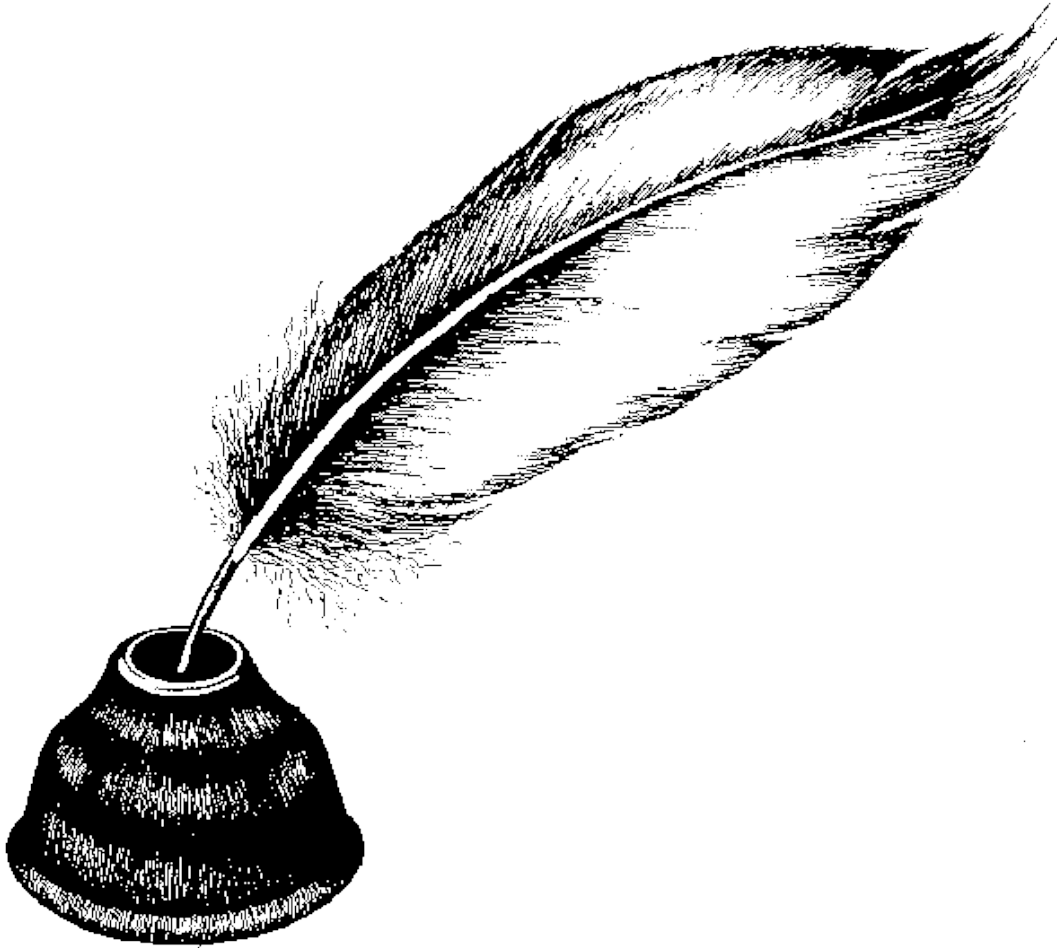


The Tenth Muse



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The Tenth Muse

*Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments though new-fangled ill;
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse.”*

Shakespeare, Sonnet 91

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The Tenth Muse is dedicated to Niekelle Bloomfield-Hunter, Christian Mendonça, Daniela Fonseca, and Ashanti Hargrove.

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Sweet Deception

by Daniela Fonseca

Green eyes to compliment his cunning smile,

A cheery laugh to captivate your heart,

You should beware of his uncommon style,

His love is dangerous; you should be smart.

Intelligence becomes the deadly weapon,

For who could be so beautiful with brains?

His touch will be much softer than fine linen;

His love will keep you locked away in chains.

The love he gives can be oh so addicting;

You will feel like you are in paradise.

But know that love can be very conflicting,

For he will play you like a pair of dice.

Your heart is what he wants to take from you,

For he took mine and then bid me adieu.

Stained Perception

by Christian Mendonça

Found I the portal God bestowed on us;
‘Tis stained its sections blown by skillful hands
When kissed by fire, bent and boisterous,
Then placed in churches on the blessed lands.
Spread colors serve as spectrums from the heart,
Ripped out from chest the essence now on glass;
Sprawled ‘round the colors rich, its vivid art,
Portrayals of deep and hardened thoughts amass.
Now did display thyself on canvas put
For all to gaze, yet sickly art thou name
A stain this form is but despised like soot,
But on clear structure light will shine the same.

All things have light and darkness in their core,

Acceptance is the key forevermore.

Individual Discovery

by Carla Silva

Lost in a world with those who know their place,

Obsessing over attitudes around,

Originality has lost its face,

Stuck in a world that is so tightly wound.

Afraid to motion in the wrong direction,

A boat that soon will sail without instructions.

The moon deceives us with a false reflection,

The dancing light creates a slight obstruction.

We are exiled to a deserted island

Where beauty does derive from untouched nature;

Purity outshines popular demand

Attested as terrain that's safe from danger.

A personality so pure is gold,

We shouldn't be constrained to what we're told.

Awaiting Rose

by Rykeea Lowe

Soft is the chair she sits on those dark nights,
Amazing stories go straight through the mind;
The strong soprano of her voice invites,
Reality becomes so redesigned.

In wind she dances, her skin is so red,
A rose that blossoms and grows with old age;
In life, in laughter, and in love roots spread
To bless with knowledge of the master sage.

The tale of life displayed, her body slows,
Her color ripe now disappears in time;
The glitter of her eyes no longer glows;
Her voice is now no more than just a chime.

Around we sit, our prayers go to the sky,
Waiting for our rose, but saying good-bye.

Life Everlasting

By Paloma Perroni

Red is the blaze that furnaces my soul

When light opens my eyes to sparks of war;

I break through rings of fire that shake me whole

To save humanity, whom I speak for.

I welcome fate to keep the flames alive

And mend my dreams that tend to fall apart,

So strength can cast away fears that survive,

Vigor that gives mankind a beating heart.

Life can only begin when death takes place;

It is assured when sunlit days are gone;

We fight the truth until we can embrace,

The start of life without another dawn.

With every end, beginnings come to sight

As we embrace and move straight towards the light.

Life's Reality

by Nadirah Lassiter

The pains we face in life include a lot;
Sometimes our hearts feel empty and alone.
People are fighting for the leading spot,
Only one person can hold down the throne.
Within the ocean covered with big waves,
They are the dreams that people chase around.
Sharks are the foes who want you in the grave;
Dolphins are pals who see you with the crown.
Life is perfect while it does last,
But death is something we all have to face.
Hold on to your sweet life and don't move fast;
Reality is something to embrace.

The journey is too short so don't complain;
People will be around to keep you sane.

Winter

by Karina Zeron

The coldness that does chill the very soul,
The summer plants do not go with the flow,
This season that may only play a role
Is a big challenge when we let it go.
The cold creates a sad and lonely vibe,
His light, blue eyes begin to slowly close,
His lifeless body tries to survive,
He gets into his fancy, dressy clothes.
Although his time here has come to an end,
He looks forward to a new start in life.
His troubles my soul can no longer mend,
He wishes the best to his cruel, sad wife.

His melancholy life is now behind,

He now has reached a better state of mind.

The Field of Life

by Dajuan Burgess

The feeling of the ball in my cold hands,
The soft turf of the field beneath my feet,
As I hear cheers and screams from roaring fans,
The marching band excites me with a beat.
My passion for this game is like the sun;
I don't feel pain; my body just goes numb;
When you do win, all things are just straight fun,
But when you lose you shrink just like a crumb.
I've had a lot of letdowns in this sport,
But all those things have never crippled me.
All kinds of people told me to abort,
But I won't quit because this is my key.

The door to victory is down the hall,

I take one knee and pray that I don't fall.

Conflicted Muse

by Ashanti Hargrove

The poetry was harder than she thought,
With meter and with rhyme she struggled then.
She tried her best to do what she was taught,
Try as she might she failed, and tried again.
Combining words together without ease
In pieces that attempt to fit as one,
Her teacher she would very soon appease
By handing in the poem perfectly done.
She stayed up late at night 'til it was right;
Her sonnet was the sole thing on her mind.
The hours and hours of all those darn rewrites,
The stars for her had finally aligned.

Today she presents in front of her class
And to her relief she had completely passed.

365

by Aliyah Reynolds

She does arrive on time, she's never late;

Her windswept entrance is more different than

Her friend, who then returns another date;

Her presence remains over a short span.

The chill that takes over my very spine

Is one that I have never felt before,

No more heat in this cold body of mine

That will now be frozen forever more.

She then returns and brings a new found life

A new life to proceed eternity,

The sun does bring an exit for my strife,

A great release from cold's severity

I now continue down the lighted path,

That leads me to my brighter aftermath.

Sparked

by Daniel Pruitt

There was a gloomy time where darkness lay;
My dreams and visions blocked by a tall gate.
I saw a big bright light and went my way,
Seeing my dreams, and visions I did wait.
I stepped out of the dark into the light;
There was a sudden spark that hit my soul.
My heart was an airplane ready for flight,
My dreams, and hopes, and visions were a whole.
The spirit fueled my heart to reach my goal,
Giving another chance to reach my dream,
Great blessings from above soothe my soul
As I move forward that has been my theme.

From lonely darkness where I used to be
To the bright lights which now I only see.

Cherishing Life

by Cristina Cabral

Life's a constant motion with no stop signs,
There is no such thing as refunding time.
Each second is cherished as time declines,
Minutes lost; turn to hour's overtime.
Forever land is a fictitious world,
Every motor dies out on its own day.
Hourglass drops sand on the floor unfurled,
As life's lived through the day, nothing is gray.
As hours make up the day, we begin
To fade, into the seconds of day's care.
Years become decades, we begin to sin,
Time never stops, for fear is in the air.

Each moment shall be precious in the heart,
For when we must leave, the clock won't restart.

Recognizing Imperfection

by Monet Jackson

Mistakes that I have made straight in my past,
Learning that destiny and fate are true,
Afraid that repercussions would soon last,
Assisting my conscience to take its cue.
The words in use to strangle with a noose,
But only pages can describe my flaws,
My focus on change leaves me no excuse,
With my emotions I'm left feeling raw.
My imperfections act as broken mirrors,
You can only see them in an x-ray;
When the cracked glass is not glued they are clearer,
All my skeletons have been locked away.
Knowing one day it will all come to light,
But I refuse to hide away in spite.

Night Terrors

by Niekelle Bloomfield-Hunter

The darkness falls upon her eyes at night;
Her life becomes another faded dream;
She screams and cries, no guide to find the light;
Her eyes, they lie 'cause things aren't what they seem.
She's friends with Fear, he sleeps within her mind;
She knows him well, he never leaves her side;
At night, he wakes, his presence makes her blind;
Illusion and reality collide.
Within the dark is where delusion feeds;
She's scared to think, her thoughts are too insane;
Now Fear has found a place to plant his seeds;
Terror now sings slow songs inside her brain.

Thinking she was asleep was her mistake;

She's in a dream from which she can't awake.

Like Scarlet Rain

by Darius Francois

The sounds of life caress yet still destroy;
My sense blasphemes without my due consent;
The demons eat me up for they enjoy
Their fangs dig deep for now I must relent.
Oh my, Venus your flowing hair so grand,
Become, please one with me for then I'm pure,
But wait your heat scorches my very hand,
Yet still you would increase your very lure.
This life's but good amidst undue unrest,
That heat still, more begets the warmth of day;
Dear love would put me to the very test,
Create for me oh love your awesome way.

Alas, you lie for now my soul's concealed;

Now hate and pain have to my soul appealed.

Heartless

By Harry Morera

Her eyes gleam and resemble crystal lakes,
And the bonds between us begin to faint.
The hard truth: her heart was not mine to take,
Forever and a day I was willing to wait.
Her words that day dimmed my clear shy weather,
The tone of her voice left me in darkness.
I was left there always and forever,
How something divine could be so heartless.
Lonely, I must live the rest of my days,
There was no departure from my destiny.
It was just too painful for me to stay,
What you did will forever change my identity.
I will never be Romeo in her eyes,
Which is a depth from which I will never rise.

Sonnet 89

By Adriana Dias

Argument over God continuous.

Misery may never leave me; I screech

My sadness is not inconspicuous.

To remain sane, I am able to teach.

There is always a beast in every man,

It stirs when you put a sword in his hand.

Often thinking what makes a man a man;

His origins or what he understands?

Battle has always seemed to be a bore,

Yet, I must fight these wars because of you.

But now I find myself so very sore,

Told you not to rely on me, you knew.

Pray that darkness does not stalk us tonight,

Have faith that the morrow will have the light.

An Oyster's Gift

By Cristina Cabral

My beauty always confused people. People always looked at me as a replication of Barbie. I was tall and lean, with a light complexion and a hint of bronze. My hair was long, well past my chest, and filled with several luses and smooth complexions of blonde. My features were defined, helping aid the appearance of my sky blue eyes. I was a beautiful Croatian woman, and people believed I had the riches, but the reality was that I was poor. My mother had died when I was seven, leaving my father to care for my brother and me.

The beach always brought back such sweet and unforgettable memories. As I washed my family's clothes in the ocean water, all the memories of this same trip my mother and I used to take began to come back to me. Now, my younger brother was so amused by the water. He would jump, kick and glide his feet as he walked back and forth in the water, just as I used to when I came with my mother as a kid.

"Let's go, Jimmy! I've got to start on supper for dad," I called to my brother as I finished up with the last piece of clothing. As we were leaving the beach, two rocks caught my eye. They were oddly shaped, and one was bigger than the other. *Take them*, I thought to myself as I tossed them into the basket with a smile.

When we got home, I quickly checked on my father, who was too weak to do anything. He had cancer and desperately needed to be operated on, but my family couldn't afford it. Despite the fact that all wasn't well, my father never let me live life in sadness. Even though he was too ill to do anything, his presence and character were even more joyful than those who were healthy around him. Even in the worst of situations, he always managed to put on a smile.

"How has your day been?" my father said with such amusement.

"Good," I simply said.

It was always too hard to talk to my father since I knew the fate that hid behind his smile.

"Just good? Well, I guess you should take the rest of the day off and enjoy yourself," he said with a chuckle.

"What? I can't do that! How could you ever say that?"

"Lighten up, Leah, you—" I cut him off.

"No, Dad. I'm fine. I'll see you later." I kissed him goodbye with a smile and ran out the door. As I walked down the steps, my brother came from behind and tagged along, baring the two rocks we found at the beach earlier that day.

We rushed to the market. Once we got there, we set up a quick stand at the exit. Since my father was unable to work every day, my brother and I would come to the market and wax shoes for some money. The amount was very little, but every penny was seen as valuable in my family's eyes. Most people didn't understand. People always looked at me shamefully for trying to gain money because I was so "beautiful" and "wealthy." This led to my brother and me having countless failed days when not even a penny was earned.

Just when my brother and I were about to lose hope, a fair-skinned man came over. I could tell he wasn't from here. As I was waxing his shoes, he continued to ask me questions about Croatia. He was extremely polite and even commented on my beauty, but it was clear he was a foreigner.

"A beauty like you should be wearing her riches," the man said.

I chuckled believing he was unaware I was poor. He began to stare at my brother much harder now.

"Where did you find that?" he asked Jimmy.

"What? This rock?" my brother asked confused.

"This rock? Surely you know that is a pearl," said the man enthusiastically.

We looked at the man confused. I had never owned a pearl but had seen many women wear them. The man took the oyster from my brother's hand and began to crack it open. Inside was a perfectly shaped pearl.

"This here is worth lots of money," the man said, and I blanked out as soon as I heard the word money.

At that moment, I realized what I had in my hand. It wasn't a pearl, but an object that symbolized money. This pearl was a gift from God. My father was going to get the surgery he needed. At that, I packed up my things and rushed to the pawn shop without even charging the man, and I ran home, feeling the biggest weight lift off my shoulders.

Finding Freedom

By Carla Silva

“Ellie, darling, it’s time to wake up. You have a very long day ahead of you,” exclaimed a maid with a messy bun, wearing her apron that was smothered by bits of the breakfast she cooked. Rays of light beamed through small openings in the curtains. Hiding from the light, Ellie snatched her covers and blanketed herself entirely. The maid, Annabelle, uncovered the girl, revealing a face accessorized by gifts from the sandman. “C’mon now, Ellie, you must get dressed properly so you can meet your mother for breakfast,” stated Annabelle.

“I’m sure my mother wouldn’t mind me sleeping for a few more hours,” muttered Ellie under her breath as she propped herself up from bed. Standing upright, Annabelle unclothed the eighteen-year-old and dressed her in a light blue gown that featured a corset for an optimal fit to the body. When lacing the ties in the back of the corset, Annabelle caught sight of Ellie gazing outside a window.

“Beautiful day to go into town with your mum, no?”

“I wonder what exciting plans my mother has in store for me,” smirked Ellie with a slight eye roll.

Ever since Ellie could remember, it was routine for her and her mother to go shopping in local boutiques. Being that they were part of the upper class, their mansion was situated in a secluded residential area amongst several other elites. Ellie never cared to engage in conversations with people from different classes because her mother was always with her, guiding her away to different places.

Once Ellie had gotten ready, she headed to the dining room, where a long table was covered with a vast amount of food. Only two chairs were set at the table, one at each end, and one was occupied by her mother.

“Ah, Ellie! Come join me. I was afraid you would never show up for breakfast,” enthused Ellie’s mother while gesturing to the empty chair across from her.

“Apologies, mum. Annabelle woke me late,” claimed Ellie while attempting to hide a grin.

“For today I was thinking about changing our Sunday routine!” Ellie’s mother explained with a pensive look drawn on her face. Ellie’s face lit with anticipation gleaming in her eyes. She had grown bored of her traditional routines with her mother. Every day during the week it was strictly home schooling by one of the most prestigious professors in France, followed by tea with biscuits at 4:00 p.m., then finally piano lessons until dinner. Her only leisure time would be after dinner; however, she was only permitted to draw and paint. Adventuring the outdoors was prohibited by her mother because it was deemed as unlady-like.

“Once we get to town, instead of going shopping for clothes, I want to pass by a jewelry store that recently opened. I’ve read quite intriguing reviews in the newspaper.”

“Lovely,” declared Ellie with a sullen expression composed on her face.

Once they had both finished with their breakfast, they made their way into the car and instructed their chauffer on where to go. On their way to town, they passed by a sign that read “Island of La Grande Jatte.” A river glistened alongside the road all the way until they reached the town. Numerous common folk treaded the cobblestone path in search of what they wanted. Farther into the heart of the town was a public park where several individuals were found basking in the sunlight or participating in activities. The river ran through the park. As Ellie and

her mother roamed alongside the park, Ellie noticed through her peripherals as a young man caught sight of her. He appeared to be her age and was very attractive. She turned to him and half-smiled, yet was tugged by her mother when changing directions to get her to focus. When Ellie's mother finally found the jewelry store, she allowed her daughter to roam freely. Ellie ventured outside and decided to walk through the park in hopes of running into the boy. She looked all over, however, to no avail.

Deciding to sit down aside the river on a small deck, she watched the ripples that the fish would make when resurfacing. Minutes later, Ellie noticed a shadow that came from behind and shifted that way to see what it was.

“Hello, mademoiselle. My name is Christian. Who might you be?” Questioned the attractive fellow for whom she had been searching. He noticed the flushing of her cheeks and insisted. “This is when you tell me your name,” he said with soft-spoken words.

“I...I'm Ellie. Pleasure to meet you!”

“Pretty name for a pretty girl.”

Ellie was immediately swooned by the gentleman. Hours passed and the conversation never died out. Ellie found herself laughing and smiling incessantly, which was strange to her because it never happened that often. A small voice sounded from the background noise, “Ellie? Ellie?! Ellie! Oh there you are!”

It was her mother.

“Where have you gone off? I have looked for hours trying to find you!” exclaimed her mother as she approached her. “Who's this young fellow? He looks oddly familiar.”

“Good day Madame. I am Christian.”

Blankly staring at the boy, Ellie's mother composed herself and responded by saying with widely opened eyes, "Ellie, it's time to return home. Look at you, you're filthy! Didn't I ever tell you not to come to parks? Disgusting." She began dragging her daughter away, ignoring the fight Ellie held to break free. Ellie hollered, "I'll write you soon!" as the door to their car shut in front of her. She had fallen head over heels for Christian, and the feeling was mutual. Months passed and neither of them have seen each other since, however, they both exchanged letters as often as they could. That is, until one day when her mother found the letters.

"Ellie, who are these letters from?" Retorted her mother.

"A friend," Ellie responded with a knot in her stomach.

"What friend? You don't have any friends. Is it that boy from the park long ago? I forbade you from communicating with him!" Yelled her mother with fevered eyes and a furious tone.

"I don't understand why, mother! We love each other; he's the only person that cares about me. He's the only person that listens to me. You don't care about me at all, you only care about materialistic things."

"He's a son from one of my ex-husbands from before you were born. I will not tolerate it," declared Ellie's mother. Ellie's mouth dropped to her knees, yet she didn't care much for her mother's past relationships. She was in no way affiliated to him, and loved him passionately.

"I can do whatever I want, I am eighteen years old. Let me live, mum. You confine me in the walls of this mansion and smother me with meaningless nothings that reek of irrelevance to my interests."

“I will not be spoken to in such a manner. If you hate living with me so much, why don’t you leave,” declared Ellie’s mother in a monotone, disinterested tone, avoiding eye contact with her daughter. She then proceeded to exit the room without another word.

The next day Annabelle entered Ellie’s room to prepare her for her morning classes with her professor. She stumbled upon a letter disclosed to her mother, and in it, it read:

Dear Mother,

I have decided to take your advice and leave, for good. You’re right, there’s no reason why I should live such a miserable life under your roof. For that, I have decided to go my separate way and live life the way I intend for it to be lived. I am living with my beloved Christian and am no longer being restricted by your ridiculous rules. I hope you have a good remainder of your life. I love you, but I needed my freedom. Please do your best to understand.

Love,

Ellie

Trouble's Milkmaid

By Christian Mendonça

Unable to be anything besides what she was, lumped on the ground like a ragged, dusty sack of swollen potatoes ready to burst at its burlap seams, Vjlma, one of my new charges, flailed the only limb she had enough strength to budge. Her neck stretched outwards in a semi-circular motion with her eyes bulging ready to wiggle out of their sockets. They even produced cupfuls of water to help make their cozy surroundings slippery with every nudge. Loud moans launched off her tongue followed by multiple painful whimpers as she pushed.

“You got here just in time.” Menno, the farm hand and stable keeper, commented audibly amongst Vjlma's hounding vocals. “Take her head and calm her please! I think her offspring's hoof might be stabbing at her insides.”

As commanded, I approached the struggling cow, trying to grasp her head. After a few jerking movements from both of us, I got a hold of her and shushed her. After stroking the black spot between her eyes, I cradled her head in my arms, distracting her from Menno's hands inside her. He was very calm with the whole procedure. Vjlma yelped horrendously, leading me to bend over and console her by putting my nose to her stout. “It's okay, Vjlma,” I whispered.

“The little one was stretching in the womb!” Menno let out a laugh. “She's already causing *moeite*, trouble! I think that should be her name.”

I cocked my head up stumbling over the name. It wasn't a particularly nice one due to the connotation, but it was appropriate, and it rolled off the tongue nicely. I looked back down at Vjlma. “Moeite, do you like that Vjlma? Moeite.” A lack of response and lots of heavy pushing finally got the little calf completely out, leaving Menno to baptize her.

“Welcome to the world, Moeite! It’s not a particularly wonderful place, but it’s a lot better when you’ve got milk!”

“That’s comforting to know.”

“Well isn’t it? She’s got a purpose. It’s more than some of us can say.”

I couldn’t argue with him there. If that were the case, I’m sure I wouldn’t have taken up this new job as a milkmaid for the extravagant Judge Roelof, who had acres of pleasantly green pastures sprinkled with timid Dutch tulips on the outskirts, a private farm and stable for his *need* for fresh milk and occasional horse mounting, and an incredibly large mansion. It was a beautiful estate, but nothing more than a place to earn some money for my family and me.

“Adelheid is your name, correct?” Menno inquired trying to wipe off some of the fluids from his arm. Before I could reply, he went on. “Quite the welcoming Vjlma gave you, eh? I think she was happy to have you here. You should know we milk her twice a day, but because of her little one, we won’t milk her at all for a month or two. You still have Anouk and Hedy to milk, and they both get the three day treatment. That’s six milkings a day for you, and when Vjlma is ready, it’ll be eight. Also, check up on Vjlma and Moeite frequently. Make sure the mother eats enough grass and the calf enough milk.”

It seemed to me that he was done, so I responded with a meekly head nod. He smiled sweetly and left the site. My gaze fell upon the two cows. Vjlma got up suddenly and sniffed at her child. I was expecting her to lick off the embryonic fluid from Moeite, as most mother cows do to their offspring, but instead she just plopped herself a few feet apart from her and began to munch on some hay. Her maternal instincts weren’t very sharp.

I went inside to get acquainted with the fellow milkmaids. Hanna was around my age, sixteen or so, and she sported golden locks and glistening sapphire eyes that twinkled voraciously with life. She was a very bubbly person. “I think it’s just so great to tend to the animals and bake all day. Imagine I were a man! I wouldn’t know a single thing about hard labor!” she joked. “I mean really, imagine me with a hammer!” she went on laughing. Nicolet was the other maid. She was older and wiser in her craft. Her hands were these worn out weapons of great capability and every whisk emitted a whiff of culinary knowledge. It was our job to bake desserts for the judge as well.

Nicolet eyed me uncertain about something. “You don’t look too happy to be here.”

“Maybe she’s anemic. You do look a little dreary,” inserted Hanna.

“I’m perfectly healthy,” I replied. “I’m just taking it all in.”

“It’s not that bad a job,” Nicolet declared. She paused to pour one of her charge’s milk into a pitcher on a far off table tastily decorated with fresh bread near the corner of the room where a picnic basket and lantern adorned the wall. “Most women don’t work, some have better jobs than we do, but there are plenty who have it worse.”

She was right. “I’m not complaining about the job. I just think too much.”

“Of what?” Hanna interjected.

“Everything,” I replied, “and nothing.”

“Which is it?” Nicolet questioned.

“What’s the difference?”

“Well whatever the case, don’t think too much. Things become confusing when you do.”

Nicolet advised carrying away the pitcher of milk.

It'd been months since Moeite was born, but there was something very odd about her. When out of the stable, she didn't graze or make a sound. She just stood by fencing that separated the estate from other Dutch land and instead grazed it with her eyes. It was land that she would never know. Vjlma didn't pay much attention to her and often forgot to approach her daughter with nutritious, milk-filled utters. Menno and the judge had spoken recently about disposing of her. She had appeared sickly to them and her lack of typical behavior and habit of fence-guarding convinced them that it was a mental impairment that had gotten her. "The prices of veal have gone up," stated the judge, "and why waste money when we can get it for free? Besides, she probably wouldn't be of any use to us anyway."

Menno was planning on butchering her that night so that she could be drained and ready to be cooked for dinner. It was a rather unfortunate ordeal for her. She just stood there, and nothing else. She stood there with these eyes that glossed over an unknown object with her ears always alert and an eager nose always poking at the wooden planks of the fence, hopeful that they would eventually give way.

Something stirred in me and it lead me to retrieve a saw from the shed. I brought it back and approached Moeite with it. There was no reaction for a while; then, her ear twitched a bit and she stuck her head through the gaps in between the wooden planks.

I took in a big breath of air to recollect myself after the strenuous effort and watched Moeite approximate a yellow tulip on the outskirts of the estate. She smelled it curiously with her tail whipping like a pendulum in the air, and she fed on it. After swallowing she let out a grand old *moo* and went on to the next. I thought of how clumsy she was when she walked, and how lively she was as she chewed. It made me relieved and somewhat contented.

Mona Lisa

By Ashanti Hargrove

Lisa Del Giocondo was a bit of a gossip. It was a humid afternoon in Florence, Italy, and Lisa was making her usual rounds. She stopped by many of the other homes and dropped off the freshly mended clothing. Of course it took her more than an hour just to give Mrs. Gherardini her shirt because she just liked to know what was going on in her neighborhood.

“Did you hear, Lisa?” asked Rose Gherardini.

“Hear what?” replied Lisa. She was eager to hear what Rose had to say; she always had the best stories.

“According to Lorraine, a famous painter is opening up a studio here. Rumor has it that he’s looking for a woman for his next big painting.”

This was Lisa’s shot. Growing up in Italy, she had always wanted to be famous. So many great writers, musicians, and artist had come from here; she just wanted her chance to become a star. Her parents, though, had forbidden her from joining arts of any kind. As an act of defiance, she had married an artist— Francesco Del Giocondo.

“Where is his studio? This could finally be my big break,” Lisa said as she imagined a beautiful painting of herself being admired by hundreds of people.

“Are you sure you’re allowed to even go?” Rose asked as she sipped her tea. “You know Francesco is a jealous man.”

“He wouldn’t have any reason to be jealous. Besides, he’ll let me do whatever it is that makes me happy,” she said as she drank the last bit of tea and began to collect her things.

“I said no, Lisa. You can’t go. I’m not going to allow you to sit in the studio for hours with some man,” Francesco told her.

“But Francesco, when we married you said you would do anything to keep me happy. Don’t you want me to be happy?” Lisa knew by the look on his face she had caught him, hook, line, and sinker.

“Some guy named Leonardo Da Vinci. I’ve never heard of him, but apparently he’s an amazing artist.”

“Da Vinci? He’s the reason why we’re stuck in this city! He stole my style! He’s the reason I’m still selling silk in the markets. No! You can’t go and that’s final,” he said still rambling on about Da Vinci.

“But—”

After much coaxing, she finally was able to make her way to Da Vinci’s studio. She turned the corner and was faced with a line of women all the way down the street. The women were all different: short, tall, skinny, chubby, brunettes, blondes, and even the occasional red head.

“Rose?” she questioned the red head in front of her.

“Yes—oh Lisa...” Rose said, surprised to see Lisa.

“What are you doing here?”

“Trying out. It’s not really my thing, you know, but I thought, ‘Why not?’”

“Amateurs,” said the woman ahead of Rose. She was stunning, her hair was long and brown, and her eyes were the lightest shade of gray. Lisa automatically recognized her.

“You’re Guilia Russo! It’s so nice to meet you. I’m a big fan of yours,” Lisa said enthusiastically as she put her hand out.

Guilia looked at Lisa's hand then back at her a small smile on her face.

"Are you now? I'm not surprised. All the old, ugly housewives aspire to be me," she said as turned back around.

Both Rose and Lisa were slightly shocked, not only by her rudeness but by the fact that this woman was one out of the many they had to compete with.

"A class act," whispered Rose as she and Lisa giggled.

—

They had finally reached the front of the line an hour later. An hour of watching woman after woman run out of the studio either sad, angry, or crying.

"Lisa, I'm kind of nervous," Rose confessed.

"You don't stand a chance anyway as long as I'm here," said Guilia. "Only the most beautiful become the subject of a painting, and you two don't qualify."

"You don't have to be such a—" Lisa was cut off by a man with long graying hair.

"Come up you three. The rest of you, go home! That's enough for today."

"Mr. Da Vinci, I am a big fan of your art. My name is Guilia Russo; I've been in many paintings you might know like—"

"You, what's your name?" He asked an obviously nervous Rose.

"Rose Gherardini."

"I'm not looking for a red head Rose. You can go."

Rose put her hand on Lisa's shoulder, mouthed a quick 'good luck' and rushed out the door.

"You, what's your name?" he asked staring at Lisa.

"Lisa Del Giocondo," she said proudly.

“Just Lisa? How boring.”

“I used to think so, too, so I tried to change it to Mona. That didn’t really go over well,” she said laughing a little as she tried to ease the tension in the room.

“Mona Lisa...I like that.”

“You said your name was Guilia Russo?” he asked as he began to set up his canvas.

“Yes sir!” she replied happily. She knew she had this in the bag.

“You can leave, Guilia Russo. Shut the doors on your way out. Mona Lisa, you be back here tomorrow by the early afternoon. You’re just what I was looking for.”

‘Mona’ Lisa came back the next day. It took all of eight hours for her to be immortalized onto the canvas. During her life she never exactly got all of the fame she was looking for.

Today, the picture of Mona Lisa sits in the Louvre in Paris, France with a telling smile on her face. She always told her parents she was going to be famous one day.

Sounds of Hope

By Rykeea Lowe

There in the deep dark of night, a melodious sound filled the quiet. The sounds came from the heart but did not match the despair that tainted the air. In the doorway of an abandoned apartment sat an old man, withered and dry skinned, barely supporting his own head. His shirt was dirty, thin, and at the end of its existence. He wore no shoes, no jacket just that pale thin old shirt. He strummed an old raggedy wooden guitar, the strings barely holding on under the light pressure of his fingers. The man, sad and old as he was, played beautifully. His music was life for the dead of the desolate streets. His notes made the small starving children dance with joy, but he did not feel those emotions.

The guitarist, as much as he tried and tried to understand, to hear, to feel the hope that was poured so effortlessly into the songs that he strummed, could never achieve it. He could never believe in the notes that were brought forth, the notes that the Muses had given him to give to others. His mind, heart, and soul were shrouded in darkness, never to see the light again. His eyes would never look up and enjoy the majestic moon and the radiant stars, for he saw them but he did not. His heart would never understand the beauty of love for he had it, yet he did not. His mind would never know the gracefulness of peace, for it was there, yet he could not see or touch it.

Still he continued to play, never stopping, never leaving. As the sun rose to greet the sky in a warm embrace, the man continued to play. When children ran out into the streets searching desperately, almost frantically for food, he never stopped, just continued to strum those melodies. The children stopped and waved, but he did not see them, never did he acknowledge their presence, and saddened they sauntered away. When the woman who loved him from afar

for years came and sat next to him, there were no words, no motions, which conveyed the man's happiness to that woman. Angry she stood, tired of wasting the rest of her life on him, and left him all alone. He still played.

What no one could see nor come near to understanding, was that the man, all alone and old, and on the brink of dying, was very much alive. He was not a person of wealth who took pity on the weak and poor, but a man far more incredible. This man, who people thought was an ordinary man in poverty, was in fact a majestic man. He was not of this earth, for he served a higher deity, Elpis, the Greek goddess who took pity on the suffering people and offered them hope. She with the aid of Eutychia, the goddess of happiness, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love, created this man to send the suffering a message. There is light in the darkness and it can be found. Never give up hope. The continuous message, strummed in different ways on that old rickety guitar, brought light to the people left in the dark.

The Storm

By Rykeea Lowe

The soft breeze made waves on the water as it blew through the park. Anna tilted her head back as the breeze hit her face and blew the soft brown curls back behind her. She looked back down at the flowers she was carefully caressing as her sister Amelia rambled on.

“You are so annoying,” Amelia huffed as she eyed one of the boys on the Dutchman, a wonderful sailing boat. “You don’t fit in. You could never be me. I don’t see why I have to babysit you all the time.”

“Maybe I don’t want to be around you either. You are so stuck up, it’s ridiculous. You have more pride in yourself than that monkey has in its collar,” Anna whispered, more to herself than to her sister as she turned to eye the monkey in question. He sat dutifully by his owner, who decided to wear one of her best gowns to the event. The monkey even had on a diamond and ruby encrusted collar around its neck.

Amelia sat next to her sister, continuously rambling about her. Amelia hated Anna. Hated her hair, her quiet beauty, how all the boys gravitated towards Amelia so they could befriend Anna. Mostly she hated how Anna was remarkably unaware of it all. She preferred books over parties and outside over a trip to the theatre. It was quite unsatisfying for Parisian society.

“You’re so unsavory, like Aunt Patrice’s chocolate bars,” Amelia shuddered in disgust. She hoped to get a response out of Anna but it didn’t work. Anna sat quietly, watching the little Shih Tzu over to their left play in the grass behind its owner.

Amelia shook her head and glanced back over to the water, searching for Lord James’ son, William. She had a fancy for him for the longest but never got to talk to him since he was

always surrounded by girls who sought his attention. She finally found him but he was kissing Andrea Van Dutch to her shock. Her heart fell as Anna finally said something.

“I told you he wasn’t for you.”

“Oh shut up you dried up dumbbell!” Amelia cried as she stood to her feet and stomped off.

Anna continued to stare after her sister, until eventually she shrugged and turned back to the race. The race was to start in twenty minutes, a battle to see which family had the fastest yet more agile boat in all of France. Personally she wanted the Louis’ to win, for their boat was a magnificent one. As Anna waited for the race to start she contemplated, her sister, and wondered where she could be.

“BOOM!” *FLASH!*

Amelia sat curled beneath a giant oak tree crying. Or maybe it was wailing. All she knew was that she loathed her life, her sister, William James, everything. She wanted to be cared for, she wanted to be held, and she just wanted someone to love her.

“But someone does love me,” she hissed in anger. “My darling little sister Anna.”

It was the truth, no matter how hard she tried to fight it, deny it. Anna did care, Amelia just pushed her away. Anna constantly looked out for Amelia. Anna knew which boys wanted Amelia just to get to her and who actually liked her. She knew the secrets that Amelia told no one, how their uncle who lived in India attempted to rape her when he came to visit but no one believed her except Anna, due to the fact that he came bearing gifts. Anna knew, and Anna ensured that he wouldn’t hurt her by sacrificing herself for her sister.

Anna cared yet Amelia didn’t want the love that Anna offered.

“BOOM!” *FLASH!*

Amelia shrieked in terror as lightning flashed across the sky, and thunder filled the sky and the rain began to pour. Amelia attempted to burrow into the tree, terrified. Amelia was awfully afraid of storms, another thing she hated Anna for. Anna was amazingly brave; seeming scared of nothing, even spiders. Amelia found one in her room and ran yelling herself hoarse and all Anna did was pick up the little creature and set him outside on the window sill.

Oh how Amelia wished she was home hidden in her bed, as she listened to the sounds of Mozart fill her house. She always did wonder where the music came from because it only was heard when there was a storm. She often would run down the grand piano, only to see Anna sitting in an armoire eating an apple, after a storm was finished to catch the person who played such music. Only now did she truly wish she could hear those melodies.

“AMELIA!”

As the rain began to fall Anna turned frantic, wondering where Amelia could be. As soon as she heard the first clap of thunder, she knew she had to find her sister. Amelia was dreadfully scared of storms. Only Mozart calmed her, and only when she was in her bed under the covers. But they were not in the house, near Amelia’s bed, near a piano; they were separated in La Grand Jatte Park in the middle of one of the worst storms of the spring. Anna, frantic with fear for her sister, searched for her, yelling her name, tripping over hidden branches in the dark.

“Amelia!” she shouted over and over again. “Where are you Amelia? AMELIA!”

For an hour Anna searched desperately. Her teeth were chattering as cold seeped nonstop through her bones and ran rampant in her veins. Her clothes were soaked, so much that she could barely walk without falling over from her heavy burden.

‘Damn these societal clothes!’ Anna thought as she struggled to step over a very large branch.

“AMELIA!” she desperately shouted, praying for a reply.

“Anna!”

Anna turned to her left to find her sister running, and falling, over to her as fast as her legs could carry her. Amelia finally made it to Anna, and she collapsed in Anna’s arms holding her desperately close. Amelia cried.

“Let’s go home Amelia. Come on. Let’s get you home and in bed, and I will play for you,” Anna cooed as she began to help her sister walk out of the park and towards home.

Amelia looked up in shock.” You’re the one who plays for me? Why?”

Anna shook her head. “Because I am your sister and I care, and I love you.”

Anna and Amelia reached their house and made their way up to Amelia’s room. Amelia undressed and Anna still in wet clothes went to sit at the piano while Amelia got in bed. Anna began to play the notes Amelia loved so well. Amelia in turn sunk farther into the pillow and whispered.

“I love you Anna.”

Mutiara

By Aliyah Reynolds

Early Saturday morning, Basket woke up sweating. She has a ceiling fan in her room but it does not withstand the Malaysian heat. She gets out of bed and storms to the bathroom, rushing grandfather out. Basket can't stand the sweat and not looking as feminine as the princess of Malaysia, Mutiara (Malay for pearl). Basket doesn't even look at hurt self when she first wakes up because the sight is not as pleasing until she looks good enough. After going to fix herself up in the bathroom, Basket is ready to look into the mirror. She has her hair pulled back tightly revealing her bold, brown face. Her status however does not allow her to wear jewelry; she is not rich enough to afford them anyways. Basket just tries her best and imagines herself as princess Mutiara.

Being a poor town girl, Basket lives in Grainville, Malaysia, which is fifty miles south of the palace of princess Mutiara. Her grandfather took her in after her parents were killed in a robbery in their unsafe, poor neighborhood. Basket has always wanted to nr like princess Mutiara for as long as she can remember and when she lost her mom she told herself that one day she would be princess. One of Baskets biggest wishes is to see the actual princess Mutiara. There are just pictures of Mutiara wearing pearl earrings, which is where she got her name from. Unlike most Malaysian girls, Princess Mutiara is pale white with huge round eyes, making her most idolized.

On Baskets typical errand to collect grains from the market of Grainville for her handicap grandfather, she strolls and finds two black buttons. Basket gets a brilliant idea. She runs home and finds some old white paint in her basement and paints the black buttons white. To basket they resemble the perfect pearls, "ah Mutiara's" she says in fascination. Basket glues them onto

her ears. She feels more like a princess but knows that she need a sash to be complete. She admires herself.

Basket begins on another great plan. That plan is to go visit the princess no matter how far away she is. Basket feels pretty enough to present herself; prettier than she has ever felt before.

Basket starts her fifty mile journey to visit the princess of Malaysia, princess Mutiara. On her way she sees a cheetah who she clearly cannot outrun. These are obstacles anyone who has tried to visit the palace has ever encountered. She gets to the cheetah and realizes she can't go around him; she can't go under him, so goes above him. She walks across along the branches of the trees until she passes him. She makes it past but Basket is only 25 miles into her journey. With no grains left from her lost basket, she starts to starve.

Basket has made it 45 miles in, and with 5 miles left, she crawls the rest. She is no longer presentable to enter the palace. A strange man comes along telling her that it was he who sent the cheetah because he knew she was coming. The old man looked mysterious and poor so Basket could not understand how such a man of this appearance could have been sent by Princess Mutiara. The old man continues on telling and explaining to basket how she has a phenomenal amount of ambition and perseverance. Her endurance shall be rewarded. The old man tells basket that her award soon waits, "Basket, young lady, your reward has been reserved". He carries Basket the remaining 5 miles to the palace.

Basket arrives at the palace. She is astonished by its beauty. They feed her and give her plenty of water. They tell her how there really is not princess Mutiara—until now. The palace people have been waiting years for someone worthy enough. They carry in basket's grandfather who dies two days later. Basket is princess Mutiara and gets to wear real pearls from now on.

Pearl Harbor's Love Story

By Monet Jackson

Emily Bowman. From a distance, one word to describe her is lonely. She doesn't associate with many people; she just treats her patients and goes home. Years ago she had a vibrant stance on life; strangers could see her light aura and the glow in her hazel eyes. She was in love with a man named Henry Ashburn. He was an infantry soldier in the U.S. Army stationed in Hawaii, and she was a nurse for the French military. She vacationed in Hawaii to escape the lives she lost in the war, and there she met Henry. They had a brief rendezvous, but they fell in love with one another. Their connection was so deep that they knew one day they'd meet again. Henry was a man built on fate, but rather faith in God, and he believed that God sent Emily to him to save him from the sins he's committed in his life. She was an angel, her grace and innocence is what propelled him into a fantasy of falling in love at first sight. Emily eventually went home to the Island of La Grande Jatte. Their parting was nothing less than romantic as Henry took her creamy-skinned face in his right palm and placed a longing but goodbye kiss on her primrose pink lips.

It was now August of 1941 and Emily was now in despair. The love of her life was nowhere to be found and now she was out of a job. She went to the port in her hometown to get a view of the ocean. It often reminded her of her brief affair with Henry and how they would look at the ports with the sun setting. It helped to clear her head, but today it only caused more pain. The grass area was filled with families and happily married couples. She would sometimes picture her and Henry, but left disappointed when she realized he was thousands of miles away and probably happily married. Henry however, was in the exact same position. He'd recently

gotten out of another terrible relationship that was a dead end. He'd been stationed in San Diego, California the year after his affair and was happy for the change of scenery. In the month of November after much contemplation, he decided it was time to go back to Hawaii. The Lieutenant General signed his relocation papers and he was placed on the post on November 17.

Emily decided it was time to search for her lost soul mate, starting with Hawaii. She made it to the base just in time to see their annual fireworks to start off the month of December. In the midst of all the chaos, her heart started to flutter and her hands shook with anxiety. She caught a glimpse of a man on her side that had a striking resemblance to Henry, but she thought she was crazy. Her reasoning for being here is what pushed her to follow the man and call the name "Henry" repeatedly until he turned around. That was when the air was knocked out of her lungs because there stood Henry, the man who'd she'd been searching for, and longing for after 6 years. Their reunion was almost picture perfect as recognition spread across his face and a wide smile soon followed.

"Emily? Is that you?" Henry asked hesitantly.

"Yes Henry, I've been searching for you," Emily replied.

"I've been looking for you too, I never stopped loving you," Henry said and with that he wrapped her in a kiss that electricity could even pierce through. It was as strong as his goodbye kiss, except this was hello and for good this time. December 7th, 1941 was the day Henry Ashburn looked into the hazel eyes of Emily Bowman and saw her staring back.

Henry and Emily continued to introduce themselves over the next few days and they walked to their favorite pier. Their hands intertwined with one another as his thumb grazed over her hand gently. Henry turned as the sun beamed on the left side of his face. Due to the warm weather in Hawaii despite the month, they were able to walk barefoot against the pine lumber. The heat

radiating off the wood caused a tingling in their feet, but they were oblivious as they so focused on their eyes. Their trance consumed them and could not see the Japanese plane that flew above them creating an explosion a mere 10 feet away. That day had been their last day together, but they'd soon find each other in heaven. Their bodies were still together when the medical personnel found them. Emily's mother was notified in France by the U.S. Army that her daughter passed away along with a man named Henry Ashburn. Mrs. Bowman looked back to her granddaughter, Sarah and thanked God that the girl's parents died happily together, but also saddened that the girl now had no parents and she had no daughter or a son-in-law to interrogate. She knew she would be the one to take care of the girl as best she could and tell her all about her parents when the questions were asked.

Sarah was a beautiful young girl who would grow up to be curious of where she came from just like her mother. She was caring and planned on becoming a nurse like her mother. Nora, her grandmother told her numerous stories about her mother, but she was left feeling empty about her paternal side. She wondered who Henry Ashburn was, almost as if he was a mysterious figure. She tried many searches with the U.S. government, but they were all dead ends and she eventually gave up hope of ever finding out anything. Her grandmother passed away when she was 26 and she was deeply saddened at the thought of having no family left, but what her grandmother gave her made up for her loss. Nora gave her the most precious gift of her father's journal in which Emily took when they parted ways. It included details of his childhood to his time in the military and even intimate details of both Emily and him. Sarah was now complete, she knew where she came from and that was enough for her to move on and hope to have a love her parents shared for one another.

Les Superstitieux

By Niekelle Bloomfield-Hunter

He watched the people dance under the trees. There were a lot of them. Women in long white dresses and men in freshly pressed suits. His twin sisters were near a table talking to a man with stringy brown hair and flushed rosy skin. He wondered why the man looked so bothered – was it from dancing? The sky was a soft shade of orange and the air was starting to cool. He was ready to leave. The band had played all their good songs and all the pretty young girls had had their dances. He loved to watch them the most. Twirling and bouncing around. He looked at his watch. It was time to go.

He met up with his sisters and told them to come along. They walked solemnly to their car. The ride home was long. The sky was dark now; rain fell lightly onto the roof. They sat in silence. Every now and then they rode pass a house and saw the father making his rounds of the premises – closing the barn, securing the windows, sitting out a bowl of milk, hanging a cross from the top of the porch door, then hurrying back inside.

His sisters looked at each other and then at him. They asked him what time it was. He looked out the window, then back at them but didn't respond. The driver glanced at the three of them quickly in the rearview mirror; his hands were shaking more than they usually did from his daily dose of coca wine. The sisters asked for the time once more. He ignored the questions and told the driver he was free to go a little faster if he liked. All the houses they passed now were completely still. They had to be the only ones out in the town at this time. He looked at his watch. His sisters were crying.

They drove past a large expand of barren land and passed two or three more houses. He asked himself why they had decided to stay so late at the Moulin de la Galette. Everything was

so still he could almost feel the catacombs shaking under the wheels of the car. Finally, the car pulled up on the side of their home. The air suddenly felt lighter. They stepped out of the car and walked to the front entrance. He looked around and everything was in place: the milk, the cross. Walking up the stairs he heard a noise behind him and turned. A sigh of relief fell over him. It was only a raven.

The sisters were at the top of the stairs waiting for him. The driver had already gone inside. He gestured for them to go ahead but they did not move. They stared at him, almost half-consciously, smiling. He started to ask if there was something wrong but they turned and entered before he could speak. He thought to himself how strange they were. They had always been that way, exceptionally peculiar, but tonight it weighed down on them – like a thick fog.

He realized he was the only one still standing outside and an uneasy feeling crept over him. He quickly walked inside, making sure he locked the bolts on the door. Then he walked upstairs into his sitting room. He looked at the clock on the wall, he could hear it ticking. The day had been long and he was exhausted. He decided to go straight to bed. As he walked into his bed room, removing his suit jacket, something strange struck him. Why had there been a raven outside this late at night?

He turned white. They hadn't made it back in time. Apprehensively, he walked back into his study. He called out for his sisters. No answer. Slowly, he walked into the hall. He called for them again. Approaching their room, he called louder. He could barely breathe. He looked at the clock in the hall, but it was stuck. He attempted a deep breath as he turned the knob to his sisters' bedroom door. He could not breathe. He opened the door and saw his sisters standing in the middle of the room – surrounded. The catacombs had opened.

Patriarchal Struggle in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*

By Lucas Schraier

The esteemed psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud once postulated that one of the driving forces of human psychology is the power struggle between a son and his father, as the son must go into conflict against the father to attain the power of the patriarch for himself. Franz Kafka elaborated on this conflict perfectly in his novella *The Metamorphosis*, in which the son Gregor is locked in conflict with his father and each asserts power over the other through economic responsibility, control of female family members, and physical subjugation. This paternal conflict is used by Kafka to show that power within a patriarchal society is based on the patriarch's ability to control his family economically, socially, and physically.

The struggle between Gregor and his father primarily centers on the issue of the family's economic well-being. The story begins with Gregor as the primary moneymaker of the family, and thus the one who holds power, as his father is in too poor a physical condition to work. This situation immediately demonstrates that the power structure of a patriarchal hierarchy has a basis on money, or more generally the ability of the patriarch to make others dependent on them by controlling their means of living. Once Gregor is metamorphosized, he completely loses his ability to earn money for his household, and as his family gradually realizes this, his position of power quickly dismantled as Gregor's father quickly retake the economic reins. The shift in power from Gregor to his father shows the volatility of the father-son conflict, as each is perpetually seeking to either maintain their current power or take power from the other.

The female members of the household play an important part in the power struggle between the men. When Gregor is human, he is rather well-liked by his sister, and during the early stages of his metamorphosis receives a level of sympathy from his mother and sister as they

feed him and clean his room. This shows Gregor had a level of emotional control over the women of the family, which acts as a social buffer to prevent his father from seizing power. The father figure is able to make more and more headway into Gregor's former position of power as his female relatives start becoming more and more disdainful of Gregor, partially because Gregor no longer has their support. Of note is that their increasing level of scorn for the son is directly tied to his losing the ability to control them economically. These familial dynamics are presented by Kafka to show how patriarchs must manipulate the family members not involved in the patriarchal struggle in order to maintain a social pressure that further secures their power.

The third means by which the father-son conflict manifests in the story is through the direct physical abuse of Gregor by his father. Multiple times in the story, Gregor's father attacks Gregor when the son attempts to leave the confines of his room. Physical power here is clearly a literal manifestation of patriarchal power. By physically subjugating Gregor, the father offers a solid display of being in charge to the family's females, which helps to put them under his wing. The physical condition of Gregor's father can actually be observed bettering over the course of the story as Gregor's worsens, which symbolizes the father draining power from the son. As physical ability is directly tied to economic ability in the story, Gregor's father's capability to literally cripple Gregor also shows his ability to destroy him as an economic entity, destroying also his ability to hold power and re-securing the father's position at the patriarch.

The patriarchal struggle between Gregor and his father in *The Metamorphosis* is used by Kafka to demonstrate the dependence of patriarchal power on controlling others economically, socially, and physically. Through this, Kafka makes not only a point about a father and his son, but the plight of all men locked in this power structure as a whole.