when they get to know me their opinions change. Never judge a book by its cover.

I understand that in order to progress in life you have to make mistakes and have experiences.

I say that everything happens for a reason, and never be regretful.

I dream that my life will be as planned.

I try to help people in every way that I can; you can't always be independent because one day you're going to need someone's help.

I hope of one day becoming a pediatrician.

I am a person with many imperfections, but nobody's perfect. My flaws are what make me unique.



# American Waiter

## by Giselle Reinoso

The summer night was beautiful like any other night here in France. The stars glistened about the sky and the moon illuminated the houses. It was nine o'clock and the café was still full of chattering people. There in the middle of the busy café stood an irritated waiter named Cullen. He was a foreign exchange student who came to France to study for the semester. When he had received the letter of acceptance by mail, he had been delighted and looked forward to studying overseas. Now, however, he couldn't wait to get back to America. He had known that he would have to get a part-time job to pay for rent and schoolbooks, but he didn't think a job as a waiter would be the most horrible experience in his life. Cullen looked around the rows of tables to see if anyone needed to place an order. His gaze met an elderly man who was waiting for him to come over. With a heavy sigh, he advanced to the table.

"How may I help you?" He asked in an obviously imperfect French accent that gave away his American identity.

The man just pointed to his coffee with an angry look. Cullen understood and took the coffee back. Maybe he was paranoid but it seemed that every customer that came into the café was determined to make his days in Paris intolerable. He was constantly returning orders to the kitchen. The customers didn't seem to be dissatisfied with the other waiters, only him. Maybe they're just against Americans he thought. Sometimes when he turned around to fetch a new order he could hear the customers snicker. It was like the French didn't welcome the well-mannered

American student. He returned back to the table with the order but saw that no one was there. The old man had left.

Cullen was supposed to be on his break when the manager came in and told him to get to work. He sighed and with reluctance put on his white apron. He walked to a table without looking at the customer and asked for his order.

“Hey Cullen,” a boy named Gabe from Cullen’s class yelled.

Cullen felt his stomach turn in agony as he looked up to face the boy. Gabe was always picking on him during class. He would mimic the way Cullen pronounced French words and laugh about it with his friends. Cullen was already having a bad day and he did not need this. As he walked away with the orders to the kitchen, he heard them laugh and whisper something about him. He already knew what was coming as he placed a hot chocolate, sandwiches, and lemonade on the table. Gabe, along with two of his friends, twitched their faces and pushed their orders back to the center.

“We didn’t order this,” one said, clearly trying to hold in his laughter.

They were having fun playing around with the American boy. Cullen clenched his fists and walked back to the kitchen. All he wanted to do right now was to throw the food at their faces. He let out a sigh and walked back to the table ready to execute his plan. The boys watched him with confusion as he raised the plates and tilted them towards them.

Then all of a sudden the lemonade and ham sandwiches ended up on their heads. For a moment, the whole café went silent. Then as the boys finally reacted and

realized what had just happened, their faces twitched with anger. Cullen could see their eyes fill with anger as they stood up from their chairs.

“Oh no,” thought Cullen. He gulped and began to back away slowly. As the boys got closer, he continued to step away. Then, in a sudden leap, one boy was on top of him throwing punches. Cullen fell to the ground and ran out of the café. He ran down the alleys. All he could think about was how badly he was going to get beaten up. Is this really how he was going to spend his studies overseas? He was shocked at himself; he had never done anything so vile; he had always been a nervous wreck to try anything like this. Nonetheless, it was he who threw the food on the customers. He had been filled with annoyance and hate and acted on those feelings. Of course, he didn't want to get beaten up, but enough was enough. The footsteps behind him came closer as he came to a stop. In an instant, he was getting punched and kicked around like some doll.

Where had his “once in a lifetime” experience gone? He had tolerated all the rude customers and prejudice for most of the semester. He only needed two more weeks to go before going back to the states. Why had he been so stupid to act on impulse and rage without thinking of the consequences?

Whether it was because of his current injuries or a guilty conscience, he remembered about the foreign exchange student that came to his school last year. He really never got acquainted with him, but he did see him one day getting bullied by a couple of seniors. They had pushed him around and Cullen had witnessed all this, yet Cullen did nothing to help. He had pretended like he had seen nothing out of the

ordinary and had left him there. Is this what they call karma? The boys gave him a couple of more kicks and then left Cullen knocked out on the streets. They walked away laughing, satisfied with what they had done. They abandoned him just like he had abandoned the boy.

# Perfection

by Jeffrey Duarte

Our feet flying through the air as an uncomfortable feeling surged in our stomachs. The ground was a friend, a safe haven. I tried to stay strong and be the man I was supposed to be alongside my girlfriend. We were on a chairlift in Capri admiring the beautiful scenery that lay in front of us. The small white houses seemed abnormal for they resembled snow on the rough green land in summer. The green trees appeared to merge seamlessly with the azure ocean. It seemed as if my girlfriend and I were the only inhabitants living in the entire world due to the water that surrounded the island. This was paradise.

I looked to my right to catch a glimpse of the girl that had been part of my life for almost three years. Her beauty was worth more than the priceless scenery that surrounded us. My hands came in contact with her cheeks. She turned to me; her eyes met mine like two pieces of a puzzle. The clinging of our eyes pulled both our faces together as our lips were about to come in contact when...the force of the chairlift reaching an end, forcing our bodies to jerk forward and ruin the mood. The safety bar lifted up so we could finally dismount the ride and enable our feet to greet the ground. Life sometimes does not go as planned.

We walked silently holding hands as we dodged tourists. The sudden smiles we received when they glanced down at our locked hands were contagious, for we reciprocated with beaming countenances. We decided to walk away from the congested area in order to find a place of solitude. We walked along the shore with

the refreshing water hitting against our feet, cooling down our bodies from the intense heat of the sun. Huge rock formations hovered alongside the beach. How it seems like life comes together as our eyes glanced over at a boat that danced on the water.

I gently took my girlfriend by the arm as we both ran towards it. I could sense a fear in her but the upcoming adventure led us on. We boarded the boat and I rowed us toward the floating mountain where the water was so placid and serene. Everything seemed surreal as it felt like I was on a boat flying through the sky for the water was a light blue. The white sand was visible due to the clarity of the water.

We arrived at the gigantic rock formation and discovered a cave of which we entered. Our jaws dropped as we witnessed a location that defied logic. The water was now a dark blue. We both laughed at each other as the reflection of the water bounced off our faces and our skin was painted blue. My heart began to drum faster as excitement flowed through every inch of my body. I realized that the time had come.

I looked at my girlfriend's face and called her name and our eyes met. I was dreaming, for an angel in such a setting was more than perfect. I was outrageously lucky to have a woman so beautiful and kind. She is truly everything to me and I knew that the time was right.

I took a small package from my pocket and opened it to reveal a ring of which shot out a rainbow that illuminated the dark ceiling and mixed with the dark blue water. Then I asked, "Will you marry me?"

# Lisa's Trip to Capri

## by Tiara Brown

"Lisa, I have a surprise for you," yelled her husband Ricky.

"What is it?"

"Do you remember when I said was going to take you somewhere nice for our one year anniversary?"

"Yes, I remember. Why are you asking me that?"

"Well, tomorrow is the day that you get to go to that special place."

"Are you serious?" Lisa asked him.

"Yes I am. We are going to the island of Capri."

Later that night Lisa and Ricky began packing their bags. They both packed seven outfits a piece. They finished packing about an hour later and got in bed. Their flight was leaving at 6:00 a.m., so it was best that they got a good night's sleep.

Ricky woke up at 4:00 a.m. the next morning and immediately got ready to go. Lisa was already dressed because she was so excited. They were out the house by five o'clock because they had to wait for a cab to the airport. When they arrived at the airport, Lisa began to tremble.

"Lisa, are you ok?" Ricky asked in the nicest tone possible.

"Yes, but it's about that time for us to get on the plane and I'm getting nervous."

"Well, I'm going to be right by your side," Ricky said, putting his arm around her shoulders in an effort to comfort her.

They boarded the plane at 5:45 and Lisa was assigned a window seat; however, she decided to switch with Ricky. She began to look for the bag that the airline supplied just in case she got sick. The plane took off and Lisa had her head in her sweater just waiting for the flight to end.

"Lisa, I hope that everything is ok. Nothing is going to happen. I told you I'm here for you."

Lisa looked at Ricky with a slight smile. She began to take his word and started listening to him. Lisa went to sleep and by the time she woke up, they were just landing in Capri.

"Are we here?" Lisa asked.

"Yes we are," replied Ricky enthusiastically.

They walked through the airport in Capri and got into a taxi to the five star deluxe hotel where they had a reservation. They arrived at Capri Palace in about 20 minutes. Entering the hotel, they were handed a brochure of Capri.

"Can we go to the Blue Grotto?" Lisa asked as she looked at the brochure.

"Sure why not. This is your vacation, so whatever you want to do just say the word and it's done," Ricky responded.

"Well, then if that's the case I want to go to Piazzetta, I want to get on the chairlift to the top of Monte Solaro, and I want to see the Faraglioni," Lisa stated emphatically.



"You're asking for too much now," Ricky laughed in a jokingly manner. Lisa just looked at him and smiled.

The first place they went to was the chairlift to the top of Monte Solaro, which cost them ten Euros. Lisa took pictures as if it were her last day on earth. She could not believe how beautiful Capri was. Once they got off the chairlift they went to get a bite to eat in Anacapri. They decided to go to Le Arcate.

After finishing their meal, they immediately left the restaurant and took a taxi to the deck of the blue grotto. They paid for a boat and then climbed in. Ricky could not believe he was about to get into a boat. He feared traveling on boats because he always got seasick in the past. Thus, he just remained quiet while they had one of the most enjoyable days of their life together. The entire trip, for that matter, was perfect. Day after day was filled with scenic views, good food, and lots of laughs. When their last day finally came, they were devastated to have to return back home.

"Lisa, wake up! You are going to be late for work," Ricky yelled.

"You are never going to guess what happened," she stated rubbing her eyes.

"What happened?" he asked.

"I had a dream we went to Capri."

"Too bad it was just a dream."

# Give Me a Reason

## by Marian Calle

She knew she shouldn't have accepted his invitation. Sitting alone in a tiny café as she had so many times before, Reka let the significance of agreeing to see someone sink in. It meant she was getting attached, and she simply could not have that. It was time for Reka to leave this town and move on. What a shame, for she really liked this place.

Her eyes fixated on an elderly couple a few tables away. Reka sipped her coffee quietly, transfixed on the pair. The woman laughed and tilted her head back while the man who accompanied her gently stroked her arm. It was a future everyone was destined to have. It was a future everyone envisioned. She failed to comprehend how she could feel empty while observing scenes like this. How could she miss something she'd never had?

No worries. She chose this life for a reason. Getting attached to people just brought problems; emotions complicated everything.

This brought her to her current problem: what to do with Eric, the local baker who had been subtly flirting with her since her arrival at Arles four months ago. Yesterday, he had finally mustered the courage to ask her for dinner and she had agreed, which surprised everyone including herself. It had seemed like such a lovely proposal at the time that she had let her guard down. Caring for someone was on her list of things not to do. She had to leave. Fast.

Reka dropped her half-empty coffee cup and let it smash on the wooden table beneath her. Falling into the steady pace she knew all too well, Reka began running away from the café and her worries. Ignoring the indignant cries of the nameless waiter she'd left behind, she laughed.

She kept running.

The faintly familiar door on her home (no, not her home, her *house*) neglected every key she tried senselessly to slam in. She was in a hurry to leave before her thoughts got the best of her. Reka had always kept a copy of every key she'd ever owned as her own personal souvenir, and now she cursed her bad habit. It was a useless mistake she now realized as she attempted to open the door with all of the dozen keys clenched in her fist. She made a mental note to throw them out at the first given opportunity.

Finally, a faintly dulled silver key opened the door, allowing her entrance. Reka let the door shut slowly and soundlessly behind her and fell to a heap on the floor.

*Leave*, her mind whispered. She tried to push it down but her attempts were futile in comparison to the deafening roar that thrashed about her skull. The voice, all the more persistent, raged within her. *Leave*. The word vibrated beneath her eyelids and she fervently rushed to slam them shut. *I don't have to leave this time*, she thought. *This could work—*

*No, leave!*

*It doesn't always have to end like thi—*

*Leave!*

Her dark eyes burst open and she knew her brain had won when she felt herself shift to autopilot. Her body took action by itself. She ran upstairs, barging into the last bedroom on the right. She glanced at a bed, drawer, clock, and suitcase. She had embraced this scene time after time, city after city. Reka found herself choking on a sob long coming.

She cringed and let a few tears glide down her face, decorating her pale cheeks. I must leave now. There's not a chance in the world that I'll end up like the silly girls who fall in love, naïve to the imminent heartbreak they're setting themselves up for. I don't want a harlequin romance.

Reka could not let herself feel that. She never allowed herself to get too involved to feel anything. She wasn't so sure anymore. Upon meeting Eric she had begun to feel lighter than she had in years. She'd started singing songs she didn't know she knew and watching movies with hackneyed happy endings. She had begun to find herself smiling and staring off into space, never wanting to let go of a dream she had shaped in her mind. Her desires would become nearly tangible.

"Silly girl! Out of love, now! We need a waitress, not a dreamer! No one pays you to sit and look pretty," her boss stated earlier that week. She hadn't even flinched. Nothing affected her anymore these days but only Eric's dazzling smile.

Reka dropped the clothes she had absentmindedly begun gathering into her suitcase. The following thought hit her: she was in love! She, who had pledged never

to feel this way since she was old enough to understand a heart could break, was in love!

She threw her head back and laughed, omitting a gleeful sound unbeknownst to her until now. Turning abruptly she began running again, dashing down the stairs and out the door, at the pace roughly that of a maniacal track star. Cheeks flushed and out of breath, Reka found herself stopping in front of the small café that marked the beginning of her thrilling journey to an epiphany she'd never forget.

A pensive Eric was seated alone. Reka smiled at the sight of him. She couldn't remember a time she'd been this happy to see anyone.

"Eric, I'm here!" she screeched, and then blushed at the thought of how desperate she must have sounded. She walked up to him slowly, allowing her eyes to devour the vision before her, wanting to keep the memory of this moment forever.

"Sorry about the..." she hesitated, and then swallowed. Starting over she asked, "Have you been waiting for long?"

"For a while now... I was little worried you wouldn't show up," he said, releasing a nervous chuckle. His eyes stared at the floor and then lifted again to meet her gaze. A smile played on Reka's lips.

"You have no idea how long *I've* been waiting," she whispered, and sat down.

She let herself sink into her own happy world, and although something told her no amount of words would ever illustrate the sensation forming in her body, she knew she could get used to this.