

Bang



and Whimper

Dominican College 2012

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Gazing out the window of Wine King Liquors in Fort Lee, New Jersey, there is nothing much to do besides gaze out the window. The only thing that could be seen is Route 46, where cars and large trucks are seen traveling to their unknown destinations. To pass the time, I turn around and buy a few scratch offs. I scratch, I lose. It's a never-ending pattern. I am always scratching and I am always losing. Before I have time buy some more, a customer approached the register. She needs a lottery ticket, specifically the one I wanted to buy for myself. I hate when this happens. She gives me the money for the card and I hand her the scratch off. I watch her take out a penny and began to watch her vigorously scratch the card on my counter. A smile appears on her face, I knew it, of course she had won. She hands me back the ticket, "I'll take the cash she said." I look down at the ticket and saw she had won \$200.00. This always happens to me. I handed her the money and she walked out. I turn around eyeing lottery scratch offs. I knew what will happen if I played but I can't help myself, I have to try again. I empty my pockets and put the last few dollars I have on me into the register. Scratch. Lose. Again.



Photo By Brandi Dones

A peculiar event this story is I suppose It starts with a field of daisies where there grew a bush with a single rose the rose seemed awkward. attractive. But different from the rest it's petals were beautifully ruffled. But It was lanky and always slightly slanted to the left A peculiar flower this was in deed but the strangest attribute was its ability to bleed From the outside it seemed like an extraordinary rose But the closer you got to it the more it bled like a wound that'd never close People were intrigued by the flower's mysterious glow But would soon run away when they'd look beyond the petals into its crimson flow The flower was beautiful but everyone knew that there was something gravely wrong Until a strange man with strange thoughts and strange eyes came along He saw beauty in the flower And was intrigued by its mystical power he saw the flower as an award as a prize crop And the more attention he gave to the flower the bleeding began to stop when the sea of red finally ceased. the man saw the rose as ordinary, Boring, And that's the very least He said "I now have no use for you old my friend"

Tossed it in his vase with other deceased flowers and that was the end The rose stood there still beautifully ruffled still lanky and still slanted to the left And it soon noticed it had ended up like the rest All those once beautiful flowers had meant something to the man at one point But he soon grew tired of them too and threw them in the vase to rot in their petals. Roots. And joints At the thought of this the rose began to bleed It bled because it thought it had already been freed Its still bleeding and the musky water in the vase has turned red Has anyone listened to a word I've said! Its bleeding I say jump get a doctor Will you all sit there while I tell this story and just mock her?

She's bleeding and I've never seen her bleed like this before Her stem is dying. Her petals aren't ruffled. And they're all hitting the floor A prized possession this flower is I swear If you'd give it a chance you'd see why I dare to care Because in reality the rose is like us It just needs love, Kisses, And every once and while some hugs!

Please, someone do something I plead!

Will you just stand there while the beautiful rose dies, And bleeds bleeds bleeds.

The Red House

By Sarah Yvonne

Oh! How I love the red house
on the pastoral country side.
For her homestead boasts the imagery
of my childhood muse.

To the north,
resides the astute maple,
whose branches have held and cradled me,
with outstretched limbs.

To the south,
Cordial French lilacs,
with their abounding aroma's,
receive me,
as I marvel at their loveliness.

To the west,
the generous chestnut stands,
amid a patio of elegant cobblestone
which has not made her proud.
For her benevolence is grand,
as she freely gives of her bounty.

To the east,
lining the drive,
resides the scarlet rose bushes
who take pride, in knowing
they will not be cut.
Except once.
Alas, it is not the scarlet,
but the yellow roses, I love.

In the home's interior,
Lies the hearth of her,

By means of the humble fireplace,
hand laid in brick.

To her adjacent wall, a petite library,
wherein I first laid pen to paper.

But woah!

Through the years
the red house has aged.
Neglect, and over growth
have befallen her grace.

Fret not!

Hope abounds, as I too have grown older,
and I stand at her door.
I have not forgotten her.

Mad World

By Brian O'Connell

The world's gone to Hell.
We treat our heroes as villains and our villains as heroes.
Houses burn down as we all sit and watch.
Children die while we worry inwards.
Murderers get parole while soldiers are branded as baby killers.
We're on a one-stop train to destruction with no brakes.
It's a mad world we live in, and we're just enjoying the view.

Wonder

By Robert Cortijo

Do u ever sit and wonder the hate
pain torture dat drives u insane the look she gives u ignites the
propane explode in your mind and now all ur life is ahaze a maze
where u cant figure out your ways and your lost in thei darkness
no sunhine on this daii. And then she walks away and u wonder
why she didnt saii.goodbye and she fades into the darkness and
flames rise all you can do is crii u just lost her and u wish u could
go bac in tym

As she put down the cold beer, she smiled kindly. She asked if there anything else she could get for me.

“No my dear, but I thank you.”

She began to turn away, but instead she turned toward me. I had a feeling she was wondering what had brought me here. There was nothing of interest in this town, with the exception of a gas station and a break from driving. The sky was bright, and the air was still and dry.

“Are you traveling to see your family?” she asked.

“Not really, I am just driving. I have no real destination, and I just felt like moving.”

“Really?” she asked.

“I’m old. I figured if I didn’t go now, I wouldn’t go at all so—here I am,” I said.

“I’m not real busy, mind if I sit and join you?” she asked.

I was a little surprised, but very happily accepted.

“With pleasure,” I said, tipping my hat naturally.

She stared at me almost questioning what I had done.

“Wow, I’m sorry for staring, but that was so sweet, I don’t remember anyone tipping their hat to me before—it was nice”

I was shocked at first, such a lovely young girl, but then I remembered what the world was like these days, and how disconnected to the simple life these young people had become.

“Back in the Thirties, when I was a boy that was quite common. We held doors and wrote love letters.”

“Well things don’t work like that anymore, I don’t think any of us write letters, or even know how much a stamp is. It sounds so romantic. I guess if we asked our boyfriends to do it they would,” she said.

“Well that’s just it, we did it because we wanted to, not because we were asked,” I told her.

“It must have been a much nicer world,” she said.

I thought long about the answer. We had our wars, our country certainly had financial issues, but it was a nicer place. I began to wish I were younger. I would love to court this lovely young lady. I know nothing about her, and yet I wanted to know everything. But how do I ask? What do I say?

“Can I ask you a personal question?” she said.

“Of course”

“How old are you,” she asked.

I told her I was eighty, and my birthday was at the end of the week.

“And you don’t want to spend it with your family?” she asked.

“The truth is, I am very much alone these days. My children are older, and they seem to be very involved in their own lives. My wife passed on a few years ago, and I decided not to just wait around for death, you know?”

I could tell that she was sad by what I had told her, which was not my intention, but she did ask. I found myself wondering why she was here.

Are you from around here?

She was clearly uneasy with the question, but to her credit, she began to tell me her story. She earned her master's in chemistry at Princeton. Unfortunately her father passed away right after her graduation. Her mother needed help running the family's motel, which ended her career in chemistry. She works here at the bar for extra cash.

"That was twenty five years ago, and I'm still here," she said.

"Did you ever marry?"

"No, never met the right one I guess. Sometimes I feel like I was supposed to be born in another era. Wanna laugh? I don't even own a cell phone," she said.

"I don't either, I don't own a computer. If I want to know what's happening in the world, I read the paper, or I'll turn on the radio."

"Me too, and if I want to know the weather, I look outside. Not that the weather is so hard to predict here," she said.

We spoke effortlessly for hours, I don't ever recall being so comfortable with someone. I wanted to ask her to join me on the rest of my trip, not that I had a clue where was I going. It didn't matter; I wanted the companionship more than the trip itself. Oh, if I were younger. Years ago I would have asked her to join me. I would have gone to the coast. I would have taken her to dinner; perhaps she would be interested in a museum? I desperately wanted to escort this woman back to life.

What a waste, I thought. If only I wasn't such a coward. I was afraid she would laugh in my face and call me a dirty old man. But it was nothing like that. Our conversation was so engaging, I just didn't want it to end.

"Really, where are you going next? -- I hate that you're alone. Would you like anything else, another beer, and some food?" she asked.

This was the perfect time to ask, all I had to do was say it, just say it.

"I'll have another beer, and a burger I guess, won't you join me?"

"Sure, I am a little hungry," she said.

I asked her to tell me all about her life, as it turned out, we had many things in common. We enjoyed the same music, old movies, and even burgers. We both liked them rare, barbeque sauce on the side. Her mother had remarried and was quite happy with her life. She had no siblings, and she seemed to be as lonely as I was.

"You never answered my question, what are your plans?" she said.

"I wish I knew," I told her, and then it came. "Any suggestions?"

She had several good ones, all of which I had already thought of. I just didn't want to begin doing them just yet. I was mesmerized by her. She was upbeat and alive.

I missed that. I had left the home for that very reason, and if I had my way, they would never look for me. The thought of one of my children remembering to visit me and not finding me there excited the hell out of me. I

really don't blame them; they are doing exactly what they should be doing. The problem was with me, not them. I should be dead. I am a burden, and the worst part about it is that I know I am.

"I am going south."

"South? Like where south?" she asked.

"New Orleans, I have a little life left in me and I feel like living it."

"What about your family, won't they worry?" she asked.

"I'll call my daughter when I get there. she'll be fine."

"That sounds wonderful. I envy you. I would love to just pack a bag and go," she said.

The voice in my head was screaming at this point. If I thought I wouldn't insult her, I would ask, but a gentleman would never ask a lady such a thing. She had noticed when I tipped my hat and admired that. If I asked her to join me, it would only confirm to her what she has already come to know-- all men are foolish and selfish.

The sky was a beautiful reddish color. There was a breeze beginning and the dust was kicking up. The bar tender was washing the last of the plates and glasses. I excused myself for a moment and made my way to the men's room. As I passed the bar, I heard a deep voice,

"Hey pops, what's up? Good thing we were slow today, Alison was been absolutely useless to me—never seen her take to someone like that before. Usually just stays to herself—ya know?"

"Really? Well I guess she was just taking some pity on an old man."

He laughed at me and mumbled something under his breath. Most likely he was making fun of me attempting to talk to such a young beautiful lady. As I returned to the table, she smiled and asked if I would mind driving her back to the Motel.

We talked and laughed all the way. She was wonderful company, and I enjoyed the day so very much. My heart was heavy as we pulled up to the motel. I couldn't help but think of her stuck here. She was an educated woman, yet she seemed to be missing her own life. If only I could ask her to join me. I could only imagine the fun we would have, and trips we could take. If only I were younger.

As we said goodbye, I kissed her hand. I thanked her the best lunch date I'd had in years. She smiled, and I knew she felt the same way. For a brief moment, I saw a sparkle in her eye.

"Will I ever see you again?" she called out.

"I certainly hope so my dear." I tipped my hat and slowly walked toward my car.

It had been a week since I left her at the motel. There was a piece of me that wanted to just stay there, but I was on my own journey.

New Orleans was just as I pictured it to be. As I walked along the streets near Lafayette Park, there was life all around me. I found the post office on Maestri Place, which was old like me, and it was there that I mailed the first of many letters to a lovely lady who captured my heart, and rebuilt my soul.

Cigarette Love

By Nikki Rivera

She promised you she would stop smoking cigarettes, if you just promised to love her. Your beautiful brown skin matched the color of her lungs as she mastered the two-step every smoker was familiar with. And as the ray of smoke left her lips so did every regret and heart ache she ever suppressed, she is a damsel in distress, so she treated her cigarette box as if it was a bible; Holding it close to her, cursing anybody who dared question her religion, and carefully making sure not to rip any of the 20 pages of death it contained. And with her remains she would keep a little black box along with all of the names she regretfully let seep into her body and that collected all of her Marlboro Mental Light butts in so she can go back and see the blasphemy she has done to herself. She promised you she would stop smoking cigarettes, if you just promised to love her. You lied, and so did she.

The New Me

By Holli Locker

I think where I used to be people took comfort and refuge in likeness. The more similarities the better. I lived in a small town of carbon copied people , with death written subtly upon their souls. No direction or a desire for a new destination. Now I am here changed because of circumstances. I pride myself in the differences my heart and mind provide. I have destroyed the constrictions my mind allowed my past to bestow within me. Life is more than sex, drugs and alcohol. Dating is deeper than dinner and a movie. Once I had awoken to the limitless restrains of reality, then I realized. I realized, I can do and be where I desire. My dreams I dream are visions of my future. I realized that when I close my eyes to envision the world that I long for, I can have it. Now once I open my eyes I devise a game plan to attain my dreams. My reality will be it will be.

Old eyes see the light of the night.

So vivid, so blush

Colors both dull and divine

Shine over the consistency of simplicity That we call home
Old eyes see the light of the night.

Cold air intertwined with fragile branches Perched upon by some
many lives.

Ambers fall hard shattering hopes
of blind eyes that burn with temptation

To see but just one flash of life.

Old eyes see the light of the night.

Stone crushed to sand.

Held captive by the concept of time

Behind glass walls that dictate when the sun shines no more.

Old eyes see the light of the night.

Pipes burst as foes exchange words

Unworthy of leaving the lips of their master but yet dance off the
tongue like aristocrats Shedding light where it is not needed.

Old eyes see the light of the night.

The rivers wash away the sins of down under As waves crash
against jagged rocks Piercing the thoughts of returning home.

Old eyes see the light of the night.

I walk these hallways bleak and bare, an old familiar scent in the air,
Here where these hallways stand, hold many memories of a young man,
The broken handle of a smashed locker door, the drop of blood still on the floor,
The sounds of many people who once walked by, the vision of a textbook
whizzing by,
The faces of many forgotten in time, the smell of food cooking nearby,
The anger of older men now gone away, but a tragic sadness continues to stay,
The sight of a beauty still so clear, the touch of a first kiss done right here,
The look of sadness on her face, at the memory of our big mistake,
The tempests of passion led us astray, into heartbreaks cruel cold embrace,
The tears welling in our eyes, the deafening sound of our last goodbyes,
These hallways stand as a dark reminder, of my life's dreariest hours,
Of happiness that never came, now sadness and shame are all that remain,
Though these halls will crumble and decay, those memories will never fade,
Someday a light will take me away, until then I wait...lost and afraid

So sad and lonely, what was is now gone,
but boy you must keep pushing, life goes on.
So sad and lonely, let me take your pain.
Please boy, wipe your tears, do not be ashamed.
So sad and lonely, I believe in you,
Please boy, quit the drugs and drop all the booze.
So sad and lonely you haven't a clue.
Please boy, look around, look all around you.
So sad and lonely, not even aware,
I am here boy, don't you see that I care
So sad and lonely, I am here for you.
Let me in boy, do you know I love you?
Brother please, let me heal your broken heart,
for my heart, it hurts and is broken too.

IMAGINE a country, a nation, a world – SICK FREE

If only I could morph into that big guy from The Green Mile, and suck the sickness out of EVERYONE.

I would give people their memory back because Alzheimer took it away, give it back to them so they can look at their grandchildren and REMEMBER their faces
So they can look at their husbands and REMEMBER the day they walked down the aisle ...

I would lengthen people's lives because AIDS cut it short
STRENGTHEN the immune system of every. single. person. in this universe, so that HIV can't attack them and win –
SAVE those 25 million people that passed away since this epidemic even began.
I would STOP the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body - so cancer can get a taste of its own medicine

So people can keep all of their hair, and not have to get their breasts removed
I would beat cancer up throw it in a headlock so that OUR lungs , and colons wouldn't have to break down on us - so we could BEAT leukemia , and brain cancer, and cervical cancer, and kidney cancer, and skin cancer, and testicular cancer, and cancers cancer

So people don't have to hear they have 6 months, or 4 months, or 2 weeks to live. SO THAT PEOPLE CAN LIVE to see another day.

I would build our bodies to be made of steel, so Christopher didn't have acute liver failure, so that Alyssa's kidneys didn't shut down, so that Michael's body didn't give in to those drugs ...so that his body and her body, ALL of our bodies are so strong our organs do not shut down or give up on us and let go of life.

I would get rid of all disorders, so that people didn't suffer from stress and panic and anxiety

So that people didn't have to add and subtract their steps and lock the doors and windows in their houses 29 times before going to sleep because they are scared the world will end because their obsessive compulsiveness is taking over their lives

So that women wouldn't have to suffer posttraumatic stress after giving birth to their beautiful newborn that they brought into this sick SICK world.

I would give children with aspergers and autism social skills and enough communication skills so they would NEVER run out of friends

I would feed the mouths of people that suffer from starvation, put an end to anorexia and STOP girls from shoving their fingers down their throats
Because don't they know that no matter what they look like that are absolutely beautiful in their own way?

I would END world hunger

And feed dying children around the world that could live off of the scraps that we throw away and waste every day

I would make alcohol and drugs not addicting so that people can still drink and sniff and cook and smoke and shoot up and enjoy themselves without over

abusing them and getting addicted

So that the world can STOP calling people alcoholics and drug addicts and rehab will no longer be a place where we need to stick people suffering of these sicknesses

I would drag the craziness out of peoples sick mental minds

So that there is NO rape and murder or suicidal people

No cuffs and back seat rides to the jail cell bars and strait jackets

Have everyone happy ALL THE TIME

No bi-polar moods or schizophrenics

STOP medicating people for disorders that should be deemed absurd

The world should be smiling, not popping pills to force an emotion that comes so naturally to ourselves

I would hand over my sight if it helped someone see a new day

And lend the world my hearing if she was deaf...

If I could single handedly rip the heart out of the sicknesses in this world I would do it in a heartbeat...

Breathing nothing but happy pollutants into the air that circles around us...

Make the world high off of health

Instead of all the sick and dying and diagnosed and handicapped people, they

would be healthy and feel young again, they would have another shot at life

- to LIVE and RUN FREE, to BE SPONTANEOUS and do things they never even

dreamt of doing, to have feelings in their legs and walk again, to see, to hear ,

to give people ANOTHER SHOT at NOT holding back , to make people believe

in themselves and the beauty of their dreams, to make people TAKE THAT

CHANCE that they were once too scared to take - to CHALLENGE themselves ,

and to try something new.

It would make the planet happier

the environment healthier,

& it would make this helpless place... HOPEFUL.

I don't understand it, the wheels are turning but it just doesn't click in my head

I sit here and I put my blood, sweat and tears into her - but that clearly isn't enough

I don't know what I can do to make her see that without her there would be no existence of me

There would be no sun, no moon, no rain, no clouds, no air for my sad broken lungs to breathe

Day in and day out I explain to her- that she is and is going to be the one person that makes this world make sense to me

The reason for being, the reason for living, is solely because of she - the way she makes me

From the way that I can't peel my eyes away from her beautiful complexion to

the way that my heart drums through my ears when I hear her voice that sings like perfection

I take my time and exert all of my effort into the beautiful being that she is I dedicate myself and the rest of my life to the one person that makes me truly melt but she still cannot dodge the terrible thoughts of who I used to be Never did I take the energy to settle for one, now all I can see is a blur, and then there's her

Never did I care about a thing that one spoke of me - now all I can see are her thoughts and perceptions of me

She is everywhere I want to be - I just wish she would shake this played up human I no longer wish to be

I try. And I try. And I try. And I try to work on everything I'm doing wrong so I can prove to her... that her and I ...we should not prolong

We should jump head first out of these pathetic emotions and dive head first into this sea of devotion

You are who I want, and what I want, and what I hope I'll always have

I'm skating on thin ice as she questions me of every single lover I once had - guys & girls that seem nothing but simple and ordinary to me, nothing compared to how extraordinary you are - like the brightest star in the cloudiest sky

You are my world and every continent and ocean in it

You are the reason the world is in fact circular and not flat because even if that I would be sure to find the end of it and jump off falling into the nothing this place would be if I didn't stalk my heart and have the epiphany that you are the one for me

Duck duck goose is all that were playing and I would love to tap your head and run- backwards into you- because there is no running from you unless it is indeed into you

I told you I'm a chaser and I promise I'm faster and smoother than anything or anyone that's ever taken the time to really run after you ...

I'm showing you all of me truly and deeply

Every color of the rainbow that shines out of me from the way that I bleed red -

Orange

Yellow

To the green on my jeans from the grass stains on my knees as I kneel here and practice proposing to you ...

Blue

Indigo

To the violet kisses I leave trailed across your body

You've seen me through my darkest nights to my brightest days
now let me express to you the boundaries that I am willing to cross for you
the sacrifices...

Babe I am willing to die for you -

Please understand you are my savior, you picked me up when I was no deeper
than down could ever be,

Now .. Take this chance

Step off the ledge ...

spread your arms ... and fly with me.

Red to the bone, eyes that match her hair -

she acts like she's mad when I say it, but I know that she secretly loves the fact
that I even mentioned it, even if it is untrue...

Sparkles cover her face, lips the color beautiful.

Tan skin, she loves the outdoors...

Not only that; she digs the boards, snow board, skim boards, surf boards, - my
wash board - stomach that is.

She says it's her favorite.

Thick is how I like her, muscular and toned.

She plays the sport I absolutely hate, soccer -

I hate it so much I now know how to dribble and pass, and I'm sure I'll eventually
learn how to rainbow - because that's only right.

Prettier than any beauty pageant contestant or miss America wannabe - she
takes the crown & the sash if I'm the judge.

Stubborn as hell, maybe more than me, & she's not even Puerto Rican ...

Italian, that's her background

Snyder that's what her dad's given her...

Every other minute were on each other's last nerves -

she says this but means that, I say that but mean this.

Always accusing or assuming something that makes sense only in her head,
of course.

I tried walking around in there, it's like a maze and I'm the mouse - I just can't
seem to find the cheese - and even if I did, I'm not sure that it would be a prize
more or less a tease... because I'll never fully understand her point, as she
sees it.

Addiction that's what my problem is with her.

I'm a no-good, never gonna quit, can't stop this fix, needa shoot up behind the
dumpster type shit, would steal it if I had to

Addict . .

Let's run away together, seriously.

No deity above me
I have forsaken thee
God shaped hole
Stars replace angels
Newfound appreciation
Unapologetic deviation
Do you believe?
A bigot hand descends
Punishing its own kin
Different becomes dangerous; diseased
Millions slain to appease
A malevolent manifestation of nothing
Innocence beaten by Gods Truncheon
A myriad of misogynous malpractices
Dogmatic creeds evoke greed and malice
Drinking from a blood-stained chalice
Ignorance trumping evidence
Allah creating culture burners
Not enlightened page turners
Believers take the blame
Yet skeptics are the same
Anthropomorphically averse atheists
Tear natures wonder asunder
Blurring the music of the spheres
With their logical tears
My views do not dismiss
Feelings of eternal bliss
Grand emotions summon the adrenaline of a slit wrist
My belief: A heaven in
between Religious argument torn at the seem
Not midday, but above
A higher
form of understanding.

I once was a child that used to get high off of growing up
Screaming, Put me on the spot street lights.
Hit me, with your best shot

Street Lights Make Skins Glimmer

Light skin! AYO LIGHT SKIN! YOU SO PRETTY
Can I get you number light skin?
Hey um Que Dios te bendiga, Guantanamo, light skin
You can go far.

Street lights blind
Stimulating fame - Papparazzi thirst through Twitter
Control your buzz
Your life mirrored through glamorous photo shops.

Where we seem to buy these images
These images become our lifestyles and we categorize.

Light skin.

Curled up in a blanket with an accent

I used to play with Bratz dolls before my boobs had even grown a full a cup.
When my good grades were something to be embarrassed of.

But hey, at least, ju lightskin
Ju can please any dude with good spanish food and light skin.

And although The concrete streets were so inviting
The allure Wasn't adding up.

The "ladies" toteing smoke in random basements didn't amount to the
glamorous images I once saw.

For a moment,
I mistook my blindness for a euphoria
Fame was love and Nuvo was the water of life I,
Self proclaimed myself a goddess without realizing

That the toxic was seeping through the cracks of the NYC sewers
And somehow making its way to the chemical imbalances in my mind

Mary Jane still follows me
Pulls me back to the past
To the days I was lost
Like a constant reminder
Like I'll remind you, a mother is always right.

Y algun dia lo vas a entender, Rosangelica
Y algun dia lo vas a entender.

The stones that were aimed at me have been rolling down the hill.
I, am the stray dog chasing these cars.
Chasing my memories with no due cause.

Became a rolling stone because I never learned how
To fully stop

My soul is ahead of its time
So bring it back

Sunlight... sun (light)

Do we even have a sun anymore?
Osiris I seem to be mistaking the Bronx for something called Planet Earth

Rolling away into another time zone
Where respect has been traded for acceptance
Respect has been traded for acceptance
And Facebook is just a live popularity contest

So I deactivated my life. Rosie is dead.
And all of those great friends that were so apparent on her
Computer screen died with her.

But these street lights keep harassing me
"Light skin, where you going?
You don't love us anymore? I thought we were friends..."
Asking me why Rosie doesn't come around.
I close my eyes and pretend like they're not talking to me.

But its simple.

My dearest Rosangelica,
Street lights make skins glimmer, no matter the color
But do me the favor and go home.

Donna chose not to go to the airport with her parents. She had arrived very early in the morning from her school, UC Santa Barbara, and had taken the red eye home. She decided to do a last minute shopping as Christmas was only a week away. Her siblings were on different flights. Earlier in the morning her Father, Cosmo had picked her up at JFK. Both her parents then left to gather the rest of their children. The twins, now 22, attended University of Miami, and her sister Christine, 19 attended Northwestern. Luckily, they were all arriving within an hour of each other at Newark Airport, so the trip was an easy one.

Dinners at the Sotilli house were never dull. Donna's mother Louise was always in the kitchen making the most wonderful food. As the smell permeated the house each evening, the family knew it was time to gather at the kitchen table for dinner. Donna was very close to her mother and often was the first to arrive, usually because she had been in the kitchen chatting with her mother while dinner was being prepared. Donna had been working so hard in school; it was not uncommon for her to fall asleep at the table while talking to her mother. As the crowd would enter, Louise would gently put her hand on Donna's shoulder and say, "Get up dear, it's time for dinner."

Tonight's dinner was no different than any other family dinner. By mid meal the noise level in the kitchen was very loud. The twins were forever bickering about everything.

"If they knew what they were doing--" John said.

"They do, its management, and until that changes, they'll never win. Hockey is too hard. You cannot just blame the players; it's nothing like figure skating," Joseph argued.

A shot directed at his sister Christine, who skated most of her life.

"Joseph, that's enough!" Cosmo said.

As they went on Louise asked how the dinner was. They all nodded simultaneously in agreement that it was good. Donna's and her parents were soft spoken, which was quite the opposite of her siblings. They loved their children, and when their kids were away, they would laugh at how much they disliked the quietness of the empty house.

"Pass the sauce?" Donna asked Joseph.

As he gave it to her, he could not resist the urge to tease her as well, "Anything new in the man department Donna?" He teased in a loud sarcastic way with the hope that his brother would join in. She just ignored him with a nasty grin. Louise did not however, and cleared her throat loudly enough that Joseph knew to stop.

"Sorry ma," he said, over the voices that were becoming more animated.

"Joseph, pass the wine," John asked.

"Remember the last time you drank wine Joe?" John asked.

They were both now loud with laughter even banging the table.

"Cosmo," Louise said.

Cosmo just shook his head and rolled his eyes.

“Joseph—Not to me son,” Louise said while pausing for a deep breath with her eyes down in disappointment.

“Sorry Donna,” Joseph said.

The rest of them had only one real fear and that was disappointing either of their parents.

“Dinner is wonderful Louise, I’m a blessed man,” Cosmo tried to say to his wife.

It was so noisy, Louise could barely hear him. Their children were now arguing over which reality show was better.

“Jersey Shore is insulting to our heritage,” Christine said.

“You always take things too seriously Christine. I realize you like Survivor, but the Jersey Shore is much more fun,” John said.

“I don’t even watch Survivor; reality shows are all stupid and trivial,” Christine said.

“Oh, I see we learned a new word this semester?” John asked.

“Knock it off,” Christine said with a smirk, she knew he was playing with her but at the same time she wasn’t happy with his sarcasm.

The siblings were loud, and dominated most of the conversations. They were careful not to go too far, mostly because their parents simply would not allow that to happen. As dinner went on Cosmo, asked how each of his children were doing. As always he started with his youngest, Donna.

“So Donna, tell me about life out in California, what do you like to do?”

“Well daddy, I like school and on the days I don’t have work or school, me and my friends head for the beach. I started to learn to surf, it’s pretty cool actually. I’m getting pretty good at it.”

“Dad, maybe she can join a surf club out there and chill all day. That would be awesome, I would love that,” Joseph said loudly interrupting the conversation to instigate yet another round of banter with John.

“Yeah, you could just chill out all day, nothing new there,” John said with a loud laugh.

“I have no doubt you would son,” Cosmo said.

“But in the real world, how would you afford that new BMW convertible your saving for or —” once again Cosmo was interrupted.

“Or the engagement ring he’s getting for Katie,” John said.

Cosmo stared at Joseph, “Well now, that’s a very good point. I guess you’ll have to leave the waves to your sister for now, won’t you?”

They all laughed, although Donna was not too happy with that.

“You know dad,” she said. “I do a lot more than surf out there, I run a charity center for battered woman and I am a grief counselor during my spare time too. I also deliver food to seniors.”

For a second you could hear the sauce spitting from the pot.

“We are so proud of you” her father said.

It was far too serious for the boys, who could not help themselves.

“So the homeless don’t count?” said Joseph, with John egging him on.

“Stop!” Christine, Louise, Cosmo and Donna yelled.

Louise tried to break the tension as gently as she could. “Christine dear, what’s new with you? How are things in Evanston?” Louise always knew just the right things to say.

“Aside from the weather, which I will never get used to—” Christine tried to answer.

“Like you need to, your leaving for Africa after New Years, I should have taken up African Studies instead of Architecture, Africa is so awesome.” Joseph admitted, “And it sure beats Engineering,” Joseph said, aiming his shot at John.

“I don’t know, Joey, at least I’m not wishing I was somewhere else doing something else, I like what I am doing, and I am doing pretty well.” The truth was, all of their children were very successful, and all doing well, what more could any parent want. Louise and Cosmo were very proud of their four children.

“Hey Christine, when did you dye your hair? I have to admit, your green eyes really stand out nicely with that color red,” Joseph asked.

“Last week, I wasn’t sure it would look alright, I wanted it close to my real color to have as little maintenance as possible in Africa, you know?” Christine said.

“Well that does make sense, you got all your shots right? Be careful when you go, I’m a little worried,” Joseph said.

Louise and Cosmo both looked on and smiled.

“I know, and I will,” Christine said.

Dinner was ending and they all took turns clearing and washing the pots and dishes. They all chipped in on the chores from when they were small children. There were no jobs designated in the house, you cleaned what you used and you ate what you cooked, with the exception of dinner. That was Louise’s job and she took great pride in it.

“Any fresh cakes or pies ma?” Donna asked. She loved the smell of her mother’s sauce, but nothing came close to her baking.

“Of course, why don’t you look in the pantry? Tonight I may have out-done myself.”

They were all sitting around the table starrng at Louise wondering what the occasion was.

“Well I know it’s not my birthday,” John said.

“Honey, what’s up, don’t tell me we’re having another one?”

Cosmo said.

Louise almost fell over. “Cosmo!” Louise said slightly embarrassed.

“Don’t say such things at the table, honestly.”

Christine and Donna both looked puzzled.

“Mom, what’s the big surprise for?” asked Donna.

“There is no big surprise really; I just thought we would celebrate the family, and how much we all love each other.”

They all raised their wine glasses toward the beautiful cannoli cake.
"To love!" Cosmo said.

Together they all warmly toasted, "To love!"

Donna was sleeping, when a hand gently touched her shoulder, only the smell of the sauce was replaced by the smell of tuna. She heard the sound of dishes and serving bowls being placed gently on the table. Tuna casserole was in one of them. In the distance she heard familiar voices.

"The service was beautiful, but we should really wake her now, she's been out for quite a while," Someone said.

As Donna opened her eyes, John, Joseph, Christine, Her father, and then her mother, vanished one by one in a smoky haze. They were gone. They were all killed in an accident on the way home from the airport. She had just buried her family. As she sat there, her mother's sister Anna moved her hand from Donna's shoulder.

"It's time to wake up dear," Anna said.

"What do I do now?" Donna asked.

"We'll start by just getting up," Anna said.



Photo By Arisnet Perez

There are days when I want to be bitter
Ready to get lost in thoughts and dreams that might not come true
Yearning for the loneliness to become my one companion
And walk the years with him hand in hand

There are days when I want to laugh
Enjoying the life around me and seeing the beauty everything holds
Where optimism is my true friend
And life just seems so simple

There are days when I want to cry.
Feeling the burden of my sorrows fall heavily upon my shoulders
When every step seems like a challenge
And the dark clouds seem to always find me

There are days when I want to love
Love so much that my heart beats throughout my whole body
So ready to give my heart away
And yet no one seems to want it

There are days when I want to be loved
Wanting someone to put their arms around me and whisper
sweet nothings
Waiting for them to look into my eyes and the world will suddenly stop
And everything will be exactly as it should

There are days, and days, and days.
What will tomorrow bring?
What will a lifetime bring?
And when everything is said and done, which day will be your fondest?

I found a new set of eyes to love myself
I brought new picture frames to capture souls in love
I built up the strength to walk without these crutches
My heart is thumping on its own, so you could have your hallow words back
Shhh... listen
Melodies of memories are just songs I once sung in my head
I'm learning new lyrics
Her name is eventually
I never thought I'd get over you but I did eventually
My heart beats to its own beat
The lines under my eyes that use to form rivers when I cry are now dry
Finally
Her name is finally
My soul could dance on its own without your faint heartbeat
I sleep full nights and dream nothing but hope
I'm saved
Her name is security
My insecurities walk behind my shadows of my self-worth
She told me I was beautiful, every day she tells me I'm beautiful
She once told me, it was my creativity that attracted her but my ability to seek
beauty in the ugly made her weak
Her hands....
Her hands told stories that correlated with the pain I was feeling deep within
Her impulse made my head spin
She had more courage than toy soldiers
She brainwashed me
Her name is deception
She deceived my feelings, tricking my body into believing her touch is the cure
to my sick feeling of abandonment
Whenever I say your name I feel sick
Her words throw parties, she makes my soul dance
Her name is intimacy
We never had sex but last night she blew my brains out when she recited lines
from poetry I use to write about him
The tone of her voice insinuated nothing compared to her wanting me and my
poetry would mean much more if I wrote about the lullabies she sings to me
at night
She made love to my heart when she attempted to write me a poem
But what she didn't realize that her words are already poetic
She whispered I love you
Her name is rebellious
She broke rules like he broke my heart
Despite our love being forbidden, she took a bite of my apple

She's the martyr of my sins
The crucifixion of my innocent soul
My troubles hung around her neck and my cross lays in between her
bosoms
Conversations like prayers, we shared our most deepest darkest secrets
Explicit words we wouldn't dare say to God but brave enough to tell
each other
Her name is God and God was she...

The Lullaby

By Sarah Yvonne

From the distance she faced him,
the fisherman as it be.
For to the siren, his presence tempted
the fates of destiny.

Sitting on the shoreline,
where earth and sea converge,
The sailor stared back at the siren,
resting above the serge.

With an outstretched arm,
he captivated,
even the likes of she
For in that moment,
emotion welled
as salted as the sea.

He motioned
to the thrashing swells
that sovergn in their wake
A reminder that it is
indeed
the sea who givith,
and also she who takes.

The fisherman's
unyielding
in the truth
he showed her there

for his life
shall not be determined
by a song and cascading hair.

Alas, the siren was moved,
as she lay witness
to his soul,
which rocked yet lulled her silently,
so as to console.

Revelation,
she discerned,
while staring in his eyes,
For in that moment,
she was captured
by a sailors lullaby.

My Best Friend

By Brandon Vicioso

It is through you that I speak
It because of your help the people I reach
You are the puppet and I am the master
One twitch of my finger and there's utter disaster
Or I can fix things like a hole that is plastered
Red fire hydrants water couldn't spit faster

I run you and you run my world
That's why every time you're my go to girl
The comfort you give cannot be found
That is why to you I am eternally bound
I can tell you anything that crosses my mind
Without a second thought that you'll find
A bullshit reason to leave me behind

Like so many have done in my past
This friendship of ours forever it'll last
And for this reason I run with the rhyme
So that when I die I may be called divine
For the words you've helped me to speak have redefined me
And when the time slips through my fingers like sand
It is you who I can count on to understand

You are faithful and loyal and you are who I love
With all the good grace from the lord above
The love I have for you cannot be seen by ignorant eyes
Because behind the lies
You've help me realize
Why every morning it is that I rise
And put on this disguise

That disgusts me
Because who I am for others displeases you
And that is not what I ever intended to do
You make me whole
You dig through my soul like the earth digging mole
But because you don't have eyes you don't know where to go
Like trying to find a grain of rice in a mountain of snow
But you take your time like a sloth so slow

And yet you are as strong as a grizzly envision it
You force things out of me that I didn't know existed
It's like my brain is a bop it and your job is to twist it
Twist it until the juices flow out of my mind and pour through my soul
Down the veins in my arm to my hand ice cold
Till the pen touches the page
Because of you I can express happiness love sadness and rage
You bring out these feelings I've never expected
And honestly as long as I live I'll never regret it
You have become a part me, my persona, my identity
And I have a feeling that forever we will be
Cause you are the one friend that will never leave
The one I can turn to when I don't believe in myself

And it's due to your faith in me I will never fail to let my words out
You are the power that forces this beast out
This beast that lives inside of me
The one who tortures and kills me
They say the pen is mightier than the sword
And with my heart I believe this to be true
Because the greatest thing I have in life is you
Because you're with me now like you were back when
You are my best friend
My words ...my pen

“Happy fiftieth birthday Robert!” Every one of my family members and friends chanted as I walked in the door. Dropping my brief case on the floor, I forced a smile on my face.

“Thank you so much,” again my wife, Regina decided to throw a surprise birthday party. I squirmed through the crowd saying hello to as many people as possible and went straight to the kitchen. I grabbed a bottle of merlot, popped the cork and chugged.

“Robert, come back out every one is looking for you,” Regina said as she snatched the bottle of wine out of my hand. Only a drop left anyway.

“Right away,” I dragged my feet and rolled my eyes as I walked out of the kitchen. The last thing I wanted to do is pretend I’m happy about coming home to a whole bunch of people when I’d rather be catching up on sleep.

“Robert, why are you acting this way? I went out of my way to throw you a party and you look just as miserable as you did when your cat died,” Regina said.

“I’m just so exhausted from work all day,” I said and made my way over to the living room.

“Hello Robert! Happy birthday! I’ve missed you so much man. How is everything?” My brother said as his gorgeous wife stood beside him.

“Thanks, everything is OK, still working in the city every day, and you?”

“That’s great well, I’m doing just fine, bought my wife a new porsche today and Britney is turning 16 in a few weeks so I need to go car shopping for her soon too,” Chuck said with a huge grin on his face. He is only 3 years younger than me and he’s living the life I can probably never pursue.

“So did you ever get the doctor position you wanted at that hospital in the city?” Chuck asked.

“Not yet, hopefully soon, I’ve been there for 20 years now and finally finished my masters. I’m just waiting for a position to open up,” I said.

“I wish you luck!” Chuck said.

“Thank you so much,” I said as I turned away so that I did not have to hear anymore about Chuck’s wonderful life. I grabbed a glass of champagne and finished it in one sip.

“Hey! How are you Rob?” My neighbor, Lisa said.

“I’m Good, How are you?” I said staring at Lisa’s chest.

“Robert! My eyes are up here! Anyway, I’m great, so glad to see you and meet your family,” Lisa said as I became lost in the ocean that reflected from her eyes. I could not help but stare, she was absolutely eye catching. Her long brown hair, blue eyes, and fair skin. I felt like I was committing a crime considering she is only about 25 years old.

“Yes, I’m sure they are glad to meet you too. How is your husband? I never see him around any more and you both live so close,” I said.

“He is doing fine, he is just so busy lately. He told me to send his apologies because he is on a business trip this week.” Lisa said.

“That’s okay,” I said. If only she was interested in a man of my age. Fifty years old. I feel like my life went by so quickly. Lisa’s husband is only 39 years old, he grew up in a wealthy family and became an architect just like his father. I would never expect her to have any interest. I walked my way back into the kitchen and grabbed another bottle of merlot. Regina stormed through the door.

“Robert! What are you doing? You hardly ever drink, what has gotten into you?” Regina yelled. She had this naturally loud, screeching voice sometimes. Her face would become red with fury and she would give me a stare as if I knew I was wrong even though I was not. I had a craving for some red wine. I gave her a blank stare and started to down the bottle of merlot as she stood there.

“Robert please stop, and come out to say good bye to our guests,” Regina said as she walked out, knowing I would follow. I swung the door open.

“Good bye every one! Thank you all for coming!” I announced to the guests and then went straight up to my bedroom hoping Regina would not follow. She is a great wife and all, but I need adventure, I need something new and exciting. Twenty-five years of marriage and twenty years of being a nurse. Just a nurse. I looked out my bedroom window and watched all the guests walk out. Chuck got into his brand new red Porsche, with his young, gorgeous wife. My sister walked out with a group of her friends this was not the end of their night. They were on there way to the city for a night of partying and celebrating their single, young, lives. I had a sudden change of mind. I got up, went to my closet and started trying on clothes that I stored away from years ago. I grabbed a leather jacket, a dressy black shirt, and an old pair of jeans. I stared at myself in the mirror, looking at an old me, before I was married or had a serious job.

“Why are you dressed like that?” Regina snuck into the room.

“I’m just trying on some old clothes. I wanted to see if it still fits,” I said.

“And what is next? Are you going to get on a motorcycle and pretend you are 20 years old again?” Regina said. She was turning red in the face and tapping her feet as if she was waiting for an answer. I had no answer. All I want is some freedom, I want to feel young again.

“This phase you are going through needs to end. I’m going to sleep now, it would be nice of you to join me when you are done reliving your past,” Regina stormed over to the bed, changed, turned off the light and went under the covers. I hadn’t slept in the same bed as her in days. I lived on the couch and was quiet content with that. I know I was the source of all our arguments, but I have not felt the same.

“Goodnight Regina,” I whispered and walked straight back to the kitchen. My eyes felt heavy, yet I still had so much energy. I poured myself a glass of champagne and looked out the kitchen window. Maybe one day I can be happy with my life and be able to spoil my wife and myself. For now, I can just hope for the best. I stumbled over to the couch after my fifth glass of champagne, fell asleep so quickly and hoped to wake up to a better day.

For a writer a poet or even an admirer of literature. words and sentences make our heart sing But the complexity of mathematics and the sciences to us are a bit tormenting We sit and struggle as we try to find a solution to the questions that we hold But in reality we have the secret equation; The mathematical equation to the heart and soul everyone first learns that $1+1=2$ But our mathematics have a different done to our do You see our $1+1=1$ and our $2-1=\text{none}$ See it comes down to your so 1 in a million without your 1 my 1 will forever be done And one day our $1+1$ will equal 3 and she or he will be our trillion x infinity But if you really break it down you'll see that $2+1$ in fact doesn't equal three it comes down to ONE.

You can always bet when all is done

It will ALWAYS come down to ONE

Bobby once said one love one heart

And he was right you need ONE to fill in that missing puzzle part but I digress

Into this strange mathematical equation which seems all over the place a beautiful mess See one day I want to find the one to my one And well be two in one doesn't that sound fun And I'll hate that I'll only get 1,440 minutes a day to express how I love my ONE.

When Ill need 5 million, to celebrate the creation, of the companion, in my equation. I guess I must multiply the speed and complexity of my words and sentences So when I find my one ill have time to tell him how his love has my nights filled with restlessness And ill love my one and ill be his one and TOGETHER we'll equal one my search will not be done till i find the x in my equation my one and only love



Photo By Jacquelyn Pletsch

