

Father give me the Bull of Heaven,  
So he can kill Gilgamesh in his dwelling.  
If you do not give me the Bull of Heaven,  
I will knock down the Gates of the Netherworld,  
I will smash the doorposts, and leave the doors flat down,  
and will let the dead go up to eat the living!  
And the dead will outnumber the living!

—Epic of Gilgamesh

# The Gallery

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# How You *Write*

I took a walk around your brain  
Dusted dactyls off countertops,  
And pulled aside the peeling paint.  
I found the mounds of polished stones,  
The poems you rarely finish,  
Marveled at the sweating walls  
And the smell of cinderblock.

I tread daintily along the fibrous  
Membranes, found the round hard rage  
Wound up in every sheath, found  
Fingernails in the rotting brick.  
You have made your escape  
Into the deep places where you sit  
Packing words into page like salt into meat.

—Julia Schaumburg



*Detail*  
**Stacy Lewis**

the  
**MOMENTS**  
before william realizes the  
**HUMILIATION**  
that his life is

By William Huberdeau

I hold both halves of the dollar. David and I have been cutting things in half ever since lunch when Grammie told us about the wishbone. I want the half with the pyramid. It's bigger, and it has an eye. David reaches for my half. My dress pants slip against my folding chair, and I kick David off my leg easily. He sits up on the grass. "But your half says 'God'. I want that."

Grammie turns in her chair and lays her hand on David's shoulder. "There's a time and a place for the Lord. He doesn't want you fighting at your parents' wedding now that it's finally happening." A man in a white tunnel-shaped hat pushes the cake cart along the sidewalk to our table. He whispers something to Grammie. Grammie gets out of her seat and continues, "There are more important things in life, boys."

The cart guy winks at me. "It's where the pyramid meets the eye, little man." He hands me a folded dollar. Grammie leaves with him towards the club house.

I swipe a glob of icing off of the cake and smear it on David's cheeks. He crinkles his face and cries.

"I hope your face gets stuck," I say.

"You're mean. I'm telling Mom and Dad."

I haven't seen Mom or Dad all day except for when they were kissing alone in the dressing room. Dad bit Mom's lip, and blood dripped onto her wedding dress. I ran away with Dad's wallet and a comb. I pull the comb out and run it backwards through my hair.

"Ay! I'm a rebel."

David grabs the comb and rubs his sugary fingers against its teeth. "I'll give you the comb back if you give me your half."

I poke holes in the side of the cake with my finger. "You can have them both because you're stupid and only stupid people want some stupid comb or a dollar that says 'God'." I throw both halves of the torn dollar at David.

“You’re a sinner.”

I wash my finger off in Grammie’s water glass. “I saw Dad eating Mom in the dressing room. She’s long gone. In his belly.” I point up to the wedding figures at the top of the cake. “He ate her up just like a toy.”

The figures have no faces except bumps for noses and empty white caves where the eyes should be. I sing, “It’s a nice day for a white wedding.”

David stands up with his feet firm on the grass. “You can’t eat those,” he says as he climbs onto Grammie’s chair and then onto the cart.

“Oh yes you can.”

“No you can’t, and I’m going to show you.”

David steps on the bottom layer of the cake but his foot smashes through onto the surface of the cart. He loses his balance and falls into the cake. Everyone runs over, knocking down chairs and spilling wine on themselves so I grab the two wedding figures and leave fast.

\*\*\*

Grammie and the cart guy are in the chapel kneeling in front of the altar with their heads bowed. I duck under the back pew and start crawling to the front. The wax figures are melting in my hands. There’s a golden circle on the floor half way through the pews that doesn’t go away when I try to rub it out with my sleeve. I sit on the pew and look at the window with the colored picture. The sun shines through. A lady with a gold halo is holding a baby. Crawling on forward, I reach the front pew.

The cart guy covers his face with his hands and rests it on Grammie’s shoulder. Grammie says, “She loved you dearly, but no longer. You’re cousins, Dale. Cousins.”

The cart guy looks up. “Second, and by law.”

“That’s not good enough. It’s not God’s way. You grew up together.”

“The boy. He’s God’s way. I named him, Elsie.”

I pick my nose and put the boogie under the pew.

“Terri’s happy now. She wasn’t happy before.”

“But she loved me.”

“She did, yes.”

A voice from the door echoes, “Elsie, the boys toppled the cake.”

Grammie coughs. “I’m coming.” She turns to the cart guy. “You shouldn’t be here today.”

“Terri hired my company.”

I take out my dollar to stick it on the boogie, but the dollar falls so I keep it in my pocket.

“No. Mark insisted upon it. To keep the family involved. He thought it



would be nice. Terri didn't want to cause a scene over it."

The cart guy is silent. Grammie says, "Leave, Dale. Terri doesn't want this." She passes the pews out the front door. The cart guy jogs out the side door.

I run to the piano bench and stand the melty wedding figures in front of the piano. The front door opens again, and I hide under the pews. Cousin Mallory's cane taps on the ground as she reaches the front. Her bright red dress has a poofy bottom and a bow around her waist. At the piano her underwear shows when she bends over to sit down.

"Ooo!" Mallory reaches under her butt and pulls out the figures. She rubs them, feeling what they are.

"Psst! Mallory."

Mallory turns her head. She has her dark glasses on, but one of the lenses is poked out because I poked it out earlier. Her eyes are empty. They're red scars that look like a scabs. Mom says her glasses keep her from picking at them, but Mallory says they keep other people from seeing them. Mallory turns back around and taps three high shrill notes on the piano.

"Mallory," I say louder.

She takes her hand away from the piano. "William, is that you?"

I pull my new dollar out of my pocket and crumple it into a ball. "I'll give you a dollar if you can guess what I saw."

Mallory slips off of the bench and walks to the pew. "What was on the bench?"

"My mom and dad. You pooped them out."

Mallory sits cross-legged in front of me. I reach my finger out to poke her underwear, but she catches my hand. "What do you think you're doing?"

She releases my hand, and I flatten the dollar on the floor and rest my cheek against it. "It's my dollar, but I'll give it to you."

"I'll bet you saw the cake fall, and I'll bet you saw the cake fall because you knocked it over, so keep your messy hands away from me."

I grab the figures out of her hand and put them in my pocket. "No, that's not what I saw. Mallory, will you play me a song?"

"What do you want me to play?"

"I don't know. Something funny."

Mallory's face goes sour. "Songs aren't funny. They can be pretty or they can be sad or they can be joyous..."

"Play the Star Spangled Banner." I roll onto my back and look up at the fans on the ceiling. They move slowly.

"I don't know how to play that."

"Can you sing it then?" I close my eyes.

Mallory begins, "Oh say can you see," but the front door opens again. A voice says, "Mallory, come back to the table while we look for William. We can't be losing all of you kids."

Mallory bends down to me and whispers, "I have to go look for you."

Rolling back onto my belly I pull the wedding figures out of my pocket and put them in Mallory's hands. "Can you give these to David?"

When she leaves I go out the door where the cart guy left to chase after him.

\*\*\*

The cart guy closes the stall door so I open the one next to him, but David is there. "William!"

I cup my hand over David's mouth, and he bites it, but he doesn't bite hard so I just keep it there. I whisper, "David, be quiet. I'm following somebody. Will you be quiet?"

David nods, and I take my hand away wiping his slobber on his clean change of clothes. I turn around and shut the door. "I'm going to have to sit on your lap until the cart guy is done."

David shakes his head and covers his lap with his hands. When I reach to grab his arms away the cart guy's hand slips a dollar into our stall. I pick it up, rip it in half, and put the side with the pyramid back under the stall.

"Hey little man, this is the wrong side," the cart guy says. He slips it back into our stall.

I bend down to pick it up. Right when my head is low to the floor the cart guy's bright red face appears upside down. "You're messing with my cosmos, little man!"

His shaggy hair brushes the tiny-tiled floor like a wet mop, and he winks at me. David cries. I hear the cart guy grab some toilet paper. He pulls more toilet paper, and then he does it again. Then the toilet flushes. I hear him wash his hands, and then he opens our door. "Come on, little man, let's go fix that cake."

He holds out his hand, and we walk out of the bathroom leaving David behind.

\*\*\*

"This is the best we can do, little man." The cart guy lets me lick the spatula when I'm done mixing the batter. "Everyone's going to be mad at you, so this cake is just for you. Your brother and Mallory can have some too if they'd like. It's good to share." He ruffles my hair. "I'm sure Mom tells you that, though."

My favorite clumps of batter still have balls of dried brownie mix in them.

The cart guy continues, "If I was around that's what I would tell you. Do

you know who I am?”

“No.” The kitchen is empty. Family rushes by through the window on the door. Some I haven’t met.

The cart guy takes the spatula away from me and spreads the batter onto a pan. “Well, you can call me cousin Dale.” The cart guy bends down to my height. “I’m glad you’re meeting me now.”

Water drips over the edge of the sink and makes a light patting tap on the shiny floor. I’m bored. The cart guy stands and smiles at me for a while before handing me the empty bowl. I get to lick it clean. Mom lets me lick the bowl, too. I dip my finger into a big glob of batter. Grammie walks in from behind the cart guy. She’ll be mad I’m eating brownies before dinner so I try to give the bowl back to the cart guy. He says, “You know, William, I see a lot of myself in your eyes. They have fire.”

Grammie pulls the cart guy’s shoulder. “What kind of perverted talk are you giving that boy?” Grammie takes the bowl away from me. I knew she’d be mad. “Terri! Mark! I found William.”

Mom and Dad rush in. They’re still wearing their wedding costumes, and Mom still has blood on her dress. Dad bends down and gives me a hug, and Mom slaps the cart guy. “Mark, go take William to the table with David and Mallory. Grammie and I are going to take care of this.”

Dad carries me to the door. “Dad, the cart guy is baking brownies for David and Mallory and me because he says everyone is going to be mad at us. Are you mad at us, Dad?”

The cart guy shouts before Dad says anything, “No true father would be mad at you, William.”

Dad stops and turns to Mom. Mom frowns. “Go, Mark. Grammie and I will take care of this.” I think Dad wants to kiss Mom, but Mom stops him. She says, “Leave, Mark.”

The cold steel door pushes open against my back as Dad takes me out of the kitchen.

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David hops off of his chair and reaches towards Mallory’s eye.

“What’s your problem poking around at me for?” Mallory says swatting David’s hand.

“I can see your eye. Why does it look like that?”

Mallory sits perfectly still. “What do you mean my eye? You can see my eye?”

“Your lens is missing.”

Mallory can’t cry. Her lip can quiver and she can put her head down and she can put her hands over her face, but she can’t cry. She chokes out a

sobbing voice. “William.”

I kick my feet. They clank against the legs of the table.

“William,” she repeats louder.

I don’t know how Mallory knows it was me so I just sing my song again. “It’s a nice day for a white wedding,” but Mallory interrupts. “No it’s not. It’s a dark wedding. It’s black as coal, and it’s your mom’s fault. And the chef’s. It’s the chef’s fault, too, and that’s what my mom says. It’s not white at all.”

“What about how Dad tried to eat Mom in the dressing room? I saw them. Is that why, too?”

“Maybe it’s because of my eye. Maybe everyone can see my eye, and it’s dark for me, but everyone else can see it. Maybe that’s why it’s dark, William.”

David clamps his teeth over the legs of the wedding figures. He spits the shoes out at Mallory. “Gross!”

Mallory feels the wax feet. “William wasn’t talking about those, David. Those are garnishes. They use those to make the cake look pretty. The chef put them there. They sure looked pretty didn’t they?”

David cries.

“Don’t bother crying. Didn’t you hear? Your parents aren’t even going to get married.”

“Why not?” I ask.

Mallory points across the lawn. Blue and red lights flash from the club house.

“Oh, no,” I say, “That’s just cousin Dale, the cart guy—the guy that gave David and me the dollar in the bathroom. He got in trouble, and I think it’s my fault.”

“You sure are his fault,” Mallory says. “I dare you to sing that song of yours to your Dad. Now, that’s a funny song.”

David stops crying, but he still has tears on his face. I give my napkin to him. It’s so silky I don’t want to give it up. It feels like Mom’s clothes at night. She always lets me sleep with her and Dad. Dad snores, and Mom pretends to be asleep and not to notice. I like to lay awake and rub her clothes. Sometimes she cries.

Grammie comes to sit at the table. “Well you kids, it’s time for the chapel.” She sees Mallory’s eye and shouts, “What happened, Mallory?”

“It’s William’s fault. He ruined everything. He’s the shame of the family. A monster.”

Grammie looks at me angrily. “William, we’re going to have a talk after chapel. Kids, let’s go.” She gives Mallory a hug. “We’ll fix your glasses, dear. You won’t have to go about for another minute with them broke like that.”

We leave together.

\*\*\*

David and I sit on opposite sides of Grammie on the pew where the gold halo was on the floor. It's not there anymore because it's dark, and I guess Mallory was right when she said this won't be a white wedding.

Grammie sees me looking at the woman in the window. She says, "That is the purest woman of all time. The baby she holds has no Dad."

"Why not?"

Grammie puts her arm around my shoulders. "God has His ways," is all she says.

Cousin Mallory comes down the aisle slowly in front of Mom and Dad and tosses flower petals. When she gets to me I tug her dress. She throws a big handful at me and sticks out her tongue. The petals smell good. I give one to Grammie to smell because I don't want her to be mad at me, but she looks forward and just holds it. "There's the priest, William. He's going to marry Mom and Dad."

I look around and everyone looks so happy like the cake never fell over or like nothing was ever wrong with Mallory's eyes or like the cart guy didn't give me brownies before dinner. "What did you do with the cart guy?" I ask Grammie.

"Who?"

"Cousin Dale, the guy who made me brownies."

Grammie's skin feels waxy and loose as she grabs my hand too tight. "He shouldn't have been here. No one needs to know about him, William. For your sake. Just call him the cart guy because that's all he'll ever be to you."

The priest asks if anyone has any reason for these two to not be married. He waits a long time, but no one says anything. Grammie starts to cry a little bit as she pulls me close and strokes my hair. I want to sing my song, but then everybody stands and claps except for Grammie and me. Mom and Dad are kissing. ☺

*Brothersport*  
**Spencer Atkinson**



# Peroxide *and* Gardenias

I look with my grandfather's eyes  
at a thing inside that keeps turning the light  
like a gem.

I don't know how precious it is.

My father fought in Vietnam for it.

My grandmother baked pies for it.

My uncle drank and hid from it.

Sid Vicious puked when he saw it.

I file my nails into its shape.

We seduce one another for it.

My mother prays and prays for it.

We crush the heads of snakes because of it.

I walk barefoot and try to remember it.

It sounds like the Golden Gate Bridge.

It feels like a glacier.

It is smooth like an apple.

It has smelled like peroxide  
and gardenias.

The closest I came to seeing it  
was when I stared into a mixing bowl  
containing fifteen broken eggs.

I counted each yolk

protected in its milky coat—

*it was when I blended them together*

*that I caught a glimpse of it—*

—Rachel Stayton

# *Letters* from Merope One

By Caroline Fulford

*The following is a transcript of the e-mail correspondence between Andrea Park, of the Columbus Youth Space Program, American Fleet, and James Sands, citizen 6120648. Recorded in the years 2020 to 2040.*

I thought of you today, on my way home from school. It was getting late; midterms are coming up, and I had stayed after to study a while in the library. You never would've let me get away with that, I'm sure. You'd throw me into your car and take us to see a showing of some old noir flick in town or something. You always had the best ideas. Andrea, the Girl Genius.

That's what they recruited you for, I guess.

Anyway, I was on my bike, and the sun was setting. Fast, too. It seemed like I was chasing the light as I rode down the sidewalk. So I stopped pedaling and coasted a little while, looking up. It was beautiful, you should've seen it. All pinks and purples with just a little bit of yellow, like a painting. And just where you could see the edge of night trailing behind, there was one star, bright as a little diamond.

I thought it might be yours. Where you are right now, I mean. That made me happy for a while.

How long has it been now? A year and a half? Weird. It seems like—well, a lot longer than that. I turned sixteen two weeks ago, which makes me two years older than when I saw you last. How's life up in the stars? Sorry for not writing sooner. They said I shouldn't write to you until at least a year had passed since you left Earth, what with the time difference and all. It seems I spent a good half-year just figuring out what to say. Some boyfriend I am. Well, we can't all be geniuses, can we?

I'm sorry. That came out wrong. I just miss you. A lot. We kind of left things unfinished when you left. You were gone before I could really process everything. Please don't think I'm angry with you for going. I know this is your dream, and you have every right to pursue it.



I just wish I could be where you are right now, that's all. I'll be waiting for your next letter.

No class can prepare you for your first glimpse of space. Real space, that is, with nothing to break the monotony of the blackness except a smattering of distant stars. I remember the first time, back when we had just broken through Earth's atmosphere and the windows rolled down, I couldn't catch my breath. It was without a doubt the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I can't paint you clearer picture than that.

But it changes every time, I find. That first time, and for a while after that, all it took for me to get really pumped about our mission was a glance out the window. But it was different after a while. Now I look out the window-wall in the main lobby sometimes, when I'm on break, and I see nothing. Nothing at all. Sure, you could say it's because of how far out (or deep in?) we are, but I'm not sure that's entirely true. Because sometimes, when I look out into the black, the nothingness of it all pulls at me. Like if I just let go, it'll rip me from the ground and tear me apart. Then the feeling passes and I close the window and stomp off to my room.

Sorry if I sound strange. It's just been weird around here lately, that's all. I feel like we're in one of those old marine divers—what's it called? A bathysphere, right. It's just a big metal ball with people in it, who peer out into the nothing and jot down notes on clipboards and stuff, and the only thing connecting them to dry land is one long tube. It's been two months, and we've found nothing, no signs of life or even death. Sometimes I don't think there's anything out here at all. That we're alone in the universe.

It just gets frustrating sometimes. But your letters help. They really, really do. God, I miss you, James. With every bone in my body, it feels like. It's only been two months (by our time), but if I don't keep myself busy with lab work or observations or physical training or whatever, I want to go home so much it hurts. But your letters remind me that there are people out there, outside of this damn ship.

But it's not just that, either. I'm still your girlfriend, you know. Love always.

Yesterday in study hall, my cell phone chimed in my pocket. I looked and saw that it was an e-mail from you. This is kind of embarrassing, but I nearly had a heart attack. You would have laughed to see it.

But it's just been so long. I'm in senior year of college now, twenty-two years old. It's been about six years since I sent you my last letter, and eight since I saw you face-to-face. I've grown half a foot or so, my hair's longer, I shave. I know, right? That scrawny scarecrow kid you knew is different now.

I checked with the Columbus representative back home. She said you'd be fifteen now, only a year older than when you left. I wonder what you look like.

I haven't dated anyone. Well, what a high school kid would call "dating" anyway. Make of that what you will.

On a different note, I'm sure you'll be wanting any updates on the life of James Sands, so here they are: I'm cramming for exams at the moment, and the end of senior year is bearing down on me. Soon I'll have to join the real world. Whatever that means. I'm pursuing a degree in aerospace engineering. I may not be able to calculate theoretical physics in my head, but I'm happy with the prospect of being NASA's newest glorified grease monkey.

I know it'll be a while before you get this, at least by our calendar down here, but I want you to know that I never forgot you. But just not in the romantic sense, like in a movie or something. You remember how in school, when a kid was out sick for a really long time, life just kind of went on without him, like he was never there? It was never like that with you gone. I don't really dream about kissing you under your dogwood tree anymore, but somehow you're still relevant to everything. I go about my daily business, but all the time I can sense the space where you used to be, if that makes any sense.

Sorry for rambling. I don't seem to know what I'm talking about anymore. Write back soon.

James, we made contact today! God, I still can't believe it. We've just been up here for so long. I never thought we'd find anything, but we did. Granted, all we found was an empty observation craft, automatically run by computers, taking samples of gases from the star Merope One. For all we know it could have been floating around there for ages, doing its job as its home world lived and died.

But, in any case, do you know what that means? It means we are not alone. For the first time in my life, words fail me. You would love to see the look on my face as I write this letter. And also—the Columbus Mission is accomplished. We can go home now. I'm coming home.

Can't wait to see you. Love always.

I heard about you on the news this morning, on my way out the door to work. They say you'll be back before the year is out. I checked my email as soon as I arrived, and saw your message.

It's funny, you would think I would be happy, and I was. I am really glad you're going to be home again after so long. You must be so tired of being up there. But there was something else, too. For a good half hour after reading your message, I couldn't move, couldn't think. I just sat there, breathing in

and breathing out. I felt like crying, as I hadn't since Dad died last year. But I couldn't cry. I just sat there.

You have to understand, this is like watching someone come back from the dead. I don't know when I started talking about you in the past tense, but I did, somewhere along the line. Even now, I think about you sometimes: I look in a store window and think, *Andrea would have liked that*, or catch an old song on the radio that you used to like and remember when you would sing it in the car on the way home from school.

I am thirty-five years old. I grieved for you, mourned for you. Somehow, I didn't think I'd ever see you again. And now you're coming back. You were—you are—my first love, but now it's like there's an entire ocean between us, and I don't know if I can take my shoes off and dive in. You've only aged three years, but down here, the world has gone on without you, taking me with it whether I liked it or not. Two decades is a long time to hold a candle.

Look, just promise me you'll meet me for coffee as soon as you land. No expectations, no obligations. We'll just talk.

Okay?

I just watched you shrink, smaller and smaller, from the rear window of the cab. You were there, and then you were gone, part of the nameless, faceless crowd in the street. Now I can hardly see anything through the rain.

I'm sending you this last letter through Columbus, before they dump all the personal records to make room for the next fleet of kids. After that, our whole correspondence will just be a tiny empty spot in some government hard-drive. Maybe I'll ask if they can print out a transcript for me, for sentiment's sake.

I'm sorry about how I acted back at the coffee shop. I didn't mean to make a scene. You must have been so embarrassed. I told myself I wouldn't cry, but I did. As teenage girls are wont to do, I guess. I'm kind of glad you led me away, though. That park was so nice. I find I prefer wide open spaces, after three years on a ship.

We talked about a lot of things, sitting on that park bench. I'm still digesting it all. How you look now, first. I think in my heart I expected to see the James I remember, all freckles and long, skinny limbs. But you're a man now, complete with broad shoulders, a suit, five 'o clock shadow, baritone voice. All grown up.

We've both lost something, I think. It's hard to put into words. For me, it feels like someone replaced the boy I loved with this man I've never met, with sad eyes I can still see when I close mine. But I don't presume to guess at how you feel.

Your honesty and openness helped, a little. I didn't say much, so you did most of the talking for me. You dutifully explained all the reasons we should

never see each other again, but I wouldn't stop crying quietly into my scarf. So you said, "There's nothing I can say to make this better, can I?" I shook my head no and you held me, just for a little while.

I could smell your men's cologne, dark but subtle. My chest ached, and I felt, more acutely than ever, the barrier time and space had erected between us, paper-thin but iron-clad. Finally, I had no more tears to cry and you released me.

What can we do? We move on. Our case wasn't that different from every other young love. The world just seemed to work against us, that's all.

But, as you wrote to me once, I never forgot you. And I never will. Somehow, you're still relevant to everything.

Love always. *☺*



*Grieving*  
**Stacy Lewis**

# Shenandoah

The soft turn of night-dark to empty blue.  
Shed dreams and frost.  
Heat of the kerosene fire.  
Warmth. Oatmeal scraped from a tin-cup.

Shed dreams and frost.  
Break camp. The tattering of leaves.  
Warmed by oatmeal scraped from a tin-cup,  
stirred by sunlight, breaks the canopy.

Break camp. The tattering of leaves.  
Rest. Blackberries, picked fresh, plump.  
Stirred by sunlight that breaks the canopy  
down. Moving with the wind.

Rest. Blackberries, ripe, fallen to the ground.  
Trailed by long shadows, the sky burning orange, a cold air  
unsettled, moving with the wind.  
Wander for a place to pass the night.

Trailed by long shadows. Sky burning. Cold air.  
Heat of the kerosene fire. (Lentil soup spooned from a tin cup).  
Set the orange flaps ablaze against,  
the soft turn of empty blue to night-dark.

—Shaughn Dugan

# Rossetti's *Ophelia*

A divine mandate can do terrible things to a man,  
Back when you kept your curls tamped tight,  
He plucked you up from dingy illiteracy  
Convinced he'd sculpted you to life.

So, you walked those twisted hallways,  
The morbid hothouse of his imagination,  
And served the screen for his projections.  
You opened your hands like poppies,  
Slacked your jaw, and let him make you  
The face for all those dead women.

So he birthed you, unselved,  
Across his canvass, curled  
The yellow rue in your fingers,  
Painted your panting chest still  
And your virginity intact,  
But did not see the lanterns smoke  
And the bathwater freeze.

—Julia Schaumburg

*Colors*  
**Stacy Lewis**





*Benjamin David Novak*  
**Color of Autumn 5**





*Onto*  
**Nicole Brzozowski**



*Discontented Heart*  
**Nicole Brzozowski**

# The Last Portrait

By Kelly Meanor

After a fifteen-year apprenticeship under the Florentine masters and another twenty-eight of portraits for his noble patrons, Petrucchio hesitated. No portrait had ever given him this much trouble. He gripped his brush tightly and glowered past his canvas. His nervous model avoided his eyes.

“Chin up!” he barked. “Stop hunching your shoulders.”

The daughter of his current patron, the lord of—something; they all ran together. Her name and identity fragmented into a nose, eyes, eyebrows, a quivering chin. If he focused, she gained only more impersonal labels: Sepia. Cream. Ochre. Her face was a mask, indistinguishable from the thousand others he had painted.

His brush twitched. A line of dark sienna curlicued across the smooth cheek. Petrucchio flung the brush down. “Wretched girl! Look what you made me do!”

Her eyes filled with tears. Cow eyes, he thought. The folds of her brocade gown wrinkled in her fists. Petrucchio started forward to straighten them, and she flinched.

“Ugh. Stop crying.” He blotted the stray line, but the oil had already soaked through the canvas. He sighed and studied his palette for the right shade of peach to blend it. A muted snuffle came from beyond the frame. He sucked the end of his beard into his mouth. If his children had survived the pox, he would have taught them not to snuffle.

“How old are you?”

She stared, saucer-eyed. “Fifteen, Master Petrucchio.”

Her father, his patron, commissioned the portrait to find her a husband. Petrucchio had painted many such commissions. He fetched the disgraced brush, grumbling.

Her chaperone, one of the lord’s serving men, coughed discreetly. He peeked out of his corner of the cramped studio. “Pardon me, Master Petrucchio. Perhaps if you would not shout so much, she would not cry...”

“Who is the master painter here?”

“You are, sir. Forgive me.”

Only within his studio was Petrucchio sovereign. Outside, her father owned nearly a quarter of the city. He defended his fragile kingdom bitterly. “If she can’t sit still and quiet for an hour, how does she ever expect a man to marry her?”

The girl put her hands over her face to muffle her crying. He went back to the painting. His leaden attempts to fix the mistake only smudged it more.

“Go home. I cannot work with you in this state. Come back next week if you think you can manage not to weep all over.” He pointed at the servant. “And as for you—Next time, you will restrain your meddling to the kitchen.”

When they had gone, Petrucchio cleaned his brushes and put away the costly oil paints. The air smelled of turpentine and mildew. The air of the studio closed in around him, hot, damp, and motionless. Cobwebs hovered in the corners of the windowpanes. Outside, summer melted over Florence, smothering the bustle of merchants, scholars, beggars and dandies. Petrucchio rubbed his eyes. The brightness of the sun made them ache.

If he did not complete his commission, he would lose his patron. If he lost his patron, he had no more money. He would lose the studio, his only home. He was in debt to the Academy for materials and paints he had borrowed, and if he did not pay, they could jail him. And even if they did not, what could he do but beg on the streets? He had never done anything but paint.

The portrait filled three quarters of the canvas, flawless except for that stray line. It was easily fixed. He picked up a palette knife and slashed it across the canvas until it peeled away in shreds from the frame.

That made the fifth attempt.

At Mass, Petrucchio raised his eyes to Heaven with the rest but saw only stone. The sacrament tasted like paper. A tightness in his chest held back words, so he mouthed the prayers silently: Our Father, who art in Heaven, how many faces have I forgotten?

He bought bread and wine, having run out of the latter, and tried to see the shop merchant without paint in mind. A nose like Caesar’s, dark pouches under the eyes. His training supplied the amount of cobalt needed before he had to think. He paid and went away sickened.

“One moment, Master Petrucchio!” A man hailed him from a passing carriage. Petrucchio identified his patron by the aquiline nose and watery green eyes. His daughter looked nothing like him; he wondered if she were legitimate.

“Master Petrucchio, what brings Florence’s great artist out on such a hot day?”

Petrucchio clutched his loaves. “My lord, you flatter me.”

“Not at all. Would I commission anyone but the best to paint my child?” The lord’s teeth showed squares of taupe behind fleshy lips.

“Speaking of which, how goes the portrait?”

“It is... proceeding, my lord.”

“Good, good. And when did I commission it, if you don’t mind? I’ve forgotten, it’s been so long.”

“Six months, my lord.” His stomach knotted. No portrait had ever taken him so long, not even his masterpiece of Fiorenza in the year he married her. A gift to her family, the only dowry he could offer, he had spent more time with it than with her until it was complete. After her death, it vanished, along with her relatives. Three months he had spent on that. Now, six—six for a patron he feared and a girl he despised. His ears burned with shame.

The lord gestured impatiently, his hand knobby with rings. “For that, Master Petrucchio, I expect something extraordinary and marvelous.”

It would be easier, he thought, if the subject did not look so much like a cow. “Yes, my lord.”

A chuckle inside the carriage interjected. “Come now, Alonzo. The way you praised him, surely six months isn’t too unreasonable a wait.”

Petrucchio’s heart skipped. A smiling young nobleman leaned out the window. “Alonzo is always talking about the artist he has hired for Emilia’s portrait. I’m delighted to finally meet you. Here, my friend. Come off the street.” He held the door open.

Petrucchio did not dare refuse. Outside the studio, he was bound to his patron’s whims. He entered, trembling, and the carriage rumbled on.

His Mass-going finery looked shabby and dull compared to the resplendent fashions of the noblemen. Petrucchio made the fourth passenger. The other, an elegant woman in a square-necked gown, offered her hand. He kissed it awkwardly.

“My lord, the brother of the wife of the Duke’s cousin,” Alonzo explained. “And his noble wife. I suggested they might see the portrait this afternoon.”

Petrucchio started. “What? Emilia has not—” But of course the little cow would not have mentioned his faltering progress. If she let a mere painter bellow at her, she would hardly bring such news to her father.

“She what? Is something the matter?”

“No, my lord. But please, give me some time.” He groped for an

excuse that left out the ruined portrait. “My studio! It’s hardly fit for guests. It reeks of paint. Give me time to prepare for a visit.”

The lady smiled graciously. Her hand felt cool on Petrucchio’s knee. “We understand. It’s a terrible inconvenience for us to ask.”

“Next week,” Alonzo said. “He will be ready then.”

“As you say, my lord.” Inwardly he reeled. He would have to work like a slave to come up with six months’ worth of progress. Perhaps he could repair the slashed canvas. “After Emilia’s next sitting, perhaps.” They nodded.

A familiar street corner came into view in the frame of the carriage window. “Your graciousness is appreciated. I can walk from here,” he said, meaning to start immediately.

The lady held him back. “A moment, Master Petrucchio,” her husband said. “I wonder if I might commission a piece of my own. A portrait of my wife and I. I’m not in so much of a hurry as my friend here.” He nudged Alonzo teasingly.

Alonzo grunted, fending him off. “Wait until you have eligible daughters, Fedele.”

Fedele grinned at Petrucchio. “Name a price, my friend.”

“I—I cannot—”

“Of course, your mind is busy with Emilia’s portrait right now,” the lady said sweetly. “Take some time to consider. We can discuss this next week. Surely two more portraits will be nothing to an artist of so much experience.”

“Surely,” Petrucchio agreed numbly. His thoughts raced. Two more portraits seemed a small price to pay for a new patron, especially one of high standing and agreeable temperament.

His artistic instincts sized up the couple, picking apart features and assigning colors. He measured their easy smiles; the shine in Fedele’s eye; the unaffected poise of her shapely neck. Hair that dark would send him to the Academy, begging for umber. A background of cerulean should bring out some color in Fedele’s features. A motif of doves might flatter them too much. It had become as easy as breathing to flatten them into imaginary canvases. No, easier—he could not stop.

“Ah! Your building,” Alonzo said, jolting Petrucchio out of his reverie. The coachman jumped down to open the door. “We will accompany you inside next time.”

“Don’t forget your wine,” Fedele added.

Petrucchio stayed on the doorstep, head bowed, until he heard the wheels clatter away. Then he went in, climbed the stairs to his apartment, and locked the door behind him. The familiar stench of turpentine, paint, and

frustration choked him now. He put the bread away and poured the wine.

Emilia would be back in three days. He carried the wine out to his studio to assess the damage.

Shreds of older canvases and paint-stained rags littered the floor. Heaps of sketches were raked up in corners, as high as his knee. He did not remember whether the windows had been opened all year. Petrucchio pivoted on his heel, taking it in like a stranger. The decay appalled him. How long ago must a man's wife have died for him to sink so far, he wondered. He could measure the time better in paintings than in years, because the years had all become the same. Now the paintings were, as well.



*A Gathering*  
**Stacy Lewis**



Squatting by the frame, Petrucchio lifted a scrap of canvas. Emilia's cow eyes stared back. He could probably repaint her from memory now, if he could bring himself to try. He hated the sight of her.

"Would it be different if I painted someone I don't loathe?" he asked the blank eyes. "Is that why I can't finish this?" Then he remembered that he wouldn't even loathe her when it was done. She would be simply another portrait. It happened to every one of his paintings.

He sorted through a heap of sketches with his foot. Faces, faces, faces; noses round or pug or pinched or hawklike; eyes watery or bright; bushy brows and lantern jaws and dimples. Their names were lost. Dimly he remembered being a child, helping his father and uncles pull in nets full of silver fish. He doubted those men ever looked around and recognized none of the faces beside them.

He sipped the wine. It burned. "My God," he said aloud. "When was the last time I enjoyed painting?"

On the third morning, Emilia sat straight-backed and soundless in her chair. The servant lingered obediently in the kitchen. Petrucchio suspected that he looked like the devil himself, unwashed and red-eyed. He had barely slept, working to recreate the portrait to the state she had last seen. Now he gnawed on his beard, ignoring her. The brush and his hand were carved in stone.

He tried not to think of the silly cow with her soft blubbery face. He imagined Fedele and his lady wife instead. If they sat for him, this tyrannical silence might be filled with their blithe conversation and laughter. The thought failed to stir his brush. He had liked other subjects before, initially. As soon as he painted them, they became only faces. The same would happen again.

He forced his brush toward the canvas, sick at heart. Each brushstroke seemed to take a thousand years.

He cursed aloud. Emilia squeaked. Petrucchio spat out his beard and jabbed the brush at her. "By all that's holy, girl, are you ever still? How can I paint you if you're always whimpering and wailing?"

"I'm sorry, Master Petrucchio."

"Your father's friends could pay me a great deal of money if I do well for you. Enough that I don't have to spend my food money on paint and canvas. I could live in a house, instead of this garret. All it takes is a portrait of one mewling little baby." He looked from the living face to the painted one. There was no difference. "I don't know if I can," he confessed softly.

She took that as another accusation, and bit her lip. Her timidity

repelled him. Petrucchio abandoned the portrait. “Stay put,” he ordered, going to the kitchen. “Practice being still. If you move, I’ll know. God help you if I hear crying again!”

The servant avoided his eyes while Petrucchio hacked the bread apart. Petrucchio glared at him anyways before carrying his plate back through the studio into his tiny bedroom. The narrow bed, jammed between wall and gable, had never held two. Fiorenza died before he moved there. He pushed a heap of bedding and clothes aside to sit. He felt very old.

He chewed slowly, wishing he had brought the wine. Not the slightest sound came from the studio. Evidently he had terrorized Emilia enough. Fiorenza would have scolded him for bullying if she were there. If she were there, Petrucchio would tell her that after almost fifty years of painting faces, he had stopped caring about the people behind them. He couldn’t even see them.

Perhaps he would just hold her. It had been a long time. He held his fingers against his lips and tried to remember her face. Could he even be sure he remembered the right one? If someone rapped on his door and returned to him his missing masterpiece, would he see his wife, or only another portrait? He had no answer.

The plate crashing to the floor jolted him out of his reverie. The light in the room had changed. Silence reigned in the studio as he went out. Emilia sat stiffly where he had had left her, but with her head canted to the side and eyes closed. She had fallen asleep, too. Traces of tears clung to her downy cheeks.

He stole back to his canvas. His brush was starting to dry; he’d been careless, leaving it like that. He moved to lay down another layer of fuchsia along the portrait’s collarbones, then stopped. If he completed the portrait, the silly twit would be gone, and he would have peace. Peace, and another portrait whose subject’s name he would forget. He knew none of the faces he had painted. He knew no one. Here he stood, fifty-three years old, with a life full of canvases where people should have been.

There was nothing wrong with Emilia’s face, save for being cowlike; nothing wrong with Fedele or his wife or the grocer on the street. He hated each face he saw, only because he saw portraits instead of faces. His heart had been screaming it for six months, and finally he listened. He could not paint another portrait. He was done.

Patronage, wealth, fame—he pushed them away. His fragile kingdom was only a three-room garret that stank. As a child on the coast, he had owned the whole of the oceans. He had owned the universe in Fiorenza’s eyes. He would not sell his heart and soul for this.

The brush in his hand swelled with paint. He studied his incomplete commission, then its human inspiration. Had any other subject been so canvas-like?

Alonzo would be furious. Even without the Academy's loans, paying back the commission would likely send Petrucchio to debtor's prison. Jail meant illness, maybe death, at his age. Alonzo would know that. He would use it to force Petrucchio to finish the portrait.

"No," Petrucchio told him aloud. "I am finished already." He picked up the palette. This portrait, his last, he wanted to remember.

The first stroke mirrored the original mistake, a delicate curl of fuchsia running down her cheek. Emilia did not wake until she felt the third. She jerked away from the brush with a gasp.

"Hold still, girl." He held her firmly by the back of the neck and continued painting on her face. Neither spoke. She stared past him at the ceiling, her eyes welling up with horror and humiliation. When tears ran from the corners, he blotted them with his sleeve.

Eyes, nose, and lips became obscured by the resplendent colors dappling her face. They merged into a hectic design of red, gold, blue, and green. His pulse pounded in his ears. With each stroke, the weight of another portrait lifted.

Lacy tendrils of color snaked from her jawline to her brows. No mask in the world could match it. Emilia trembled under his hands. His loathing melted away. He wished he had a mirror for her.

When there was no bare canvas remaining, not even her ears, Petrucchio stepped back. He could barely make out her cow eyes within the maze of color. "There," he said. "You may go tell your father that your portrait is complete."

Emilia raised her hands, but seemed afraid to touch her face. "M-Master Petrucchio!"

"Go on. Get out. Go home. You're done here." He wiped his brush, jerking his head toward the kitchen. "Your man can walk you home, can't he? I have to clean the studio." She reached for a cloth. "No! Don't smear it. I want your father to see."

In the end he had to chase her out. "This is an outrage!" the servant shouted, as Petrucchio locked the door behind them. "Lord Alonzo will hear of this!"

"I hope you'll let him see it as well," Petrucchio retorted. The servant raged for another few minutes, but Petrucchio did not bother to listen. He hoped people would see. He was quite pleased with his masterpiece.

Alonzo stormed in two hours later. Petrucchio had unlocked the door for him. “What the devil’s gotten into you?” he bellowed. “Have you completely lost your wits? I hired you to paint my daughter’s portrait, not make her up like a heathen!”

Petrucchio tossed an armful of sketches and canvas scraps into the growing pile of trash. He dusted his hands off. “Did you like it? I think it’s very beautiful.”

“Petrucchio!”

“Did you at least look at it?”

“How could I not? My child looks like a jester!”

Petrucchio smiled. “I’m glad someone got to see it, at least.” Unlike Fiorenza’s lost portrait, this one would never be forgotten.

Alonzo flung his hat at him. “Did I see? Half of Florence saw! She’s ruined!”

At the least, Petrucchio thought, her face will be memorable. He continued gathering up the rubbish.

Finally Alonzo noticed the state of the studio. All the flotsam and jetsam of decades of painting had been swept out of the corners; the jars of pigments heaped up; the brushes clumped like so much firewood. His fury dissolved into bewilderment. “What is this?”

“Rubbish,” Petrucchio answered. “I can hardly use it now. Perhaps your friend Fedele can offer it to another painter? There are many good ones at the Academy. I can give him names.”

Alonzo picked up a color study that had fallen toward his feet. “By all the saints,” he said, shaking his head. “You’ve damned yourself, Petrucchio. You could have been something legendary. So much talent, wasted.”

“As you say, my lord.”

Petrucchio took the incomplete portrait of Emilia from his easel and tossed it on top of the mound. He dashed the cobwebs from the window and tried to open it. The panes jammed, but he managed to shoulder them free. A warm breeze darted in and whirled around the room in a frenzy of newfound freedom. It chased away the dust and the smell of oil paint.

He leaned out, ignoring Alonzo’s grumbling behind him, and breathed in the Florentine summer. If Alonzo did not press charges right away, Petrucchio would go back to the coast. The people there might be kind to an old fool. If not, maybe Fedele would keep him from jail. Perhaps the Academy would look mercifully on an old student. He regretted nothing. The painting of Emilia had been something extraordinary and marvelous indeed. ☺

# Oakrest

I will not live quietly anymore, your  
words taste too much like iron.  
You and your buttoned-up neck,  
and your bible.

My eyelids will no longer genuflect  
as you pass, I will not be scorched  
with your righteousness  
and your white-hot pity.

I know that beneath the rock  
of your face, we are the same clay.  
The same breathing clay, no spark,  
just movement and sound.

—Julia Schaumburg



*Witness*

**Marisa Sprowls**

*1985-2004*

A young and soiled man bound by the vice of pride  
Spoke often of a dream he dreamt one fevery night.  
“Die you will in ten years time,”  
Spoke the image of his mind.  
To this he scoffed and hotly claimed *It will not be!*  
Nine years straight saved paper weights, and jumped into the sea.

—William Huberdeau

# THE Cutting THINGS

By Taylor Larson

If everybody could see your scar, if they all smiled at it and laughed and said it's cute, if no one cared about your pain—you'd be happy. You could keep to yourself and not worry about letting other people see. But what if nobody can see?

The program found a pleasant home. A cold draft blows in your room and all your books rest close to the bed. No noise presents itself, as the other people living here are always away. The stairs feel firm and you grin.

But mornings are different. Now the other people sit gathered here and push you in with them. You don't want to eat but they cut bananas above red oatmeal in front of you and you don't want to eat but the clanging of their passing spoons pushes into your ears and you don't eat but orange juice gets spilt on your blouse and bottom anyway and so you've got to put on another outfit.

Why are the only other clothes you own too big and scratchy? The bus comes late. Your seat warms your legs and causes them to tingle so you kick it with the back of your feet. Other girls get on who look nothing like you and can't say your name. If you were back in the other land you'd hear your name. Maybe then it's good these girls can't say it.

The sky burns. Through the open window it heats the small room and makes you scowl. All four beds are topped with folded clothes, and the radio plays music from a different land.

Mother taps her left foot in rhythm with the music. She puts some of your books into a suitcase but stares at one before setting it in, trying to read the cover. How proud she is of your awards at school. Studying so much was easy though, since you wanted to be away from her, and it was easy to be alone with your books. But wouldn't that mean what she did to you was good since it helped you do well in school? This thought hurts, so you clench your teeth and shake your head.

Did Mother have it done to her when she was a girl?

Yes.

Why then, did she have it done to you?

It had to be done. No one wanted you to be in pain, but when you get a husband you'll be happy it was done.

And why do other people get to decide if you have a husband or not?

You'll need a husband because you'll want children.

But one of your books details the human body. Having children might now kill you.

Something else might need to be done, to help you give birth.

You'll never let anything more be done.

A picture of you and your brothers lies by one of the beds. The photo shows you with baby fat. You cry as you leave. Mother asks if you'll be back soon but you don't answer because you're thinking how happy you are not to have sisters.

School's worse now. Every room has so many cutting things. Scissors cut smooth things and the shredder cuts unwanted things and the sharpener cuts nubby things and the scalpels cut dead things and all the eyes cut you things.

There are many eyes and many people. All the halls pack with them and become pressed into evenly cut lines. The lunchroom fills and everyone uses knives to cut. Since you're tall, you're called onto a crowded court where you have to jump and bump into different girls for a ball. Plenty of room exists on the sides, but only for other people to come sit and look at you. In the showers the other girls walk around and it seems impossible for them not to see. But at least the water's cold, and numbing.

The library is the only alone place here. All the books stand shelved close to a table sitting chilled under dim light. Away from the table you see a big window. On the other side a plump sun pours warmth onto some laughing people. They stand close together.

Is this what you're supposed to be? Is this what's expected of you?

Outside the air stifles and smells. Steamy fumes slither into your nose and start mists in your eyes and a humming sound that stabs your ears. Your feet become weaker as you walk toward the group, so that you stumble on the curve and drop one of your books into a puddle of dirty water.

They want to know you. Do you want to come with them to a place where there's food and people?

School's fun, so why don't people come? Maybe it's because the school's new and people aren't used to it yet. It'd be more fun with more people and busy halls.



The door opens. The heat feels nice on your skin and the steps are bouncy.

Market Street lays unblocked and puts all the broken voices from the side stands into one pretty sound. What smells good? A man selling fruit grins at you. He sees that you like fruit and he has some really good fruit in his store so you follow him into a room because he has a happy face. An old woman leans by a low table with knives spread out on it and Mother's here with a small but proud smile because now you'll be a woman and you realize this is a place of cutting things. The door closes.

The dirtied book doesn't look bad. The stained cover feels fleshy.

No. No you will not go because you are you and you know that and you say no you will not. *ℳ*

*Rose*  
**Cory Hitt**



# I felt an *eclipse*

The bottom fell out today.  
I felt a shiver, a pin prick, my skin  
twisted, my smile fell.  
I shrank suddenly, became too thin.

I couldn't get warm, despite the mug  
of tea I held, savoring  
the earthy smell, rose petals and cloves. I closed my  
eyes, saw the ocean lapping, the sun gently

falling on my skin. I'm woken, my thoughts broken,  
and I see that I am far, so far  
from any tranquil beach with  
glinting white caps. I went to

bed, shutting off my broken thought-machine,  
burnt up my hopes, used for fuel,  
left this body with a cough, a sputtering of sparks,  
and an awkward, uncertain gait.

But tomorrow is a new sun. It will  
rise, with renewed spirit, and light.

—Shaughn Dugan

# Closed Casket

It seems I'm too much for this last morning.  
The lid locks, my moans move my ears alone  
In this crevice black. Mumbles of mourning  
I knew seep in--proof I'm not on my own.  
"Here lies one of us all. May we soon meet  
What we never tried to know." Hands of mud  
Smear my face--I cringe at the hand-clapping beat  
And claw at the lid, my nails black with blood.  
Whispers sing below, "They reach in, you reach  
Down, where we wait on blind Faith of our choice."  
The voice of books that teach, preachers that preach  
Said caskets would rise and forever rejoice.  
But my soul stays still, buried, locked in place  
By the damned, the pure, and my Christ's lost face.

—Logan Wamsley



*Tree*  
**Cory Hitt**

# pastoral involving providence

this tree could not have been anywhere else,  
but i am less in earth than air.  
you used to say *the air's so cold*  
*it's like we don't even have to smoke.*  
the wind says with universal assurance  
what season it is,  
and the trees begin  
their resurrection act:  
the yellow vine hardening,  
the twig snapping,  
the bow groaning beneath its own weight,  
all dried up yet  
limp with moisture.  
see this leaf? i could have held it  
in my hand and cracked it  
into fine rust. i could have  
walked just as easily  
on the other side of the street—  
going where i came,  
seeing things backwards,  
seeing mirror-trees—  
but time makes no room for  
what doesn't move forward.  
you could be walking me home,  
but you have bronchitis  
and a girl who is making you soup  
while you sleep.

—Rachel Stayton

11/4/09

I have barricaded myself here in Blair 215, which is my last stronghold against the undead. I do not know the fate of the Gallery staff, let alone the remainder of W&M students, but I can only hope that they have withstood the recent onslaught. As more and more <sup>and more</sup> zombies accumulate outside the door, I realize it is more and more likely that this will be my last will and testament. And so I ~~am~~ would like to take this opportunity to address some very important people, who are the reason I have stayed alive thus far. If you have found this letter, lying next to my mangled body, please make sure it gets to the right people. If they are still alive.

To Carrie, Katie, Kristine, and Arielle: Each of you has saved my life at least once since the zombies came. Carrie, Katie, your cache of weaponry was crucial in keeping us all alive as the infection began.

to spread. Just remember not to lock when you should group, and I know you'll be fine. Kristine, your underground bunker saved my life when I was cornered and outnumbered. But Kristine, you can't fight every zombie. Get some sleep. Arielle, I owe so much to the martial arts training you have taught me. Your dedication is truly inspiring, and I would like to leave you my trusty sword, with which I have beheaded many a zombie.

To Andrew, although you have ~~and~~ joined the teeming mass of the undead, and may even now be throwing your rotting flesh against the door that is my only safeguard: Although you predicted the zombie uprising, and spent so many hours and days preparing for it, there was, tragically, nothing you could do to keep yourself from infection. As long as I live, I'll never forget your last words to me: "I hid the cure in — BRAAAAINS."

To Marisa: I probably owe you more than anyone else. I know I would've died that day when the zombies ambushed us at Confusion Corner, if you hadn't distracted them, by pretending that demotors were approaching. You bought me the time to escape... it just wasn't enough time to save



# Contributors

**Spencer Atkinson** is a senior at the College. He takes science classes and makes art in the evenings.

**Shaughn Dugan** is a senior English major at the College. He hopes to one day receive an MFA in Creative Writing.

**Caroline Fulford** enjoys reading foppish novels, long walks on the beach, candlelit dinners, and the sound of chainsaws on yielding flesh. She is also not, in fact, a student at the College, but is spending a year in space, transmitting the Beatles for the listening pleasure of our galaxial neighbors.

**Stacy Lewis** tackles, rucks, mauls, and scrums. Most of her clothes have paint stains. She loves pheromones.

**Kelly Meanor** will write for food. People tell her this is not a good homelessness contingency plan.

**Benjamin David Novak** is an amateur photographer and 3L at the William & Mary School of Law. Upon graduation in May, he will be an Associate with the law firm of Lowenstein Sandler.

**Julia Schaumburg** is a senior at the College. She thinks psychology and poetry express the same truth about humanity; the former in a scientific way, and the latter in an anecdotal, artistic way. She also likes Law and Order, orange juice, and pr0n.

**Rachel Stayton** was born in Southeast Alabama. In kindergarten she kept a journal in which she gradually learned to spell using phonetics (e.g. campyooter, pankaks). She writes confessional poetry because it's the most accurate way she can communicate her feelings.

**Logan Wamsley** is currently a sophomore at the College and is working toward a dual major in English and Economics. He enjoys reading, writing, Metal Gear Solid, football, martial arts, and occasionally acting.