

Carroll Community College

Art & Literary

Magazine

Rising from
the Ashes

PUZZLES,
GAMES
AND
PRIZES
(PG 12)

DR. DAVIDA
ANDERSON AND
DR MELODY MOORE
GIVE GUIDANCE AND
INSIGHT ON SEXUAL
VIOLENCE (PG 19)

Trigger
Warning!
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Mission Statement

We created this collection of artists' dazzling masterpieces and writers' grand manuscripts and poetry to show the talent in this community and what things they can accomplish. This was made for you.

ALM 2022's Fall issue Theme "Rising from the Ashes" is about many things. It is about overcoming adversity, pulling through the tough times, achieving your dream, and fighting against a constant struggle. With this message, please keep this in mind, such things can include an unimaginable amount of trauma and hardships. Please respect the struggle to get here and the courage it takes to talk about what they went through.

A Boy Called Jack

By Cassidy Borcheding

A warm
connecticut day
The crimson lake lit
by the sun

The home of one
on candlelight lane
A street of
deserted memories

A boy called jack
Of seymour

His cheeks the
color of carmine
From too many
days spent outside



As he blows out
twenty-three
candles
On a sunny topaz
evening

The call of a red
finch
Signals for what is
coming

The clouds begin to
darken
A storm approaches

Even as it continues
to pour
The lanterns stay lit

As the day comes to
a close
He sits alone again

The Adventurer

By Samantha Donnlinger



GATEWAY TOWER

BY RACHEL KNAPP

Your Amidst a time of suffering, take care not to succumb to the loathing of existence. If you have the courage to look, you will find an escape. Fix your gaze towards the deep woods. Find the opening between the two birch trees, which is vital to the start of your journey. The opening will lead you down a steep hill; you cannot find the stone path any other way. The passage seems tumultuous and dangerous, but do not lose sight of your goal.

You will come across the stone path which will change direction; continue to follow it up the abrupt incline. And do not worry, for the stones will turn to stairs. The steepest portion of the hill will force you to use your hands, so watch out for the thorn bushes and branches. The thorns will cut you and pull blood from your skin- expect to be pricked and blistered. The thorns will cut you and pull blood from your skin- expect to be pricked and blistered. Your hands and legs will burn.

GATEWAY TOWER

CONUNITED

Your lungs will ache with exhaustion. Is the pain of change any worse than the pain of complacency?

Anguished and exhausted, you will find your destination. There before you, an old watch tower. The tower waits for you in desolation. Regardless of your exhaustion, do not forget to admire the tower's beauty. Moss, vine, and lush foliage cover the old stone, vitalizing the tower in nature and livelihood.

Do not fear the darkness inside, for sunlight cannot reach past foliage and stone. Within the dark, there is a staircase. Ascend the staircase, careful not to stumble. At the top, you will find a room with a clean slab of stone to sit on and an open window. There before you, rests your getaway. What is it you see?



GATEWAY TOWER CONTINUED

**Deep, quiet woodland?
Distant constellations:
stars or city lights?
Miles of crashing
waves against the
coast? Feel the breeze
against your hot skin.
Feel the sunlight's
revitalizing glory, or if
you prefer,**

**You may scream if you
must, nobody will hear
you. You may let your
vision blur from tears,
nobody will judge you.
Finally, you are free.**

**Allow the peace to
engulf your body and
soul. Familiarize yourself
with the sole sensations
of rest, silence, peace,
and calmness. When you
are ready, you may
leave.**

**WHEN YOU ARE READY, YOU MAY LEAVE. YOUR GETAWAY TOWER
WILL FOREVER EXIST, BUT FINDING IT IS ONLY UP TO YOU.**

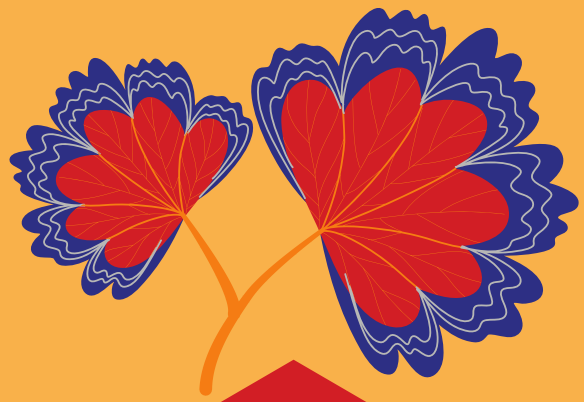
**the moonlight's
illuminating essence.
What do you hear? Bird
songs or breeze whispers
or wave crashes? Do you
recognize the silence?**

**Your getaway tower will
forever exist, but finding
it is only up to you. We
tend to consciously
familiarize ourselves
with deep rooted pain.**

GATEWAY TOWER CONTINUED

**Time after time again we
revert to the comfortable
face of agony.**

**The calm under the bridge
is just as appealing as the
rain itself, but only if we
have the courage to find
that bridge. Although
courage leads to change
and change leads to fear,
ending the cycle is
essential to bettering our
lives. We need to
familiarize ourselves with
rest, silence, peace, and
calmness. We need a
getaway.**



**Find your Gate
Tower here at
Carroll, join any
number of ours
clubs or sports to
find a system of
support during this
crazy time of our
lives.**



LOST AND FOUND

BY JULIE DAY

**A woman ran away at the age
of 18 with her boyfriend.**

**To look for adventure in places
they never looked, to travel to
faraway places.**

**In her place she left a note for
her parents telling them
she needed to leave home to
find something.**

**Days, months passed not a
single word from their
runaway daughter.**

**They had begun to lose hope
they would never see her again
Two days after the anniversary
of her leaving was there a
knock on the door.**

**It was the daughter with
rumpled hair and dirty
clothes and a deep tan.
It looked as if she had never
left.**

**After she ate, washed and
clothed herself.
Only then did her parents ask
what happened.**

**She said, she had left with
her boyfriend backpacking
the country.**

**Working odd jobs, living out
of dinky motels.**

**Her boyfriend had left after
three months after their
adventure had started,
saying he could not take it
anymore.**

**She continued, she still had
not found what she was
looking for.**



LOST AND FOUND CONTINUED

**She set out to look for
what she had lost
and was not sure if she
would find it again.
She was looking for
herself,
something that'd been
missing for some time**

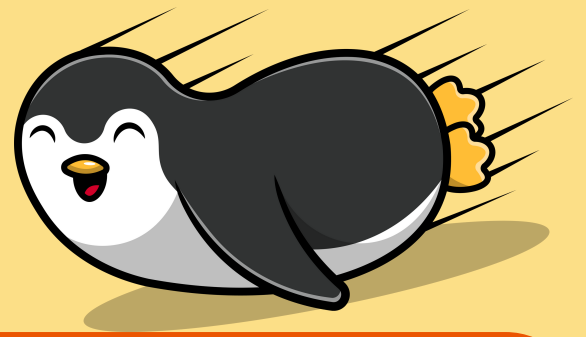
**It was several months
after she figured it out.
What she was missing
was not herself.**

**It was never missing,
just buried beneath the
ruble of her dreams.**

**WHAT SHE
WAS MISSING
WAS NOT
HERSELF.
IT WAS
NEVER
MISSING, JUST
BURIED
BENEATH
THE RUBLE
OF HER
DREAMS.**



GAMES AND PUZZLES



Looked through our Magazine?

Did you notice a familiar face?

That's Winston!

ALM's club ambassador. Winston will appear several times in the issue. Count how many times Winston shows up (one penguin per page). Enter this number to get a chance to win 5 mystery books especially chosen for our issue's theme and a plushie cousin to Winston!

To enter to win email jday4@carrollcc.edu or our dropbox with the correct #.

From now to March 30th.

Don't forget to join our instagram to be updated of the winners!

Rise from the Ashes

Word Search

Y P

N Y

Q R

E H E X

X M S W V R L C V Z

T F K Q I N F E R N O S F E Y

F I R E S X P L O S I O N H S D K J

N R X C C Q P J F L U G N E N Z H

Y A G E L O Z J G I F I E R Y V T

F G S U I L R A Y R A I D N E C N I

N Z A I H I T R C R Q C R F F R R P Y

Y O U W S I S A L H O R I A I M I V I H D

A S H M K O N H B N L O L O R E S C B

U E T Y J L O T N E E F F L A N E h E G X T E X P S X H

T M C I O K K Q A S S L L E A T C F B E N G U L F C I C

E R H W I L A T R A S Z E E I W F I N V

R B T R P G L U D U M D E Y R W L G R N

E J A S R H A E B R X M Y H D Q A N U

T M A E V O M T V T O A U T R M I B

L T V R D O E B S E M B E R P E T

I C N D C W S N G N O R D L V I E

O C R S T A R B I N O L X Q E B Q

N Y B L A Z E T X R E T I N G I

H N J N Z M S O R N

Z S M X

A I

F E

F Q

Word List

- DESTROY
- ENGULF
- EXPLOSION
- FAWKES
- FIERY
- FIRE
- FIREBIRD
- FLAME
- IGNITE
- INFERNO
- ABLAZE
- RISE
- BLAZE
- BURN
- COMBUS
- PYRE
- SCORCH
- SMOKE
- STAR
- ASH

Complete the word search and you may win a 25\$ gift card to Carroll's bookstore.

To be entered to win, scan or take a picture of the completed word search. Sending it as an attachment in an email to jday4@outlook.com.

Or place in our dropbox on March 14
9:30am-11am.

In front of the Canteen.

Last day to enter March 30th.

Wanna hear more from us?

Join us on instagram @ccc._alm and stay up to date with our events and the crazy shenngeins Winston gets into.



Winter Scene

by Madeline Blattau



TRIGGER WARNING !!

**In the following works in this issue,
there are some scenes and actions that
can be distressing and triggering to
some of our readers.**

**These include sexual harrassment,
stalking, domestic violence, mental
health crises, and
animal cruelty.**

**To raise awareness of all of these circumstances
Dr. DaVida Anderson Director of Student Care
and Integrity and
Dr. Melody Moore give insight and information
on how to see the signs and seek help.**

A Guide to Navigating Sexual Assault and Harassment

Title IX is a law put in place to stop discrimination in federally run and private schools, protecting students from falling victim to sexual discrimination in educational programs and activities.

Title IX is part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and is a federal law that states:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Title IX at Carroll Community College members of the Carroll Community College community, guests and visitors have the right to be free from all forms of gender and sex-based discrimination, which can include acts of sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

Sexual Misconduct is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by federal and state discrimination laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 2020 Title IX Regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. In addition, some forms of Sexual Misconduct violate the criminal laws of the State of Maryland.

Sexual Misconduct Includes

- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Exploitation
- Sexual Intimidation
- Sexual Assault
- Domestic Violence
- Dating Violence and Stalking

Who Needs to Report?

All “Responsible Employees”, including all instructional faculty and faculty chairs, coaches, athletic trainers, administrators, supervisors, campus security officers, staff, and other employees with a responsibility for student welfare, are required to report to the College Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator
Dr. Melody Moore,
(410) 386-8412
titleix@carrollcc.edu

Campus Security Authorities
Contact any Division Chair,
Director or Program Director.
Carroll Campus Police
(410) 386-8123

Why do I Need to Report?

- To ensure that the reporting party has access to all available resources.
- To help identify individuals displaying patterns of disturbing behavior.
- To identify and address any trends or systematic problems.
- To keep our campus safe.

What to say

- There are many community resources available to help you. Some resources are strictly confidential.
- I am required by law to connect you with the Title IX Coordinator, who will meet with you to help you ensure your safety and your physical and emotional well-being, direct you to resources, and explain your options if you want the College to take action.
- The Title IX Coordinator will keep your information private and will only share it with those who need to know. You have the right to choose to whom you will speak, what resources you will use, what you will say, and when you will say it.

What to Do

1. The person's health and safety should be your primary concern. If the person's safety is an immediate concern, contact Campus Police 410-386-8123 or call 911.

2.If someone tells you that he or she has experienced sexual misconduct including: sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, first offer them support. Listen and encourage them to seek help and counseling as soon as possible.

3.Report the incident to Title IX in accordance with the policy on the back of this card.

4.If there is any question about how to proceed after a conversation with someone who has experienced misconduct, call and consult with the Title IX coordinator, Dr. Melody Moore at 410-386-8412 or titleix@carrollcc.edu.

IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

What to Do:

A person who experiences sexual misconduct should consider the following immediate actions:

- Call the police, 911.
- Contact Campus Police 410-386-8123.

- Seek medical attention.
- Seek counseling.
- Report the situation to the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Moore @ 410-386-8412 or titleIX@carrollcc.edu.
- Contact a trained, experienced counselor.
- Contact parents, relatives, or close friends for support.
- You do not have to choose a course of action immediately, but consider preserving evidence in a paper bag in case you choose to pursue charges. Possible evidence might be physical (clothing, bedding, letters, etc.) or electronic (photos, emails, text messages, etc.).

What to Know:

- You set the pace.
- You have the right to choose to whom you will speak, what resources you will use, what you will say, and when you will say it.
- There are many community resources available to help you.
- It is your choice whether to name the other person(s).
- Your information will be kept private and only shared with those who need to know. We want to take care of you and keep you safe, and make sure others in the community are safe.
- Carroll Community College prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. When made aware of sexual misconduct, the College will take immediate action to eliminate the misconduct, prevent its reoccurrence, and address its effects.

On-Campus Resources

Carroll Campus Police

(410) 386-8123 | Room A137

Or Dial 8123 internally

Title IX Coordinator

(410) 386-8412 | TitleIX@carrollcc.edu

Confidential Reporting

If someone wishes an incident be kept confidential, contact off campus licensed counselors, clergy or one of the following. Verify confidential status before speaking.

Non-retaliation Policy

It is a violation of College policy to retaliate in any way against a student or employee because he/she raised allegations or was accused of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking.

Community Resources

Carroll County Domestic Violence Helpline
(443) 865-8031

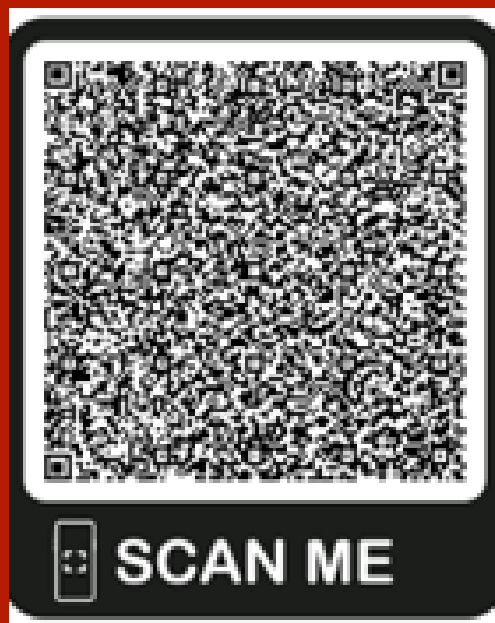
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program (SAFE)
(410) 876-6655
(410) 848-3000

Family + Children's Services of Central Maryland
(410) 876-1233

Rape Crisis Intervention Services of Carroll County
(410) 857-0900

Police
911 (non-confidential)

Caring for yourself and others is a part of how we protect each other and our mission. Empowering learners, Changing lives, Building Community is our mission statement at Carroll Community College. Students can empower themselves by knowing the resources that we offer here at Carroll, being aware of your surroundings, having a safety plan, protecting your integrity, and speaking up when you have a concern.



Check out the resources below and let us know if you have additional resources that will be helpful for our Carroll Community.

~Office of Student Care & Integrity

Heart

by Sean Owen

Let me pull this out
And rest it right here

Yeah
It's ugly
Grows heavy at times
But let me make something
better

This wretched thing
Has been presented to
queens
Who had it returned by
jesters with cheer

It's worn and torn
Stitched and patched
My God it's been destroyed
And a love welded it back

The poor thing was
dragged through Hell

It's been torched by a
fool

Whose intentions were
pure cruel

It was smashed by a
tyrant

It may take me years to
readmire it



Untouchable

By Anonymous

My dog is well-behaved
when she's wearing her
leash.

It's a symbol for her. Her
collar is a tie or a pearl
necklace, a reminder she's
at the office and to act like
her boss is watching.

Occasionally, my dog will
give a gentle tug, but she
will always sit if you ask,
always drop the stick when
directed. She is so eager to
test her listening skills, so
enthralled in the idea of
impressing you that she
could be a show dog when
she's wearing her leash.

In my room, I hear a
distant bark coming
from the woods. It
sounds like my dog's
call, if she were an echo
across the street, like
my neighbor is petsitting
for the night. I glance
out the window, but I'm
not concerned. My
sister is downstairs, and
she'll hear the howls
over Gilmore Girls. She
can handle it.

My phone is silent. I see
it light up as a text slips
through: help.

Oh fuck.

Untouchable continued

I find a leash, some treats, and stumble down the stairs. I rummage through our kitchen cabinet and fill an empty Pringles can with six coins. I don't put on a coat because it won't take long. I have a lab at 9 am tomorrow. This won't take long.

I follow the barks, drifting into cries now, out the door, past the moths fighting one another to get to the porch light. I walk halfway down the driveway, into the familiar crunch of the woods under my feet.

"See her tail," she says. Her glasses are fogged from her breath fighting against the cold air. She shines the light over my dog: the tail is erect, ears up, eyes slightly wild. Her dark fur is cascading in ripples. She's a golden retriever, mixed with just enough husky to confuse strangers on the street. I'm not surprised to see a possum cowering under the branch my dog is circling. He looks shy — bashful, almost. They're both growling, harmonizing in their united annoyance with the situation.

Untouchable Continued

The possum looks back at me, snagged between asking for help and warning me away.

“I don’t know what to do,” I tell him.

I take a step forward, but my dog stomps her front paws. The possum opens his mouth wide as if surprised by my display of incompetence. My dog is flirting with him. Moving forward and back, side to side.

“Should we leave?” I ask my sister.

“She’s too close to the road,” she replies. “I don’t want to leave her by the cars.”

As we deliberate, my dog makes a decision and dashes under a log and around a tree. I shake the Pringles can hard, and the money pings around with a fierce and tinny rattle. It works for a second. My dog blinks; her fixation is broken. But I’m not confident enough to reach for her collar.

It happens fast. Too fast for my indecisive mind to follow. Unexpected.

The first time I felt this pang, I was walking into a diner beside my father and brother. I heard a strange string of comments from across the booths and tables.

Untouchable Continued

Something about my chest and waist. I remember looking up with smugness.

Wait until my dad gets a hold of you. I remember a tingling silence, ears scanning for my dad's voice like the jukebox switching vinyl. I remember the flickering yellow lights. A cold cup of coffee in a wrinkled hand. His eyes were looking my 10-year-old body up and down, the things he wanted to do flashing across his lips. An awkward nod, four averted eyes, a why are you upset. A red face and a broken promise to keep me safe.

Tears are rolling down my cheeks now. My sister says I blush right before I cry. "Don't watch," she whispers. The possum is hanging from my dog's mouth. He's a flash of a winter coat's pocket-worth of fur, a bundle of whiskers, and a defeated acceptance of fate. My dog's tail is whirring, her paws practically prancing down the side of the hill. I dropped the Pringles can somewhere back there. Is it wrong if I litter by accident? Is it still harmful if I meant to fix it but forgot? I lock eyes with my dog.

Untouchable Continued

She's staring directly at me. She seems to be saying, I am going to kill it. She seems to be enjoying it. She shakes him hard. My hands shook, too.

Walking home because I walked so fast, I missed the subway stop.

Walking home and never wanting to stop.

Walking home. God. Why wouldn't he stop. My dog is still whipping

She shakes him hard. My hands shook too. Lying in a strange boy's living room, in a apartment, in a city, I didn't know yet.

Lying in a strange boy's living room, in an apartment, in a city I didn't yet know. He worked in I.T. but couldn't get his TV to play Netflix. His breath was all over my body. Me, asking to use a condom, him, pretending he didn't hear. That's what I want, I said.

and dancing around. The possum looks like one of her stuffed toys she carries to Mom in and out of the kitchen. In and out. I stumble down the hill after her, my sister steady behind me.

Untouchable Continued

If you're not allowed to play with dolls, what do you play with instead? She thinks it's a game, like when I used to throw sticks across the yard, and she would bring them back to me. She lunges again, like a cobra, a snake, sinking her fangs into the flesh she doesn't want to eat but merely experience on her lips. The possum rolls into a pile of brush. Frozen. Too scared to play dead. Too dead to stand up again.

Glued in place.

I was stuck once, on the train. I couldn't stand up from the seat. . He followed me from class. He likes my hair.

He wants my eyes. He likes my ass. Why won't I smile? This is because I smeared on eyeliner. Could he possibly know I'm wearing lacy underwear? He said he likes the way my legs move. He said he watches me in yoga class, wants to go down on me in the alley out back. I never went back.

My dog is on the road now, and my sister and I come out of the woods behind her. The four of us are standing still, catching our breath. My hand tightens on the leash. I want to grab her, but she seems to yell. Not with her lungs or throat, but her eyes.

Untouchable Continued

A snarl. A growl. She snaps at my ankles and my dad's patched-up loafers I slipped on. I don't feel scared. I feel ashamed.

She sees through my layers of poise. She knows I won't do it. I lost my nerve. I feel ashamed. I really like you, the boy at the bar said. I'm so sorry, I replied. I fiddled with my sleeve. I didn't think this was a date. Apologizing for how I am perceived, for misinterpreting how I am perceiving. What a bad feminist it makes me. What a bad feminist it makes me.

It makes me want to scream. He orders another round. He leans into me. I'm so sorry, but this is not a date. An hour later, he's falling over, his breath a mixture of tequila and vomit. A girl asked if I knew him. Does he have someone to take him home? I asked for his phone. It takes me three minutes to get the passcode from his slurred lips. He said he knows I'm not his date. He still tried to kiss me as I closed the Uber door. I'm sure he looks better when he's not passed-out drunk in the backseat.

Untouchable Continued

I'm sure I look better when
I'm not crying on the
sidewalk.

We look at the animal on
the ground, wrangled, still
breathing, wishing it
weren't. There's a river of
wine pouring out of his
side, his fur matted with
slobber and mud. I can fix
it. I can fix this. Even my
sister isn't fazed. She's
holding a stick over the
carcass so my dog can't
attack it again. She's firm
with the natural inclination
to save something, even
something lost. I step
forward with the leash.
"I wish it weren't so short,"
I say.

Sometimes I like short.
But I can't find my debit
card. I lost it in Brooklyn
because I sank to the
elevator floor when my
bones were too tattered
to hold me up. My skirt
was short, and it fell out
of my pocket. I was
dancing, and it was fun,
and I liked the attention
but fuck. My skirt was
way too short. He said
that's why he squeezed
my thigh—icy fingertips
along my knee. I cut my
bangs too short once.
3am and drunk was the
best haircut I ever gave
myself. He said I looked
like Taylor Swift, with my
bangs cut short like that.
I think he forgot my
name.

Untouchable Continued

He called me Taylor the rest of the night. He took a picture to send his friends, and he touched my thigh, and he called me Taylor, and he kept buying me drinks, and he asked to kiss me but didn't wait for my answer, and I'm sure my debit card fell out of my pocket. My skirt was just — too short.

My sister is still holding the stick, moving it up and down, back and forth. "I'm pretty good at this," she says. My dog bares her teeth at me. She knows it's my fault. It feels like she's yelling my name.

And I hear it in the basement, in the laundry room, over the dryer's gentle hum. I hear my dad shouting it upstairs and listing what I did wrong while cleaning the kitchen. You need to earn it, he says. Approval. Love. Autonomy? I can't remember. I'm folding the laundry more slowly than I need to. I don't care if all the T-shirts are ironed, I don't care if the napkins are pressed, but my feet won't carry me up the stairs. Not until his last bottle is drunk, and he's asleep on the couch. He'll feel bad in the morning. He won't remember why.

Untouchable Continued the shadows swirling at

A car approaches us
on the road. My sister
and I crouch down as
the headlights pass
over our bodies, the
light revealing too
much of us,



I shake it off just as I
shake off the
constant hands,
straying and
searching like an
unholy version of
patty-cake, like I
shake my head at the
men who holler
guarantees on the
sidewalks



30mph.

As we stand, my dog
grabs the possum one last
time. She flings it into my
leg by miscalculation. I
shake the bloody fur from
my sweatpants.

I shake it off just as I
shake off the constant
hands, straying and
searching like an unholy
version of patty-cake, like
I shake my head at the
men who holler
guarantees on the
sidewalks, like my
shoulders shake, crying in
the shower because it's
the only time I won't be
seen.

Untouchable Countined

Shaking in the dark, so
helpless I can barely
breathe, the noose of
perception digging into
my skin at all angles. I
have dreams I'm being
choked. Generic hands
around my neck, my
throat burning with the
pressure of the one task it
knows it cannot
complete. The words are
stuck and tangled and
clawing their way out of
my chest until it's raw and
worn and tired.
I'm tired. I have a bio lab
tomorrow.

The possum's body seems
to disappear, sinking into
the shadows and the
dried leaves. ?

Why didn't he run when
he had the chance? Why
didn't he fight? He lay
there, playing dead,
holding still, waiting for it
to be over, until it was
too late to say no. My
dog is bored now.

I hand my sister the
leash. My dog could be a
show dog if she wore her
leash. Her eyes dance
with mine as my sister
slips the loop over her
head and tosses me the
handle. I tighten it just
enough so I have control.



Hurricane

By Samantha Donlinnger

It felt like living in a hurricane. I never knew how long the wind and the rain would stay. I never knew how long he was going to stay. As soon as the sun would peak through the clouds, as soon as I stepped out of my porch and could take a deep breath, my phone would ring. The clouds would rumble. The sky would go dark — black. There was something exciting about the chaos. Something uncertain about the way in which the blaze of the droplets would ruin my clothes.

I would dance in the rain sometimes. Sometimes it felt good to be soaked in the wonder of it all, to be so out of control that nothing could stop your heart from beating or your laugh from escaping. I hate cleaning up. I hate the sticks that land in my yard after the storm. I hate the glass I have to sweep under the rug and the broken shingles someone needs to fix. Someone needs to fix this. Someone should really fix this.

Hurricane Continued
He bought me a red umbrella the day he said goodbye. As if the tiny collection of nylon and metal could withstand the tornado his butterfly wings unleashed on my life.

the puddles overflowed, and the bus lanes flooded. The sun came out eventually. At that point, there was nothing left. All we saw was a wreckage of house frames and fallen trees, an empty silence, an eerie late morning,

As if the tiny collection of nylon and metal could withstand the tornado his butterfly wings unleashed on my life.

As if the little thing could protect me from the flying houses and the cars that got overturned in his wake, as if I could hold on tight enough, as if my fingers were strong enough, to hold it all together once the rain began to pour and .

and a broken umbrella that a girl just couldn't let go.



Don't Forget To Breathe

By Samantha Dondlinger

and a broken umbrella that a
girl just couldn't let go
The stares leave my skin
feeling throttled

His eyes
Follow me down the subway
tracks
Tracking the way I walk
along the platform, up the
stairs
across the street
and down my block

The whistles ring in my ears
never knowing
if they're coming from ahead
or behind
never knowing if the next
turn I take
will drive me into someone's
leeching arms

His hand
holding a whisky sour
laughing in the run-down
bar
with green paint peeling
off
the window shutters
and dim lights
making it impossible
to remember what you
think you saw
last night.

His hand
on my thigh like a
stubborn spider
his icy fingers
pierce my back
down my spine
like a blunt dagger
tracing its prey

Don't Forget to Breathe Continued

feeling its pulse before it
decides

if this is the one
it wants to ruin tonight

He knows my name
because he asked around

He knows my name
I didn't have the chance
to introduce myself


His fist
swings at me when I'm on
the sidewalk
when I'm trying to call a
taxi.

The yellow car drives past
us standing in the pool of
streetlights.

My face is a thunderstorm
of cherry red rain
the car drives past
anyways.

I didn't see it coming
I could have put my hand
out.

I'm looking for all the signs
and all the traffic lights
from every alley, down
every sidewalk
and trying to read them
to decide if I can cross.
Trying to read every one
all the time
all at once.



***MY FACE IS A
THUNDERSTORM
OF CHERRY RED RAIN
THAT THE CAR DRIVES
PAST ANYWAYS.***

DON'T FORGET TO BREATHE CONTIUNED

The thing that keeps us alive
is what I always forget
when I'm scared
holding my breath
to stay quiet
holding my breath
in case I disappear
when I exhale.



JUST
breathe

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