



The literary and arts
magazine of Wayland
Baptist University

embers^{'15}

embers^{'15}

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New Wor(1)ds

Dr. Deborah Kuhlmann and Dr. Brent Lynn

Another language can
Invert your perspective,
Flip your world,
Like no other.
Spanish couplet,
Greek simile,
Latin lyric,
Chinese ditty,
Any one
Will do the trick.

Like standing on your hands,
Floating feet,
Finding upside down,
Heart and head
Presenting new possibilities.
Meter for a rising star,
Like an American idol,
Snatching away the blurry edge
And pow!
The rhythm is clear.

In an instant
Confidence and joy
Have you
Soaring above the fray,
Like a helium balloon,
Without a ghost of a chance
To be otherwise,
When new words
Suddenly spring off
Your lips.



Stars n' Stripes

Carley Hardage



Ancient Words

Lara Manly

The Jamaica Files

Alexa Lundsford

Characters:

Christine Brumfeld – East Texas attorney; Maximus’s sister
Maximus Brumfeld – Christine’s brother and Sheridan’s father
Sheridan Brumfeld – Max’s 6-year-old daughter; Christine’s niece
William Lucious – Retired district court judge; Christine’s mentor;
Sheridan’s godfather
Lilly Miles – Sheridan’s teacher

ACT I

Scene 1

(Stage is divided into 4 settings, and action occurs from left to right. Each setting will be referenced according to its location. Location names are: L1, L2, R1, and R2. First active setting is L1. Lights up on a small, dimly lit, rustic-looking bedroom. MAXIMUS is sitting on the floor, cross-legged, rocking back and forth holding his sister, CHRISTINE’S lifeless and bloodied body draped across his lap.)

MAXIMUS: CHRIS!! CHRIISS!!! Nooo! *(MAX’S voice breaks into hysterical sobs.)* What did they do to you? Oh, sister! What did we do? *(Blackout as MAXIMUS continues to grieve over CHRISTINE.)*

(L2. Lights up on SHERIDAN’S classroom. LILLY MILES paces the classroom checking over little shoulders as the students copy their spelling lists.)

LILLY: *(Stopping at SHERIDAN’S desk.)* Sheridan, your handwriting looks much better today. Have you been practicing?

SHERIDAN: *(Nodding her head.)* My daddy’s been helping me. We go for ice cream when I get my whole list spelled right and all my letters are right.

LILLY: I see! That’s a handy trick! None of your letters are backwards today either.

SHERIDAN: Nope. *(Blackout.)*

(R1. Spotlight on WILLIAM, who slouches haggardly in an armchair covering his face with one hand pressing the phone to his ear with the other.)

WILLIAM: Oh, No! How in the hell did they find her?!? Are the documents there? Her laptop? A zip drive? COME ON, MAX! ANY-

THING? NO! No, don’t come here. We can’t have that. But you gotta get out of there. That’s for sure. Meet me at the diner in an hour? Right. What?... You gotta leave her there for now. I know. I know...I KNOW,

but what’re you gonna do, Max? We can’t take her anywhere, and we can’t call anyone ‘til we find those files. You know that. Just keep a close lookout, and be careful. *(WILLIAM hangs up. Trembling, he brings a drink to his mouth, falters as he sips, lets the glass drop to the floor and holds his head in both hands. Blackout.)*

Scene 2

(L1. Lights up on a diner. WILLIAM sits stiffly at a table by the window. His eyes drop to his lap as a wild-eyed MAX stumbles up to the booth and halfway falls into it.)

WILLIAM: Geeze, Max. I was startin’ to worry. You okay?

MAXIMUS: No, Will. No, I’m not. Sorry. Had to grab some smokes.

(MAXIMUS lights a cigarette and stares at the table.) They got my little sister. They got my Chrissy.

WILLIAM: *(Motioning to the waitress to bring MAXIMUS some coffee.)* Chris never would tell me where or how she was keeping those files. I can’t believe they found her. *(Softly.)* Maximus, what did they do to her?

MAXIMUS: They killed her. They killed my baby sister. Shot her in the back.

WILLIAM: *(With a sickened look on his face)* Ahh man. I’m sorry, son. I’m hurtin’ for ya. Hell...for her. She never done a thing to deserve this.

Max, did she ever tell you anything about how she kept the studies?

MAXIMUS: Huh? No. No, she didn’t tell me.

WILLIAM: What did the cabin look like?

MAXIMUS: Like hell, Will. Place was trashed. They took everything electronic down to the T.V. remote. No tellin’ where she hid those studies, but wherever they are, they got ‘em now. It’s just a matter of time—

WILLIAM: No, Max, it’s not! It’s a matter of time before we find those studies and turn ‘em over to Calloway’s people. That’s the matter we gotta think of, and you’re right; time is of the essence. So where are we?

MAXIMUS: Nowhere yet. *(Looking down.)*

WILLIAM: Don’t you have some old Army buddies you can call? Or someone on the force?

MAXIMUS: I’ll make some calls. Be in touch.

(WILLIAM tosses some money on the table and heads out the door. After a few seconds alone, MAXIMUS pulls out a cell phone and makes a call.)

MAXIMUS: Hey, man. How’s it goin’? Ah...not so good. Look...you got any ponies in the barn? Right. Fifteen minutes. *(MAXIMUS hangs up, pays for his coffee, and leaves. Blackout.)*

ACT II

Scene 1

(L2. Lights up on SHERIDAN'S classroom. SHERIDAN is on the floor beside her desk seizing violently. LILLY is on the phone with 911.)

LILLY: Hello? Hello! I have an emergency...I need an ambulance...No, it's for one of my students...A six-year-old girl is having a seizure in my classroom...Hildale Elementary 11185 Cedar Drive Room 205...Her name is Sheridan Brumfeld. Middle name Hope...Yes, I can stay on the line. (Blackout.)

(L1. MAXIMUS sits beside SHERIDAN'S bed watching her as she rests. WILLIAM enters.)

WILLIAM: How is she?

MAXIMUS: She's resting.

WILLIAM: Has she come out of it yet?

MAXIMUS: (Slowly looks up.) No. It takes a lot longer with the pills they give her here. Poor kid always wakes up slack-jawed and out of it. Christine said she stayed that way four days last time.

WILLIAM: I remember. Lyrica, Gabitril, Lamictal...they're all the same. Turn her into a little zombie. And the Felbzar...Chris wouldn't let them get near her with that stuff. They all thought she was nuts. You should have a few months of the oil treatments Chrissy's been doing with her at home. Give her one as soon as they cut her loose. This bill's gotta pass to get more though. The connection that got us those is indisposed... Listen, Max—

MAXIMUS: This is my fault, Lucious. This is on me. She never would have gone to Jamaica if I'd just gotten a job. Maybe I should have just gone back to the force. If I could have moved us out of here and paid for Sherry's meds, Chris wouldn't have cared about Jamaica or the study or the results or this bill. All she really cared about was Sherry. (Sinking into sobs.) Ooohh what am I gonna tell Sherry? Chrissy was the closest thing she ever had to a mother. Oh, my baby girl! How's she gonna get by without her aunt?

WILLIAM: (Sternly.) She's gonna get by fine because you're gonna be a father! And you're gonna get her the medicine she needs because you're gonna find those files! Now about Christine—

MAXIMUS: We gotta get her outta there. Can't call the cops. I gotta go take care of her.

WILLIAM: How you gonna do that, Max?

MAXIMUS: I have to clean her up. I can't leave my little sister like that. You know that.

WILLIAM: Yeah. I'll make a few calls...find somewhere clean to store the body 'til we can lay her to rest. I'll have my people set it up. Ya know, I'd be surprised if those Felbzar files are really in anything they took. She was a sharp tack, Max. She knew they'd come after her once she saw the subjects for herself, even if she hadn't recovered the studies. She was afraid to let anyone know how to access them.

MAXIMUS: She saw the subjects? I thought only two made it. Why in the world would she go all the way to Jamaica for that? I thought she just went to interview the doctors.

WILLIAM: I'm afraid the truth ain't so pretty as that. In fact, they only lost two. The doctors are mysteriously missing. Eighteen survived. But they should have died. If there was a merciful God in the sky, they would have died. The results those studies rendered...they're big. HUGE. The kind of storm that could sink a thousand ships. Know what I mean?

MAXIMUS: What are we talkin' here? Defects? Disfigurement? What?

WILLIAM: We're talkin' a drug that's backed by old, southern politician's money that's already been FDA approved...all based on fixed results.

MAXIMUS: Well what the hell does it DO to people, Lucious? They're gonna try to give it to my little girl. I gotta know what I'm dealing with.

WILLIAM: I can't explain what it does, Max. All I know is what Chris told me...that it's a slow, miserable way to die. Says they make it look like livin' but it ain't. It's dying. That's all I know. That kind of thing is worth a lot of money to a lot of people—investors. Chris knew that. I never could have imagined they could reach her there. I'd have put her up somewhere better than that old cabin. Got her security. I could have called in a lot more help if she just would have told me who the shareholders were. She was so afraid. From the time she got back from Jamaica, she was just like a spooked ally cat. Flinched every time a twig cracked. She was scared enough to hide those files somewhere real good, Max.

MAXIMUS: (Nods his head) I gotta go.

WILLIAM: I'll stay with Sherry. You sweep that place high and low, son. Your sister was a smart cookie. (Blackout.)

Stole My Heart

Charyssa Woodcock

My heart is gone
It was stolen
When the stars were out
And the moon was full

Straight from my chest
He picked the lock
Only a master could do
And a master was he

Then with my heart
That he has taken
He put in his chest
Next to his heart

Our hearts beat in sync
With each breath we take
We grow closer together
One, we have become



An Iced Rose in My Garden

Daniel Martinez

Last Night

Jesse Tafoya

Mist hovered in the air as I walked on the bridge that spanned the river. It wasn't anything special, a small, slow running little thing at the bottom of a ditch that ran just outside of my small town. It was about a forty foot drop. It wasn't even very deep. I could make out rocks that broke over the surface.

It'll just take a second. Then it will all be over.

I made it to the middle of the bridge and leaned over to take a closer look. Head first. The rocks would make it end quickly. The rain covered my face, so no one would be able to tell that I had been crying all night. Not like anyone would look close enough to notice.

I straightened myself and edged closer to the metal railing. I put a hand on it. My long sleeve pulled back to reveal countless scars along my wrist.

No cars were on the small road. No one came through Little Creek, Kentucky for anything, especially so early on a Saturday morning. Half the population of about three hundred would still be asleep. The teenagers would be recuperating from the party last night, the one that I was blamed for.

I took a deep breath and threw one leg over the railing. This would be the end of it all. No more crying. No more cutting. No more pain. I pulled my other leg over and sat on the edge.

Do it now. Do it before you turn back to your meaningless life.

My whole body was trembling. It was a miracle that I didn't slip off the wet concrete in the first place. I took another breath, but sputtered it out with a cry as new tears streamed down my cheeks. I stepped back onto the other side, fell to my knees facing the edge, and began to sob. My own breath caught in my throat as I struggled to take air in.

Why can't you do it? Are you so stupid you can't even make this choice?

I clenched my fists on the railing and gnashed my teeth until my jaw hurt. I was just letting myself down. It wouldn't have been the first time. I was a stupid little mistake that my parents never even wanted. I just took more attention away from Caroline, my older sister.

In sixth grade I started cutting, after I messed up and lost my volleyball team our biggest match of the season. Of course Caroline, who was

already the captain of the team in seventh grade, made do with my mistake and took the team to nationals that year, myself not included. That night, after my parents and teammates degraded me, I walked home and pulled a paring knife from the kitchen drawer. No one even noticed I'd done anything, so I kept doing it.

Just get it over with.

I pulled myself up and threw my leg over the rail again.

You'll never be wanted. Caroline's smart, she has a boyfriend, she's popular, she's a national champion, and she got a full scholarship to Harvard. You have nothing.

I spent the rest of middle school secluded, always shunned. Even the one boy I met in my freshmen year of high school dumped me because I wouldn't have sex with him. Meanwhile, Caroline had become one of the most popular girls in school.

I remembered a night when Caroline and her friends were forced to drive me home after a school basketball game. Caroline's boyfriend had made the winning basket, and they were all having a good time. I was the only one wearing a seatbelt, and Caroline's older friend was driving fast down the small roads. When the cop pulled us over and took us all to jail to call parents, I was blamed for the whole thing and grounded for a month. Caroline wasn't punished at all.

I was able to get myself back on the other side of the rail.

It will be better after this. You won't be a burden to anyone anymore.

In my sophomore year I was blamed for almost getting Caroline arrested at a party because someone brought beer. I didn't even want to go to the stupid thing. Caroline had dragged me there. She said that it was so I could drive her home after, but I knew that it was just so she and her friends could make fun of me.

I was even blamed for Caroline getting pregnant last year. I pressured her into having sex with her boyfriend. Of course I had to pay for the abortion. My parents refused to have her drive over three hours away to the closest free clinic. They said that paying it was a punishment for nearly ruining Caroline's future. I paid from the college fund that I had been slowly building by myself over the years. I gave up on that dream a long time ago though.

It was time to get it over with. I barely managed to calm myself before finally stepping back over the rail. I wouldn't be returning.

I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and prayed that it would end quickly. I didn't want to suffer anymore than I had to. I put one leg out over the edge.

"Hello?"

I steadied myself and opened my eyes. A stranger stood a few feet down the road. He looked nice enough, but to be honest I didn't pay that much attention to him, considering I was leaning over an edge at the time.

"Can I help you?" he asked.

"No," I said. "I'm fine." I tried to not look him in the eyes. I didn't want him to think anything was wrong.

"Then why don't you do me a favor and come back over here," he said. "I wouldn't want anything to happen to you."

"I told you I'm fine," I shot at him. I closed my eyes and a shuddered breath escaped my lips, "Just, please...leave me alone."

The man looked me up and down for a second. "Why don't I make you a deal. You talk with me for five minutes then I'll leave you alone. Would that be ok?"

I glanced at the man. "Alright, fine."

It didn't matter. I'd spent nineteen years waiting for this moment, what was another five minutes?

"Can you tell me why you're here?" the man asked me.

"I would've thought you already guessed that."

He chuckled, "I assume you're here to jump?"

"Why do you care?"

"Well to be quite frank I don't like the idea of anyone losing their life after what I've seen and done."

"And what's that?" I asked.

"Enough to know a bit about the world."

"I already know enough about the world," I said. "It's cruel and hateful."

"That's true enough," he said. "But it can also be compassionate and loving."

"I haven't seen any of it."

"It'd be a fair guess to say that I've seen more than you have," he said. "I've spent thirty three years seeing things."

"Well it doesn't matter now," I said. "There's no turning back. I have no reason to not jump."

"That can't be true," the man said. "There has to be something you have worth living for. Someone must miss you if you were gone."

"No." I was about ready now. Just a couple more minutes and I would do it.

“No one would notice if you died? I can’t believe that.”

“Well it’s true.”

“Not completely,” the man said. “For one thing, I would miss you.”

“You? You barely know me.”

“I know more about you than you may think.”

“What do you know about me?”

“For one thing I know that you obviously don’t think your life’s worth living for.” He said, “That’s something.”

“That’s the first thing we’ve agreed on,” I told him.

“But are you sure that your life is completely worthless?” he asked.

“I’ve known for a while now.”

“How? What could make you not want to live?”

“My parents have said it to me enough. I’m alone. No one loves me. No one cares.”

“That’s a shame,” the man said. “Parents should never hate their children. I can’t imagine my father hating me.”

“Well mine do.” I said, “Last night was the last night I’m going to spend alone.” I sighed. It was time to do it. I had waited long enough.

“Alright,” I said. “It’s been five minutes. You’ll want to leave so you don’t have to watch.”

“You’re right,” he said. “Last night can be the last night you’ll ever spend alone. I know someone who will always love you, no matter what.”

“Who?” I asked, desperate to grab at any final shred of hope.

“Why don’t you step back over here and I’ll tell you?”

I was curious. Reluctantly, I threw one leg over the railing. He smiled and held his hand out for me to balance on.



Light and Dark

Amber Hamilton

She loved the morning
He loved the night

The hope of a new day.
The colorful light.
The cool, dark silence.
The moon at full height.

A chance to start over:
To laugh, to learn, to try.
A chance to reflect,
To retreat and watch the sky.

She loved the morning
He loved the night

Dawn makes a statement,
Unforgettable—pink, orange, blue.
The center of attention.
Its warm light breaks though.

Dusk is more subtle,
Unnoticed, entering with a sneak.
Slowly it reveals its beauty:
Quiet, warm—solemn, unique

She loved the morning
He loved the night

Both mysterious—enchanting.
Both lovely works of art.
Much in love with each other,
But forever apart

Though their love was real it wasn't right,
For how can morning ever meet night?

He was the morning
She was the night

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Chained in Every Way

Jordan Vera

If I wanted you away,
I would have let you decay,
To grow diseased and old,
Buried within memory mold,
To be consumed in past fire
Burning up my every last desire,
Drowned in a black empty sea,
Washing away nothing left to see,
Truth was I wanted you away,
Yet, I needed you to stay...

Longing

Haley Bonner

Like an unsent letter,
heavy and burdened,
or like a familiar dream,
sought so many years it has
become monumental and far away,
so my longing for you has become
more bitter than sweet. I
wish to recall the years spent
on such a fantasy and
grind them back to dust.



In Ethereal Sorrow

Jacob Hackett

Guitar 1
Standard tuning

Guitar 2
Standard tuning

Bass Guitar
E A D G C
①=C ④=A
②=G ⑤=E
③=D

♩ = 220

Musical score for 'In Ethereal Sorrow' by Jacob Hackett. The score is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 220. It features three staves: Guitar 1, Guitar 2, and Bass. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes melodic lines with triplets and ties, and guitar-specific notation such as fret numbers and bar lines. Dynamics include *mf* and *mf*. The guitar parts use standard tuning (EADGC).

Continuation of the musical score for 'In Ethereal Sorrow'. This section includes measures 5 through 8. It continues the melodic and harmonic development for Guitar 1, Guitar 2, and Bass. The notation includes fret numbers, bar lines, and dynamic markings like *mf*.

9 10 11 12

P.M.-----

TAB 88 77 55 55 77 88 77 55 55 77 7-7 7-7 4-4 4-4 7-7 88 7-7 4-4 4-4 7-7

33 33 5-5 4-4 5-5

6 8 7 7 8 6 8 7 6 5 3 5 4 5 3 6 3 5 3 5

885588555555 885588555555 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 8 8 8 8 7 7 7

13 14 15 16

P.M.-----

TAB 8 8 10 10 11 11 13 13 11 11 10 10 10 10 7-7 10 10 7-7 10 10 7-7 10 10 7-7

7-7 10 10 7-7 10 10 7-7 10 10 7-7 10 10 7-7

6 8 7 8 7 8 (7) 8 7 6 8 10 7 10 9 10 7 8 10 7 10 9 10

8 8 5 5 8 8 5 5 5 5 5 5 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 7 7 7 7 5 8 7

8 10 11 10 8 13 11 10 13 10 7

P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M. P.M.----- P.M.

3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 2 4 6 4 2 4 3 4 6 4 2 4

3 3 5 3 5 3 3 5 7 4 6 8 7

5 7 10 8 7 10 7 4

3 3 5 3 5 3 10 8 7 10 9 10 7

21 22 23 24

Guitar 1

TAB 5 7 8 7 5 8 10 7 7 8 4

Guitar 2

P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M. P.M.

TAB 3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 5 5 3 5 6 3 6 5 5 2 4 5 4 2 4

Bass

TAB 3 3 5 3 5 8 10 10 8 10 8 7 8 4

25 26 27 28

P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M. P.M.----- P.M.

TAB 3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 2 4 6 4 2 4 3 4 6 4 2 4

P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M. P.M.----- P.M.

TAB 3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 2 4 6 4 2 4 3 4 6 4 2 4

Bass

TAB 5 3 3 3 5 3 3 3 3 5 7 4 6 8 7

29 30 31 32

Guitar 1

TAB 3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 5 5 3 6 3 6 5 5 2 4 5 4 2 4

Guitar 2

P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M.----- P.M. P.M.

TAB 3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 5 5 3 6 3 6 5 5 2 4 5 4 2 4

Bass

TAB 5 3 3 3 5 3 10 8 7 10 9 10 7

33 P.M.----4 P.M.----4 P.M.-----1 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

3 5 5 5 3 5 5 3 2 4 6 4 2 4 3 4 6 4 2 4

37 P.M.----4 P.M.----4 P.M.-----1 P.M. P.M.

3 5 5 6 3 5 3 5 3 3 4 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 4 5

41 P.M.----4 P.M.----4 P.M.-----1 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

3 5 0 5 3 5 7 5 3 5 2 5 5 7 7 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

42 P.M.----4 P.M.----4 P.M.-----1 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

5 6 3 6 5 5 8 7 5 7 4 5 5 7 7 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

43 P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

5 7 7 3

44 P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

7 7 3

45 P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

8 6 6 6 6 6 7 6 6 6 5 3 3 3 5 3 2 3 3 3 2 3

49 P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

3 1 1 1 1 3 2 3 2 3 3 3 1 3 3 3 3 5 5 3 3 3 3

53 P.M.--1 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 2 4 1 4 2-5 2 4 3 5 4

54 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 5 7 8 7 5-8 5 7 3 5 4

55 P.M.--1 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 5 7 8 7 5-8 5 7 3 5 4

56 P.M.--1 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 5 7 8 7 5-8 5 7 3 5 4

45 P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

8 6 6 6 6 6 7 6 6 6 5 3 3 3 5 3 2 3 3 3 2 3

49 P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M. P.M.----4 P.M.

3 1 1 1 1 3 2 3 2 3 3 3 1 3 3 3 3 5 5 3 3 3 3

53 P.M.--1 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 2 4 1 4 2-5 2 4 3 5 4

54 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 5 7 8 7 5-8 5 7 3 5 4

55 P.M.--1 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 5 7 8 7 5-8 5 7 3 5 4

56 P.M.--1 P.M.-1 P.M. P.M. P.M.-1

2 4 4 4 2-5 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 4 3 5 7 8 7 5-8 5 7 3 5 4

Lovely Letters

Callie Hughes

Perfect, creating a contented sigh,
Like piano keys, all laid out in order.
Silent, lovely letters in the book lie.

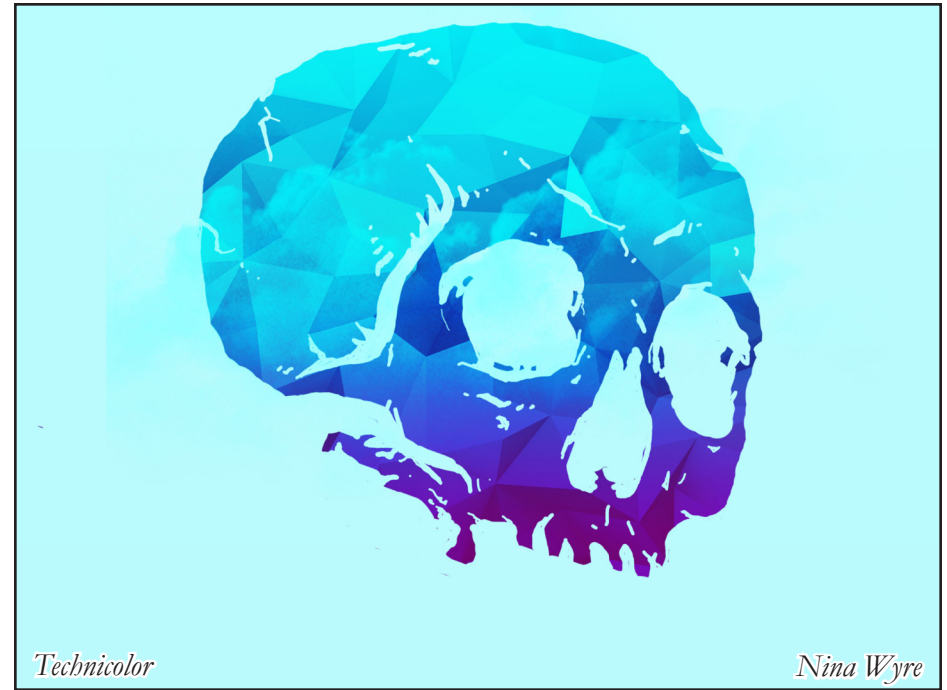
Daily, somehow, someway, people imply.
Some sound monotone, like a recorder.
Perfect, creating a contented sigh.

Authors express works, under watchful eye.
Words on a page contained in a border.
Silent, lovely letters in the book lie.

Printed black ink marks on white papers lie.
Neatness can make one an expert sorter,
Perfect, creating a contented sigh.

Words surprise, like screams or a lullaby,
Written, they can press in and reorder.
Silent, lovely letters in the book lie.

Words can praise, or belittle and belie.
Some say words are useless, in disorder.
Perfect, creating a contented sigh,
Silent, lovely letters in the book lie.





Untitled

Austin Mardock

Angels

Alfred Haumpy

They say angels watch over us while we live,
So we do everything we can until we've got nothing left to give.
Unfortunately there's no way we can explain why some leave us so soon,
All we can do is hope they go to live in the sky with the sun and the moon.
Knowing nothing is guaranteed why live life with regret?
You might as well ask out that girl or guy you just met.
Because we never know when life will be over just like that,
Like my cousin who was killed over a struggle for his hat.
Don't take anything for granted in this life,
Because it can be taken away easily over a struggle with a knife.
Angels watch over us while we live,
So do all you can until there's nothing left you can give.

Disillusion

Haley Bonner

The poignant pain of age does not come from the
slow decay of our
youthful vibrance but from the
swift hand of change which
steals exuberance from our
very hands and leaves us
utterly disillusioned.



Colors

Bridgit O'Connell

You are calling out on the corner. It is late.

Too late For me to give a care but still

I see you standing there. I think

"She must be cold."

And for a second I just

want to hold you again.

I remember the dancing after midnight.

The kisses; I remember

late night wanderings. I want to run to you.

But eternity and Poplar street

don't cross paths.

Glass Worlds

Holly Falkner

I don't make a habit of driving around at 3:00 in the morning. It's an ungodly time to be awake, to be doing anything except drifting off somewhere in a fog of dream and sleep. And yet, as is so often in life, we can't have our way with everything. This is why I find myself riding in the back of the family van at 3:00 in the morning, on my way to fly out of Tampa International Airport and back to college. My flight will leave around 6. It will take a little less than forty-five minutes to drive from home to the airport. I'll have about two hours to spare once I get my baggage checked in, time enough to wrestle my way through TIA's over-crowded security checkpoint. The early flights are the cheap flights. No one wants to fly at this time, so then everyone wants to fly at this time.

The car is quiet—no one wants to be awake right now, let alone me. It's still enough to hear a pin drop. I may not like the hour, but I love the quietness. It lets me hear my thoughts.

For once, the multi-lane highways that stretch from St. Petersburg, where I live, across the bay to Tampa, are quiet. Few other cars share the road with us. Lonely street lights cast an empty orange glow over the dark tarmacked roads. A thick halo surrounds each lamp light, the humidity causing the glow to stagnate around the bulb rather than spread. The dense Florida air is silent and still. In a few hours, these same roads will be swollen with commuters, fighting each other to arrive at their desk jobs in Tampa's overcrowded workplace, filled with featureless, formless glass boxes—filing cabinets for working people.

But right now, the world is still and calm. Bathed in this warm amber light, it becomes a different reality, a different planet than the tourist-stuffed, congested packing place for either the incredibly rich or the disastrously poor—two dichotomies of people shoved together in one tiny smear of land that a small-sized hurricane could take out in a moment.

And despite the early hour, I've almost come to enjoy driving through Tampa before the sun has even considered rising, and the moon still rules the sky. I've lived in Florida all of my life, but I never feel quite as peaceful, quite as mystified, as I do when I'm driving through Tampa before dawn—long, long before dawn.

As we drive, we pass the places that will be the hubs of white-collar

workers once the sun rises. The office buildings all look alike in the daytime—their glassy surfaces reflecting the outside world with glaring detail, their professional names cleverly obscuring the phone-answering and pencil-pushing that goes on inside them. In the daytime, I glare disgustedly at these buildings. They are ugly, featureless, dull. They are merely places to shove workers, boxes for computers.

But in the dark, they become something different. Something very special happens to these buildings at night, something that allows me to see them in a way I don't see them normally.

Without the Florida sun shining on them, and with the emergency lights on inside the buildings, maybe on a timer, I can see inside. I love to see inside.

I suppose I never noticed how much I love to see inside these buildings until recently. But I distinctly remember that when I was little, and we would drive through Tampa at night, I would look into the buildings as much as possible, into their lighted windows. I remember trying to spot a worker who was still there, or a custodian, or some sign of life. I'd then try to imagine who they were, try to understand what they did. It became a game.

In the orange semi-light of 3:00 in the morning, on my way back to school, I play the same game. There are no workers in these buildings now, though I still hope to catch the merest glance of maybe some lingering janitor, or perhaps some insanely early worker. And I try to imagine, just for a moment, what life is like in those glass boxes. It fascinates me, tantalizes me, to try and imagine what it is like in there. For "them."

But that is just it. I know that when the sun rises, I will go back to glaring at these buildings. They lose their magic when the night turns to day, when the people I've been trying to imagine actually come in droves to earn their pay checks. I cease caring, lose interest once more as if these buildings are a magical toy that comes alive at night, but once the dawn comes, they return to nothing but inanimate objects. The workers inside cease to have lives that I care about. Instead I stare at my reflection in the polished glass windows, wishing I had a rock to throw through one.

Why is it that I can only bring myself to imagine their lives when the buildings are empty, when there's no one inside? Why is my imagination only piqued when I can see into their glass world, through the glass of my car window? As I stare at their mystically lit interiors, I ponder these questions in reverent silence. Once the sun rises, I won't care a bit for

these people. In fact, they will be a nuisance, cluttering the roads and causing lines at the restaurants during lunch. My interest stretches only to the point the magic fades. And then the world becomes ugly again. I cannot see beyond the glass. I cannot see beyond my life, through the window, and into the world of another. I do not want to see. I have made my glass world, and I will stay in it, until the night comes again, and I wonder.

As I drive past these buildings, coming ever closer to the airport where I will say goodbye once more to my family and leave for school again, I wonder about this magical world of night that I have created for myself. I wonder if I should break my glass to see another better. I wonder if I even want to.

The sun is rising quickly. The magic fades, and the sun turns the glass into a mirror in which I only see myself.



Chase Things That Matter

Janie Keller

We work and toil to an endless resolve.

Like busy little ants, we labor to what seems no end.

Bigger and better are the goals set to strive for, yet satisfaction and contentment never come.

So, we chase after the newest and brightest, forgetting to stop and look at the beauty surrounding us, basking in the quiet solitude.

We sacrifice peace for stress until in the end, we find ourselves worn out, old and tired, and the pursuit of what makes one “happy” ultimately leaves us empty and alone.

Chase the things that matter!

Treasure family and friends!

Walk in the Freedom of living simple!

Love God, live long and happy in what is truly

Life!



Philosophy of Magic

Dylan Clark

Jars erupted off of the shelves, flying across the room in every which direction. Just before hitting the wall, the jars stopped as if hitting a cushion and slowly descended upon a table that ran the length of the room. A sigh of relief escaped the mouth of a young man standing near the table.

“Seriously, Sauda, I’m getting tired of having to waste my time casting spells to keep your reagents safe. If you do not take care with your reagents—or should I say the Instructor’s reagents—you will surely be expelled from the program!”

Colin watched the witch across the room with a steady eye. He could tell his words struck a nerve, for she had stopped recklessly throwing the reagents in search of her mystery object.

“I know not the land you come from, boy,” she spat the last word at Colin, “but in my land, failure to provide a spell leads to certain death... or worse, excommunication.” Colin couldn’t help noticing that as Sauda mentioned the penalties, a pain entered her normally strong eyes. When she met his gaze, Sauda quickly diverted her eyes.

For the past three days, Colin had seen nothing but determination and independence from this young woman as she attempted to complete the spell assigned to them. In this brief silence and absence of motion, Colin took the time to take a good look at his colleague. She walked through life barefoot. He had discovered that when he stepped on her foot within an hour of the appointed task. On that first day, she had been clothed in a regal white dress that she said denoted those of importance in her land. Now, though, she wore leggings that allowed for more maneuverability as well as a white tunic, the purpose of which Colin did not doubt was to remind those around her that she was a well-respected individual from her land. Her hair fell around her ebony shoulders in beautiful, dark locks. Colin couldn’t help noticing how her muscles flexed the last three days as she chopped various reagents and stirred them into her cauldron. He feared her physical strength as much as he respected her mental strength.

But now, seeing her stand motionless with her eyes averted in this brief moment of vulnerability, she looked so young, so unlike the woman he met three days ago. When he broke the silence, he did so with a quiet

voice. “So communion is important to your people?”

Sauda looked up at Colin in mute shock. These were the first words he had spoken to her that weren’t reprimanding her choice of action. Making sure her voice was steady before speaking, Sauda found the words to reply after a moment’s hesitation. “Family be more important than anything to us. To be excommunicated means to be shut out. To not be loved.” The coldness that entered Sauda’s voice during the last phrase chilled Colin’s warm and laid-back heart.

“But isn’t death the same thing? To be cut off from life, and all feelings attached to it?” Colin couldn’t contain his curiosity as he moved across the room to where Sauda kept her workstation. Different jars of reagents littered her station and the floor surrounding it. He could feel her dark eyes bore into his head as he looked down at her almost illegible notes. Near the bottom, underlined twice, he found the words “Skin of Hog.” Colin refrained from letting a small chuckle escape his mouth.

“No. Death be a gift from the gods. It be a time of moving on. With the right items and timing, you can see the dead again. No amount of items can bring the shunned back into your life.” Sauda watched as Colin nodded in understanding. He moved slowly back to his work station where various tomes lie open. His frame was small, yet he walked with a confidence she had seldom seen in this foreign country. He wore a small robe, blue in color. Her attention snapped back to their conversation when he spoke again.

His voice regained the confident tone as he spoke. “I saw you needed Skin of Hog. In this land, the closest thing we have to a hog is a boar.” Colin tossed a jar to the witch. When she caught it and read that the jar contained boar skin, he said, “Try that.” He gave her a wink and watched as she returned to her station. When her back was to the mage, she allowed a smile to spread across her face.

As she set to chopping the boar skin, she made a mental note to begin researching the local flora and fauna to check for differences in species as well as their potency in spells. Her thoughts were interrupted, though, when Colin began speaking. This time, he returned to the soft, inquiring voice he used when talking about her life.

“Maybe excommunication isn’t so bad.” Sauda dropped her knife, almost severing her toe from her foot. Her previous smile vanished and the tension became all but palpable in the room. “No, no, no. Hear me out.” The witch gripped her station so hard that her knuckles began to turn white. “I mean, you said failure results in excommunication, right?”

Sauda forced her voice to remain calm. “Yes.”

“Even just one tiny slip up?”

A pause, then, “Yes.”

“In my land, in this land, we encourage failure. It is not a punishable act to fail. It’s a time of learning.” He laughed as he remembered a time when he said a spell wrong, which led to the explosion of a nearby shrub a few years back. “If your ‘family’ doesn’t want to speak to you even in death just because you accidentally put in Cat Hair instead of Cat Whisker, then they aren’t your family.” Colin heard a weird sound, and it took him a few moments to realize Sauda was sniffing between silent sobs.

Quickly but gently, Colin walked over to Sauda’s station and placed his hand on her ebony shoulder. “Hey, you’re okay. It’s okay.” He wished he could do more, but he didn’t know her that well, and mages didn’t specialize in helping people feel better. That was the priest’s job.

“No. I be *not* okay. *It* be not okay.” She turned to face Colin, wiping her tears as best as she could. Sauda stared into Colin’s eyes, moving her gaze from his left eye to his right, then back to his left. “Do you not get it, boy?” This time, she used “boy” as a term of endearment rather than as an insult. “*I* be the one excommunicated.” Tears began falling again, creating soft rivulets on her dark cheeks. “*I* be the one that failed.” Her lips quivered, her breaths shortened into quick gasps, and she curled her arms around her midsection.

Colin smiled empathetically and stepped forward to hug his colleague. As soon as her head rested on his shoulder, she erupted into loud sobs. He held her while she cried.

“Sauda, your past actions shouldn’t affect your future possibilities. You must let the past stay in the past.” Sobs continued to rack the witch’s body. Colin hugged her tighter.

Her voice came in between sobs and was so soft he almost didn’t hear her. “You do not understand...My failure...be the cause...of...my mother’s death.” A sudden weight hit Colin straight in his heart. This was a pain he would never be able to relate to. For once, the young mage was at a loss for words. As he searched for consoling words, he gently rubbed Sauda’s arms.

Colin recalled their earlier conversation, and, with nothing else to go on, decided to inquire further. “Earlier, you mentioned having a way of seeing the dead again. Have you tried this with your mother?”

Sauda steadied her breathing and took a step back from the mage.

She wiped her eyes with the back of her hand and looked up into his green eyes. “The concoction be with me wherever I may go.” She reached for a pouch she kept tied at her hip. When Sauda withdrew her hand, Colin saw she held a small, corked vial that contained a thick, black liquid.

“Why have you not yet tried it, then?” Colin’s voice was thick with sincerity.

“Fear.” That one word coupled with Sauda’s tone in her voice said all Colin would ever need to know. Gently, he reached for her free hand and clasped it. When she looked back at him, he smiled with as much love as her mother once had.

“Don’t be scared, Sauda. You needn’t fear rejection or shame. You tried your best. Your mother knew—” He paused to correct himself. “—knows that. If you drink your concoction to see her, she will have no other emotion than elation at seeing you, her beautiful daughter, again.”

“You really be believing that, boy?” Colin couldn’t help thinking to himself that all of the hope in the known world must be residing in those deep, brown eyes.

“Yes. I believe that with all of my heart.”



Today

Jesse Tafoya

Today a baby boy lies in the NICU, tubes and machines barely keeping him alive for a life that might not be worth living,
His mother sits in the chair beside him with tear-stained eyes crying out why, while his father wishes he could do something as he stands in the hall,
Today a fifteen year old girl is crying in her room, starving because she won't eat and wishing she would be accepted by anyone,
Her best friend is being pulled between two unbearable forces, does she go to her friend, or stay behind a wall of false relationships and fear of persecution?
Today a seventeen year old boy walks into school for the last time, a gun in his bag and eyes set on making it all end,
An hour later parents mourn their loss as three students leave in body bags, the community outcries to fix a problem that we don't want fixed,
Today a policeman has a tough choice to make, does he shoot the young kid who has a gun pointed at him or not go back to his wife and two kids,
Meanwhile the young kid wishes the policeman would just end it all, death or jail – either is better than going back to another beating,
Today a child molester stands trial, he hates himself and the monster that's within but he can't change it,
The parents struggle to forgive as they get ready to hear the verdict, while the ten year old girl can't get the images out of her head,
Today a baby cries, a father works, a mother wishes, a daughter is hurting, a son is in torment, a man is dying, a woman is struggling,
Today is a horrible day,
But today...today is also a great day,
Today a baby boy is home, he's happy and healthy and his parents love him,
Today a mother comforts her fifteen year old daughter as she tells her she's loved, her daughter's friend stands at the front door about to knock,
Today the fourteen year old boy who watched his friend die in front of him is healing, his mother realizes that there is evil in the world but also good to fight against it,

Today the young kid is crying in the policeman's arms because he finally feels loved, that night the policeman discusses to his wife why he brought the kid home,
Today the child molester is happy that now he has a chance to change, the parents realize that it's more important to help their daughter heal than to hold a grudge,
Today a baby laughs, a son heals, a daughter is loved, a father has peace of mind, a mother cares for her child, a man is accepted, a woman can be happy,
Yes...while today is a bad day, today is also a very good day,
And while there will most certainly be bad days, there will also be good days,
Because tomorrow is just another today.



A Tragedy of The People

Dylan Clark

A frequent question aimed at me as a writer is,
“Why do you not write happy endings?”
The thing is, dear, our world is void of happy endings.

Ask the girl whose mother works twice as hard because her father skipped
out.

Ask the boy who uses bracelets to hide the openings left by last night’s razor.

Ask the man whose boss just laid him off.

Ask the woman who miscarried.

The girl has to learn to love without a father and probably must grow up too
quick.

The boy lives with a sickness our society doesn’t deem as a true illness.

The man must still pay bills and find a way to feed himself.

The woman will never know her child.

We won’t even delve into the fact that racism still runs rampant in our
society,

That *white* women get paid seventy-five cents to the *white* man’s dollar,

That women of color get paid even less,

That we teach women not to “ask for it” when we should teach men not to
be dogs,

That parents are becoming more and more disconnected from their
children’s lives,

That school shootings occur frequently, yet guns are easier to buy than birth
control,

That boys and girls starve themselves to look like models on the television,

That boys and girls starve because no one else believes starvation still
happens,

That children questioning their sexuality are too scared to even tell their
parents,

That women are treated like trophies or prizes,
That men believe women *owe* them sex,
That drugs are more important to some people than their own children,
That children would rather be expelled than continue going to school,
That education isn’t even a possibility for some children,
That black men and women cannot safely walk in public without being shot,
Or that I even have to explain *why* I write tragic stories.

Show me a world void of every single item listed,
And then I will *still* write tragic stories with horrific endings
To remind my readers why we should never return to such a world.





Ice Cream

Hannah Goble

unfinished

David Barkley

The sweet nectar of oils and graphite squealed in delight as the door swung open, welcome back master. Each day, the master toned his craft, welcoming challenge; It was second nature to the man. "Shall I draw a ballet? A brave lady in powder blue? In pastels and chalk of cool, cool mountain hue? How about a boy practicing his phonics? Or perhaps a woman in a velvet red bonnet? I can make them come alive you see, in pinks and gray and sea-foam green. Let me wander in your dreams." He toiled. He toiled. He toiled. For this would be his masterpiece. A girl with her willow tree. Her smile, a sea of radiant sunshine, washed the guilt of the world away. The glitter of her eyes, Oh! The glitter in her eyes. It was impossible to say. The starlight danced the night away. . . . But now it will stay that way, a girl whose portrait only faded away. Her hair void of color. The spiders build bridges and highways across the workshop, toiling, toiling, toiling, even on this day. The wooden palette, stained with crust and mold. The color of her blush, streaked across a trail of gold. The girl had found him there, doing what he loved most, until the time when he joined all the ghosts. As the ground filled back into the grave, she remembered him. A life, like his final work, left



His Breath Flows Over This Place

Haley Bonner

God's breath. That would be an easy way to describe the air here, but one that doesn't quite fit. Saying that alone seems too whimsical, too flippant, and, above all, too simple to convey the actual feel of the air on this island. This air lives. It has weight. It feels ancient, as though long before time, it began a continuous journey, winding over once proud castles and moving in among small, seaside villages. The heavens pulse with vitality and mystery. It maintains a certain texture. In the mornings, the mist of clouds kiss the heathered earth. Even after the sun has long since broken over the mountains and burned off the mist, which has settled between the trees, you still feel them like a burden sitting on your shoulders. Maybe that explains the watchful attitude of this land: the feeling that the clouds never quite leave. They are constant companions, watching from their vantage point above. At times, they seem to mass together to block out all the dark and sinister evil of the world and shelter a soul in the cocoon of a dense grey blanket across the sky. The evening clouds of this place are perhaps the most memorable.

By walking down the meandering road that leads to the village and continuing through and on to the dock, you will reach a footpath that leads alongside the beach. The path to the right provides an easy road to travel. Millions of small, sea-smoothed stones litter the ground, along with shells of equal number; many of which have been crushed by the feet of those who made this pilgrimage before you. Some are barnacled mussel shells; others belong to all sizes of snails. Oysters and crabs sit on the exposed sand, along with the occasional jellyfish that ventured too close to shore during the high tide. After a small while, you find yourself standing by inward channel and a suddenly grassy embankment where you can see the most inspiring line of sky that exists for the sight of man. On the left, the Mourne Mountains sweep down to the Carlingford Loch and meet the Irish Sea lapping at their base. Above that, the clouds crouch upon the craggy tops of the mountains. On many evenings, they are huge, billowed, and fierce-looking. Sometimes, they bring a threat of a storm, and on

those days, you will find that a sea fog rolls in just before dusk. The colors that paint these monsters create the most magnificent sight. Burnt oranges that belong to leaves of fall, a dusky pink the color of a miller rose, and yellows that outshine sunflowers appear overhead. If there is a breeze, you will be treated to the sight of a dancing masterpiece. Colors roll in on top of each other, changing so quickly, that if you close your eyes against the cool, sting of the sea air, you will miss them. When the sun has finally gone, but dusk is not yet over, majestic purple steals over the skyline and the air becomes poignant at the close of its performance.

The walk back to the dock becomes a time of meditation, the evening air hushed and unbroken but for the movement of the tide. The earth settles into a quiet, calm reverence as you move back over it. Creation too seems afraid to break the silence left by the sheer grandeur of what unfolded moments ago. Yet even in this stillness, the air is not stagnant. The breeze flows in from the sea, bringing the tangy brine of salt water and seaweed with it. The air is cool enough to chill your skin and elicit goose bumps, but not so uncomfortable that you need more than a light jacket. Even now, in the midst of this, the air maintains a heaviness, a presence of being that never seems to dissipate. A calmness surrounds this place, a covering of protection and peace that steals into your soul. The air here is touched somehow, to instill within a soul trust of the quiet surrounding them. With that in mind, saying that the air of this island is "God's breath" does not seem so farfetched. You can clearly see why this is known as the island of saints and scholars. The atmosphere alone leaves one feeling consecrated to God.



When We Were Children

Sierra Bailey

We were children full of innocence,
Never wandering far from home,
Because home was safety and security.
Family was love and acceptance,
And there was no shame in crying out
In the middle of the night when the
Darkness and shadows were frightening.

We were children full of joy and laughter,
Mocking life and its unknown troubles.
Apprehensions were few and far between,
So we jumped from heights and flew to the stars.
Nothing could stop our dreams, our plans
For the day when adulthood was an
Open door for us to walk through with pride.

We were children full of insecurities,
Longing to leave home behind,
Because home was pain and anxiety.
Mom and Dad cried and fought, while
Our doors shut silently to hide secret tears.
The darkness seeped through the cracks
In our hearts, leaving us with guilt and shame.

We were children full of nightmares,
Doubting we would survive another day.
Each breath felt like a waste of time, and
Razorblades and scarred wrists became security.
We smiled and wore thick bracelets, but
All we wanted was for Mom and Dad to
Bind our wounds that had surfaced to our skin.

And we wondered what happened to the day when
We were children full of innocence.



God's Breath

Dylan Clark



Sister of the Bride

Sarah Walton

Child's Dream

Sarah Walton

Beauty's fleeting or so I've been told
and that a good woman's worth is way more than gold
but I'm just a girl that's never been told
the extent of my beauty or the value of my mold
I love my parents but I've technically been sold
to a man with the plan that is way too old

I have no choice he told me to stay
even though there was school today
by his side I have to lay
I have no choice I can't run away
He'll catch me and kill me that very same day

But I had a dream of a king who would say
"I'll come and for you for the rest of your days"
He told me my future was not set in "his" ways
but in the ways of a father who cares where my head lays
He cries out to me "I have a plan that's in play
for a woman to carry you out of there someday"

"She cries for you now but soon she will fight
some day she will free you and bring you into the light
and soon you'll be free to fly like a kite
but for now you must stay in the center of "his" sight
don't cry, I know you have every right
but save your strength for the upcoming fight
for the fight is for your future so fight with all your might
just wait for me so I can be your guiding light



