







**A biannual
humanities
and arts
journal for
students
through
high school**

UNTITLED

Aidan Bradshaw

Blow your white glowing sands
Throughout these deserted, foreign lands.
Introduce your cold to my heat,
Where your pretty flakes fall clean and neat.
Show me your silvery ice
For it is this you sacrifice.
I long to see beauty glow
Within the freshly fallen snow.

Aidan Bradshaw loved man-
atees, pizza, Edgar Allen Poe,
Pokemon, and fantasy fiction.
He had written twelve chap-
ters of a fantasy novel. He was
excited and happy about school
for the first time in his life
when we started roam-school-
ing in September 2012. He had
three surgeries for congenital
heart defects when he was
young. He died suddenly in No-
vember 2012, two weeks before
his 15th birthday.

PETRICHOR

Meg Bradshaw

Dust and rain
Ethereal droplets
Dance,
Evanescent
Lilies murmur,
Lilt, and wither
Demure and articulate.
She's weeping,
Gently weeping.

Megan Bradshaw is in 7th grade at Whitney Young High School Academic Center. She loves Dr. Who, the Marvel Universe, the BBC's Sherlock, John and Hank Green, poetry, reading, architecture, and TED talks. She plays saxophone in advanced honors band, and is teaching herself piano as well.

ODE TO A LEMON

Zola A. Price

The story that I am about to tell is not of particular consequence or merit, though there is a possibility that perhaps the way it is perceived will provide some diversion.

I was making a birthday cake. My supervising parent had left for one reason or another, perhaps to obtain a necessary ingredient, or for some other irrelevancy. I was left in charge of the creation of the birthday cake. Now, I had made cakes before, and if I knew one thing, it was that in most cases the supplier of the recipe decided to add their own special twist, or simply magnify the flavor of said recipe. I had put in everything I needed except for one optional ingredient that complied with the description in the last sentence. "1 teaspoon lemon zest". Had I ever liked lemons very much? Not necessarily. Did I even care if the cake tasted like lemon? No. All I knew was that this one ingredient could be used for malicious practical-joking aspirations. But how would I know this? This lemon ingredient listed was not a mistake. And yet it was treated as such. Because my mother wanted a plain vanilla birthday cake. And once my project was realized, I was not prepared for the firestorm that ensued. She was truly angry. It was a short lived, but incredibly intense burst of outrage. And I was forgiven for my George Clooney-esque behavior. Afterward, even Ezra admitted that he preferred lemon in his birthday cake, but the most imperative outcome of this entire operation was that the lemon had now become a weapon. A weapon of defiance, a symbol of my own unique preferences. I remember being in a Spanish class many years ago, and my classmates and I were asked about our preferences for different kinds of fruit. Only one person in the class claimed to like lemons. I thought that was amazing. I didn't even know if there was a specific way to eat a lemon. And this same aura of mystery surrounding the lemon had been transferred unto me now, a newfound identity. I spread this persona around, and the lemon and I were one. The lemon was moody, quiet, sour, sporadic, mischievous. Is it still so incredibly important? The lemon is no longer all that I am. On the contrary, lemon is an taste, scent, and persona that will always stay with me.

UNTITLED

Liam Schumm



Liam Schumm is 12 years old and lives in the northern neighborhoods of the city of Chicago, IL, on the planet Earth in the Milky Way Galaxy. He spends his days designing, creating, building and repairing things, be they drawings, clay pots, Minecraftian worlds, computers and computer programs, or other various contraptions. Among his many interests are math, traditional Irish music, and bio-engineering. He is not a member of Anonymous.

CHECK: OTHER II

Aphra Price

When it came time for lights out, Beryl said good night and Liesel crawled into bed without another word, quietly awaiting the nightmare she knew would come, both in reality and in dreams. She tried to be optimistic for a moment, remembering her pleasant day, but she gave up quickly and slipped off to sleep, hoping all would go well.

She steeled herself for the memory. She was at home, doing math. The problem was difficult, but Liesel felt that as long as she was in the dream, she'd best try to figure it out. A man (her father?) bent over her, and tried to explain the problem.

"You have to square root the result. Have you forgotten that so fast? If you want to go to Ruby's house, you'll have to finish today's work," he said. She didn't know who Ruby was at first, but thinking a moment, she brought up the image of a girl with wild hair and large eyes. A friend, she thought. "Liesel? Liesel, please try to focus on your work," her father (she was now sure) said. She looked at her work, and completed the problem, as the room slowly faded away. When she woke up, she was extremely nonplussed.

"There wasn't a nightmare, only the memory," she thought, shrugging her shoulders. She hoped that she wouldn't have to deal with a waking nightmare, either. She got up, and got dressed. It was late, but Beryl (thankfully not John) was in the room. She looked up from her cash register.

"It's a weekend, Liesel," she said, smiling. Liesel nodded, and then waved, walking away without a word. She wanted to talk to Octavian. John had known what was going on, the scab. He ought to be right about the importance of this. She went down the hall, and came to the metal door. She showed her clearance patch to the AI-SU robot again, and went through the other door by herself, using her card. Miura was waiting for her when she came, with her arms crossed and her mood even crosser.

"What were you doing here last time?" she inquired, making a face at Liesel.

"None of your business," Liesel replied, and pushed right past her. She could not let Miura stand in her way if she was to find things out.

The slight fear she had had of Miura had vanished. She had more on her mind than a mind-wiped teenage girl who couldn't seem to stop Liesel from doing whatever she pleased. As soon as Liesel thought this, she regretted it. It was a bit cruel to poke fun at Miura, considering what had happened to her. She walked through the door. The lights were out, Octavian was awake. Octavia wasn't in the room, and Akon and Maribeth were asleep.

"Why are all of you always sleeping?" asked Liesel, realizing for the first time that this was rather strange. Octavian just looked at the floor.

"Nothing else to do, I guess. But I don't sleep," he said quietly. Liesel frowned at this, confused.

"What do you mean, you don't sleep? Why?" she said. It took a long time for Octavian to answer. But eventually, he did.

"I mean that I don't sleep," he said, "at least not when I can help it," he said. Liesel realized that every time she had been in the room, Octavian had likely been awake.

"Did you see..." she said, trailing off. Octavian nodded in answer.

"I know more things, too. You're like us. But they don't have the dreams. I'm starting to wonder if I'm the only one," he said. Liesel shook her head. "I had the nightmares. But mine, they stopped, or at the very least I think so," she said. Octavian looked at the floor again.

"I hope to god that'll happen to me. But it's been three years," he said mournfully. Just then, a thought struck Liesel.

"Do they ever let you outside?" she asked.

"No. Not since I came here. Three years ago, yeah. I've mostly just been in this room, apart from a few things," he said, so quietly Liesel almost couldn't hear. She took that in for a moment. Three years without the sun, without even a memory of a world outside the building in which they now stood. Small wonder he couldn't sleep at night. It was disgusting even to think of, that someone could even have the stomach to do that to anyone. She nodded to Octavian, then walked out the door, without another word.

When she came back, Rita was waiting for her in the hallway. It took a moment for Liesel to recognize her, for instead of her usual attire, she wore a pale pink argyle sweater and white corduroys. Her hair was neatly combed, and pulled back with a headband. She wore no makeup, and it made her look much more normal. Liesel didn't usually pay much attention to people's appearances, but Rita's was now entirely different. She waved for Liesel to come over to her.

"My parents are coming today, and I need someone to pose as a responsible friend. Corry said no. Well, actually, he said 'Go to hell, I'm not taking off this heavy metal t-shirt'. But you get the idea," she said flippantly. Liesel wanted to scream that they were locking up people, who could not remember the sun or the sky. But she didn't. Rita must have seen something in Liesel's grim face, though, because she said: "What did you see in there? You saw something terrible, didn't you?" Liesel nodded slowly, then she told Rita everything, just as she had once John, and the pleasant look on Rita's face quickly turned to a look of horror.

"Three years... what are we going to do?" she asked plaintively. Tears began to bubble in Liesel's eyes.

"I—I don't know," she choked. Rita leaned against the wall, hanging her head. She was skilled in the art of not crying. They walked together, out into the rain, and sat there, talking, about plans, making odd, ridiculous remarks, like "It sure rains a lot around here," trying to distract themselves from the atrocities they now knew of, that Liesel had witnessed. If Rita hadn't been serious before, she was then. They suffered together, to some extent. They didn't go back inside until Rita's parents came around.

"So much for looking responsible," said Rita glumly. But she said they had been outside and had been caught in the rain. Liesel thought it was rather unbelievable, but they swallowed it. She decided it was because they wouldn't naturally assume that they had sat in the rain on purpose. Rita and her parents (named Ottoline and Ryker respectively, as Liesel found out) talked banally for a while, and Liesel stood off to the side for a while, then became sickened, as well as bored and left to go dry off. She went into the bathroom to change, since Beryl was in their room and put on a light green t-shirt and a pair of jeans, then put on a pink windbreaker she had grabbed as an afterthought. She immediately tore it off again.

"I'm starting to hate the color pink quite a lot," she muttered. It was everywhere, the walls, the coins, the t-shirt she had worn in her first nightmare, the ugly plastic cat from her second, the walls of Redford's office... god, she hated pink.

She went into her room and put on a dark blue sweater. Then she went to the rec room, and sat on the computer for hours, but there was no game or website that could make her forget her life. Forget her life... Liesel thought she understood the need, at least a bit, to have your memory gone. Just for a while, to have her mind truly clear of the past would be an incredible boon. Liesel didn't want that though, despite how she felt at the moment. She wasn't sure what they could have seen to make them want that, and she wished she could ask them. Of course though, they didn't have the answers. She thought to go ask them. Perhaps they knew something, or perhaps Liesel could trigger something with questions asked. She walked aimlessly to the steel door, but was confused by the lack of a card slot on the door handle. Miura walked up to her, holding a mop and making a face like she'd just eaten a lemon.

"No cards. Redford's set up touch technology, I can't get in. ECS denied my request for door clearance, and I've been downgraded to maintenance because I can't actually be fired. She's obviously onto us," she said bitterly. Disappointed as she was, Liesel wasn't surprised. Dr. Redford had probably seen everything.

"What's the ECS?" she asked. Miura grimaced.

"Employee Command Agency, because Redford doesn't have time to supervise such petty things as the people who work here. She's a very busy woman, which is why we're not dead right now," she said spitefully. Liesel nodded her head, then looked at the floor. "Just go," said Miura, "just go while I try to figure this out!" Liesel went for the door to the yard, and did not once look back. When she came out, she found the sun shining and a group of children clamoring. Beryl stood in the center of it all, holding a large and empty tomato sauce can, which some of the crowd were tossing paper slips into. Beryl, not noticing Liesel's evident depression, began to talk to her. "They're signing up for the fight tomorrow, some of them. And the rest are placing early bets," she said buoyantly. Beryl was not normally an overly cheery girl, but at the moment she was in her element. Liesel tried to ignore this, and pulled an overly large slip of paper out of the can, and tore off a small piece. Then, she placed the slip back in the can and grabbed a pen from a surprised boy passing by. After scribbling her name on the paper, (which she saw others doing as well) she threw the slip decisively into the can. Following this, Liesel graciously returned the pen, and stalked away to hide out the rest of the day in her room. She buried her head under the covers and slept. She had been expecting

a memory, but she slept dreamlessly that night. While Liesel was somewhat put out by this, she did not dwell on it for long. She had more to think about, like getting through the steel door, and indeed, all the others. There was also the matter of the fight, and what condition she would be in at the end of it. It was still a weekend, a Sunday, and Beryl was at a church someplace. Liesel couldn't remember whether she had been religious, but she doubted it. She walked to breakfast, and ate an egg sandwich much like the one she had eaten on her first day at the school. It hadn't been a month, but it felt like a million years. Liesel realized that she did have a memory after all, one she had created at the school. She had friends, and ideas, and a reality. She wasn't just a blank slate floating in nothingness, she wasn't memory wiped at all. But a large chunk of her memory was still missing, and Liesel knew she would still give anything to get it back. She walked back to her room, and lay on her bed reading Beryl's trashy books.

The beautiful blonde haired, emerald eyed Adora fell into her lover's arms, and she sighed as Beau, with his chestnut hair and midnight blue eyes, carried her across the windswept, plain, field. At first, the field was bare, lifeless and gray, but it became flowery and purple as they went along, as if in response to their passionate love.

Liesel grew irritated by the book, and clapped it shut.

"The thing that's really purple and flowery about this book is the prose!" Liesel said, suddenly annoyed. She had a real world to deal with. She walked out the door, and went to the yard. Beryl had arrived back, and was writing on a whiteboard from one of the classrooms. She was documenting the odds of each combatant, and Liesel's odds were minuscule. Beryl gave her an apologetic look.

"Sorry, Liesel, but you're a first-time fighter, have no prior experience with anything even resembling fighting... I couldn't give you good odds. Nobody bet on you," she said. Liesel understood, but certainly wasn't reassured. She didn't need reassurance, per say, but it certainly wouldn't have hurt her confidence. She noted that there was still time to place bets, and perhaps someone would later on. "Not likely," she thought bitterly. But she waited in front of the bars, sizing up her opponents. Noah was obviously far taller than her, and stronger as well. She realized he had short steel nails tied to his sneakers. That didn't seem... legal?

"Well, it apparently isn't against the rules," Liesel thought. Corry was shorter than Liesel, but he was built like a stump, and certainly Liesel's defeating him seemed about as likely as her uprooting a stump. Rita smiled, and waved at Liesel, and Liesel knew Rita wouldn't severely in-

jure her. But Rita was still far taller, a year older, and generally more experienced (at least in the subject they were then focusing on) than Liesel. Then there was April, who was at least somewhat more powerful than Liesel, having at least made it to the final tournament, there was Dean, and the same applied to him, and there was also Bishop, the boy who had lost every time. Liesel was certain that she was about to break his streak. There were assorted other opponents, but Liesel was too depressed from looking at the regulars to bother with them. Beryl called out the new combatants' names, and the attending students applauded halfheartedly. Then the first round of fighters climbed up on the bars.

"Allen, Nora, Dean, Rita, Leo!" Beryl yelled. From asking around, Liesel found that the championship worked a bit differently than the rest of the fights. The various pugilists would climb atop the bars in rounds, and the two people pushed off first were eliminated. The other three would advance to another round, after all the randomly selected groups of people were through. Liesel, to distract herself while she waited for her turn, kept score in her mind, like so: Round one winner: Rita. Round two winner: April. Round three winner: Corry. And on and on it went, until Liesel's name was finally called.

"Noah, Cara, Andrea, Liesel, Kit!" Beryl yelled. Liesel clambered up the bars so fast she didn't even think about the familiar name, until the person from her dreams was staring her right in the face. For a moment, Liesel thought she had been recognized, but then she saw that Kit was looking at something behind her. Then, the fight began. Liesel's feet were immediately stomped on by Noah (she sighed in relief realizing his nails hadn't punctured her shoes), and she lost her balance. She hadn't been holding on to the bars, partially because Kit had distracted her, and partially because she didn't want her hands stepped on. Luckily, Noah had turned to a more worthy opponent, and Liesel grabbed the bars to steady herself. But just then, she saw John. In a tree. Talking to Melanie, another girl from her dreams. Capitalizing on Liesel's sudden distraction, a girl with blue hair shoved her off the bars. Liesel was too surprised to react, and she fell in a graceful arc to the ground. "Well, I did wish for grace, didn't I?" she thought bitterly. When she hit the ground, her head hurt, and her nose was bleeding. She reflected on this as she staggered away, assisted by some faceless student. After a moment of thought, she remembered what this reminded her of. Her nose had been bleeding in her first dream. After she was led into the school, and left by the dorm rooms, Liesel turned to thank the student who had brought her inside, and recognized the familiar face of Rylie. This confused her greatly, and she wondered why

Rylie had helped her.

"You should just shut yourself in your room and cry, because you are a pathetic human being!" That was what Rylie had said, Liesel knew, though it struck her as odd that she had remembered it so clearly. After some deliberation, Liesel thought that perhaps Rylie hadn't really meant it. That she had overreacted in some way, although Liesel had been incredibly rude. Rylie had seemed incredibly tolerant, up until the moment when she snapped. Perhaps she had forgiven Liesel, and perhaps, Liesel thought, she ought to do the same. It didn't seem fair to hold a grudge, despite the fact that Rylie had been extreme. Liesel realized that she had indeed started the argument with a rant of her own.

"You're creepy, and obnoxious, and you smile too much!" Yes, she had indeed been looking for a fight. No matter how much Rylie had wanted to avoid one, it was unavoidable given Liesel's behavior. Liesel walked to the bathroom for a mirror, and gratefully observed that there was nothing but a bruise on her forehead, discounting the blood from her nose. She wiped her face off, and left the bathroom, feeling quite relieved that she had avoided Noah's shoes. She went back outside to Beryl, and feeling curious, asked about the scores. Beryl shook her head, smiling.

"You were in next-to-last. A boy named Derrick Whitley ran off crying before he even got on the bars, so it was ruled that you basically just beat him, even having been pushed off second, since he was pushed off before even first. All factors considered, you were left in, above all the other people pushed off second. That's definitely a piece of luck, Liesel," she said. Liesel frowned.

"Wasn't I off first?" she asked, confusedly. Beryl shook her head again, this time seeming slightly irritated.

"You must have been pretty distracted, Liesel. Andrea was off first," she said, raising an eyebrow. Liesel shrugged and left, walking back indoors. Looking at a wall clock, she realized it was time for lunch, and set off down the main hallway. When she passed the metal door, she was apprehended by Miura, who was wearing a large blue plastic watch. Liesel was certain she hadn't been wearing before.

"Come on, come on," Miura said impatiently, never taking her eyes off the door, nor releasing her grip on Liesel's hand. After what seemed to Liesel like an eternity (but was really more like fifteen minutes), the door swung open, and Mac leaned out and invited them in.

"Sorry for making you wait, I had business to attend to," he said quietly, guiding them through to his office. Yarrow was standing there as well, waving and smiling, ridiculously garbed in her usual frilly apron. Liesel shrank into a corner,

unsure what she was there for. Mac and Miura had a long, whispered conversation, while Yarrow stared at Liesel, watching with large yellow eyes. Finally, Miura grabbed a hacksaw and left the room, making Liesel even more confused. What would Miura even need a hacksaw for, she wondered. Mac started mumbling to himself, walking around in circles, and this went on for about five minutes, until finally, he straightened up and spoke to Liesel.

"Liesel, Dr. Redford has obviously found out that we're in here, which is why you can't enter with a card any longer. This will be your last visit here for quite some time, but I can use Yarrow to relay messages to you, and so can Maribeth, Octavia, Akon and Octavian, if there was a reason they would need to. I'm sorry this happened, but we'll all have to be a bit more inconspicuous for a while," he said. Liesel found herself full of dread, and then confusion. If Dr. Redford knew what was going on, why weren't they being punished somehow? Yarrow shooed her out, emphatically telling Liesel things about the arrangement that she wasn't listening to. She caught that she had to meet Yarrow in a closet somewhere.

"The one that we saw on the tour, remember?" Yarrow said brightly. Liesel remembered that they had wasted time looking into at least six of them, and even if she could remember all of their locations, she would have to check every janitor's closet that might be the correct one. This did little to improve Liesel's already dampened mood. She walked back to her room slowly, trying to cheer herself up. Her depression was worse than her regular bouts of horrible mood, because she knew it wouldn't truly go away until her problem was solved, and she was starting to have increasing doubts that she would ever regain her memory. Any happiness or sense of normality Liesel had had was gone utterly, those had only been distractions. The rest of the day was a dull fog, she ate dinner (after having completely missed lunch) and she went to bed early. That was when the nightmares started again. In the memory, Liesel was sitting on a stool in a dark room.

"Help, please, oh god, help!" Liesel shrieked. A figure walked out of the room, the door slamming behind them. Liesel could hear a faint sound of sobbing that wasn't hers. After that, everything was a blank void, and Liesel could not have described what it looked like. It wasn't black, or white, or gray. It was nothing at all, and it was terrifying. After that, she sat up on the sidewalk, staring at her surroundings blankly. Just as a flicker of recognition began in her mind, the sidewalk fell in, and she fell in a colorless abyss for what felt like hours.

She looked down at where her hands should have been, and there was nothing. Her body was gone. The air was filled with a keening sound, from where, Liesel did not know. She only knew that she wanted to escape it, the horrible noise. She woke up with the sound still ringing in her ears, screaming into her pillow. She realized that the dream had been about the loss of her memory, and that the last piece before the nightmare had been her, sitting up on the sidewalk. It felt like it had been a million years since Liesel had awoken there with nothing.

Some weeks passed in a blur for Liesel, trying to explain to Rita, to Yarrow, hearing messages. These stuck in her mind, stories told through Yarrow's mouth detailing a dream of being buried alive, or cut into pieces, or having bones broken one by one. Liesel found a mosaic, a picture of a life lived, in things that had never happened, seeing Octavian's reality past and present in a nightmare. She saw in pieces where he had been. Dreams of wars, of violence, of things living on the fringes of Octavian's mind, generally unseen, but still enough to keep him from sleeping at night. Liesel felt almost ashamed that her memories were so banal. There came news from Maribeth about what they had eaten for dinner, and long speeches from Akon about the uselessness of life. Each she responded to with care, answering every sentence directly, and Yarrow would repeat it in Liesel's voice to the one being answered. A few such exchanges went like these below:

Octavian: Last night, I dreamed I was being shot to death. I wish I couldn't feel pain in dreams, but it's there, worse than in real life. In real life, there are scrapes from rugs, and little cuts from paper plates, but in dreams, you feel so crushed by your pain.

Liesel: I think perhaps you might have felt such pain before, but it's been forgotten, and now it feels so horrid compared to only a little physical pain, because you don't get hurt often in a little room.

Akon: There is no use for life, really, humans, animals, all just a pointless waste of flesh, I say. Venus and Saturn and all the other uninhabitable planets I remember learning about get on just fine without people and animals around to ruin things. We people are the worst, since as we create we destroy, and just as I said, it's all a pointless waste, doing things we don't want to do, to gain advantages we don't need, and the dumb animals are little better. But we all go on living, as a reward for being stupid, selfish beings.

Liesel: There is no use for life, to be sure... but since we want it anyway, why not keep it in our grasp? Venus and Saturn are pointless, more so than Earth because they produce less,

and nothing that can think for itself. We destroy when we create. Emphasis on create, because create we do. And it might be a waste, but who cares. If everything is, then nothing is. And living is as much a punishment as a reward.

Maribeth: Today for lunch we had egg salad, fruit punch, and popsicles. Octavia gagged on the egg salad on purpose, and spit it out, just so Miura would have to clean it up. This is my first time having popsicles, except I think I might have seen one in a memory. I chose an orange one, and it was delicious.

Liesel: Today for lunch we (Rita and I, Beryl sat by John today) ate bratwurst and macaroni salad. I have definitely ate both of those before, though of course I am unsure when. I do not like macaroni salad, and ended up tossing much of it in the trash. I am sorry about Octavia's egg salad.

Octavia: I left the memory room to work today. First, I sorted memory files alphabetically, then divided them by gender of the wipe recipient, and then by the age. Then I organized Oliver's office for him, because it was a complete mess. He kept barking orders that made no sense, and at least twice he interjected that he had no idea what he was doing.

Liesel: So is that why you have a uniform like Miura's, you work here? And the rest of them don't because they're too fragile, or something along those lines? Do you leave the building, ever? I met Oliver once, he seemed quite scatterbrained.

Octavia: Mostly yes, but for the third question, no.

All of these and more were related to Rita, and she reacted, and asked questions every so often. A few messages were even directed towards Rita herself. It pleased her no small amount to speak with the people Liesel had so often spoken of, even if it was just a short message that Octavian had dreamt of being stabbed repeatedly, or that they had had ice cream as a special treat with dinner. Then, Liesel was called to the closet one day (she brought Rita along), and received a message in the voice of Mac.

Mac: Liesel, we found a memory file that belongs to Kit, one of Redford's daughters. We opened her file and it was tagged with your name. Anything?

Liesel: I used to know her, I remember, but why did she have her memory wiped?

Liesel and Rita waited on tenterhooks for an answer, but sadly none was forthcoming. Yarrow, still with a cheery smile on her face, waved them out. Liesel and Rita proceeded to lunch, and chatted in hushed voices over their table, an empty one in the corner.

"So you know this Kit person?" Rita said excitedly (it had been a while since she had sounded this way, her attitude had shifted

towards glum after hearing of the three years).

"Yes, I do, I think she's something from my life, Rita," Liesel said in a similar tone. Rita nodded her head.

"So maybe her memory was wiped so she didn't remember you, so she couldn't trigger anything," Rita said. Then it was Liesel's turn to nod. They stuffed their faces quickly, and ran to find Yarrow, who was mopping the floor in the shower room and whistling.

"Well, hi there!" she said brightly. Liesel grabbed Yarrow's arm and yelled.

"Do you have any news?" she said, completely disregarding the fact that there could be others in the shower room. As luck would have it, no one was there but John, who walked out of the boy's side of the shower room, looking bemused. He ignored the scene in front of him. Meanwhile, Yarrow shook her head.

"No, nothing, sorry guys! But if you want, I could tell you a story," she said, smiling. Liesel frowned, but Rita looked slightly curious.

Liesel and Rita were walking towards the door when Yarrow began her story, but she began just as they were leaving the room, and they found it significantly interesting enough to stay around for the rest of. And hence, Yarrow told her story.

"Once upon a time, I was made on a factory assembly line. I looked a little different, since I didn't have eyes like these, and my facial expressions were more limited. I didn't really have much of a personality, because I didn't have an emotional simulator! Then, one day, I walked into a room, and saw something that I guess I wasn't supposed to see. After that, they removed my memory card, and also they had to break a bunch of other stuff in my head, and I was deactivated for a long, long, time. I got left outside, and my face got wrecked, and my metal got rusted. But Mac was bored, and kinda lonely, since he hadn't met Violet yet. So he fixed my up, and gave me an emotional simulator and new eyes. He also added a facial expression producer that alters my appearance based on how I'm feeling. This was the personality I got, sort of weird because my programming was broken. Mac gave me a name, and got his boss to let me work here, and that's how I became me!"

Liesel was rather perplexed, but also interested. What had Yarrow seen that she hadn't been meant to see? And they had heard it all simply by Yarrow asking them if they wanted a story. They both walked away to their respective classes, both somewhat tardy. Liesel and Rita met up again, and tried to divine something of importance from Mac's message, and thought of nothing, apart from the fact that it showed a certain degree of ruthlessness to memory wipe one's own children. In the end, they both went off to

bed, feeling rather dissatisfied. Liesel slept little that night, and she was certain she had experienced another nightmare, but when she awoke, she couldn't remember it.

She got up and brushed her hair mechanically, then washed her face until her skin felt raw. She enjoyed the feeling of the hot water trickling down her face, almost reaching her shirt, and then rubbed herself dry before brushing her teeth, pulling on her shoes and walking out the door. She arrived at her first class, which was with Oliver. He had a lesson that day, but Liesel found herself wishing that he had still been working on his syllabus. The lesson was a long and incredibly dull lecture on different kinds of soil sediment, and Liesel was expected to take copious notes, which she did after being told off for doodling in her notebook. Her other classes were better, particularly music, where Liesel and her class commenced a new song for the first time. Liesel tapped out drumbeats, and tried to keep in beat and make sure that she didn't start too early or finish too late. After classes, Liesel met up with Rita and received a communication from Miura, via Yarrow as per usual.

Miura: Liesel, Rita, come to the metal door with the locks on it, right after your dinner. You two know which one I'm talking about. Wear something formal.

Liesel shrugged, and Rita nodded, and they both set off for dinner.

"No reason why we shouldn't go, and anyway, I don't fancy making Maribeth upset," Liesel said.

"Yeah," said Rita, "we wouldn't want to. Those people never have anything to do, and if they're having a party, the least we can do is show up. There's no question." Then it was Liesel's turn to nod, and after dinner, they split up temporarily to change into formalwear. Rita came back wearing a pale pink dress, black flats, and a charm bracelet. She still wore heavy eyeliner, but her hair was flat and straight instead of being spiky. The overall effect was quite nice. Liesel wore a knee-length black dress, silver shoes that looked much like Rita's, and an empty silver locket. They walked briskly along to the door, and on the way, Liesel had a sudden thought: Yarrow had chosen her dress. Mac and Violet had noted that she did the shopping, and Liesel had indeed received her suitcase from Yarrow. She wasn't quite sure what to think about that, and she kept the thought to herself. They arrived at the door, and were greeted by Miura, who was also dressed up for the occasion in a maroon cocktail dress with black fringe.

"Well, the party's in there," said Miura, seeming in an unusually good mood. Violet opened the door from the inside, and led them both to the room.

"We're celebrating four things today," said Violet, "Maribeth and Akon have both been ruled as being sane, so they're allowed to have jobs, Octavia finally got a spot in the Other dorms... and Miura made a special addition to the room." Violet gained clearance, and they walked past the USB room to the room with the jobless Others. Octavian was wearing a tie and sat on his bed, and Maribeth wore a pale blue dress with a scalloped hem. Akon sat in the center of the room, wearing a pink ball gown with a voluminous skirt and a large sash. It was the only time Liesel had seen her in anything but her shapeless nightgown, and Akon looked lovely.

"I made it for her," Violet said quietly. Then she blew a whistle, and out came the walking dish ware, set with food. Liesel and Rita had already eaten, and so only ate dessert, but everyone else ate their fill. After that, Octavian set out a cheap music player and some small speakers. A song began playing, and Octavian began dancing, slowly and convulsively. After about half a minute, Maribeth shakily rose to her feet, and began dancing as well. Rita joined them, whirling around in a circle. She grabbed Liesel's hands and they went around, and around. Liesel was fairly certain that everyone else had started dancing as well, but to her everything looked rather blurry. They danced for about an hour, then Miura turned off the music player.

"All right, everyone sit down. I'm going to open the window, so just be quiet and look," she said. They all obediently sat down on the beds, and watched Miura begin by opening the curtains. It was a clear night, and the moon was full. There were no stars, but the sky was beautiful all the same. Maribeth, Akon, and Octavian (everyone else having seen the sky before) watched transfixed as a single cloud scudded across the sky, and then examining the skyline. No one uttered a word. They had all decided it would spoil the moment. Then Miura opened the window, and the curtains rippled and the wind blew in their faces. Maribeth laughed, and hugged Akon. Akon almost smiled, and she patted Maribeth's head. Violet walked out, waving goodbye outside the door, and Liesel and Rita were doing the same when Rita's foot hit the music player, causing it to turn on. It played a slow song, and Miura got up and pulled Akon to her feet.

They began slow dancing to the song, which sounded like classical music. They moved back and forth across the floor, and Akon smiled, a full, real smile. Miura did as well. Liesel left, bade everyone goodbye, and fell asleep without dreaming that night. It was a weekend the day after, and there was a fight. Liesel attended, and fought as best she could, but still she ended up being off first. Rita did quite well, though, and Liesel cheered for her. Beryl looked satisfied.

"Drew in a lot of tokens today, I'm going to get a major prize," she said. Liesel smiled, and walked away, grabbing Rita's hand and dragging her down the hall.

"Miura dragged me like this when I first came," Liesel said, laughing. She smiled buoyantly, thinking that if someone locked in a room for three years could be happy, she could as well. "I could have it worse, honestly," said Liesel, "I could have been trapped in that room. I would never have met you. I might not even... wait, do you think those are their real names?" Rita shrugged.

"Maybe, or maybe not. I guess they might change them. Does it really matter? I mean, I could be named Valentina or Donatella or one of those other dumbass names my mom wanted, but I'd just call myself Val or Ella, and be done with it. I wouldn't change," she said. Liesel frowned.

"Well, what if I were named something else? I mean to say this theoretically, because I think my name is in fact my name. I suppose I could be using it as a mental placeholder during my recollections... never mind. Anyhow, people would react to me differently if I was named something else. If I were named Agatha or Bertha, you might think differently of me," said Liesel, suddenly irritated. Rita stifled a laugh.

"Well, yeah, maybe. Those names suck. But that's not the name I met you with. So it doesn't really matter, because who cares what could have been. Anyway, where are you taking me?" she said. "It's been a couple days," said Liesel, "and I thought we ought to go check for a message from Yarrow," Rita nodded. "Well, you might have told me that instead of dragging me," she said. Liesel smiled, her good mood temporarily restored. "Eh, same thing. All right, we're here," she said, coming to a stop in front of Yarrow's janitor closet. The door swung open, and there stood Yarrow, ready to deliver a message. "Hello!" said Yarrow, "I've been waiting for you both! For a really long time, actually." Rita frowned.

"Um... how long have you been standing here?" she inquired.

"Oh, about two days. But never mind that. Let's get you your message!" Yarrow said. The robot promptly began speaking in Mac's voice.

Mac: Hello, Liesel. Miura wanted you to go to the room with the pink walls again. The Others' room, did I tell you? There's someone there she wants you to meet. After that, I'll meet you outside the room and we can go see Oliver for a lecture. You can bring your friend. I'll be outside at two-thirty.

Liesel and Rita decided that it was approximately that time, and waited for a few minutes until Mac appeared, poking his head out the door.

"Oh, you're here. I was thinking I could've sent Yarrow to find you... that might have been a bad idea. I'm glad you both came," he said. Mac proceeded to lead Liesel and Rita inside, and he left them at the Others' room.

"I'll come meet you later," he said. Rita opened the door for Liesel, and the two girls walked in. Miura waved to them in a friendly manner, but she was scowling.

"Octavia left and we have someone else now. Maribeth and Akon will be leaving too," she said. Miura stood away from the bed she had been blocking, and there was a boy about Liesel's age with auburn hair laying on the bed. To Liesel, he looked faintly familiar. Then it hit her. She knew the person. Liesel grabbed him by his shoulders and shook him awake.

"Dmitri! Wake up!" she yelled. Dmitri sat up in bed, blinking his gray eyes.

"I was sleeping! Miura, why'd you€"" Dmitri broke off abruptly, seeing Liesel staring at him. It took him a moment to process what Liesel had said (and that it was she who had said it), but he responded.

"My name is Wyatt. Not Dmitri. I don't know who you are, or how you got here, but you have the wrong person," said Dmitri, now abruptly Wyatt. Liesel was certain she recognized her old friend.

"I know you, okay? I remember you. Your name is Dmitri Terse, you like chemistry, and ginger ale, and black and white movies. I met you at a library with my friend Diane when I was eight years old. Your favorite color is gray, you're a terrible artist, and your mom never keeps paper towels in your house because she thinks it's a waste of resources! But apparently you've forgotten all that, as well as everything I ever knew about you. Everything you knew about yourself. And now, you know what? I know more about you than you. Ever. WILL!" said Liesel, her voice degrading into a shriek. Tears began bubbling in her eyes, and her face grew hot. Then Dmitri's expression appeared less confused, and he gave Liesel a painful, conflicted look. It seemed to take an age for him to turn his head towards her. He put his head in his hands, sat back down on his bed, and said "Your name is Liesel Tanner."

THANKSGIVING SNOW

Elizabeth Medina

Thanksgiving snow, Thanksgiving snow,
on the rooftops of the houses below,
covering them with a thin white blanket of powder.

O, ho ho ho,

Thanksgiving snow, falling down the necks of the people
coming inside, wondering what the wonderful dinner
awaiting them tastes like.

Thanksgiving snow, dusting the fur of the dogs prancing about,
turning to water on the thick brown coats, looking like it just rained,

Thanksgiving snow, making people shiver as they watch it land
on the ground, doing a prelude to Christmas snow.

The land freezes and defrosts when the glittering white snow arrives,
and then fades.

The leaves piled by the street side sparkle so brightly,

Thanksgiving snow, turns to ice
on the stoplights as they flash the autumn colors:

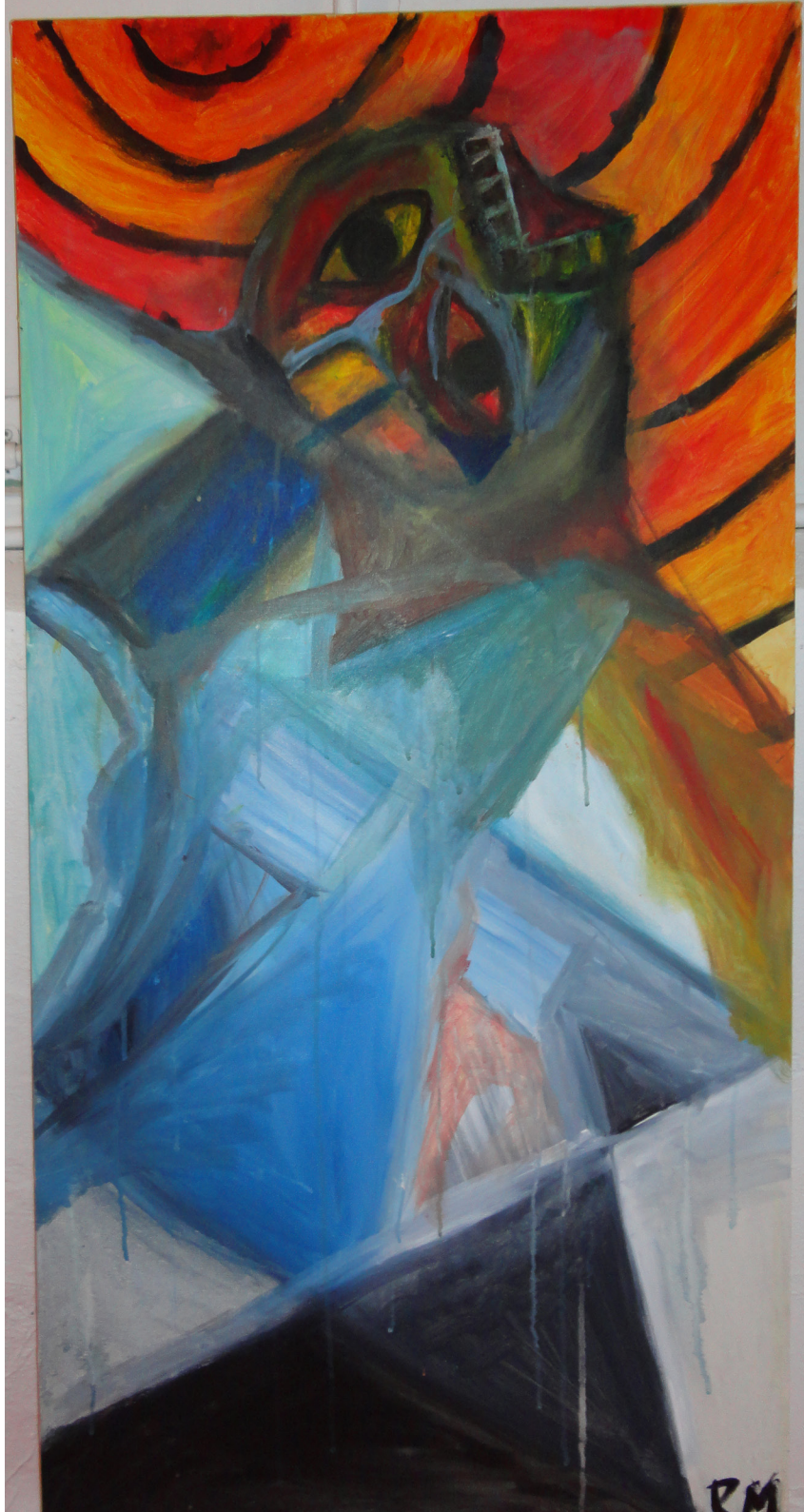
Red, yellow, and green,
Red, yellow, and green,
Red, yellow, and green.

Elizabeth Medina is 11 and
loves her dog, Bella, and
tolerates the family's bird,
Bowser. She frequently
goes horseback riding and
practices violin and piano.
She also likes walking her
dog in the snow.

ABOUT ELIZABETH MEDINA
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ABOUT ELIZABETH MEDINA

AGONY OF TRANSFORMATION

Richard Medina



HUArt

WHAT IS ART?

Ezra Price

Art can be violent, graceful, simple, or overwhelming.

Art is a human act. Art comes from the body as well as the mind. It emerges from both skill and ideas.

The artist and the audience collide when they meet in a piece of art.

Art is a masterpiece of creation and perception. Civilization expands its humanity through art.

Hi, I'm Ezra Price. You may remember me from such educational films as the Odyssey and Sea, Space, and Time. I like animals, especially reptiles. My favorite reptile is the Black Mamba. I also like Green Anacondas, Taipans, and Bushmasters. I enjoy watching movies and documentaries. In the future I would like to work as a special effects artist.

WHEN LONELY GETS UNBEARABLE

Dionna Bidny

A crash.
That was all.
I feel myself flying...
I fall.
I land.
Don't even try to stand.
What happened?
I can't recall.
Where have I been?
What car was I in?
What hit me?
What song was on the radio?
Oh.
I remember one thing:
I was thinking...
Of you.
Nothing new.
But you're gone.
Gone.
I live in the past,
Because you are there.
I say a prayer,
Because I can't bear
The pain,
The strain.
I try, in vain.
You went away...
You fought.
You died.
I wish with all my heart

I was by your side.
They tell me to move on,
That you're in a better place.
Why can't I be there, too?
With you?
But now I feel you calling
To me.
I feel myself falling...
I see
Your face.
You're smiling...
Too many times I've cried
Asked why...
This time when I close my eyes
You won't be so far.
I'll wake up where you are.

Dionna has written humorous poetry since she was six, and has recently made her first exploration of more serious subjects for her works.

Dionna's ultimate goal is to study engineering and become a surgeon, but on her way there she hopes to visit Antarctica, go zip lining, go bungee jumping, learn archery, and walk a 5k on stilts.

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S POLTERGEIST AS IDEOLOGICAL PAPERBOY

Ben Medina

Poltergeist is an ideological fable of reassurance. The film argues for the strength of the family unit, idealizing the middle class family, as well as the associated paraphernalia and commodity comforts affordable to such a unit. Its occult element is purely escapist fantasy, neither reactionary nor subversive. The film functions as a conversion of the terrifyingly ambiguous and nebulous threats to the family into a nightmarish yet tangible and conquerable evil. The first half of the film is largely devoted to establishing the familial bonds and creature comforts of the lavish suburban lifestyle led by the Freelings. Its second half tests those bonds, via the intrusion of the gothic and the theft of Carol Anne. By the film's end, all that is left standing is the family unit, which is centered on the figure of the mother, and her strength. Poltergeist avoids the conservative, patriarchal ethos that can come with a staunch support for traditional roles and institutions through its presentation of women. The film's family centers on Diane Freeling, the narrative's conventional, active hero and most developed character. She is equally capable of venturing into the afterlife to rescue her daughter and relaxing and smoking pot. While the family members all stay within the traditional roles of the family, Diane Freeling has both the most active role in the film and the most leeway within the traditional role of "American mother".

The film's focus on family and its function as an affirming fable makes sense within its context. Poltergeist was released on June 4 of 1982, in the middle of a dire American recession, which lasted from July of 1981 to November of 1982. Families accustomed to the bountiful commodities of suburban life that had grown attached to their objects were suddenly thrown into financial free fall. Poltergeist plays on this lack of security through its manifestation of the poltergeists, who direct their rage toward the family's purchased objects, culminating in the obliteration of their house. The fluctuating economy also manifests itself in the film's stance toward the paranormal. The Beast is presented as an unstoppable force of nature, something that cannot be contained or defeated, only avoided, something to be reacted against. The family does

not defeat the Beast, but can only flee from it. Poltergeist is essentially a fairy tale fable machine, carefully designed to reinforce middle class family centric ideology and to comfort viewers in a time of economic strife. The stressful recession is recast as a completely supernatural, fantastic force which must be lived with and through, but one which can be repelled by the strength of the family unit.

The film's perspective takes care to corroborate its essential fairy tale nature. When depicting the parents and adults traipsing through the film's landscape, the camera remains affectionate yet comfortably distanced, lingering over the ephemera of suburban life and the joys of ritual, be it an argument between mother and daughter or a private moment between Mr. and Mrs. Freeling. However, the film's perspective changes within the children's bedroom, where it becomes childlike, leaning forward from the comfortable distance maintained in other scenes. This shift in perspective is best manifested in Robbie's fear of the tree and his clown toy, relatable fears and universal fears of a child in his bed. Poltergeist derives its power by using the cinematic medium to render the nighttime fears of a child into the banal, leafy green, subdivided reality presented by the film. Poltergeist introduces the fact of darkness in the world through an externalized and understandable gothic force.

Poltergeist is remarkable for its use of the occult and its humanist celebration of the family unit, which distinguishes the film from other American juxtapositions of the gothic in a suburban and familial setting. The gothic in American cinema of the 1970s and 1980s tended to the reactionary or the subversive. For example, William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* is a proponent of a conservative patriarchal ideology, basting the pubescent Linda Blair in a wide variety of viscous liquids before she is rescued and restored to chaste childhood by two male priests. In *The Exorcist*, the cultural fear of girlhood maturing into womanhood is externalized and addressed in the form of Pazuzu, a monstrously possessive demon from Northern Iraq.

Conversely, Wes Craven's 1984 film, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, portrays a peaceful

suburban milieu rocked by the sins and secrets of older generations. The vigilante justice of the protagonists' parents unleashes Freddy Krueger's vengeance upon the town's teens. *Poltergeist* skillfully navigates between these opposed reactionary/traditional and subversive/progressive ideologies.

Poltergeist's ideology takes care to validate and endorse a comfortable middle class American existence, through the detailed close ups lavished upon the children's toys and the commercial products, which signpost the children's personalities through their consumption. For example, Robbie Freeling is established as an active, outdoorsy child via the blue baseball cap affixed to his head, and Carol Anne's telephone and stuffed toys endear and soften the audience toward her. The films' ideology at first appears confused and contradictory, because it seems to simultaneously validate a comfortable middle class American existence in its first half while condemning such a way of life in its second half, when the corrupt nature of Mr. Freeling's real estate development firm is revealed, and the initially utopic portrayal of suburban existence becomes nightmarish. *Poltergeist* navigates between the Scylla of callous subversion and the Charybdis of conventional patriarchal institution by holding the family unit above all else. The fragmenting and then coming together of the family unit powers the film's narrative.

LITTLE BIRD

Maggie Wren

Come down and say hello to me my little
birdie blue
Come down and say hello to me upon this
morning dew
Come down and say your feathers true upon
this story told
Come down and say hello to me for all that
you behold

Maggie Wren has lived in
Chicago her whole life and
likes to play with her friend
and her dog Frances and she
loves to read. Her favorite
food is artichoke and she is
proud to be in Hu.Art.

ABOUT MAGGIE WREN
ABOUT MAGGIE WREN

FEMALE ARTISTS

Fiona S. K. Repp

The Renaissance wasn't a very welcoming place for women to enter male-dominated professions. The most women were expected to do was marry and have children. And very commonly women were unable to receive formal art training. But some women broke this rule, and were privately taught, usually by their fathers who were sometimes looking to draft their daughters into the family business. But still these women had to have lots of sheer talent to even get a chance for their art to be recognized. One of these women was Caterina van Hemessen. She was among the majority of artist women that were trained by their fathers, and even collaborated with her father in some paintings. She did mainly portraits, usually with a dark background. Caterina was a member of the Guild of St. Luke, and later became a teacher to three male students. A second example of those women who did not follow the basic standard was Sofonisba Anguissola. She was the eldest of seven children in an aristocratic family. Her father took great care to make sure Sofonisba and her sisters were educated in the fine arts. Later she became an apprentice to Bernardino Gatti. In 1554 she went to Rome and met Michelangelo, who recognized her talent. Michelangelo even sent her some of his drawings to study. In 1559, Sofonisba was invited to join the Spanish court of Philip II, and she became the painting tutor to Queen Elisabeth of Valois. Meanwhile her sister, Lucia Anguissola, was the third eldest of her sisters and was far less well known than her older sister Sofonisba. She was a mannerist painter, and only a few of her paintings were signed. Yet another woman artist was Fede Galizia, the daughter of Nunzio Galizia, a portrait painter. As her father was a fairly talented artist, Fede was an accomplished artist by age 12. She, like her father, became a very popular portrait artist. She was commissioned for both religious and secular paintings. Our fourth example of female artists is Lavinia Fontana, daughter of Prospero Fontana. She painted her first work at the age of 23. She

went on to paint in various genres. Fontana later married Paolo Zappi, although she continued to paint after marriage to support her family. Fontana and her family moved to Rome in 1603, and she lived there the rest of her life.

There was also Levina Teerlinc, who was a miniaturist who served as a painter to the English court of Edward IV, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. She may have worked in her father's workshop before her marriage to George Teerlinc of Blankenberge. In 1545 she moved to England to live with her husband, where she then served as the royal painter to Henry VIII.

One final example of female Renaissance artists is Artemisia Gentileschi. She was the daughter of Orazio Gentileschi. She was one of the most recognized women artists in the Renaissance. She was trained by her father, and tried to go to an art academy, but was rejected as all women were. Later on she continued her art studies under Agostino Tassi. She married Pierantonio Stiattesi. Until recently, most of her artistic works were attributed to her father and other artists, even after death.

Hi, I'm Fiona S. K. Repp,
and I'm 12. I live with my
parents and grandparents,
my giant herding dog, and
my cat (who occasional-
ly steals small items like
hairties and quarters). I
really enjoy knitting, vid-
eo games, and the popular
British show Doctor Who.

ABOUT FIONA S. K. REPP

MURDER AT GRAYFIELD MANOR

Sophia Bidny

Engston was quite a peaceful town—the worst crime for the past ten years had been a shopkeeper cheating his customer of a few pence—and so Inspector Sherriton was both astonished and annoyed when he heard an urgent knock on his office door at 7:00 in the morning.

He sat at his office desk reading the morning newspaper, with his feet on the desktop, feeling very comfortable. It had rained the whole night through, and he had not had a busy night shift at all.

“Come in,” he said, and a policeman rushed into the room.

“What is it, Jennings?” asked Sherriton, yawning.

“Telegram for you, sir!” said Jennings, placing a paper on the desk. Sherriton removed his feet from the desktop and picked up the telegram.

Come to Grayfield Manor at once. Murder.
~Constable Clarke.

“I suppose I have to go,” muttered the Inspector. “Jennings, hold the fort while I’m gone. Shouldn’t be too long.”

“Good luck, sir,” said Jennings as Sherriton walked out of the office. As the inspector hailed a cab, he was pleased to see that the rain had stopped. In half an hour he was walking up the path toward the door of Grayfield Manor. It was small, for an estate, and, because of the carelessness of former owners, quickly falling into disrepair. Many of the stones making up the front steps were cracked, and the many windows were dirty or broken. In contrast with the poor condition of the house, the gardens seemed to be well tended to. The grass was muddy from the storm, but the brick path leading to the front door had been cleaned, and Inspector Sherriton reached the house with just small signs of mud on his boots. Constable Clarke met him at the door. “So glad you could come, Inspector,” said the constable, showing him in. “Sir Frederick Stanely – the master of Grayfield – he’s been killed. Gunshot wound. His body’s in the library, and nothing’s been moved – but perhaps you’d like to speak to his wife first.”

“I’d prefer to see the scene of the crime first, if it’s no trouble to you,” said Sherriton.

“Very well,” said the constable. “The library is this way.”

The library was quite large, and there were bookcases on every wall. The floor was covered with a rich, dark carpet. A desk stood in one corner, and a sofa in another. There was a fireplace on the north side of the room. The body lay stretched out in the center of the floor. The open and unshuttered window from which the killer had apparently escaped was on the west wall, approximately six feet away from the body, and directly across from the door to the room. Inspector Sherriton entered the room and looked at the dead body. The bullet had gone into his chest. From the way the body lay, it looked as if the murderer had stood by the fireplace. Sherriton then inspected the area around the window. The carpet directly underneath was slightly damp, and the shutters had signs of being forced. “I noticed those marks on the shutters too, inspector,” said the Constable. “Looks like our murderer busted them open with a crowbar.” “That is certainly a possibility,” said Sherriton. He turned away from the window. Suddenly, the inspector noticed something glinting in the morning light under the body. He picked it up and examined it. It was a gold, open-faced pocket watch, and a broken chain hung from one side. Inspector Sherriton turned the watch over and brushed some dirt off the back to reveal a small engraving: Rob. W.

“Do you know of a Robert W involved in the case?” Sherriton asked the constable.

“Ah, certainly,” said Clarke. “A fellow by the name of Robert Whartington is Lady Stanely’s lover. They were planning to run away together – I believe he has a house in London. This new evidence certainly points to him as the murderer.”

“She told you all this?” Sherriton raised his eyebrows.

The Constable nodded. “After some questioning.”

“Interesting,” said Sherriton, covering a yawn. “This case seems to be unfolding predictably. The jealous lover...”

He glanced around the room again.

"I assume you have not inspected the outside, yet?"

"No, we haven't done much - we were waiting for you."

"Ah. Well then, I will go see what there is to find under the window."

They went outside, and the inspector examined the ground under the library window. "If I remember, there was quite a large storm last night," said Inspector Sherriton, "and so all the footprints have been washed away. Ugh, this mud is terrible! But what is this?" He picked up a pistol, which had sunk into the mud.

"Whartington must have dropped it as he fled," said the constable.

"That may be what happened," Inspector Sherriton said, "By the way, when were you notified?"

"Around six," replied the constable, "It was one of the servants."

Inspector Sherriton thought for a moment.

"I think I'd like to speak to the lady now," he said, walking back into the house.

The lady met them in the drawing room. She wore a long, dark blue silk dress, and was seated in a chair by the window. She turned as they entered, and revealed a face pale with worry and fear, contrasting strangely with her dark hair, up in a knot in the back of her head. Her beautiful face, which would have dazzled any other man, did not have any apparent effect on the Inspector. He approached her languidly.

"Good afternoon," he said, "I'm extremely sorry about this whole business. You have my condolences."

"Thank you," she said quietly. "Please sit down."

He did so. "Now, what can you tell me of this business?"

"Well, last night, my husband seemed very agitated," she said. "I thought he was just drunk, but around six in the morning I was awakened by a pistol shot. I put on my robe and hurried downstairs, to find the library door open. I entered, and immediately called for the servants. My husband lay on the floor in a pool of blood. Whoever had shot him had escaped through the open window. I sent one of the servants for the police."

"You said you thought he was drunk?" said the inspector. "Was your husband commonly drunk?"

"Oh yes," said Lady Stanely sadly. "It was very distressing, but he was drunk rather frequently."

"What can you tell me about his past? Do you know anything of his relatives? His parents?"

"No, not much, nothing of consequence," replied the lady.

"Where did you meet your husband?"

asked Sherriton.

"I was an Italian actress, and met my husband in Italy," she said, "He was very talkative and charming, and we soon were married." She paused for a moment, as though remembering the occasion. Inspector Sherriton wrinkled his forehead, and motioned for her to continue.

"After our wedding, I found he was commonly drunk, and hard and abusive to me, even when sober. But he was very good at keeping it under cover, and many people saw him as an occasionally drunk, but good and harmless man. He commanded me many times to act in public as if there was nothing wrong with him, and as if we got along marvelously. I complied, for if I hadn't, he would have hurt me."

"An abusive relationship - that might be a key," muttered the constable to the inspector. Sherriton ignored him.

"Did anything of significance happen before your husband was killed?" he asked Lady Stanely.

"About a month ago, yes," she said. "A friend of mine, Mr. Robert Whartington, came to visit." Clarke raised his eyebrows at Sherriton.

"I had met him when I had been an actress," Lady Stanely continued, "As he had directed one of the plays I had done in London.

"We received him graciously, and at first Robert seemed not to realize my and my husband's apparent love for each other was only a mask, hiding our terrible relationship. Robert and I spoke frequently, and he deduced that our marriage was not as happy as it seemed. When I found Robert suspected something, I told him all, including that I loved him more than I loved my husband, and not only as a friend. He replied he felt the same and wished to save me from Frederick's horrible ways. We decided to run away to Italy, my homeland, where my husband would never find us.

"We couldn't leave immediately, as Robert had some business to attend to, but we planned that once that was completed, he would return and we would run away.

"However, I believe my husband had some suspicion of our affections, for immediately after we had said goodbye and our guest had left the room and was being shown out by one of the servants, my husband began to reprimand me for being unfaithful to him. He raised his arm as if to slap me, but suddenly turned toward the door. Robert had returned to get his jacket, which he had left hanging on a chair, and had witnessed all. At first my husband just stared at him, then Robert said, 'If you touch her in any way, I swear I will report you to the police.'

"At this point I crept away, but I heard my husband shout, 'Get out of here!' and then the door slammed. Somehow, by the next week, the whole town was full of rumors about my husband's brutality. But as they were just rumors, there was no formal report, and the police were not involved.

Robert found a way to see me, however. He told me that he was worried, and hadn't gone to his flat in London because he was afraid of what my husband would do to me. Robert met me often in secret in the garden, and we managed to hide this, until my husband caught us four nights ago and threatened to shoot him, if Robert ever came again."

"And you have not seen Mr. Whartington since?" asked the inspector. She shook her head sadly.

"Thank you so much, Lady Stanely," said Sherriton, getting up. "I'll try to have this business cleared up soon."

The inspector and constable returned to the library, and the lady remained in the drawing room.

"I believe that the body can be removed," said Sherriton to Clarke. "I would like to speak to one of the servants now - the head housemistress?"

The head housemistress was duly summoned.

"I would like you to tell me all that happened yesterday and this morning," said the inspector.

"Well, sir, I shuttered all the windows last night," she said, "As I always do, and then went up to bed. I heard the master walking in the library, but thought nothing of it. I was awakened around six by a gunshot, and then my lady screaming downstairs, and so I rushed down as fast as I could. Some of the other servants were already there. When I saw him lying there on the floor, I very nearly fainted."

"That's all for now, I think. Thank you very much, I appreciate your help."

"Thank you, sir." The housemistress left.

"Now we may continue our investigation in the library," said Inspector Sherriton, entering that room. He strode over to the fireplace, in front of which the murderer must have stood. The inspector examined the carpeting there, and below the window. He turned to the constable who had been following his every move.

"I call your attention to the footprints."

"The footprints? But they are indistinguishable on this carpet."

"Exactly. It is the lack of visible footprints that is most strange."

The constable looked at him, confused. The inspector looked around, to make sure no one was listening, then said, "You remember the

mud outside?"

"Yes, of course, I almost slipped on it."

"Well then. Look at the floor. We have both left some mud stains on it. If the murderer had crawled through the window, he would have left mud stains on the carpet. I found none. The carpet is wet right under the window, but there are no mud stains anywhere. Therefore, we have two theories. Either someone wanted to make it seem as if Robert Whartington was the murderer, by putting his watch on the scene of the crime, and by opening and the window and making it look as though force were used, to show his way of escape and entrance, or, Robert Whartington was hidden in the house."

"What do you advise we do now?" asked the constable.

"Let us go pay a visit to Mr. Whartington," suggested the inspector, and they followed up on this, after asking Mrs. Stanely for his address, which she gave quite freely.

It was quite a drive from Grayfield to Robert Whartington's flat in London, and by the time they arrived it was almost eleven. Inspector Sherriton tried to keep his mind off the delicious smells emanating from the landlady's apartment, and followed her up the stairs to Mr. Whartington's flat. Whartington opened the door slowly when he saw who his visitors were. His dark eyes darted from Inspector Sherriton to the constable and back again, and he continually ran his hand through his black hair. He invited his guests to sit, but himself remained standing, his tall frame casting a shadow as he stood in front of the fire.

"I'm sure I will try to answer any questions you may put to me that may be helpful to you, sirs," he said as he led them in, "I've heard of this terrible business—Laura sent a servant to tell me."

"Really?" asked the inspector, "I suppose that was nice of her. But did you hear what we found?"

"All I know is that Laura found Sir Frederick Stanely dead in the library."

"Well then, you didn't know we found this?" Inspector Sherriton took Robert Whartington's watch out of his pocket.

"My watch!" gasped Mr. Whartington.

"Can you please tell us where you lost it?"

"Oh, I lost my watch four nights ago."

"Where?" asked the constable. Mr. Whartington hesitated, blushing. "Don't worry," said Inspector Sherriton, "Mrs. Stanely has told us of your relationship."

"Oh," said Mr. Whartington, still a little hesitant.

"I left it in her garden. I would visit her there, but four nights ago, Sir Stanely caught us and threatened to kill me

if he ever saw me again. I climbed the garden wall hurriedly, and I must have dropped my watch by accident. May I have it back?"

"I'm sorry," said Inspector Sherriton, "We may need to keep it a bit longer. It may figure in the trial once we catch the criminal. By the way, do you know of anyone in the house, other than Sir Stanely, of course, who harbored any ill feelings toward you?"

"No, I don't believe so."

"Thank you, Mr. Whartington," Inspector Sherriton said, "Good bye."

They left his room, and summoned the landlady.

"How long has Mr. Whartington rented this flat?" asked the inspector.

"Oh, he's had it for a few months, I believe," she replied.

"Did he go out last night?"

"No, he didn't. I brought him a very late dinner, and we chatted for a while, afterwards. I must have left around midnight. And last night I couldn't sleep, so I puttered around a bit. I live on the ground floor – right by the front door – and if he had gone, I would have heard him. Someone came with a telegram for him around 6:15. I gave it to him myself. When he read it, he looked quite frightened."

They thanked her and drove back to the Manor. The inspector asked if any of the servants had been in the garden the day before. No one but the gardener had.

"The gardener, hmmm..." muttered the inspector.

Mrs. Stanely hurried up to him.

"Has Robert been able to help you? Have you found the criminal?" she asked.

"Yes, Mr. Whartington has helped immensely. No, I have not solved the crime yet, but I am very close to it," Inspector Sherriton replied,

"Would you mind giving me a description of your gardener?"

She smiled.

"Of course," she said, "His name is John Watley. He is old and quite feeble, and he lives in the little garden house."

"Ah. And were you in the garden yesterday?"

"Yes, in fact, I was. But how is this connected with the mystery?"

"Well, I now know who murdered your husband."

"Who? Watley?" Mrs. Stanely laughed.

"No," said the inspector, "You."

Mrs. Stanely abruptly stopped laughing. She grew red in the face and her hands clenched.

"What sort of joke is this, sir?"

"I do not joke in these matters, ma'am," he replied, "You provided the last bit of information that I needed in the matter by telling me that

Watley was old and feeble. And so he could not pry open such old and heavy shutters as I saw on your house. You are the only other person who was in the garden yesterday, and so you picked up Mr. Whartington's watch, which he had dropped when your husband had caught you together. I do not know why you decided to lay the blame on Mr. Whartington though, considering your relationship. But you did, and you did it wonderfully, taking advantage of your experience as an actress – you planted the watch, and you made it look like the shutters had been forced open. Except you made one mistake. You anticipated the rain, and so any 'footprints' would be washed away. But the mud would also cause there to be mud stains on the carpeting." Mrs. Stanely had stood dumbfounded through the whole time Inspector Sherriton spoke. But here she finally found her voice.

"My husband was so terrible I would do anything to be rid of him."

"Including blaming your lover. And it almost worked too."

The inspector sighed.

"Well," he said, turning to the constable, "You can arrest her. I'm tired, which I assume you are too. If you need me for the trial, I will be at my office. Oh, and I almost forgot—you should keep this for now." The inspector handed the constable the pocket watch. Then he turned to Mrs. Stanely.

"You are quite a good actress. It's a pity I never saw you in the theatre. Well, good bye." Inspector Sherriton walked down the drive and hailed a cab.

When left to her own devices, Sophia naturally gravitates towards books (this has been proven through countless scientific studies). Though her natural writer's habitat is the novel, she occasionally wanders into the realm of short stories, and is considering sending the intrepid Inspector Sherriton on another adventure in the near future. Sophia also rambles about anything and everything related to literature at her blog, www.ravens-and-writingdesks.blogspot.com. Stop by for a bookish chat over a fresh cup of (virtual) tea! Sophia's favorite author is C. S. Lewis, and she lives by his words - "You can't get a cup of tea big enough or a book long enough to suit me."

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you to everyone who submitted their artwork and writings! This journal is biannual, so another issue will be coming out next summer.

Make sure to check out the Hu.Art website, huart.weebly.com, for past issues, video interviews, and more!

-RICHARD MEDINA

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