LebaNon-Sequitur
2011

Cover Art:

Lebanon Cityscape

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One sofa in the apartment,
our thrift store find
with green and orange stripes.
Rabbit ears and four channels,
“T.V. sucks, let’s snuggle and watch a movie tonight.”

One sofa in the trailer,
a beige slipcover
to hide the stripes.
Cable and thirty-two channels,
“Move over, I can’t stretch my legs out right.”

Two sofas in the house,
His and Hers,
new and plush and nice.
Satellite and three-hundred channels,
nothing to say tonight.
Winter Washday
By
Joan Weaver

I tug at t-shirts and pillowcases, frozen to the clothesline, fold pants into odd stiff shapes. My mother did this every winter washday of my childhood, carried baskets of wet wash out back, to hang and dry, or freeze. Mornings, my sister and I ate our toast and lifted soapsuds from the machine chugging clean another load. My mother would hurry back inside, push back the kerchief from her hair, and thrust red icy fingers into our warm necks. We yiped in happy protest. I wanted to be big like her, to hang the important wash on the line and iron it smooth the next day. But now I see how important to be the child with a tender neck where my mother could warm her hands before the next load turned her hands red again.
The Lighthouse
by
Rachel L. Umstead

Standing rigid, unafraid,
Its light a knife slicing
Its wide path through the night.

Boldly the lighthouse beckons,
Bearing the burdens
Of those that stumble by.

It reaches out a firm hand to grasp
Writhing, wretched souls who
Mournfully, afraid, tremble before it.
Room with a View
by
Drew Schaeffer

Sheets soaked with sweat, and regret,
an angry bed of contempt.
Body broken on the rocks
of toil and self-loathing.
Tattered, ratty curtains hang uneven,
below a peeling, scaly ceiling
Musty, dusty chairs sit in mute testimony
to those that go unsung.
Ancient pendulum peals away the hours
behind spider web glass.
A pesky fly buzzes on plastered wall,
a desperate rain slaps the pane.
“Whenever God closes a door, He opens a window. Never give up hope.” My grandmother reiterated these phrases when I was young to make me feel better about the calamities of life. I would sit at her kitchen table, eating her homemade chicken pot pie, and she would tell me about the miracles of the lepers, cripples, and blind men that Jesus Christ had healed or of the fourteen-year-old peasant girl in Lourdes, France who saw an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She even told me about a piece of toast that had the image of Christ seared into it from a sacrosanct toaster in an Alabama trailer park. Now that my grandmother has gone to her reward and I am older and aware of the atrocities of the world, I am hesitant to believe in the existence of a higher being. Where is God in these turbulent times?

My wife and I have been blessed with seven children. Most people, including my parents, think that we are insane for having that many kids. I get exasperated with the remarks of co-workers and friends. “You know how that happens, right?” “Wow, soon you’ll have your own baseball team!” When it comes to discussing my copious, Roman Catholic family, everyone is a comedian. My children love being in our abundant family, except the oldest. My fifteen-year-old daughter was teased at her Catholic school for coming from a big family. She was mortified when we dropped her off at school with our titanic, fifteen-passenger van that she said could be seen from space.
In December 2009, my wife and I were surprised to learn that she was carrying our eighth child, and we braced ourselves for a new round of coarse comments. However, complications arose that would threaten the future of the embryo. The doctor diagnosed that the pregnancy would not be viable. A few months later, we were in an ultrasound room being told that we were having a healthy baby girl. Somehow the doomed fetus, which the doctors had written off, survived.

Meanwhile, my eleven-year-old son started to complain about a sharp pain in his jaw. The dentist examined him and determined the pain was not caused by a dental issue. We took him to visit his pediatrician and all he could say was that he was puzzled. Every specialist we consulted could not figure out what was wrong. My son’s pain intensified and traveled from his jaw to his arms and finally to his legs. After weeks of appointments with several doctors, they curtailed the possible diagnoses to childhood rheumatoid arthritis or fibromyalgia. An x-ray of his legs was scheduled just as a precaution, and we hoped it would give us a clue as to what was going on in his body. My wife and I were relieved that we finally were getting close to learning the reason for his pain.

I was at work on the day of the appointment, putting little boxes into big boxes when my supervisor approached me and said I had an emergency call. My wife was on the phone in hysterics. “He has cancer,” she howled. “You need to come home now.” I stammered as I tried to explain the situation to my supervisor and judging my disconcerted facial expression, he asked if I needed a ride home. I told him that I would be fine as the word “cancer” whirled in my head. My supervisor offered his condolences and said he hoped everything would be all right. As I started my car, my mind was absorbed trying to
remember what leukemia even was. I’m not sure how I got home because the next thing I noticed was that I was pulling into my driveway. I walked in the front door and saw my wife flanked by a couple of family friends that came to support us during this devastating revelation. My wife tried to explain through her tears that the x-ray of his knees showed signs of leukemia and that he would need to be evaluated further at the Children’s Hospital in Hershey. I tried to console her by telling her that everything would be all right, but how can you convince someone of something you don’t believe yourself? We cancelled our summer trips and activities. I had to drop two college courses; I knew I would no longer have the time or the mental capacity to concentrate on the subjects. We packed up my son’s clothes and things for him to do during his anticipated week long stay in the hospital.

The next day, we drove to the Hershey Medical Center. My wife and I were silent and nervous; deeply thinking about how all this would play out. As we pulled into the entrance of the prodigious complex, I hoped that the testing that day would come back negative and life would not have to make the abrupt change that it was about to make. Much like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, I was trying to bargain with the same God whose existence I was questioning, saying things like, “Why can’t it be me?” or “I won’t miss Mass anymore and I’ll become a model Christian; just don’t take him.”

Walking into the children’s clinic, I observed many frail children with severe conditions. I felt uneasy when I noticed their hairless heads--tubes hanging from various apertures, waiting to be seen by the medical staff and to receive their life saving medicines. I pondered about how these kids were being robbed of their childhood; they should be taking part in summertime merriment, not confined inside the
clinic’s walls with hardships that their classmates could never fully comprehend. My heart ached for them and their parents and I thought how now my family was about to join their ranks. The alabaster walls were decorated with many inspirational pictures, thoughts, and sayings with a common theme: *Hope*.

We were called back to an examination room; the doctor divulged that my son had acute lymphoblastic leukemia and then went on to explicate the procedures that he would have to endure for the next three years. We were being bombarded by information about things we never expected to have to consider. Advanced medical terms and acronyms—leukocytes, erythrocytes, ANC, ARA-C—were flying out of the doctor’s mouth like bullets out of a machine gun firing on our ignorance. After our briefing, my son was admitted to the hospital for one week for testing, chemotherapy, and blood transfusions. My wife would stay with him during the day and I would stay with him at night. A supportive group of friends and family came to our aid with anything else we needed—childcare, meals, and housecleaning. At the end of the week, after my wife and I were instructed on my son’s myriad of medicines that we were to administer to him as well as what reactions we should look for, my son was released from the hospital.

One day, while surfing the Internet, my wife happened to find an article about how umbilical cord blood transplantation with sibling donors was being used to save children with leukemia. I then had a realization that this is why our surprise pregnancy happened. This was why our soon-to-be-born baby daughter survived when the doctors said she wouldn’t. We had been provided with *hope* for a last option to save his life. My wife called a cord bank service and ordered the kit that would be used to acquire the
blood that would then be shipped immediately to their site to be stored until it would be needed.

We decided to let my son name the newborn. He decided on the name Hope, and my wife and I both agreed it was apropos. However, we did not want her to have a complex about being my son’s savior, so we decided to call her by her middle name, Elizabeth. Hope Elizabeth Grace was born on June 30, 2010. The umbilical cord was the longest the doctor had ever seen and, subsequently, it was the most cord blood the doctor had ever collected.

My son is now in remission and coping with the chemotherapy and radiation treatments, but it is still a three year process to watch, monitor, and ensure it does not come back. Now I have a story to tell my grandchildren of the miracle of an unplanned pregnancy months before my son’s diagnosis and the cord blood that could be used to save his life. Even though we’re not in a leper colony in Jerusalem, a grotto in Lourdes, or even a trailer park in Alabama, this is our miracle. The cord blood is still safely stored in the bank waiting for the day my son may need it. I hope that day will never come.
Catch Me A Cat
by
Linda J. Powell

What would I do, if I could catch me a cat,
Just how would I go about such a task?
I would think that it would take a lot of work.
It would surely take weeks, maybe even months.
I would know the second, that it would be caught.
Yes, I would be able to tell.
How would I catch me a cat?
By opening the door to my heart,
Then what would I do when I caught this cat?
I would give it a home, a home in my heart.
That’s what I would do, if I could catch me a cat.

Mr. Bridges and Sugarloaf Lightfoot
by
Linda J. Powell
A golden ribbon
Hanging loosely from the ceiling,
works best.

But beware,
a disease carrier with tiny wings
it’s deadly.
Tattoos at Sunrise
by
Katie Trainer

Was it the sting of my tattoo kiss
That branded my name into your mind?
Our fascinations growing stronger and mine
Is growing rapidly as I descent through
The trees, the floor is approaching ever
Quickly, yet I ignore the air; It’s briskly revolving
Through my tattered affairs, I’m climbing
Higher than I ever have before to
Make my passion braided in your hair
Then it means, yes, for you I’ll fall
I’ll fall from that God’s grace to land upon
Your breath. I’ll fall from these mountain
Pass roads to define what we expect. I’ll fall
From building to rivers to refine my
Image. I’ll fall from dream after dream
Until you have met my vision. Until I
See that picture with my own eyes, I’ll fall.
We’ve branded each other to fall
Together into the night we fall
Asleep together for the first time
Will we dream forever?
Moonshine Church
by
Amy Kile

Most students of Northern Lebanon High School are familiar with Moonshine Church. It is one of those places that have been the subject of rumors and tall-tales, the most common of which involves your car stalling while passing the church. Another is that if you look inside the church you can see apparitions of soldiers and others walking around. Lastly, it is said that blue lights or eyes float in the darkness, a legend based on the fact that the victim of the Blue Eyed Six, Joseph Raber, is buried in the church cemetery.

Because of the rumors and stories, my best friend Andrew and I were frequent visitors of Moonshine Church. 19 years old and recently graduated from Northern Lebanon High School, we drove by several times a week, slowing down to look for blue lights. We very rarely stopped the car. On the rare occasion that we felt brave enough, we pulled into the church parking lot and watched across the street, where the cemetery was located. We never did see anything paranormal or out of the ordinary. We saw only the dark night blanketed all around and the cold grey tombstones.

At Boscov’s, where Andrew and I were working, we met a coworker whose parents happened to have a cabin located near Moonshine Church, used when the family wanted a break from Lebanon. Our coworker, Ann, told us something that fueled our Moonshine fascination. Ann told us of all the hand-drawn pentagrams they would find scattered in the woods. They were found on trees, on the ground, on the cement underneath the pavilion. She told
us that one morning they had found a huge pentagram cir-

cle with dead and mutilated rats inside. We begged Ann to
take us there so we could see something, anything paranor-
mal and scary. She agreed to take us, and Andrew and I
agreed that we should go during the day. We looked
around the area surrounding Ann’s family cabin, finding
nothing but dried leaves and the faint markings of a young
child’s sidewalk chalk. Since we were in the Moonshine
Church area, we decided to check out one of the long dirt
roads we often passed and see where it would take us. We
started down a long road, deeper and deeper into the
woods, the sunlight occasionally peeking through the trees.
Finally, we saw a clearing and what appeared to be a nor-
mal, ranch style house, white with black shutters. It even
had a swing set just to the side. But what we saw next
caus ed us to gasp in horror and panic. There were three
white upside-down crosses in the yard. We hightailed it out
of there so fast, we left a trail of dust as the tires spit out a
stream of gravel and dirt. Seeing the upside-crosses con-
firmed for us that the Moonshine area was full of Satanists
and evil.

Even though Andrew and I were now terrified of
Moonshine, we still could not fight the intense desire to
visit. We were addicted to the fear and the creepy sensa-
tion that caused the hair on our arms to stand up. One
night, in October, Andrew and I were bored to death, in the
typical teenage fashion. Our other friends were working
and we were tired of watching TV and were, of course,
broke. We started talking about Moonshine Church and de-
cided we should explore the church and the cemetery.

“Why are we so afraid?” Andrew asked. “We need
to stop being so afraid and actually get out of the car.”

“If we are going to be successful paranormal re-
searchers, we have to get over our fears.” I added.

Matthew, my brother younger by 18 months, heard us talking and informed us that if we went he was coming too. My brother had never been there and according to him he was not scared of anything.

The three of us piled into Andrew’s Cavalier. It was a chilly October night. The sky was clear and there was no wind to rustle the fallen leaves. On the way to the church, we told my brother about the drive up the long dirt road and the upside-down crosses we saw at the white and black house. The look on his face was priceless. It was the kind of look a person gets when they hear a noise when they are home alone, the look of fear, this coming from the kid claiming to not be afraid of anything. As we approached the church, Andrew slowed the car, but instead of turning into the parking lot, he slowly passed the church. My brother and I yelled at him for chickening out. So we drove a little way down the road and found a spot to turn around. We headed back to the church.

This time, instead of passing the church, Andrew pulled into the parking lot. He parked the car to the right of the church, facing the wooded area. The cemetery was behind us, across the street, a small yellow glow of light coming from the one floodlight that sat on a tall wooden pole. The light was not bright enough to illuminate the entire parking lot and was on the other side of the church, leaving the area we were in very dark. We sat in silence. Finally, Andrew turned the car off and stuck the keys in his pocket. With the car headlights out, the woods looked even darker, and we could make out the silhouetted trees.

My brother finally broke the silence by kicking the passenger seat, startling me. “Come on, let’s go!” he yelled!

Slowly, Andrew and I got out of the car. My brother flew out of the back seat, almost knocking me over. The three
of us stood there slowly scanning the surroundings, looking and
listening for anything out of the ordinary. It was quiet with not
even a night breeze to rustle the trees and scatter the leaves. I
started to walk towards the front door of the church. Andrew
and Matthew followed.

The church was small and painted white with green trim.
There were two small windows in the front with a brown metal
door between them. There were two steps up to a small porch.
My hand reached for the door and turned the knob. It was
locked. There was no window in the door, so I decided to check
out the window on the left. There was a small round bush that I
had to step over to get to the window. We all had to stand on
our toes to peer inside the window. The glass had a thin veil of
dirt which made the view instead appear blurry. Expecting to
see a shadowy figure or a satanic priest, I saw instead the usual
church furniture. Wood pews in orderly rows—the kind of
pews that had the book holder on the back for the hymnals and
Bibles. There was a pulpit at the front of the church—nothing
elaborate or fancy. Behind the pulpit, a wooden cross hung on
the wall. This cross was not hung upside down or spattered with
blood. We stood there for several minutes, waiting.

Defeated, we turned around to face the cemetery across
the street, surrounded by chain link fence, the kind you see
around a school or a prison. It was about 3 feet high and had
one gate in the center. Even from where I was standing, I could
see there was a lock on the gate. Most likely the gate was put
there to keep the vandalism at a minimum. Turning to the side
and looking at the car, I noticed we had left the doors open and
wondered if we had done this unconsciously in order to secure
a quick get away. I chuckled to myself at the thought, breaking
the silence. Matthew and Andrew were too hypnotized by the
cemetery to notice. I joined them in scanning the cemetery,
looking for any movement or the blue eyes that classmates
talked about. Again, there was nothing but the darkness and the whiteness of the stone tombstones.

We were about 10 feet from the car and the only thing separating us from the cemetery was the road. During this time, about 10 minutes, no cars had passed, but then again, it was close to midnight and usually people are in bed. My brother again broke the silence.

“I’m going into the cemetery.”

I replied, “How are you going to get in? There is a lock on the gate?”

His response was “I’ll just jump over the fence, it’s not that tall, DUH!” For some unknown reason, Andrew decided to go with him. I, however, was not going into the cemetery. I watched as they looked both ways before crossing the street. Far from a highway, there was nothing but silence surrounding us. As Andrew and Matthew crossed the road I noticed that even their steps seemed silent. As they walked closer to the fence, I stepped slowly backwards in the direction of the car, never taking my eyes off them. I don’t recall why I started walking backwards to the car. Maybe I thought the car equaled safety. By the time they reached the cemetery fence, I had reached the open car door on the passenger side. My backside was against the open door.

Andrew and Matthew reached out to grasp the fence. As soon as I saw their hands grasp the fence, I heard something. It was leaves, leaves rustling. Yet there was no wind. I noticed that, as I stood in my spot, my hair remained unmoved, the branches on the trees were not moving, it was as if time had stopped. I dismissed the noise as an animal, a deer or raccoon possibly. Matthew started to hoist himself over the fence. Obviously, he had not heard the noise. As he swung one of his legs over the fence, the noise I had heard got louder. I was frozen by the sound. Andrew was swinging his leg over
when he stopped to look in my direction. Was he hearing what I was hearing? My brother was straddling the fence and with one lift of his leg he was over the fence and on the other side.

It was now evident that the rustling sound I had heard was not an animal. I could clearly hear that it was steps, the steps of someone or something walking on leaves. I could hear the crackling of the leaves, and distinctly make out the sound of each step. Terrified and frozen to the spot, I turned to face the woods. My hands firmly grasped the top of the car door and noticed that my knuckles had turned white. I could not see anything - not a shape of a person or an animal. The branches were still, yet I could hear the snap of twigs that had fallen on the ground. A twig snapped as someone stepped on it, and I realized then that someone was walking toward the car. I could hear the steps coming from straight ahead. I wanted to scream “Come back, there’s someone in the woods,” but fear had taken over, and all I could muster to say was “LEAVE NOW!”

I jumped into the passenger seat and slammed the door shut, locking it behind me. Turning back to see if either Matthew and Andrew had heard me, I saw Andrew running across the street, this time not even bothering to see if there were cars coming. I saw my brother straddling the fence rushing to get his legs over and scrambling across the road. Andrew made it to the car, hopped in, and slammed the door. “Did you hear that too?” he screamed. I could see the terror in his eyes and the fear in his voice. He was shaking.

“Yeah, I heard it” I said in a whisper.

“That was a person walking in the woods,” Andrew said.
“I know,” was all I could muster and say. All of a sudden I heard pounding on the window. Andrew and I both screamed. We had completely forgotten about my brother and he was frantically hitting the glass with his hand screaming “Let me in, let me in.”

Remembering I had to get out of the car to let him in, I reached for the door handle and tried to open the door, the door that I had locked. In my panic, I fumbled for the lock, trying to pull it up. All the while Matthew was screaming and crying. The scene was like something out of one of the scary movies that we always watched. Finally, the lock was up, but before I could open the door, he beat me to it. I pulled the latch to bring the seat forward so he could get in the car. I was crunched over as my frantic brother pushed the seat further front. Before I could even shut the door, Andrew had started the car and was backing out. The lights of the car were turned on. I think all three of us were expecting to see the same thing. A figure of a crazed Satanist, a ghostly figure, or even Michael Myers or Jason. Instead we saw what we had seen all night, nothing. Andrew whipped the car around, and we headed for the road. We started down the road and headed towards home.

“What was that, or who was that?” asked my brother.

“I don’t know. I thought it was an animal at first,” I replied.

Andrew confirmed, “That was not an animal. There was someone walking towards us.”

“I know,” I said. “There was no wind tonight either!”

We drove the rest of the way home in silence. The three of us replayed the scene in our heads. Was it a person in the woods? Was it a large animal? Was it just the
Crazy fear of three teenagers raised on too many horror films? To this day we still talk about that night. We have shared the story with our new friends and family. I have even passed the story down to my son. His eyes grow big every time he hears the story. I still drive by the church every year, not as often as Andrew and I did, and I always remember that night when I pass.

A few years ago, I took my son to the church so we could see the cemetery, during the day of course. The fence is still there but there is no lock on the gate to keep people out. The church still looks the same. There are several no trespassing signs in the parking lot and hanging on some of the trees in the surrounding woods. I wonder if, when my son gets to high school, he will hear the same stories that Andrew and I did. It brings a smile to my face to think of him telling our story to his friends. And I wonder if Moonshine Church still holds the same appeal as it did for us all those years ago. Are the teens now desensitized to the paranormal? Will this story intrigue any readers to check out the church? I hope so.
Lower Lake
by
Cheyenne Haldeman
Isn't It Amazing?
by
Erin Colleen Howie

Isn’t it amazing when
One small step
Can change the way the world spins
Can change a country’s thought process
Can change so much
Even though it’s just one small step?
Isn’t it amazing how
One small word
Can bring a nation to its knees
Can make a world of people go quiet
Can draw the attention of those who never listen
Can make you rethink your lifestyle?
Isn’t it amazing how
One small touch
Can change your life forever
Can make you feel safe
Wrap their arms around you
In this cold, dark world?
Isn’t amazing that
The smaller the foot that makes the step
The softer the voice that says the word
And the rougher the hand that makes the touch
The more meaning it holds?
Isn’t it amazing how small things
Can make such a big impact on the world?
How small things
Can suffice your need to hear and to be heard
Can suffice your need to give love and be loved
Can suffice your need to feel in general?
Isn’t it amazing?
White Right?
by
Jessica Simmons

Why is white always right?
Why the Dove,
And not the Raven?

Why the swish, swish of a silky ponytail,
Sexier than,
The bounce, bounce of Afro-puffs?

Why the faceted gaze of green eyes
More sultry,
Than the golden mocha glow glancing through a veil of lashes?

And if White is so
Damned right?
Why do I ...

Have to wait in the Sally’s to buy hair grease
Behind two valley girls,
Fake baked,
Pancaked,
With cornrowed heads,
Hollerin’ Nigga’ back and forth?
Aging Gamer
by
Juan Carlos Morales

Manically mashing buttons
In a maddening fury,
He foully flings obscenities
As his vision becomes blurry.

It began as a night of nostalgia
With a controller clutched in hand,
And a cola at arms reach
He thought it would be grand!

But his ridiculously rusty skill
Or ludicrous lack-there-of
Makes him lose again and again
Whenever push comes to shove.

Once a youthful second nature
In his maturity now a chore,
He curses out the programmer
That hid the key for this door!

He wonders why he ever liked
This steaming pile of crap,
And wanders around aimlessly
Don’t go there! It’s a trap!

He saw the words “Game Over,”
And his playtime had stopped.
Ten tries with the same conclusion,
The f-bomb finally dropped...
Self-Portrait in Subtractive Chalk

by

Kathy Ebling
Big Fish
by
Joseph Wade

Are you the Big Fish,
the one who jumps into the air
over a glass pond-
with its slick, wet body
arched at the peak of flight
shining to mock the pink sunrise in the pale sky?

A white bird with stretched wings
voices its ca-caw of the
rainbow trout with black spots
Before it clashes with glass,
sounds like cymbals.

A chorus of little drops
fly and freeze in the sharp blue sky
where sun passes through them
birthing prisms of dancing light
on the rippling water’s surface.

Sparkles captured in spheres
shower down
In lasting, gentle
tings.

So let me ask you again,
Sir,

“Are you the Big Fish?”
Self-Portrait
by
Megan O’Connor
Here’s to our good ol’ Lebanon High. Actually, here’s to the run down cave the district has the gall to call a high school. I don’t know if it has always been what it is now. It may have been the bucket of rainbows and sparkles some people say it was. I’ve heard alumni say things such as “LHS was like a second home to me” or “I loved being involved in the many extracurricular activities.” But I think many of those people may have been been just a little too friendly with Mary Jane during their time in that school. It is not a happy place. And I doubt it ever will be again.

From outside on a lazy summer day, Lebanon High School looks like an alright place. A little bland, but nothing too disturbing. Nothing to get upset about. It just sits there, tucked away in its corner of land, its three circular buildings offending no one as they keep to themselves. Perhaps it’s a little messy, sort of crumbling. But what does that matter? Well, it matters a lot. When fall rolls around and the building is inhabited by the supposed students who are required to attend, it takes on a whole new look. One that sends a feeling of hatred into all who must enter, and a warning into all who must pass by.

On mornings most students are forced to walk to school because the cheap budget cannot provide them with transportation. Whether it’s sunny or rainy, snowy or icy, they must walk to this place five days a week. One can see all kinds of things on the way to school, trudging hatefully toward their doom. Dead animals decomposing and festering out in the open for all to gawp at. Used condoms sprinkled up
and down sidewalks. Garbage floating every which way in the wind. It all forms a trail to this magical place where people of all kinds gather for one form of education or another.

Once one steps inside the giant school, there is a pressing decision to make. Which way do you turn? Not only does the mishmash of slippery, hilly hallways and narrow, circular buildings create enough confusion to cause a mental breakdown, but the one-way hallway system generates so much indoor road rage and blind fury that it is almost impossible to understand why the administration ever thought it was a good policy to enforce. The arrows, which are there for the sole purpose of guiding students and faculty in the correct direction, tend to stump everyone. As do the ancient, power-hungry security guards that patrol the hallways, searching for people going the wrong direction, using the wrong staircase, or otherwise doing something logical by breaking an illogical rule.

During the school day, passersby will see many curious sights outside the school. Delinquents loiter outside the very place they are avoiding, smoking their cigarettes which they keep hidden from their parents in crayon boxes or change purses. When watching them, one can almost hear the k-chinging of the truancy fines accumulating for every single one of them as they opt to skip school by coming to school. The graduation rate plummets as the dropout rates and failure rates rise to an all-time high. None of them have any kind of pride in themselves. And why should they when they think they can go through life without a morsel of sophisticated knowledge in their alcohol and drug infested brains?

Not all students are like that, of course. The rest of them are inside. Some are listening, learning, taking notes and applying the wisdom they’ve worked so hard to acquire to real situations. They’re striving to be in the top of their
class, get accepted to ivy league colleges, and receive so much scholarship money Bill Gates would be jealous. And some of them will achieve that. Others are just happy to do their best and be successful in life, living each day to the fullest, knowing they’ve earned the easy life. Obviously, you’ve got the slackers who are stuffed into already overpopulated classrooms, causing ruckus equivalent to that of Woodstock and preventing teachers from actually teaching.

Every building has its own distinct smell. The Gymnasium building smells of burnt out tennis shoes and ranky dishwater. In the Auditorium building, hints of delicious food from the faculty break room waft by every so often, distracting you from the chemicals in the walls and the fart the kid in front of you just let fly. And the Library building is where stale popcorn and body odor haunt the air. The carpets are stained with what we hope to God isn’t blood. The linoleum and tile floors are permanently stained with what is most likely puke that was ignored for far too long. The walls are literally crumbling as you walk by them, and they’re paper thin, allowing you to hear exactly what is happening on the other side.

The bathrooms, when they aren’t closed off because students were recently caught smoking in them, are like the setting in a low-budget horror film. Smelling of every filth imaginable, only the bravest and sickest dare to venture inside. Out of four stalls, three work. Out of those three, only one has a door. Sharpie covers the stall barriers. Stories of sluts and cowards and baby-daddies inhabit spaces next to drawings of disliked teachers and poetry about the most random things. Each week, a new layer of the same disgusting sea-sick blue is applied in an effort to stop the graffiti from growing back. It fails.
I fear this may not be so different from any other public school in America. A place where countless teenagers are sent every day, either to make their future, or waste it. A place where students feel strangled by the strict, useless rules. A place where you don’t matter if you can’t get them more money. However, generations before us have made it out alive. So can we.

Hello?
by
Abby Dun
In dreams, I commit suicide on your lips,
Succumbing to the sword in your mouth to flatter the flesh of my fancy,
But who are you?
You seduce the sweat from my pores,
And stalk my desire until I’m yielding to your knife,
But who are you?
You're the ghostly lothario who haunts my slumber,
Leaving me spoiled and sweltering in my sleep,
But who are you?
Like an incubus, you plunder the soul from my body and prey upon my limbs,
Swimming in the swamp of my every sin,
But who are you?
When darkness slaughters day, you float into my room,
And meld with my mind,
But when the sun rises, every waking memory smothers in smoke,
And you melt into the night.
Who are you?
Monster
by
Katie McCrary

The smoke from his cigarette,
crept through the cracks of his crooked teeth
  Staining his smug smile,
tainting his breath with a stale, stagnant stench
  His mutating mask was a masterpiece.
His love, built on jealous rage and hypocrisy
  He never saw the light flicker in her eye,
he did not see,
He never heard the heart beat beneath her soul
  He did not hear,
One hand on the door, one hand on the throat
Of the one he branded as the one who he loved,
  Until he felt her limp body subdue in his arms
  He did not know.
My Perspective

by

Pam Rogers
Lies
by
David Zengulis

His smile lies, but never his eyes -
Legions invade, raining death on jackboots,
ravens, vultures, black silhouettes on a red sky,
fires burn fiercely the fingers of smoke drive -
- them out.
Twisted as the cross on his Sleeve -
skull and bones on his cap.
The Huns close in,
and the FEW try to hide, betrayed by Neighbors - Fear rules the streets, the fields,
and the skies.

He will fill the ghettos to a flood of tears
Only to drain them, “work will set you free”
a lie told to all, filling freight cars, bursting -
- with stench
His legions hunt, seek, every attic a final solution. A little girl and her diary -
- another FEW gone,
Piled in pits covered with lye -
- the scent of roast flesh burns -
- in the eye.
Only the gaunt and the dead will survive.

All of it, there, in those unlying eyes,
amid the sound of breaking glass. And
A cheer, Sieg-Heil.
Three Second Memory
by
Dustin W. Horne
My Go-Go Girl

by

Brett Stumphy

She looks forlorn in that gilded cage, her wings all droopy, her aura as smudgy as her mascara. When I met her, she’d been all rainbow sherbet delicious, and now she’s the bottom of the amber ashtray I bought at a garage sale. Fifty cents for the big glass, granulated, 1970’s monstrosity almost a birdbath in its proportions—a good deal, really. I was proud of myself. Not quite as proud as when I caught her, one night, looking out for me, that night, that evening I won’t forget. How could I? That was the night my one and only my true, my everything, the night she, well…. It’s best not to think about it. Trust me. Some things aren’t for polite company.

The tips of her wings, they’re as dirty as the bottoms of her feet. I gave her a dirt devil, but she refuses to clean up after herself. She also refuses to dance. The go-go dancer’s cage wasn’t expensive, and I wouldn’t begrudge her the cost because she’s still beautiful, and I still love her, or I continue to think that I love her, whichever is more true. It’s the thought that counts, and I thought she’d love the irony of the go-go dancer’s cage. Even bought her the boots. Put her hair up. Turned my office into a nightmare of hairspray, the miasma so thick, I might as well have sucked exhaust from a rubber hose. Surrounded her with multicolored track lighting, flashed surrealist images of amoeba self-abusing until it spurted a second amoeba. Sure, she danced for a bit, but her heart was never in it.

I don’t think she loves me anymore. She certainly
doesn’t pretend to love me anymore. And that’s probably worse.

The go-go boots are limp in the cage.

She sits there, smoking cigarettes. She twists the filters off. She gets bits of tobacco in her teeth.

Just like the bottom of that amber ashtray.

And her belly’s getting flabby. I noticed it several weeks ago, but I haven’t said anything to her about it. It would be cruel of me to let her know that my sexual attraction for her has diminished. Perhaps it was cruel of her to allow its dissipation, but I don’t think I can blame her much. It can’t be comfortable, not through the bars of the cage like that, not always on her knees.

What’s worse, she only says cruddy things to me. Just yesterday, she called me a selfish bastard who didn’t measure up to his own dreams. I often told her my dreams. It’s something of a compulsion, I admit. The psychiatrist says I need to develop an external focus. He says I’m compensating. Everyone’s compensating, I told him. He didn’t think so. I asked her too, after I brought her another pack of cigarettes. She twisted the filter off of one and blew smoke at nothing in particular. Fuck you, she said.

And then, just yesterday, she told me I didn’t measure up to my own dreams. She called me a failure and a creep. She said I’d been shitty to her. It seemed a terribly cruel thing to say to me. And then she asked me if I could get her a beer. I should have told her the beer was making her fat, but she looked so sad, and I probably deserved it. Still, it seemed especially cruel because she knew my dreams and she knew what they’d all come to. She’d been there that night, after all. So she ought to know.

Sometimes she says “nothing.” Well, she says noth-
ing a lot. If I ask her what’s the matter, it’s nothing. If I ask her if there’s anything she’d like from the store, it’s nothing. Would you like new shoes? I know how you like new shoes. Nothing. Zip. Nada. Zilch. I’ve never seen anything so pretty, or so formerly pretty, so downright divine, no matter how fallen with dirty feet, a smudged aura the color of ash over amber, filthy wings, and a flabby gut. Other times, she said, “Whatever.” That’s how she wins arguments. You’re a selfish prick, she’d say. But she’d always interrupt me whenever I tried to tell her about my dreams and about how my dreams never turned out to be so terribly dreamy. She’d finish my thoughts for me, like the utterance of the thought was the thought itself. Finishing a person’s sentence isn’t the same thing as listening, I’d say to her. It’s certainly not the same thing as empathizing. You used to empathize with me, I told her. It was true. She empathized with me, once. That is, once upon a time, not just the one time. You never let me finish, so how can I be selfish if you never let me finish a thought. I thought I had her. But she said, “Whatever.”

The other trick she’s learned is to say, “If you don’t know, I’m not going to tell you.” That’s how she kept me from being not selfish anymore. She convinced me I was, so I wanted to change. A person can’t argue with “Whatever,” especially when one knew one was probably responsible for all that “nothing.”

So I wanted to be less of a prick, less selfish. I wanted to improve myself, if I could, in her eyes. The go-go boots hadn’t worked. Neither had the amazing masturbat- ing, procreating amoebas. Neither had the lava lamps. Her beautiful rainbow, though admittedly caustic, brilliant aura had gone smudgy despite my best efforts. So now I was trying to “listen.” I asked her what I could do. She said I
never said the things she wanted me to say. She said I never did the things she wanted me to do. I told her I loved her, but that made her bottom lip sag. So I asked her, “what is it? What would you like me to say?” Then she said it. I think she got it from one of those soap operas she’s always watching.

“If you don’t know, I’m not going to tell you.”

In the beginning, she said some of the things I taught her to say, when my dreams were all still new to her, but she’d never quite said them the way I wanted her to say them. It was better before the cage, but that couldn’t be helped. She’d fly away to someone else’s sadness if I didn’t keep her in the cage. You can’t argue with that logic. They say if you love something you should set it free, but then nobody loves you and the being loved is at least as important as loving someone else, don’t you think? It’s probably more important. Do you know what happens to people who love someone who doesn’t love them? It’s not pretty. A person who loves someone who doesn’t love them, or worse, who loves them but can’t be with them, just like in a pop song, well that person will bend over backwards to stomp his own head in general despair.

That’s what I felt when she said that to me, when she said, “If you don’t know, I’m not going to tell you.” I felt general despair.

No, she’d never been very good at saying quite the thing I wanted to hear.

Angels make shitty parrots.

I suspect she wanted me to let her go. Yes. She was definitely tired of getting flabby and sad in a gilded cage in my office, but if it hadn’t been for her, I’d have never gotten over it, the night my one, my only, etc. So, that’s why I can’t let her go. I can’t ever let her go. I’d rather have a dead,
flabby angel rotting in the bottom of a gilded cage while one amoeba becomes two amoeba than let her go and be here all alone with all these pictures.

That’s how I captured her. The pictures.

She’d been there when the hammer fell, when the other shoe dropped, when the worst of the worst cliché ripped my still beating heart from my chest and made a bobble-head out of it. Stuck my heart on my dashboard and nodded to the pot-hole rhythm of general despair.

Angels, as you know, or maybe, as you don’t know, tend to represent different aspects of the cosmic soul. Some angels avenge wrongs. Some smite for the sake of smiting. Ever seen a guy get hit by a bus? I bet you dollars to donuts that some angel pushed him just for shits and giggles. Angels get bored. This angel, my angel, she shows up when your one, your only, your true speaks the unspeakable.

She has these flint black eyes, kinda like a shark, big as walnuts. She’s got this Mediterranean complexion, and no hips to speak of. And she’s not very big. Some would call her petite. Cute as hell. And when you’re down in the dumps and wanting to stomp on your own head, crush it to a Rorschach inkblot, now tell me about your mother, well, the most irresistible thing in the world is some ironically detached, adoring sex pot, who’s cute as hell. They should come with warning labels.

She told me that she had a habit of meeting men just like this, on the rebound. I didn’t feel like I was on the rebound. I was still experiencing the bounding part, truth be told. An elastic bong, kinda like a kickball—that’s what I felt, bilious and huge in my throat when she perched beside me on the barstool and touched my hand.

I can tell you exactly what it felt like. Her fingertips
on my palm felt like electric mini-marshmallows, sweet, soft, and shooting straight up my arm, bypassing my brain and overloading my already overloaded heart. Kissing her was almost anti-climactic, like a foregone conclusion, like I’d been kissing her for millions of years already, not boring, but familiar, a steady, incontrovertible fact, and there shouldn’t be anything but kissing her ever again. When she kissed me, I forgot that my one, my only, my true, had spoken the unspeakable, but when we weren’t kissing, that’s all we ever seemed to talk about was my one, my only, my true, and it turns out she’s been in relationships like this before, which made me oddly jealous. I could see that she was a serial angel. She profiled me. Singled me out. She was going to leave me in general despair. I just knew it.

And that’s when I got the idea of the pictures.

It was the heartbreak, you see. She really liked the heartbreak. She tied off her forearm with one of my ties and she jabbed her vein and she filled it up with heartbreak. It made her dizzy. It made her aura, especially the blues and the pinks, flash brilliant. What could I do but stand in the rain, drenched by soggy, clinging, lusciously uncomfortable desire, and stare up into the bright sky on the horizon and marvel at all the pretty colors?

If I was ever happy, I knew, she’d leave me and go on to some other heartbroken sap. So the trick was, I had to make myself as unhappy as possible, and nothing’s more depressing than pictures, so I trotted out every picture I had of my, well, you know, of the girl who came before. Like pigeons after breadcrumbs, her multiple intentions clamored after my pictures. “She’s very pretty,” she told me. It wasn’t quite what I wanted to hear, but it was nice to know that she was very pretty. I wanted her to say, “I love you.” Instead, she
said, “She’s very pretty.” Jealousy was close enough to love, I figured.

Probably, it was better than love. Because if she said she loved me, it would have made me happy, and if I was happy, well then, the next thing you know, bammo! There I am, smoking cigarettes, watching soap operas, and masturbating in an otherwise empty gilded cage. I’ve tried it. Tested it out. Never once did I wind up with two of me where, before, there was only just the one of me.

I told her all about my dreams and about how nothing in my life resembled the life I dreamed for myself all those nights when I’d been happy with her, when I’d been happy with someone who wanted to make my dreams come true. There were things I’d wanted to do. There were ideas of myself I’d wanted to realize. Mostly, I didn’t want to be alone. “You’re not alone,” she told me. Again, that was pretty close to what I wanted to hear, but it wasn’t quite what I wanted to hear. But it certainly made sure I was never happy, and so she didn’t leave me.

She just followed those pictures, dream by dream, until I shut her up in that cage.

I had to do it.

I kept the pictures out, in my office, all over my office, surrounding the cage, all of the pictures facing away from her because they were my pictures, and I didn’t want to talk to her about them anymore, and I didn’t want her looking at them anymore, but I couldn’t put the pictures away because they were part of the trap, and that’s why she loved me, or pretended to love me, right? If I wasn’t obviously broken hearted, she wouldn’t love me or even pretend to love me. I was almost happy. Because I loved her. That’s why I had to lock her up. Even if it smudged her aura
and dirtied her wings and even if she’d never pretend to love me again. I had to do it.

There wasn’t any other way.
I love you, I say to her.
“Whatever,” she says.
Out of the Fire
by
Joan Weaver

On Tuesday, Nov. 13 [1990], tragedy struck downtown Lebanon and the family of a young firefighter. Flames destroyed a third of a city block that included one of Lebanon’s oldest family-owned stores and its first college campus.

The fire caused $7 million dollars damage and took the life of 20-year old volunteer fireman Timothy Stine.

This partial account of the fire that destroyed the original building housing Lebanon’s campus of HACC which appeared in the Lebanon Daily News on December 30, 1990, is typical of news reports of the time. Anyone interested in the facts can find them in newspaper archives of the period. But for a sense of how the event played out in the lives of those who lived through it, that is the HACC Fire Journal, a compilation of 22 students’ entries in the journals they were keeping at the time.

Several weeks after the fire, students turned in their English class journals to Professor Pat Fischer and me. Stunned at the feeling and honesty in the accounts we read, we agreed they should be preserved and shared. With students’ permission we copied their entries; our campus Administrative Secretary, Carol
Schaak, typed them for us; and Campus Director, Phil Hubbard, arranged to have the booklet printed and bound by the Vo-Tech Graphic Arts department. Funds were limited, so only 20 copies were made. We distributed them to all the county libraries as well as administrators and public officials who had supported the Lebanon Campus, but because of the limited edition, even students whose entries made up this first-hand history had to read them in the campus library.

Now, 20 years after Lebanon HACC’S tumultuous first year, our campus literary journal, the LebaNon-Sequitur, has chosen to republish several of those entries. It is hard to select just a few. But the ones that follow will give you some idea of what the college and the fire that destroyed it meant to those very first Lebanon students — how beautiful the building seemed, how much it meant to be able to go to college near home, how deeply they felt the death of young Tim Stine. I hope you will look for the HACC Fire Journal in the library and read the rest.
Journal Entry
by
Ciri Daigle

Devastation is the word I would use to describe what I saw on Tuesday, November 13th, 1990. People everywhere, fire trucks galore, dowsing what was the biggest fire I have ever seen in my life. The new Harrisburg Area Community College was burning down to the ground. All I could think of was how nice the inside of that building was, the smell of the newness in the air, and the stained glass murals on the ceiling turning into black melted pieces of nothing.

As I stood in the public library, gazing at the smoke, I began to ponder over the tragic event. “How could this happen?” “What is going to happen now?” I thought selfishly.

I began a new life this year by returning to school after sixteen years. I wondered now if I would be able to continue.

As I watched the fire, I heard voices behind me. “I’ll bet it was the furnace,” someone remarked.

I silently agreed. The school had been having furnace problems from the first day it opened. Most of the time you had to wear a heavy sweater or keep a coat on in class. You would occasionally hear squeaky noises coming from the walls or signs that someone had been working in the room. A panel from the false ceiling was pushed to the side exposing the plumbing.

While I tried to figure out what was the cause of this fire, I began a conversation with two girls, who I guessed were students.
“Do you know what happened?” I questioned.
One girl replied “we don’t know for sure. Some man came in our room told us to collect our things and leave the building immediately. We knew something was up, because it was very cold in the rooms in the morning and later it became hot.”

A few minutes passed after my conversation with the other students. I heard a man speaking in the background.
“A fireman died,” he said.
“Yeah, a young kid. Twenty years old,” said the other one.

How horrible I thought, someone so young and just beginning to live. My mood began to change. There was no way of saving the building. Let it burn. Although it was a tragedy to lose a building that brought a lot of good to Lebanon, it was not worth losing a life in order to save it.

The building can be replaced but certainly not the life of the young man I learned to be Timothy Stine. His parents and friends will always mourn his loss. I too will always think of Timothy Stine who tried to save my beginning, only to lose his own. I thank you, Tim.
I couldn’t believe what I saw. The flames were shooting skyward. It seemed that everyone in the town of Lebanon who wasn’t working gathered on the street to observe. I couldn’t walk anywhere in the block and not see firemen and their trucks. The HACC building was burning down before my eyes. All the recent plans for my education floated to the sky with the burning embers. How could this be happening? I asked myself. I had heard that the building had caught fire but I did not realize the amount of damage that was taking place. I was concerned about finishing the semester. Everyone I asked had no answer to the question “what happens now?”

Later that night on the news my question was answered. Vo-Tech would help HACC by allowing the use of spare rooms. This brought all new questions of how can they possibly accommodate four hundred extra students. It was a time of tension for me. I do not always accept change in a rational state of mind. Now I am content with the location of classes and looking forward to next semester.
The Day Part of Lebanon Died
Journal Entry by
Chris Yeingst

On November 13, a fire ravaged the Lebanon Campus of the Harrisburg Area Community College. The loss of property itself is terrible, but the loss of Timothy Stine multiplied the devastation suffered by the community.

Everyone wondered how Lebanon would survive? Would the college return? What were they going to do about the rest of the semester? We now know the college will rebuild and what they did for the rest of the semester what we still don’t know is the effect the fire will have on Lebanon. The fire destroyed a very historic building in Lebanon. And dampened many hopes for the rejuvenation of downtown Lebanon. HACC brought with it not only hundreds of students to spend money in local stores, but a spark of hope that downtown Lebanon would once again have the prosperity it once enjoyed.

The loss of the campus was more of a loss to the students than anyone else. The campus was more than a place of learning for the students; it was our home. Being the first students to attend the campus, we felt alone; for many of us this was our first college experience. There were no upperclassman for us to look up to for help. This reliance on our fellow students made us closer, as a group, than any other first year college students. As I watched the building burn, I saw classmates comforting each other. Actually caring for someone they knew nothing about a few months ago.

When you are in grade school, you always wish that something would happen to your school, so you wouldn’t have to go. As I watched the school burn, I realized something - I had lost more than a school; I had lost a home.
“You know Tiffany, everything is going great for me right now – my family life is very stable, my love life is the best it’s ever been, Caitlin is a joy, and I’m doing really well in college. What’s going to go wrong now?” I made this statement to my best friend on November 12th in jest; the next day all of my laughter was gone, replaced with tears.

“Karen, are you OK?” came a frantic call the next day for a very distressed Dawn.

“I’m fine, Dawn, are you O.K.?” I asked.

“I was so worried about you, Karen,” she said. “I knew you had a class today, and when I saw what was happening at HACC, I immediately thought of you.”

“What do you mean, Dawn, what’s happening at HACC?”

“You mean you don’t know?” Dawn replied incredulously.

“No...” was my answer.

“Karen, HACC is burning down!”

After I got off the phone with Dawn, I sat down and cried. I felt like all of the things I had worked for had gone up in smoke, just like the building had. I was unsure just how things would work out and what would happen to me; I was feeling sorry for myself. Then I watched the news and it changed my opinion. First, I heard about Tim Stine and I thought fleetingly that his
family must be devastated. A life lost is always tragic, but I found comfort in the fact that he died for something he was passionate about, and that he probably was now at peace.

Then I saw this woman, with tear stains and soot on her face, and she said “You know, the HACC building was a godsend. I thought I’d have to go out of business because the bills were piling up faster than the profit. Then HACC moved in and business really picked up; I really thought I’d make it. Now I just don’t know.” I think I’ll remember the look on her face forever - tears in her eyes, sorrow written in every line of her face, and defeat in the set of her mouth.

All of a sudden I realized that things could have been much worse, and that I should be rejoicing that everything would be O.K. eventually. I realized that a whole city shared my tears that day, and that they weren’t defeated tears, they were healing tears; I would heal, Tim’s family would heal, and the city would heal, and we would all be closer for the effort.
At school today people from the main campus came down to help those students who were having problems dealing with the fire. A couple of friends and I went at first just to be nosy. There were about fifteen students and faculty that attended. We first did a relaxation exercise. It really worked. I was surprised how relaxed it actually made me. In fact, I almost fell asleep. After that we got into separate groups for open conversations. At first no one really said too much. Then one woman began to talk and I was surprised to find out that she was feeling the same way I was. Others then began to talk and they too had some of the same feelings I was experiencing. I was so relieved to find all this out. I thought I was weird feeling this way, but after hearing everyone else I felt so much better. After it was over all of us were glad we went. We were all glad to finally get our feelings out. The feelings we are feeling can’t be explained to people who weren’t there, who didn’t experience what we did. I’m so glad HACC had this for us. It made me feel good to know that I’m not alone in my feelings.
Photograph by
David Zengulis
We hope you have enjoyed reading this year’s Lebanon Campus Literary Journal. Thanks to all the students, staff, and faculty who submitted their works.

The journal is published at the end of the Spring semester each year. We welcome submissions.

If you are interested in submitting an essay, memoir, story, photograph, drawing or sketch, please contact Dr. Brett Stumphy, English Department, Annette Damato Beamesderfer in the Learning Center, or Deb Lovett, in the Library. All entries must be accompanied by your name, address, phone number, email address and the title of the work(s) submitted.

You will be contacted when your work has been selected for the journal. Once accepted, you must submit your work to the editor in an electronic format.

Check out our Facebook page. To find it, just type in Literary Journal.

You can submit your entries as well as any questions you may have to the following email: LebanonLiteraryJournal@hacc.edu