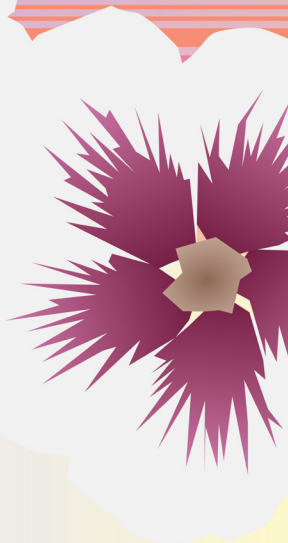
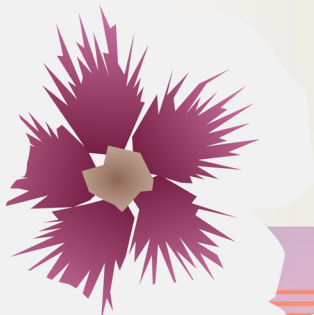


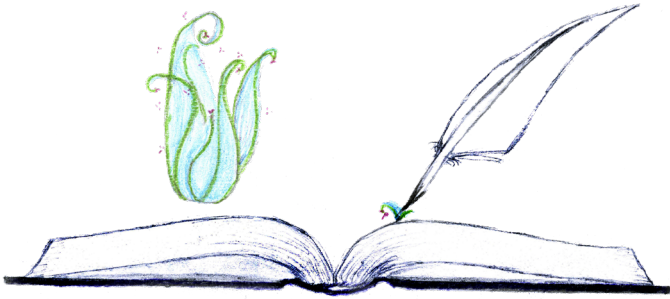


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Dear Reader,

This season's journal includes both genre and non-genre fiction pieces, because we found that the theme of growing and thawing drew a broad variety of quality work. Many of these works include the process of transformation or an appreciation for the beauty of creation. As you read, we hope these pieces lead you to contemplate God's beauty growing within and around you.

I want to thank Beth Potterveld for her consistent support and advice. John Colson, next year's editor-in-chief, was integral this year in editing, marketing, team formation, and obtaining club status. We are grateful for Tolkien Society, Whinklings, and Laura Schmidt for their support since the beginning of this journal. We also want to thank Professor Mazarella for her help as our new club advisor.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Williams

CONTRIBUTORS

Elizabeth Sublette ('21)

Elizabeth is a double major at Wheaton in Biblical Archaeology and Ancient Languages with a concentration in Greek. She is from a ski town in Utah (ah Mormons), and she has been writing since she was seven years old.

Autumngrace Page ('22)

Autumngrace Page is a freshman English writing major. She loves writing poems and some of her favorite poems are written by Maya Angelou or Wislawa Szymborska.

Cassidy Keenan ('21)

Cassidy Keenan is a sophomore English Major with a theatre minor. She has played many strange and lovely games with her theatre company at Wheaton in order to be able to write this piece, and is grateful for all that she has learned along the way. She spends most of her free time reading, waitressing, being dramatic, and just generally making a mess.

CONTRIBUTORS (cont.)

Kayley Goertzen ('19)

Kayley Goertzen is a senior studying Psychology, with certificates in Neuroscience and HNGR. She loves writing and reflecting on the six months she spent in Santo Domingo, Ecuador, where she got to learn from her host mom in her garden and students at school. she is interested in Occupational Therapy, tea, microphotography, dogs, and all things justice.

Staff

Elizabeth Williams ('19)

Elizabeth is a senior English Literature major. She mostly loves to read but also likes to write poetry from time to time. She enjoys painting portraits of friends and family.

Beth Potterveld (alumni '11)

Beth likes to write fantasy stories, of short or epic length. She also likes to write down any theological breakthroughs that bring her closer to peace with God (because if she doesn't write them down quickly, she completely forgets and her life is back to shambles the next morning). Although she has studied Spanish, Latin, Greek, German, Hebrew, ASL, and Elvish, she only speaks English.

Staff

John Colson ('22)

John is a freshman English major and an avid reader of fantasy, Westerns, literary fiction and poetry. He has spent his life on his family's ranch in central Montana, and is proud to say that his county has a population density of 0.8 people per square mile. He is still amazed that the Chicago area has ten times the population of his entire state, but is beginning to get used to the idea. In his spare time, John can often be found hiking, fishing, or skiing in Montana's mountain ranges, hunting, reading, writing poetry and short fiction, and reading some more. John famously loves beef, and would do almost anything to see more of it served at SAGA.

Arrival of Spring by Autumn Grace Page

It's amusing to me
to see
How some view dandelions as weeds.
Yet I yearn for the first spectacular sighting of them.
They scream springtime and colors,
Sprouting out of the nowhere-ness
of shivering winter
Dandelions turn into beauty, sunlight, lilies, lace,
dresses twirling to the beat
of the gasping wind,
taking in all that is spring.
This flower time leads into summertime
Humid nights spent under gazebos,
with heads thrown back in laughter,
flip-flops tossed aside
to ease feet into bristly soothing blades of grass

And the smell,
oh, such a smell tingles the nose
with the delightful and incomparable
Smell of flowers
That begin with the wondrous and misty arrival of spring.



Life's Work by Elizabeth Sublette

The bomb fit perfectly into the bag; just as I had intended. I wasn't going to waste my opportunity, six months in the making, or my bomb, which had also been a year in the making, on a bag that wouldn't fit the job properly. I shook my head, and rubbed my face tiredly. I hadn't shaved in a couple of days, but maybe... The clock said I didn't really have time, but I could almost hear Helen's voice in my head telling me I needed to shave before leaving the house; If this miserable studio apartment could be called a house. Only a few minutes late, I finally stepped out of the room and walked into the hallway. Turning from locking the door, I lugged the heavy bag further onto my shoulder and walked briskly down the stairs to exit the dingy square building I had resided in for eight months.

It was overcast but the early morning sun struggled to shine all the same. I sort of admired its tenacity, but most of me didn't respond. It was like that these days, probably depression after three years of being alone. Even that thought couldn't bring me to care; which was probably the most damning evidence of all.

In this small town there was a town square. No one was awake yet, which is what I intended.

The square would be empty. I would be alone with Jane, the hero of this town. He had died in opposition to the “oppressive” government. I had nothing against the government, even worked as a scientist for them for years. They had helped me feed my family. The Rebels though, them I had a problem with.

As I walked toward the statue of Jane the Brave, I remembered that day. The sun had been shining, I had brought Helen and Ben, our son, to the lab that day to show Ben some of what we’d been working on. He’d only been ten, but he’d been bright as they come. Helen had homeschooled him, to give him the best education we could. I’d left just for a few minutes to get some papers from the car when the Rebels had struck. The building was reduced to rubble, along with my family and my life’s work.

My death’s work was to end the Rebels. Yeah, I called it death’s work because life’s work didn’t fit. I didn’t feel like I was living anymore. I rubbed my face with both hands, trying to drive away the drowsiness and the cold.

It didn’t really matter to me what the Rebels were fighting for, I knew they were wrong.

“Hi!” A high pitched, almost annoying, voice interrupted my thoughts.

I grunted and looked around. A small girl, maybe eight, had fallen in step beside me. I

stopped. She stopped.

“What do you want?” I asked gruffly.

Stupid kid.

“Nothing.” She answered, then she smiled.

“My name is Beatrice. What’s yours?”

I turned and continued walking toward the town square. The sun would be fully up soon, and then the Rebels would come and make their speech. The bomb had to be in place before they crawled out of their holes.

“Do you have a name?”

“Yes.”

“Well, it’s rude not to say it back. Mommy says so.”

I kept walking.

“Where are you going?”

“Nowhere.”

“You’re walking pretty fast to be going nowhere.” She huffed. “What’s in your bag?”

I sighed longsufferingly and turned to look at her. She had big blue eyes, which only dredged up more memories. I pushed them away and was left with frustration. I could try to get rid of her, but why did it matter? She wasn’t going to be able to stop me. I’d fought soldiers, secret agents, and generals in the last three years. A little girl wasn’t going to change my mind.

“Where are your parents?” I snapped, thinking I was going to give them a piece of my mind.

Honestly, letting your child run around at this time of the morning alone...

She shrugged. "I dunno. I wanna know what you're doing."

I turned and continued walking.

"People only say they're going nowhere with nothing when they're doing something important." She continued.

"Well maybe I am." I retorted. "So you had better hurry along back to your parents and quit bothering me."

"I could." She looked back up mischievously at me. "Or I could come with you. You could tell me what's in you bag."

She started to reach for it.

"No!" I pulled the bag away. "Go find your parents, now is not the time for little girls to be running around alone."

"Fine." She pouted, but at least she went away.

Finally, I could see the statue.

The statue of Jane was poorly constructed. It had been crudely carved from wood. The face was probably supposed to be awe inspiring, but it almost didn't come across as a face. The crooked features spoke more to sadness than to bravery. I knelt at the statue and pulled at one of the boards at the bottom. It came loose. A night or two ago I had come by and loosened it specifically for this

day. No one had discovered it. That boded well.

I shoved the black bag into the statue base and refixed the panel. Just as I was shoving the board back on, a voice spoke.

“Why are you doing that?”

I jumped and turned around. But it was only Beatrice. Her blond hair and blue eyes made her look so innocent, and such features were rare these days, but I didn't believe in her innocence for a second. That child was devious.

“No reason.”

“Is it for the Resistance?”

I sighed, realizing that I was going to have to try harder to lose her.

“Sure, it's for the Resistance.”

“Oh, the Resistance is good. Is it a good surprise?”

Fine, whatever you say miserable brain-washed child. I walked to the edge of a nearby building. Some stairs on its side led up onto the roof, the perfect spot to watch the end of the Resistance.

“How do you know the Resistance is good?”

I asked, although I didn't really care what the answer was.

The anger was just sparking up inside of me at this stupid child who thought that the people of this town were good. She had no idea what sort of evils they committed.

“Daddy says the Resistance will win the war.”

And then she grinned. "Mommy says daddy is a hero, and that's why he fights."

Oh no.

I looked at Beatrice with new eyes. For just a single moment, I saw a daughter that I might have had. Helen and I had always wanted one. She would have looked like her mom, blond hair and blue eyes. I blinked, the sweet vision was gone and along with it the color.

"Go home, it'll be safer there."

"What? But I wanna see the parade!" She protested.

I turned her around and set her towards the row of houses we had come from.

"Listen to me." I said with an urgent compassion for another human that I hadn't managed in awhile. "Go far away from here, this square is not safe."

She looked back at me indignantly.

"If it's not safe then why are you here?"

Then, her eyes lit up as she looked over my shoulder.

"Oh, mommy!" She waved at me, then took off.

Across the square I saw her run into the arms of a woman.

The sun was almost free of the earth, only to be imprisoned again in the clouds. People were gathering. Men were gathering. A man came through

the crowd. I turned and hurried up the steps. That man was their leader, son of Jane. Today he would die, and with him the Resistance.

Up at the top of the building, I stood with my hands in my pockets. Waiting. The remote was in my hand. I only had to wait for the soldiers to gather before pushing the trigger. Only moments were left before I would have the revenge I had sought for three eternal years.

Beatrice and her mother stood near the front of the crowd, which was closing in on the statue. I blinked again, and I saw her wave at a man at the front. He had her blonde hair, but I couldn't see more from the distance. I blinked, and I could see color again.

The men gathering were young and old. Their uniforms were patchwork, barely even worth calling uniforms. They stood with minimal weapons. Their leader started speaking, but I didn't hear him. There were women and children in the crowd. Beatrice and her mother were laughing and excitedly talking with the people beside them.

I looked at the control in my hand.

A long time ago, when Helen and I had met in college, she had been reading something and she had cried. I'd felt compelled to ask her what was wrong, as I always did. It had been a regular occurrence. She'd been a literature major, something that I had found frivolous, but now her words

washed over me like the water of life.

"Why does revenge and hate only breed more revenge and hate? When does it end?"

I sank to my knees on that roof. And

Finally,

Blessedly,

I wept.



Botanical Reverie by John Colson

Upon a wide plain on a cool May night,
Illumined by bright, Selenic light,
A tall hill looms with somber face,
Careless to night's pacific embrace.

Its sandstone crags survey the fields
Surrounding the old and noble hill,
And cracked and crumbling, prepare to yield
Themselves to Nature's grinding mill.

The plain surrounding the hill presents
Myriad beautiful blossoming flowers
Arrayed in all colors, and elegant,
Yet absent from yon imposing tower.

A harsh, ugly hill, and unpleasant to see—

What flora at all could survive on its peak?
No magnificent flowers or lovely trees
But only a sage-brush, gnarled and meek.

This simple sage's sweet delight,
Unlike to the gaudy herbs below,
Bears only a mellow scent and polite,
That never expires, but ebbs in its flow.

Though the flowers below only briefly allure
And in short-lived flashes of brightness abound,
This humble sage for years will endure
And its sweet scent blanket the rolling ground.

Perhaps this harsh hill chose wisest of all,
For as flowers quickly fade and fall,
The aroma of sage, what comfort brings!
True beauty is found in simple things.

See the Room

by Cassidy Keenan

My acting professor Mark says to look for people that we've seen under the fig tree. It's an idea based on a Bible passage, coming from a verse in the book of John. Jesus tells Nathanael that he saw him under the fig tree, observing him when he didn't realize he was being watched, and it was then that Jesus realized that there was "no deceit in him."

In Workout, seeing someone under the fig tree is the concept of having witnessed someone at their most basic level, a moment when they didn't know someone was watching or perhaps knew and simply didn't want to be seen, when they are, in short, their most human selves. My first thought is Sarah.

There are some people who you've seen under the fig tree just by accident, some people who are in the right (or wrong) place at the right (or wrong) time and the world slips a bit on its axis and you can see through the cracks in the veneer for just the briefest instant. Maybe it's so brief, or maybe they are so foreign to you, that you don't notice. And there are certainly those who don't make it easy for you. There are those who duck behind the wide, austere trunk of the fig tree, who cling

to it, nails digging into the soft earthy bark, pressing their face against it so the grooves dig marks into their skin. There are those who don't want to be seen. But these people are few and far between. Sarah is not one of them.

Nor is Sarah anything like me, one of those people who grabs hold of the tree and scales it in an instant. I cling to one of the uppermost branches and wave frantically so that the leaves bend and dip as if they're caught in a lightning storm and figs come thundering to the ground like hail. (Somehow, people still don't see me there anyway. Almost certainly because I try too hard.)

Sarah is one of those people who stands quietly beneath the fig tree, not hiding, not begging to be noticed, just standing. It's hard to think of all the people who walk by and do not bother to look. It's hard to think of how I used to be one of them.

Workout is the name of the Wheaton College Arena Theatre company, and it is very difficult to describe without making us sound like a big hippie cult. Running this risk, I usually tell people that we meet twice a week as a company—there are about forty members total—and we play acting games and do exercises in physicality and emotion. The goal is to get more in sync with our inner selves as we attune to the space around us and to one another. All of this is true. None of it is what

Workout is really about.

I think of all the things that I have done in Workout, all the various games that we have played, things that wouldn't make sense to anyone else. I have been "in the middle." I have played Corey's Game, where you tell a story in five sentences. I have walked the tightrope between heavy and light. I have hatched a dragon egg with a holy dance. I have cried so hard that I was unable to breathe. I have gone bowling with the saints. The wildest part, of course, is that none of it made sense to me at the time, either. Mark never explains the rules of the games: instead, he has the senior members of Workout share "sentences" about them. Usually it is sentences like:

"Try ten percent less."

"Consider with breath."

"Go before you're ready."

And of course, "See the room you're in."

I met Sarah at the beginning of my freshman year, because she lived across the hall from me. I remember noticing her at the floor meetings. She stood out in the chaotic haze of orientation just enough to make a first impression; a tall, slender blonde with haunted blue eyes and perfect posture. I remember thinking from the very beginning that she was quiet and striking and lovely.

I remember noticing that she had scars on her back, and a few on her shoulder as well.

after Arena had held its beginning-of-the-year informational meeting. We had both attended.

“Are you going to practice your monologue?” she wanted to know. The haunted look I thought I had glimpsed was gone, replaced by such frankness as I had never known. She stood in the doorway to my room, lips pursed slightly, not impatient so much as brisk.

“I guess so,” I answered her, going for my friendliest tone.

She was utterly unmoved. “Good. Me, too. Let’s go down to the theatre and practice there.”

I was aghast at the idea, rehearsing in the sacred space that I felt we had no right to yet, but she was adamant. “I think it would be great,” she insisted. Not unfriendly, just intense. “There’s bound to be plenty of space. We’ll just find an empty room and get to it.”

It’s hard to disagree with her. Even then, she had this way of looking at me, a way that let me know that she saw through every single one of my excuses. There is something intrinsic in human beings that makes us want to either follow or run away from people like that.

I followed.

We sat in the empty greenroom, all the makeup mirrors and lights gleaming around us, and I stood and paced back and forth in front of her. Some of the monologues had all the proper

nouns and adjectives removed, and we were supposed to fill them in with whichever word felt right. One read, it was a great mistake, my being born a _____.

Sarah sat in front of me on the couch, long legs crossed, posture still perfect, lips still slightly pursed.

"I don't know what to fill this blank with," I fretted.

"I'm not going to help you," she said simply.

On the day of auditions, she performed right after I did. I had watched her recite the monologue repeatedly in the makeup room the night before—an angsty piece, a bitter, ranting girlfriend who cannot live up to the rest of the world's ideals—so I wasn't expecting to be surprised by her performance.

She began to talk, and immediately the atmosphere changed. Everything felt tense and shaky as she spoke, her eyes lighting up. Fervent. Almost feverish. She was shaking, too, every part of her. As I watched her, startled, my nerves were suddenly whisked into something sharper, electric. The hollow area behind my ribs filled up with a strange anxiety as she began to cry.

There are people who take great pride in being able to cry on command, but nothing about Sarah's crying was orchestrated. I could tell. I think she was just as bewildered by it, if not more so, than

the rest of us. She hunched over herself, gasping for a moment, then continued on, her voice quivering. She dropped her line, called for it, still gasping. As soon as someone read it to her she was off again.

The world shifted on its axis a bit. That was the first time I saw her under the fig tree, I think. She finished the monologue without any grand flourish and sat back down next to me, looking as confused and unhinged as I felt.

It is a weighty thing to be an actor. It is not simply jazz hands and box steps. It is not flashy lights or strange costumes or Shakespearean sonnets or even merely pretending to be someone else for awhile. There is something in it that Sarah encompasses, and she always has. Something about being as open and vulnerable as you possibly can. You are not putting on a mask when you get on-stage; rather, you are taking one off, exposing yourself to your deepest and rawest emotions. Not only that, but you are standing in front of a crowd of others—strangers, critics, cynics, dreamers, often friends and family, which can be the scariest of all—and letting them witness you.

A weighty thing indeed.

We both got into Workout, in the end. I remember that she was the first person I ran to with my letter, squealing and shaking. I remember her screaming with me, hugging me so tight, spinning

me around.

Then she stopped and cupped my face in her hands and held it there, beaming down at me. I remember that moment with clarity: standing there, wordless, weightless, clinging to her wrists, the two of us just staring at each other. To this day, I'm not sure what she saw. Later, she knocked on my door and held up her own acceptance letter, grinning.

What a time we two will have, I thought, staring at my ally. What hell we will raise.

On the second day of Workout, Mark had us all sit in a line on the ground. He had us all turn and face the back wall, away from the floor-to-ceiling windows. I sat in my bare feet and thin leggings and stared at the plain whitewash while he talked.

"Here's the game," he said. "You're going to sit on the ground and look there, and you're going to come face to face with something in your past."

Several faces rose unbidden to my mind—my sister, my ex-boyfriend, my old best friend from home—but Mark wasn't done talking.

"You're going to face that thing in your past, and you're going to acknowledge it with breath. Who knows how long you've been carrying it around? How are you supposed to step into your future when you are clinging so hard to what you've lost?"

I realized suddenly how shallow my breath

was. Trying to loosen my tense shoulders, I inhaled as deeply as I could.

He continued to talk about the tension we hold between the past and the future, the specific type of holy boldness that this sort of step takes, but I was no longer listening. I had returned to gazing at that plain whitewashed wall, feeling skeptical.

Suddenly, another image came to mind. Six people standing before me. I could name every single one of them in a heartbeat. I stared at the wall without seeing it, watching them in my mind's eye.

Mark had stopped talking. Everyone was lost in the past now. There were sniffles coming from people on either side of me.

I stared at those six faces. My best friends from high school. The ones I had left behind mere weeks ago. I drew in another big breath.

I didn't realize I was crying too until a tear splashed onto my wrist.

I was walking down the hall when Sarah called out to me from behind, unknowingly using a nickname that my family had used from my birth.

I turned. She paused, taking in the expression on my face.

We both stood sizing one another up for an instant.

"Can I call you that?" she asked calmly.

I tried in vain to breathe again. It took me a minute for the words to come bubbling back up my throat.

“Yes,” I blurted. “Yes, that’s fine.”

People grew to love me. I loved them, too. I was cherished, cared for, protected. The seniors cooed and stroked my hair and invited me to their apartments for tea. The juniors laughed when I got excited and called me a sweetheart whenever I giggled. The sophomores invited me to eat with them whenever they saw me by myself in the cafeteria.

I signed up for a theater survey class that first fall semester. It was taught by a professor who wore black turtlenecks and gray blazers and insisted that we simply call him Michael. He had us read tragedies by Sophocles and Arthur Miller and asked us to draw visual representations of the characters. Michael raged against the showiness of Broadway and musicals, insisting that if the audience didn’t feel slightly uncomfortable by the end of the performance, then the actors didn’t do their jobs correctly.

To prove his point, he took the whole class to see a play of his choosing in the city. I sat in the audience that night and cringed, struggling to understand the heavy symbolism. There was a full five minutes during which all the actors sat onstage while

a loud, ominous drumbeat sounded and none of them spoke a single line. At the end, it started raining fake blood onstage, to the point where the actors were slipping around in it when they went on to take their bows. None of us students spoke a word on the bus ride home.

When we got off the bus, my sophomore friends were sympathetic.

"That was a lot," they murmured, rubbing my shoulder, squeezing my hand.

"I don't know how I'm going to do a visual representation of that," I worried. They rushed to reassure me, insisting that I would come up with something, telling me to give myself the evening to think about it. Later that night, I knocked on Sarah's door and she let me in. We sat on her couch.

"I just...I don't think I know what acting is anymore," I said miserably.

She stayed firmly on her side of the couch and shrugged. I blinked.

"That's why we're here," she told me matter-of-factly. "That's our job. To figure it out. So you've got to get in there and figure it out." No excuses.

She picked up a piece of paper that she had been working on before I entered. I peered over her shoulder. She had already begun her visual representation. It was already stunning.

I said goodnight and excused myself.

Another game that we play in Workout is called “National Geographic Special.” Mark walks around describing a certain type of made-up animal, narrating as though it were a wildlife program on television, and all forty members of the company crawl or hop or squawk around on the floor imitating what he describes.

One day, it was the Scarlet-Crested Thresh. A remarkable animal, he said, one who is almost completely blind. I crouched near one of the windows, squinting through my eyelashes until everything became fuzzy.

“The Scarlet-Crested Thresh is very aggressive and territorial by nature,” Mark said. I immediately turned and snarled at the person next to me. It took me a moment to realize it was Sarah. I fell out of the exercise for just a moment, my eyes going wide, before I quickly squinted again and hopped awkwardly to my left, making my best bird noise in the back of my throat.

I butted heads with two other Threshes before Mark mentioned that the Thresh, though aggressive, was a deeply lonely creature, who sometimes let its true feelings out late at night by howling. I hunched back on my heels and let out a high, mournful howl. I surprised myself by the depth of it.

“And now it is time for the Thresh to sleep,” Mark intoned, the cue that the game was coming to an end. I curled up by the window and let my

eyes close all the way.

Several beats of silence passed, and I opened my eyes. As silly as the game was, it was the strangest feeling, as though I really were shifting back into my own body. My throat ached.

Sarah played the games in Workout, too, always with that same confidence, lovely and calm. She was good at everything she did. She answered questions in theatre class thoughtfully and insightfully, making Michael nod in approval.

The theatre to me was a sacred space, a place I had not earned yet and did not know how to. On days where it took me nearly half an hour to work up the courage to take some homework down to the building, I found her already lounging there, joking and laughing with the upperclassmen.

I forced a smile at her, turned, and went to hide in the dressing room.

One day, she stopped me back at the dorm again.

"Is something wrong?" she asked, eyebrows furrowed.

I stared back at her, feeling trapped beneath her gaze. No excuses. One heartbeat passed. Then two.

"I just feel like you might be mad at me," she pressed when I didn't answer.

More to preserve my image than to spare her

feelings, I smiled and lied and said no. Of course I wasn't mad at her. There would be no rational reason to be jealous or resentful.

More to preserve my image than to spare her own feelings, she nodded and said she believed me.

She stared at me a minute longer, her brow furrowing. It was just like that first day when I ran to her with my letter and she stared at me so intently. Again, I'm not sure what she saw.

For the briefest instant, her blue eyes clouded, regained that haunted look that I still noticed every once in awhile, when she didn't think anyone was looking. Then she turned and headed back down the hall. Toward the theatre, no doubt, going off to do something else excellently. I watched her walk away. Bitterness rose up in the back of my throat until I could taste it spilling onto my tongue.

Another game that we play is throwing nets. We stand and envision a net on the ground in front of us, a net that represents some piece of baggage or other that we are holding onto. Then we stoop down and pretend to pick up the net, and then we turn and throw it far away. I say that we pretend, but truthfully, it isn't like pretending at all. When you're thinking of all the shame you've experienced from the first test you've ever failed in your life, or that boy from home whose face you can't

stop seeing everywhere on campus, or the heaviness of self-hatred that has steadily settled onto you while you gain weight, it doesn't feel like pretending. You feel that net in your hands, sodden and slimy and heavy, and you grip it as best you can and you throw it as far as you dare, and you take a deep, deep breath as you watch it fly away.

You feel that net when you're acting in a scene. I acted in three different scenes my freshman year, three different characters, and I felt the net with all of them: Jessica, a girl who had fallen for a boy and was humiliated by him, or Eliza, who was planning on running away from home, or Izzy, who was pregnant and didn't know how to tell her sister, but craved nothing more than her approval. Your character has nets to throw, too. Some of them are alarmingly similar to your own in real life.

On the day after our interaction in the hallway, Sarah stood before the whole group. I watched her, fighting the resentful edge in my heart. It was a strange combination of awe and consequent insecurity. A combination I had gotten very used to because I felt it every time I looked at her.

She stood and looked at us all, so quiet and striking and lovely still. Those big eyes which see through everything. Then her lip quivered. And I noticed for the first time that her hands were shaking.

The world shifted on its axis. I saw through the cracks in the veneer. No—Sarah was pulling the

cracks wide open, holding herself in front of our scrutiny and letting us see. I felt bark of the fig tree underneath my fingernails.

She didn't cry. She simply stood there looking at us, until it began to happen again. The energy in the air changed. The hollow spaces between my ribs began to fill with that strange electric anxiety. I got the sudden feeling that Sarah could bend the whole world to her will if she wanted to, and that the world would always resent her for it.

Abruptly, she stooped down and grabbed the air where the net was, and she flung it with all her might, a sudden, fierce, quivering cry tearing from her lips.

She stood there for a while longer with her back to us, shaking, shaking.

"Sarah, see the room you're in," Mark said quietly, cutting through the silence.

She turned and looked at us watching her, almost defiant, daring us to say something. One of those doomed looks that breaks your heart. I got the sudden, gut-wrenching feeling you get when you realize that you've been horribly wrong about something.

No one said anything. And she lifted her head, composed and lovely once more, and went to go sit back down.

More than anything, I think, learning how to

act at Wheaton College is learning how to see. We try and see things with The Elephant's Gaze, which is to say as though we are seeing them for the very first and the very last time. We learn how to see people and wonder about them. We learn how to see their pain and figure out how to best come alongside them. We learn to see them under the fig tree, when we see each other as our basest and most human selves.

I think that's why we love acting so much. We're playing these characters, and to do that is to play with the very building blocks of raw and unadulterated life. It is telling the story of what makes us all human. We are letting the audience see all those things.

I went back to the dorm that night and knocked on Sarah's door. After a short pause, the door opened, and there she was.

"Can I come in?" I asked.

She looked at me with that ethereal gaze for a long moment. Then she stood back and opened the door a little wider.

"Stay as long as you like," she said.

She let me come in, and we sat on her couch. I turned until I was facing her, looking at her, really looking. She looked steadily back.

"Where did you get your scars?" I asked quietly. I didn't just mean the ones on her back.

And then Sarah opened her mouth and she

told me a story of scars, of cancer scares and circuses. She told me a story of loneliness, and pain, and art. She told me about all the times she'd been struck down, by words, and by fists, and by diseases that run heavy fingers down your spine and weigh you down piece by piece, beginning with your mind. She told me of an attic, and girl who waited eight years in the cold for a home she could call her own, a girl who was never able to find a place to rest.

We talked for hours, and we cried, and we laughed, and there were hours when we sat there and didn't say anything at all. It was the clearest I've ever seen anyone. I watched her stand there under the fig tree all night, shadowed in the whisper of the wind and the branches, her gaze locked on the horizon, watching her net fly and fly and fly away.



Hope in the Soil by Kayley Goertzen

I follow her in the garden.

She shows me which leafy-green plants to pull,
and which to leave

in
the
dirt.

At first, they all look the same.

I am slow. Clumsy. Feeble.

With practice, though, I begin to recognize weed
from plant, good from bad.

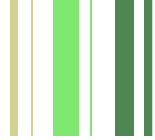
I am fast. Precise. Efficient.

But just when I have my categories straight, just when
I know who should stay

and who should go,
she tells me a story.

She tells me a story of when she worked in the fields
as a little girl.

Hours upon hours her hands worked the earth, until
her stomach



grumbled.

When that happened, she learned that some weeds,

“like this one, here,”

She said, pointing to the wilted plant in my hand.

“This weed, we would eat and satisfy our stomachs.”

I stared at the weed.

A bad, invasive plant can be food?

My hands slowed, less sure of what to pull, and what

to leave.

Slow. Clumsy. Feeble.

I follow her in the garden.

The soil produces food after fire has scorched it.

The boy who needed support to walk now runs on his

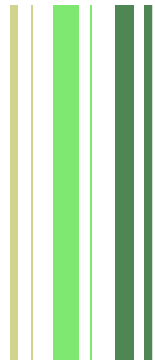
own.

The father who was abused teaches his own son to

live gently.

And the weed that so often takes life can also give life

to a little girl who is hungry.



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- We welcome submissions from any member of the Wheaton College community, whether student, faculty, staff, or alum. Only two fiction pieces from any one author may be submitted per issue.
- For copyright reasons, we must limit our published selection to original characters and worlds only. Please, no fan-fiction or fan-art.
- While the journal's main emphasis is on fiction, we will also consider poetry, non-fiction, essay, and art for publication.
- The journal will only publish genre fiction. The genres included are:
 - Science fiction
 - Fantasy
 - Mystery
 - Action/Adventure
 - Horror
 - Western
- We are interested in any mix of these or similar genres. If your piece falls under a genre we missed, please contact us and ask about it. We will most likely welcome your story!
- Short fiction is preferred, but chapters of longer stories may have the opportunity to be published serially.
- Essays and other non-fiction submissions may be on these genres themselves, authors who write in them, personal experiences with genres, reviews of popular works of genre fiction, etc.
- Art submissions must have as their main subject something to do with the target genres. Please submit your work as a high-resolution PDF.

Deadlines

Submission deadlines are:

- Fall semester—October 31
- Spring semester—March 30

We will accept submissions at any point during the semester, but only those submitted before the above dates will be considered for the current issue. Submissions should be e-mailed as attachments to *SubCreation@my.wheaton.edu*. If your piece is too big for an e-mail attachment, simply contact the same address for further instructions. Please include your full name and Wheaton e-mail address with your submission.

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