



Journeying Through the Mind

PGHS Literary Magazine
Spring 2024

Journeying Through the Mind

The Hard Part About Letting Go

Anonymous

There's a hard part about letting go
When you've held on for so long
When you pictured yourself somewhere
And the sudden shocking realization that you will never get there
Shakes you to your core
When that ground beneath you disappears
And you just know in the fiber of your being that everything is not all right
When your dream was at the tips of your fingers
And it gut wrenchingly flies away
There's that bittersweet tang in your chest
Right as you unclench your fists to let go
And yes that heavy weight is gone
But in its place lies a gaping hole of the person you were
See the hard part about letting go
Isn't the sour disappointment coating your tongue
It isn't the bile that rises up your throat
It's the pain of losing what never was
It's the pain of losing what could have been



“Zeitoun” by Helen Hanalla

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Alchemist

Hailie Atkinson

Her shadow bleeds ink onto canvas, to forge words of mosaic empires.
Each letter, like stepping stones, concocting connections out of crumbs.
Building brick by brick, she loses the world in the extravagant page of fire.

A hideous beast, unrefined obscuration of her unfiltered mind transpires.
Undoubtedly enraging precedent passes penment with furious qualms.
But her shadow bleeds—ink spilling onto canvas, dreaming of mosaic empires.

Eraser in hand, she strikes and tames any misspoken strokes uninspired.
The creature alchemizes, actualizing its arterial awakening, refusing to calm.
Building beat by beat, the canvas becomes the world, infusing like fire.

And soon she cannot differentiate the sky from the cerulean ink she'd acquired.
Her frantic fingers gush and ooze landscapes with the swipe of her palms.
Indeed, her shadow bleeds ink onto canvas, erecting mosaic empires.

The scribbler renounces her creation, dissatisfaction sparking the papers on fire.
Growing with each flame, her shadow, amused, concludes comically more to come.
Burning page by page, she too, becomes lost in the vehement flaming gyre.

When the world becomes nothing but charcoal, the remaining ashes conspire.
The essence of her arbitrary alphabet, compound, and at last, succumb.
Her shadow bled ink onto canvas, to forge worlds of mosaic empires.
Letter by letter, she regains herself in the residual ashes of her fire.

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dishes

Maram Haddad

I want to burn my hands,
under the hot sink water where they
move freely and carelessly,
unknowing of their delay.
They've done this before many times,
it's not something new.

My fingers have become pruny,
and my nails are now thin,
the water finds a home everywhere:
splish, splash, splosh;
except for the sink.

Watch the drain clog with muck,
my hands digging to find gold
in the disposal that's
made to cut my skin
and shine my bones clean.

And only until my hands are stained red
shaking from scorching heat,
only then is this task complete,
though, I am not allowed to feel tired.

So let me burn my hands,
to feel heat for a minute,
to cry for my skin-ridden fingers,
as I prepare for womanhood.
Just as my mother did



“Confections Delight”
by Mauna Mohammadi



“Blueberry Tart” by Mauna Mohammadi

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Drowning in Life

Anonymous

Sometimes I feel like I'm drowning
It started with a single drop of water
Which suddenly became a fierce storm with claps of thunder
Still I put on my rain boots and opened my umbrella
Still I carried on
Until the ground beneath me slowly became overtaken by a flood
And soon I began swimming
But one can only swim for so long before they get tired
That's when I started to drown
Drowning in the countless things that I needed to accomplish
Drowning in an ocean that only ever seemed to get larger
Struggling to keep my head up
With only the sheer hope and desperation that the shore was near
Promising myself if I could just make it past this wave it would be enough
But it was never enough and the waves beat back stronger each time
I wondered if I could make it
But it turns out I couldn't
And the ocean overtook me
Yet I was still alive



“Life is a beautiful magnificent thing even to a jellyfish.’ - Charlie Chaplin” by Sara Pisano

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Burning Skies Eglantine OEA
Nathaniel Oberreuter-Rodi

Published in The New Dawn Sci-fi stories
magazine Volume 34, in August 2547

<Urgent>

//All Sectors Gate Transmission//
//unclassified - all read//

Instantaneous transfer through FTL initiation gate Alpha 12 of UNCC CSV27 Class medium freighter Eglantine has not arrived through FTL receiving gate Iota 5. Report immediately upon sighting of Eglantine. Sent: 0.00 ms of expected arrival (OEA)

Hailing remaining portion of hull transfer unsuccessful at initiating gate. Eglantine still in burn.

Update: 5s OEA

Rescue initiated Update: 10s OEA

Anomalies reported as follows:

Initial findings:

- Creation of FTL pinpoint drive gate:
 - Drone instantaneously transferred between gates Alpha 1 and Beta 1 (similarly to walking through a door) upon outside observation
 - Drone footage upon multiple travels showed the drone experienced a minimum transit delay (TD) of 5 seconds up to a maximum recorded TD of 2 minutes;

with the average being around 20 seconds. Acceptable Range (AR) created 0.05s - 2m GREEN; 2m - 5m YELLOW; 5m - 8m ORANGE; <0.05s or >8+m RED

- Scientific research vessel Phoenix reported electrical surge detected during transfer from initiation gate Gamma 2 to receiving gate Epsilon 5. No other anomalies detected. Transfer completed 0.00ms. TD 2 minutes. Flagged NULL Acceptable Range (AR) GREEN. Received: 10 minutes prior to Eglantine transfer initiation
- UNCCIN Military Naval Vessel Midway Class Heavy Cruiser Roosevelt reported railgun charge detected during transfer from initiation gate Foxtrot 4 to receiving gate Echo 8. Magnetic rails of railgun B charging without Fire Control System (FCS) or crew input detected. No other anomalies detected. Transfer completed 0.00ms. TD 2.5 minutes. TD Flagged OUT Of Acceptable Range (AR) - YELLOW. Received: 8 minutes prior to Eglantine transfer initiation.
- UNCC Passenger Liner Celebration reported gravitational anomaly of the centrifugal wheel during transfer from initiation gate Theta 12 to receiving gate Nu 7. The mechanism unexpectedly came to a full stop and reversed rotation without crew initialization. Minor injuries recorded. Safety computer overrode and was able to correct the issue. Transfer completed 0.00ms. TD 6 minutes. TD Flagged OUT Of Acceptable Range (AR) - ORANGE. Received: 4 minutes prior to Eglantine transfer initiation.

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Source of anomaly and mechanical failure unknown as of 0.00ms OEA
- MERCK Private Corporate Vessel Pantera crew 10/ passengers 25 reported vibrational anomaly during transfer from initiation gate Rho 5 to receiving gate Upsilon 32. Sounds could be heard and vibrations could be felt throughout the Pantera. Sounds were similar to speech of unknown origin. All 35 on board experienced similar sensations and auditory input. Microphones did not pick up auditory anomalies, vibrations were recorded on sensors. Transfer completed 0.00ms. TD 8 minutes 7 seconds. TD Flagged OUT Of Acceptable Range (AR) - RED.

DUE TO (AR) - RED ALL STOP ON INITIATION TRANSFERS ALL GATES

Received: 0.00 ms prior to Eglantine transfer initiation

- ALL Stop not received prior to Eglantine transfer initiation

<Urgent>

//All Sectors Gate Transmission//
//CLASSIFIED GATE TRANSFER - ALL KNOWN TRANSFER GATES// initiate individual send
//unclassified - all read//

ALL STOP ON INITIATION TRANSFER - ALL GATES

Eglantine rescue unsuccessful. Unable to hail or make physical contact with vessel. Eglantine STILL IN BURN. Update: 5m OEA

BE AWARE Eglantine - Course Unknown - Collision Course Unknown

CLEAR TRANSFER AREA - ALL GATES

//CLASSIFIED GATE TRANSFER - ALL KNOWN TRANSFER GATES// initiate individual send {{|Eglantine| deny entry|}}

Update: 5m OEA

<URGENT>

//ALL SECTORS GATE TRANSMISSION//
//CLASSIFIED GATE TRANSFER - ALL KNOWN TRANSFER GATES// initiate individual send
//unclassified - all read//

CONTINUE ALL STOP ON INITIATION TRANSFER - ALL GATES

Prep Drones for safety evaluation of gate transfers at OEA 15m

Initialize Safety Drones all gates pattern Alpha-Iota-12-5.

//CLASSIFIED GATE TRANSFER - ALL KNOWN TRANSFER GATES// initiate drone protocol {{|BROKEN ARROW 2| OEA 15m|}}

Update: 5m OEA

<URGENT>

//ALL SECTORS GATE TRANSMISSION//
//CLASSIFIED GATE TRANSFER - ALL

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<URGENT>

//ALL SECTORS GATE TRANSMISSION//

//CLASSIFIED GATE TRANSFER - ALL KNOWN TRANSFER GATES// initiate individual send

//unclassified - all read//

CONTINUE ALL STOP ON INITIATION TRANSFER - ALL GATES

Drone safety evaluation completed. Transit anomaly - all drones transfer completed 5s. No anomalies found in transit area. Unmanned drones - unable to confirm auditory anomaly. No report of sighting of Eglantine in transfer OEA 15m 5s. Transfer completed 5s. TC Flagged OUT of Acceptable Range. (AR) - RED. TD range 5s - 2m on all drones. (AR) - GREEN.

Eglantine transfer incomplete OEA 15m 5s

Report any sightings of Eglantine

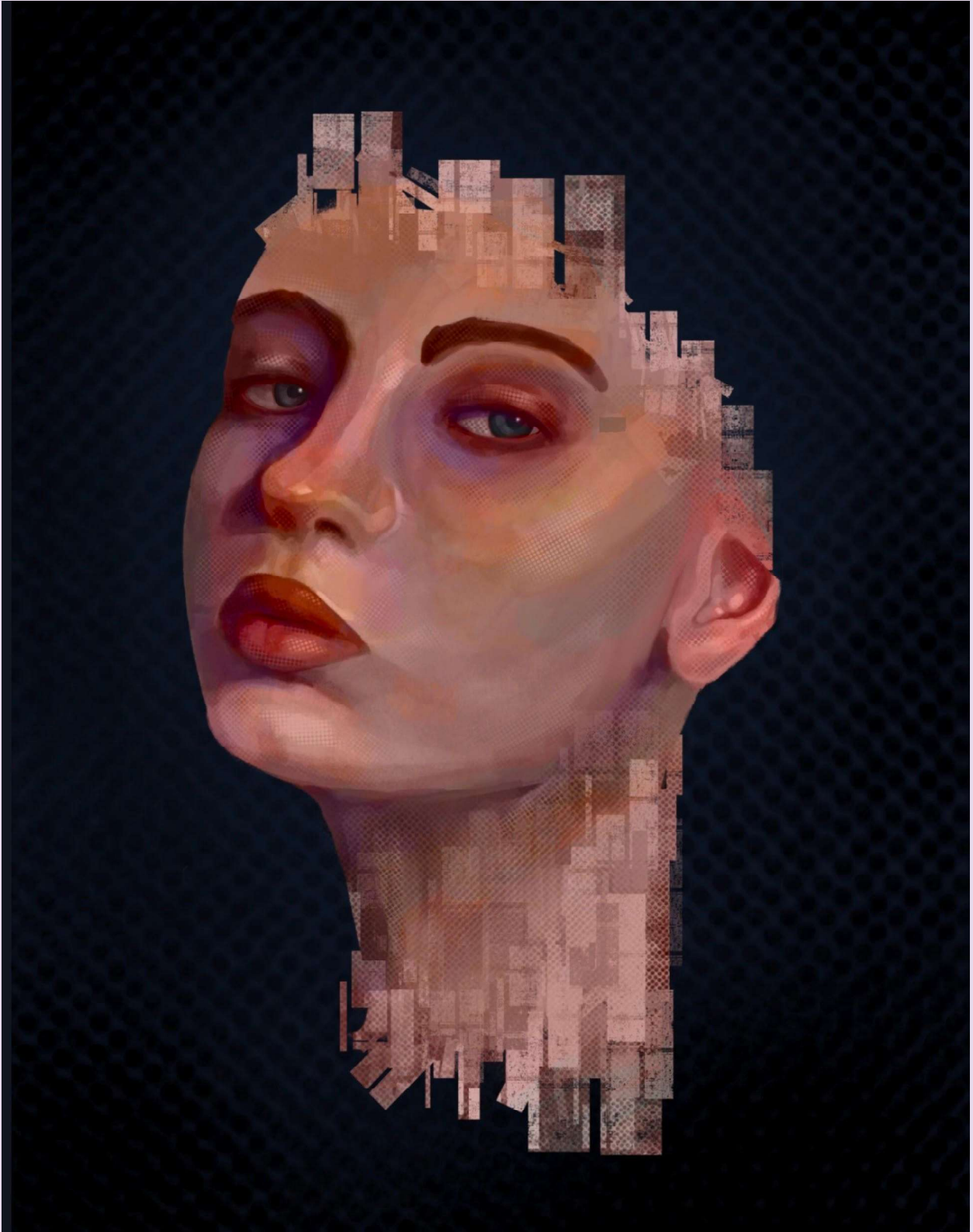
Sighting of hull of unknown ship at receiving gate Iota 5 Update: OEA 32m

Unknown ship identified as missing vessel Eglantine. Hull damage reported - deformation. No evidence of hull integrity lost. Search completed. TD Unknown. Rescue initiated. Update: 37m OEA



“Kaleidoscope” by Helen Hanalla

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“Prosopagnosia” by Charlotte Deegan

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on the tv
Maram Haddad

Father Daughter Dance
Anonymous

the man lives in a prison
where he is fed with
gold and silver—abundance—
chalking him up
with substances,

making him more susceptible,
to mankind's false reality of
hope.

he sits on satin bedsheets,
and is washed intricately,
because he cannot bear to
move a single inch of his
body.

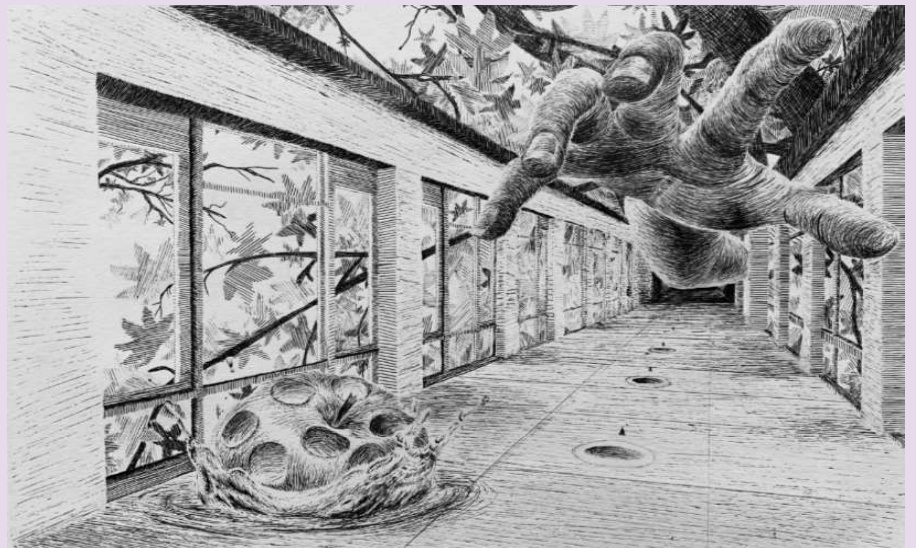
when his time is up,
he will be unable to walk
to the pixels of *real* life,
and will be stuck in
his imaginary world,
where he is the only
solution to all of his
problems.

Father, I am what you made me.
I heed your every beck and call.
While you, with your sword and shield,
shatter my glass walls.

I heed your every beck and call
even in your absence.
But, I wish to shatter glass walls
and destroy the same you can.

So, in your absence,
I strive for more than me,
to destroy the same you can,
and become what you could never be.

I strive for more than me
until you can finally hear me call,
“Father, I am what you made me.
I am your daughter after all.”



“Privacy Please” by Leah Grief

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Medusa
Hailie Atkinson

Bright, bold eyes and twisting crowns of silk
forced 'neath the hissing world of man,
amongst women without word—
where lust: oh, ghastly sin,
punishes its prey.
Yet, it traps she
'neath crowns of
kinder
snakes.



“Death of the Forest” by Hailey Hahn

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S.H.I.N.E.: The Other Side of the Light [Excerpt from “Chapter Nine: Power Play”]
Emily Keller

There was a scuffling sound at the top of the stairs and Nolan and Aubri both turned to see what it was. The man that had restrained Aubri earlier was currently trying to apprehend Juliette. He had wrapped his arms around her from behind, pinning her forearms to her chest as she struggled feebly within his grip. Nolan started to run up the stairs to help her when someone appeared in the air behind Juliette, one leg outstretched as they twisted themselves through the air and brought their foot into the side of the man’s head. As the man fell to the side, releasing Juliette, and her savior straightened themselves up, Aubri saw the familiar red curls and felt her jaw drop, involuntarily. Maya appeared at Aubri’s side, a somewhat entranced-looking—and very exhausted—Mateo slightly behind her.

“Are you seeing what I’m seeing?” Aubri asked Maya.

“I am,” she replied, sounding as stupefied as Aubri felt, “I honestly would’ve been less surprised if I’d found out Juliette wanted to be a math major.”

“Looks like your friend is a Protector,” Mateo chimed in, weariness weighing his voice down.

Maya snorted, “I would love to see

Juliette’s face if we told her Frankie was her ‘protector.’”

“Protector as in that’s his Talent, right?” Aubri asked Mateo, who nodded his confirmation.

“Protection Talents specialize in healing and combat—some practice both in all of their forms. Others have specific specializations within either healing or combat,” Mateo explained.

“That’s sick,” Maya commented.

“Yeah, that’ll definitely be useful . . .” Aubri agreed, remembering what Ms. Bershaw had said about them all having the full breadth of their respective Talents.

“Well . . . it doesn’t really look like he needs help,” Nolan shrugged, continuing up the stairs with considerably less urgency. He barely made it a few steps before Aubri let out a startled yell as a dark figure off to the side of the staircase superhero-launched themselves up and tackled Nolan, sending them both tumbling off the opposite edge. Aubri ran around to the side they’d disappeared on, but was stopped short by the young guard that Mateo had thrown around the corner when he helped them escape the cell. He was clearly injured but he limped forward anyway to stand in front of Aubri and block her path.

Aubri stared at him, contemplating her next move. He was so young; and she couldn’t help wondering every time she looked at him if he was there of his own accord, and, if he was, if he truly understood

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why.

“You’re injured,” she began, deciding to take a somewhat-sympathetic approach—with a hint of a threat, “It would not be in your best interest to fight.”

“I’m no more injured than you,” he retorted, pointing to the arm she was still cradling against her stomach.

“Perhaps,” she agreed, “Except that I can still walk.”

“I’m fine. I can walk with a sprained knee,” he argued.

“Walk, I suppose,” she conceded, “But not fight. And I think we can both agree that a fight is unnecessary.”

“So you surrender?”

She smiled wryly, “No need to surrender if there’s never a fight.”

He furrowed his brow and scowled, “What do you mean?”

“Look, I don’t want to hurt you. But I’m getting over there one way or another.”

She’d been slowly inching forward and angling herself sideways as they spoke, hoping he wouldn’t notice the minute changes. Now she was half an arm’s length away from him and rotated ninety degrees.

“So, as cliché as it is, you have two options,” she continued, “What do you choose?”

He hesitated a beat. “I choose life,” he finally said, and she could see him set his jaw right before he swung his wrist into what would have been the side of her head had she not anticipated his move and

ducked. Straightening up, she blocked his next swing with the side of her arm and kicked him in his bad knee. He stumbled and cried out in pain, but she didn’t let herself hesitate. *He made his choice*, she told herself, *That’s not your fault. Focus on getting your team out of here safely.* So she swiped her leg through his ankles and sent him crashing to the floor, turning her back on him and rushing over to Nolan before he could recover.

She reached Nolan just as his attacker kicked him into the base of the staircase. She threw herself in front of him, putting her good arm up in front of her and yelling, “Wait!” as the man went to strike again. She managed to force herself not to close her eyes in fear, but she couldn’t stop herself from exhaling sharply in relief when there was no contact. She brought her arm down shakily and felt Nolan grab her forearm, gently but firmly. She turned to face him. There was a determined pain in his eyes.

“Aubri, what are you doing?” he murmured.

“It’s okay,” she promised, “We came in together and we’re all leaving together. Trust me.”

“Please be careful. This doesn’t need to be your fight.”

“It doesn’t need to be yours either.”

She smiled softly and she could see the regret flicker across his face, but he didn’t fight it any further.

Aubri turned back to the person who

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had ambushed Nolan. He had momentarily paused his attack but he looked ready to resume the fight. She knew she needed to find the right words quickly.

“Let us go,” she demanded, wishing she’d come up with something more tactful, “You already lost this battle. What will one fight do for you?”

His scowl deepened. She could tell he did not appreciate the challenge.

“I’m settling a score,” he replied roughly.

She didn’t know what he meant by that. Whose score could he be settling against Nolan? Then she noticed he was squaring up to her and she held his gaze.

“Then let’s settle it,” she finally said. She heard Nolan’s breath catch beside her. She found his hand and squeezed it, a silent promise, feeling her heart jump from multiple different adrenaline rushes. She slid her fingers out after a moment, feeling him resist her withdrawal, but she had a promise to keep to herself: they were all going to make it out.

“You and me?” his accent only added to his mocking tone, “You don’t even know what you can do.”

“Doesn’t that make me even more dangerous?” she countered.

“We’ll see . . .”

He drew his arms out beside him and before she could react he had brought his palms together in front of him, sending a burst of force into her chest. She hit the

earthen base of the staircase a few inches behind her. She gasped, but not from the impact. In fact, there was hardly an impact, as if the earth had softened to catch her. No, she gasped from the shock of the tidal wave of energy that had rushed over her when her hands made contact with the earth. As the energy sank into every drop of strength and consciousness she had, threatening to drown her, she felt the desperation to live kick in and she instinctively did the only thing she could think of to breach the surface: she sent the energy back into the earth.

She suddenly found she could breathe again, but there was still energy rushing in faster than she could release it. So she pushed against it harder, trying not only to send the energy back where it had come from but to resist the inflow altogether.

As she did, she felt a low rumble building in the earth, but she couldn’t tell if it was real or if only she could feel it. Then she turned her head to the left and realized simultaneously that she was no longer aware of the pain in her arm and that hair-line fractures in the earth were stretching out on either side of her, getting larger as they extended away from her fingertips. A moment later it hit her that *she* was doing that; *she* was causing the earth to split and shudder. Something told her it was dangerous to continue sending the energy back into the earth but she couldn’t bring herself to stop—it was the only thing keeping her

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only thing keeping her from succumbing to her own power. The longer she kept up the effort, though, the more time seemed to slow down around her as the surge of power dulled her senses. She became more aware of the blood rushing through her veins, her heart beating in her chest, the breath flowing through her lungs—at a fraction of their normal speed. The trembling of the earth intensified but Aubri was hardly aware.

In the next moment, she found herself on the steps of the staircase, trying to focus on what was in front of her after the shock of the transfer. Her vision swam in and out, slowly coming into focus on someone in front of her who appeared to be saying something. A moment later Nolan’s amber eyes came into focus and she heard the words, “We need to leave,” ringing around her head like a bird in a cage, desperately looking for an opening that wasn’t there. But she registered his next words—“You need to stop”—bringing her crashing back to reality. She finally noticed the dangerous shaking of the earth beneath her feet, the crumbling of the room around her from fissures in the walls that she knew hadn’t been there when they’d arrived. And when she tried to remember what had caused the change, she drew a blank. There was a blank. There was nothing but a frustrating darkness in her memory that did nothing to help her understand Nolan’s words.

She looked down at her arms, noticing he was gripping her forearms—desperately, she realized, fearfully—then back into his eyes. Her forehead crinkled with genuine confusion as she asked, “Stop what?” Then her knees buckled and her head spun and she collapsed into darkness.



“Indecisiveness” by Chloe Stevens

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The Thing About Kindness

Anonymous

Here's the thing about kindness
Kindness is like giving the universe a hundred dollar bill
And telling it to keep the change
You don't expect it back
But you keep your fingers crossed
In hopes it spreads and goes somewhere good
Because the thing about kindness is just that
A little bit of goodness and belief in it

when my lust runs out
Maram Haddad

when my lust runs out
love grows into me—a dying thirst,
my blood sickening for sweet,
until then i will crave nothing

but the hallowing voices
appreciating my selfish passions—
my self-served allowance.

I *deserved* this.



“Ghost of Candlelight” by
Hailey Hahn

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White Flag

Emily Keller

I am sitting in a library;
surrounded by books, yes,
but more importantly,
surrounded by worlds.

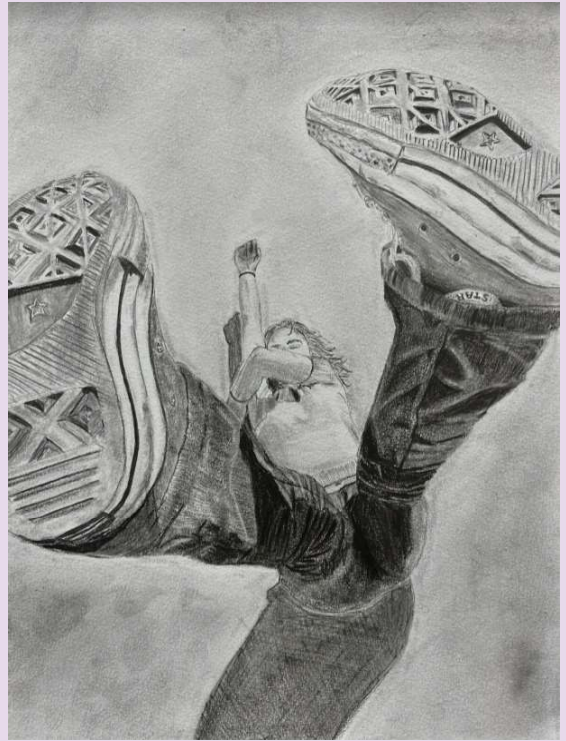
I am trying to concentrate on my work,
but they won't leave me alone.
I can hear their inscribed hums;
feel their invisible inky fingers reaching out,
trying to draw me away.

I am a writer;
but, first and foremost, I am a reader.
I mention this to say that I knew
words were powerful—
but not this powerful.

An unseen, unspoken word is as powerful
as its less discrete counterparts.
Just by me knowing it is there,
waiting to fulfill its purpose . . .
well, I concede that it already has.

Because I am bound to it—
like its innards to its spine—
I already know I will yield—
and it knows it, too.
It sits, there, waiting,
knowing it has won the battle

—just waiting for the white flag.



“Head Over Heels” by Sara Pisano



“Sara’s Gaze” by Chloe Stevens



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-
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-
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