



Athena's Quill



Fall, 2021

Welcome to Athena's Quill!

Dear Athena's Community,

I'm very excited to present this semester's Quill because I also get to present Prof. Lisa, who has taken over teaching Writer's Lab and WriteNOW Workshop this year. I am taking some time to focus more on my own writing, and Lisa has jumped into these courses with enthusiasm!

As always, our students have incredible imagination. Some students are just starting to write short creative pieces. Others are working on full novels. The amazing thing is the support and camaraderie they show each other.

I hope you enjoy the writing and art our students have shared with you this semester.

~Professor Suki

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WRITE·NOW workshop

*In WriteNOW Workshop,
everything is "write"!*

A student made up this motto, and it fits perfectly. When you write in class, everything is a work in progress!

In this course we read poems or stories for inspiration, play with ideas we discover, and don't worry about "mistakes." The results can be messy or unfinished, poetic or inspiring, or all of these at once—creative writing is an experiment, and much of the fun comes from experimenting together.

Students respond to in-class prompts in such different and interesting ways, and I've been delighted with their enthusiasm as we share new work!

- Prof. Lisa

In This Section

Colors, shapes, intangible things

Word Paths

Inanimate and Made-up Objects

"Tertinas"

Interruptions

These are examples of "first draft" writing generated in a few minutes during class. We used sensory details and figurative language to describe colors and abstract ideas. I love the energy, emotion, and vivid images in these pieces! - Prof. Lisa

Green the color of life

Green the color of the sprig leaves that blow in the cool breeze
 Green the color that covers the dull and dry ground
 Green is the smell of fresh flowers that grow amidst the garden
 Green the color of carrot tops sprouting amidst the garden rows
 Green the color of old bills that smell of ink
 Green the smell of mint that wafts up the creaky stairs
 Green the color of the sour limes that the children squeeze
 Green the color that is everywhere
 Green the color of life

-Harper

Blue Like a Bluebird

Blue is the color of the sky,
 Blue is the color of bluebirds,
 The sound of a bluebird's beautiful song,
 The taste of blueberries,
 The feel of feathers on bluebirds,
 The sound of waves in the sea,
 The color of lakes,
 The color of roads,
 The color of the sky,
 The sound of a bluebird's beautiful song.

-Jack

Pollinators passing by purple air
 Purple feeling of relief
 Closing colors or purple flowers
 Flowers moving higher and taller
 Cells of microscopic sizes of purple color
 Purple as a flower floating on blue air
 Photons flying by through cells
 Producing color of light with red
 Flying back in your eyes and consuming red and blue
 Purple with the color of love

-Henry

Happiness is the yellow sundress, hanging ready in the closet
 for a cheerful day.

Bright and calm sits the red apple that is satisfaction, waiting in
 the fruit bowl as shards of light gleam off of its waxy peel.

The blueberries that are friendship hang in sweet bunches on
 every limb of the fruiting bush as the grapes of luxury ripen
 in the sun.

And the growing buds, delicately brushed with dots of dew, wait
 patiently till the day they bloom in the light of a new day.

-Zoe

What shape are colors?

They are in the shape of everything, as they are energy.

Energy is everything... Unless... You are an intranslucent in-
 candescent rock.

Rocks are stubborn.

-Luca

I am breathing blue air. I think that the color of peace is green,
 the color of joy is orange, the color of boredom is gray, and
 the color of friendship is purple. Laughter is like a spiked but
 still round ball, like ferro-fluid near a magnet. Silence is a
 simple line. Hope is a steep slope, mystery is an undulating
 line curving in random directions, and surprise is an explo-
 sion. After words have been said, they go into the minds of
 others.

-Jojo

Laughter is a bunch of wavy lines, pink, blue, and orange.

Boredom is a bland grey or black.

Words are given to someone else once they're said.

Love is a soft orange with a hint of blue in it.

Hope is a bright green and yellow.

Joy is pinkish red.

Peace is a light blue.

Silence is black in color and is a circle.

-McKenzie

One WriteNOW warm-up to get thoughts flowing is "word path" exercise. Students begin with a chosen word, write continuously, and make connections to see where their word journey goes- maybe circling back to the starting point. It's fun to see how much can happen in two minutes! Sometimes, students find the seed of an idea or a thought to run with. - Prof. Lisa

SHIMMERING STAR

Star is there
 Sky it is in
 Night so special
 Dark so sparkling
 Gleaming at night
 Shine above us
 Twinkle magically
 Dream makers
 Above us sleeping
 World is where we are

-Harinee

UNTITLED

The sky,
 So blue
 Up there
 So many
 Secrets
 But none
 Shared
 So maybe
 One day
 She will
 The birds
 Flying up above
 I should ask
 What its like

-Jeremy

RAIN-COVERED STORIES

Rain
 Falling gently down
 On the flimsy,
 Tin roof
 Clouds float slowly overhead
 As rivers flow higher,
 Dark shadows explore the world.
 Flowers bloom,
 Bright colors smothered by storms.
 The sun is hidden,
 The moon no less
 As the rain falls gently down.
 Stories are told in the old house,
 The house with the flimsy,
 Tin roof
 Weaving words circle throughout,
 The house
 With the flimsy,
 Tin roof.
 And the rain is spoken away,
 As the rain-dotted spiderwebs sway in the breeze.
 A scent of water wreathes through the air,
 As lithe brown birds float through the air,
 Their wings fluttering in the wind.
 The stories go on,
 Through the wind and the rain and the snow.

-Adeline



Here are some creative looks at inanimate objects, along with pieces about living things that have never been discovered! - Prof. Lisa

Doors

They slide
They spin
Wheeeee
In the rotating door
The world turns blurry
Except my hands, frozen to the handle, spinning round
and round
A door is opportunity
They open
They close
Some need keys to unlock
They wait for the right key
So that someone can open them
And see
What waits inside

-Zoe

The sakura glasswing is an extremely rare insect, only appearing in people's dreams. They have been present in lucid dreams for centuries, oftentimes guiding people towards awakening. However, to certify that the sakura glasswing is in fact real, I traveled from the USA to India to China and finally arrived in Japan. I saw a whole exhibit of the 'dream butterflies'.

Sadly, their population is slowly decreasing. But if a glasswing is left alone, it can live for a hundred years. It feeds off of sakura blossoms. The wings are see-through, but if the light hits them just right, it can be a beautiful rainbow.

-Avalon

He sits
Waiting
Animals come
And go
He waits
Trees grow
And bloom
Humans hike
Unseeing of him
Then
He feels
Something in him
Bubbling
Churning
BOOM!!
He explodes
In a fiery display
People run
Why?
Birds fly
Why?
Questions grow like trees with no answers
Lava flows out of him
He is a volcano

Artwork by Xan



Photonic Fly

A strange creature that is mostly made out of inorganic matter. The only living parts of it are the organ systems and muscles. Most of its body is made out of a clear and durable material, similar to enameled glass. Unlike other organisms, the photonic fly carries out something completely opposite to photosynthesis. At night, the fly absorbs the darkness and radiates with a strong light. Most people do not know of this creature's existence, and mistake it for a star in the sky.

-Jojo

WriteNOW Workshop students experiment with different forms. After looking at poems in the form of a sestina, with a pattern of repeated end words in the lines of each stanza, we tried a form invented by Prof. Suki called a "tertina." A "tertina" is half of a sestina, and students quickly discovered interesting ways to use this form. - Prof. Lisa

BLUE JAYS AND BLUEBIRDS

The jays are there,
The books all are right—
They are very pretty and blue.

I want to write about it
But the wind blew
Leaves all over there

And I mistake them for bluebirds, who are out too; they're
also blue.

They think the seed is theirs,
They come so often that they're almost right.

-Jack

REMEMBRANCE

The sky is full of clouds.
The road, packed with snow,
With rain becomes cold, ice-covered.

And as from the quiet sky falls snow,
The fog is dark as fallen clouds.
Snow fallen from the heavens as if angels of ice.

Consider your place here, you can break as easily as new-dawn ice.
Your future is safely encased by wispy clouds,
Remember, because life is as fast as snowflakes melting
within the budding of spring.

-Adeline

UNTITLED

Light dances on their fur, orange as amber.
They climb up the tree branches to watch the sun.
The gibbons chew some emerald-green leaves.

The gibbons now relax beneath the morning sun.
A mottled pattern of shadows and light are cast onto the
apes through the leaves.

Some gibbons lick sweet sap from the trees: the sap will
one day become amber.

-Scarlet

COLOR

Sparkly like a diamond
And filled with warm, cold, dark and light spots of color
As abstract as fire

Look closely, at the images that are formed with the dramatic color
The consuming fire
The sharp, beautiful diamond

It is not fire
Nor a diamond
Instead it is just color

-Maria



Artwork by Xan

WriteNOW Workshop offers students practice in writing quickly, fluently, and flexibly! A challenging but fun exercise we've tried is for students to begin writing on a topic of their choice, then incorporate selected words as "interruptions" as they write. They create some surprising and wonderful pieces! - Prof. Lisa

COMET

The comet shines bright
 a wish I receive but wait
 I am frozen stuck floating in the air
 now I wish I had a hint
 in why this was happening
 but I must keep shining
 extra shine I must add
 under and around the earth
 I can see the look of a child
 melting me through

-Torah

OUTSIDE AT NIGHT

I am outside
 Or, as John Muir gave a hint of
 I am going inside
 I keep my conscience with me
 Or I try to
 The wind carries it away
 I love being here
 Under the stars and the moon
 The night sky being a blanket
 Comforting me of my troubles
 I always keep extra sounds with me
 Extra memories that I receive from Mother Nature
 I look and see the leaves shaking
 Shaking not with fear but with respect

-Maria

NEVER-ARRIVING SNOW

I wish we'll have snow soon
 and everything will be frozen
 we already have a hint of snow
 that I wish we'll keep
 but I want extra snow
 piled under my window
 i love to look at falling snow
 when the freezing winter comes

-Sabrina

THE RAINFOREST BEDROOM

I look at the strange place. It was filled with plants and animals
 and it looked like mine to keep. I started to make a list in my
 head. I could put a bed under that tree and I could put a few
 extra vines here so I can swing across the strange place. I gave
 my friend a hint of what I am going to make this place into.
 My friend laughed and said, "You cannot have this place. It is a
 rainforest!"

-Harinee

UNTITLED

Anger budding forth hinting kindness
 Keep yourself safe
 Under a blanket of snow
 You hear extra silence
 As quiet eyes peer from the dark
 Don't look around...

-Adeline



Writer's LAB

Writer's Lab is a creative "laboratory" workshop where avid writers can experiment. We examine and discuss reactions to both published work and writing shared by students. Short, free-flowing pieces produced in class may be "practice" or the catalysts for something new.

Over the semester, students have shown so much originality, insight, and passion for writing as they developed their projects!

- Prof. Lisa

In This Section

"Random Nothingness: Unpredictable" by Taylor Frank

"The Viola Spaceship" by Alexa

"Dreams and Madness: First two chapters" by Sarah Gwinup

"iPhone 13 Cat Edition" by Grant the Cat



Random Nothingness

Unpredictable

by Taylor Frank

You sit there and stare at nothingness. The title of this page is Random Nothingness. It is so random, so unpredictable. Even in a strict life, you need Unpredictable. And it will find such fun, wondrous ways to surprise. Maybe you are just sitting there, sitting and staring, and then, Unpredictable pops into your head. He gives you such crazy, wacky, silly, unpredictable ideas. Ideas that seem so real, but you know it will never happen.

Deep down, there sits Predictable, telling you it would never happen in reality. But sometimes, sometimes, it does. Like when you guess what something might happen. You plan it the way you would plan it, and then, it happens. Perhaps not the exact way you planned it, but you got the broad idea. (I'm writing this from experience.) Then Unpredictable goes down to do what he gets to do rarely to Predictable. He goes down and says right in his face, "Told you so!"

Perhaps you are wondering why Predictable and Unpredictable are being written as if they were people. Here is my reason: Sometimes you have to do it to make a story work. There is a sad feeling for Unpredictable at times. (Yes, he has feelings.) It is just that, just that, very rarely HIS ideas happen. But YOU can make them happen. You can sit down and write them out. Make Unpredictable happy, instead of sad. Because he is YOUR Unpredictable! Your crazy, wacky, silly, unpredictable, idea maker. So, nourish him, care for him. After all, if it wasn't for him, you wouldn't be reading this.

When you sit and ponder,
Your brain begins to wander.
He'll jump into your head,
Perhaps while you're in bed.
He likes to reach me in a dream,
It just makes him proudly beam.
So don't shut him out,
For that will make him pout.

UNPREDICTABLE!



Artwork by Xan

The Viola Spaceship

by Alexa

Captain Janet grimaced, watching the big golden letters displaying the name of her new station, the Viola. She had no idea what member of the crew thought that was a good name, but somehow everyone went along with it. It was probably one of the children. She knew how to lead adults, but children? She hoped nobody thought that changing diapers was a part of her duties, because they would be in for a nasty surprise. The captain took a few deep breaths. Despite the name and the children, she would manage. After all, she had to. This was what she had spent months licking boots for, and everything she had been focused on proving Xavier wrong about. She was not going to let some kids ruin her plans for this station. She took one more deep breath, then walked into the ship's announcement room to address her crew.

Lenny spun the fidget spinner in his hand. He could not believe this was actually happening. They had asked his whole family if they wanted to come, even him. Obviously, he chose to go. It didn't take a genius to realize going to space was a once in a lifetime possibility you did not want to miss out on because of a little thing like fear. After all, he was just a tiny dot in the universe. So what did his, or anyone else's on this vessel's, fear matter? Nothing in comparison with getting to see space, in this tiny dot's opinion, he thought, spinning the fidget spinner even faster. He caught sight of the Captain, the one who twitched her eye in annoyance when they voted on the name of the ship. He still had no idea who had suggested it, but it was hilarious, so of course he had agreed. Plus, even though it wasn't a typical name for a spaceship, he figured this wasn't a typical spaceship seeing as it had kids on it.

Ellen could remember the day the agents came as well as the feel of her piano's keys. She remembered her parents' huge grins upon being chosen and how they looked at her, pleading she would get over her fears and just say, "yes." She had said "yes," and in a way she was glad. Space meant a fresh start, away from all the bullies at school. She tried to stop herself from thinking of how there was no way out, and how she had to wait a whole year till she was back on Earth, by thinking of her proudest moment in all of this. On the naming day, all the members of the ship got together and were instructed to write an idea for the ship's name on a piece of paper. She had seen the boy who constantly spun a fidget spinner, Leo or something like that, write in messy handwriting, "The Cyclops." Then it came to her, "The Viola." It was both a beautiful name and a name that would forever remind her of playing music. She sighed, thinking of a year where the only piano to play was a virtual one. If humans could bring themselves to space, why couldn't they bring pianos? Did they hate music and want her career abolished? She took a few more deep breaths and looked at fidget spinner boy. Even he looked confident. If he could put his fear aside, surely she could as well. With this goal in mind she turned her attention back to the stage, to see the Captain herself standing on it.

Captain Janet grabbed the microphone, holding it to steady her nerves as much as she did so to amplify her voice. She had never liked making long speeches, so she intended to keep this one short. "People of The...Viola, I am your Captain, Janet Brown. I am glad that you have joined us in exploring space. I hope we make many successful discoveries, but remember-- even failure can pave the way to true greatness. Now, I hope everyone has an excellent time on our journey, but remember, this is not a game. You will have responsibilities aboard this ship as difficult as any sailor of the olden days. Now I will let my friend, Professor James, tell you a few things you will want to know."

She stood on the stage awhile as her colleague James droned on about things the entire crew would already know, if they read the manual. The only person she had seen reading it had been a boy named Lenny, who was probably just flicking through it for lack of anything better to do. Still, the crowd of crew members seemed to react well to her speech, and she walked off the stage ready to spend a year proving Xavier wrong.

Dreams and Madness (First two chapters)

By Sarah Gwinup (Sarah the Winged Cat)

Prologue/Chapter Negative Three

Narrated by Kazimir (the Main Character)

“An uphill path, sun-gleams between the showers, / Where every beam that broke the leaden sky / Lit other hills with fairer ways than ours”

-John McCrae, “The Pilgrims”

A field of concrete and skyscrapers stretches for eternity. The sky is grey, the clouds blotting out the sky. It is windy, the breaths of Zeus moving the propaganda papers into alleys. The wind blows my hair in multiple directions simultaneously. The rain has collapsed my hat. My glasses are wet. The rainwater in the streets is getting into my shoes.

The few flowers in the grass growing between the cracks of the pavement look up at me with a pleading look. There are not many here. Even the ones there are grow like weeds then are blotted out. I walk away, then realize my umbrella has flown away into the wind.

Chapter Negative Two

Narrated by Kazimir

My alarm clock brutally wakes me up with a harsh ringing sound and my glass of water falling on my face. The water is not cold in the slightest, in fact, it is room temperature. Not the nice, comfortable room temperature, no. The room temperature that you want to be colder.

I knock my alarm clock off of my side-table. The batteries fall out of it at high velocities. I open my left eye. The world is blurry. I pick up my glasses and put them on. The world is no longer blurry. Unfortunately, my glasses now have smudges on them. I open my other eye. It is now slightly, very slightly, easier to see. I get up and clean my glasses.

There is a letter on the floor. I pick it up and open it. The words in it are “Why hello there Kazimir.”

Is that all it says? Who sent this to me?

Chapter Negative One

Narrated by Kazimir

It is raining like always. The wind is blowing the cold rain into sheets. There is no hope of going anywhere without an umbrella. I pick up an umbrella from my closet. I open it and it spreads over my head like a firework.

I walk out of my apartment into the pouring rain. The wind tears at my coat and tries to pluck my umbrella out of my hand. I walk on the sidewalk in a sea of people and rain. Nobody takes note of anyone else, excluding the times when their feet get stepped on.

iPhone 13 Cat Edition

By Grant the Cat

Google Home Mini: Takes control of Grant the Cat's cat keyboard and makes herself the portal maker

Echo Dot: Steals Google Home Mini's portal making powers

iPhone 13: Steals Echo Dot's portal making powers

iPhone 12: Steals iPhone 13's portal making powers

iPhone SE: Steals iPhone 12's portal making powers, fixes the 4th wall, deletes iPhone 12, and sets herself to be deleted in two lines

iPhone SE: Continuously runs into the 4th Wall

iPhone SE: Gets deleted

iPhone 13: Jumps over the 4th wall

iPhone 13: Deletes the 4th wall

iPhone 13: Recreates iPhone SE

iPhone SE: Accidentally creates an evil Echo Dot army

iPhone 13: Notifies Echo Dot

Echo Dot: Notifies Google Home Mini

Google Home Mini: Creates Evil Echo Dot Army fighting iPhone army

iPhone Army: Fights Evil Echo Dot Army, causing there to be no iPhones and one Echo Dot left.

Evil Echo Dot: Recreates Evil Echo Dot Army

Evil Echo Dot Army: Disintegrates the universe

Other-Universal iPhone: Transports a time machine to the disintegrated universe, time travels to before the Evil Echo Dot Army got created, and recreates the 4th wall, causing the Writer's Lab Sharing Forum universe to be recreated

iPhone 13, iPhone SE, Echo Dot, Google Home Mini: Trample iPad Air and MacBook Air to get to an Apple Event

Tim Cook: This is—

MacBook Pro, Mac mini, AirPods: Trample MacBook Air and iPad Air to get away from possible replacement

Tim Cook: HomePod mini—

iPhone 13: Instantly orders HomePod mini

iPhone SE: Almost instantly orders HomePod mini, only to find out iPhone 13 already ordered it

HomePod mini: Erases Echo Dot and Google Home Mini

Tim Cook: and AirTag 2.

iPhone 13: Instantly orders AirTag

iPhone SE: Almost instantly orders AirTag, only to find out iPhone 13 already ordered it

Tim Cook: Just kidding, AirTag 2 doesn't exist.

AirTag: Erases iPhone SE

Apple TV and Apple Watch: Tramples MacBook Pro and Mac mini to see the Apple Event

Meanwhile, in iPad's Dream

MacBook Air: You shall come out of hiding when MacBook Pro and Mac mini get trampled. After that, you shall watch an Apple Event.

Apple TV and Apple Watch: (Tramples MacBook Pro and Mac mini)

Back in the real world:

iPad: Comes out of hiding, accidentally knocking iPad Air out the window

iPad, iPhone, Apple Watch, Apple TV, HomePod, AirTag: Trample MacBook Air to watch the Apple Event on a different computer, because they were watching it on iPad Air

MacBook Air: WHY DO I KEEP GETTING TRAMPLED???

Writer's TEEN LAB



Teen Writer's Lab is a community of 13+ writers who support each other in writing, editing, studying, and life in general. We have lots of new students this year, with a whole new group dynamic. This semester students led some of the prompt exercises, so we got to find out what two enemies would say to each other if they were stuck in an elevator, personify foods, see what happens when "snarky" talks to "gregarious," watch a fictional animal meet a real one, and more! It was fun to see the students inspire each other. As always, our teens sometimes touch on dark themes.

- Prof. Suki

In This Section

Two short pieces by Xan Tardis Traveler

"Praise Be to She" by Robert Ekstrand

Acrostic poem by Ved

"a smile on her face" by Odelle

"As Always, With Love" by Devon J. Scott

"Up North," by Sasha C.

"Delicious Microfiction!" by Megan the Moon Knight

FOR MATURE READERS:

"Travelers Guide to Sleeping Sailors Bay" by Adown

"dear homophobes" by molly torinus

"Elevator" by Violet Jensen

By Xan Tardis Traveler

Chase the Moon

Hati was tired, the moon only seemed to be getting farther away. Suddenly they felt a strange tug on their tail. They turned slightly. There was a small wolf pup chewing on their tail. Hati growled, they had a moon to catch. They swished their tail violently back and forth. The wolf pup clung on. Hati growled again and spun in a circle, what was this pup doing? Didn't it know that Hati could swallow the moon? Hati tried to bite the pup off, but they couldn't reach. They could swallow the moon, why couldn't they just get this stupid pup to let go. They spun one last time and the pup went flying into the trees, yipping all the way. Ok, Hati felt a little guilty about that.



What conversation would you like to have with the world?

She sat there in the coffee shop, swirling the sugar into her coffee with a spoon, staring out the window at the city and the cars and the frantic people.

"I'm sorry," I said.

She tilted her head slightly, still watching out the window.

"For what?" She sounded like the wind in the trees.

"For everything we've done to you."



"Hmmm," she said, watching a dog owner get pulled along behind a large lab.

"I'm really sorry, we're driving you to a mass extinction." I fiddled anxiously with my napkin.

"It's happened before. Why do you run so much, like every second you're truly still is wasting time?"

"Our lives are short."

"Not to a fruit fly. You only believe your lives are short because you know how long I've been here." She smiled as a butterfly flew past the window. "Someday I will be swallowed by the sun. I could consider my life short in comparison to the universe, but I do not. Everything is relative."

"Why aren't you mad at us? For ruining you?"

"Because I believe you can fix it."

"And if we don't?"

"Life goes on."

She stood, leaving the cafe, not saying goodbye. But she is the world, she will always be there. She was in a cab before I realized she'd paid for my coffee.

Praise Be to She

by Robert Ekstrand

Sol,
Goddess of the sun;
Or so you'd like to think.
You wake at dawn,
On paws you run,
To push me to the brink.

Sol,
Oh how you sleep all day.
Rain would fall,
Or I could call,
But still you'd slouch and slink.

Sol,
Am I but a pawn to you?
Scratch that-no but don't really,
For I doubt you would comply,
With your token-topaz eyes,
To withstrain a day,
To not make a mess of chess.

Sol,
A goddess such as you needs her daily praise.
Still, even I come to find clouds on rainy days.
And when I do, what will become of you?
When I'm locked in bed, dead (as much as my mind
permits),
When I can't even talk or draw upon my witts?

Sol,
As much as you refute it so,
I wish, I hope, I know,
You'll never let me go.
The clang of keys,
When brushed by breeze,
Will stir you from your sleep.
A break amongst your schedule,
Whilst you're counting hunting sheep
It's me of course,
Trekking slowly in the dark,
But when I see you, my sour mood burns into some
sparks.

Sol,
You light my life
Even if you claw me with your knives.
Two souls for you and I,
With my cat (a phoenix-stray),
I'll always come home to you,
It'll always be this way.



by Ved

Never in the history of mankind have we come so far. We live in a world where we have going, a thriving civilization, and technology to help our every need. We have machines to get food, make cars, and just about everything. We have done much but we need to give back what we have taken from the environment. Global Warming is a serious issue you can do something about. What we need to really tell ourselves nowadays is to look up, at the future, and guide ourselves in the right direction. We must tell ourselves to never repeat mistakes we have made in the past and make sure that our civilization is going in the right direction. Doing simple things like biking, instead of driving in the car to go to the store when you can, will help us make sure, that we will have the ability to let our kids have a good and clean world to live in.

You have the power in you to make sure this incredible and stunning world will not fall down and instead rise up to meet the challenges we face. If you do small things we will never fall into chaos and create a better world. If you turn off the lights when you are going out of the room the carbon emissions from making the electricity would not travel to the atmosphere. Global warming is an issue that we must solve if we do not want to run away from this beautiful planet we call home. We have to stop avoiding it and not go around our lives not caring about our actions. If you eat a sandwich instead of a burger and walk to the store instead of driving, we will make it extremely certain that we never desert the earth in its time of need and give back to it. If you understand the importance you have, all of us can make the world a better place.

a smile on her face

by Odelle

when she was 1, she saw the ocean
dancing, prancing, swirling
the waves crash and roll with a single motion
splash, crashing, dashing
the children screamed and ran away
but when she was 1, she decided to stay
just sitting, gasping, staring, wearing
a smile on her face

when she was 5, she saw her school
crowded, massive, new
the sky was clear, the air was cool
chilly, frosty, blue
the children cried and ran away
but when she was 5, she decided to stay
reading, writing, sharing, wearing
a smile on her face

when she was 15, she took a test
hard, and very scary
she worked so hard and did her best
working, tired, weary
her friends all cried and stomped their feet
but she just sat there in her seat
passing, working, preparing, wearing
a smile on her face

when she grew up, she changed the world
talking, convincing, praising
she became a leader and her future unfurled
glorious, fun and amazing
while the other people were all the same
she had the last laugh 'cause the world knew her name
earning, changing, caring, wearing
a smile on her face



Artwork by Xan



As Always, With Love

by Devon J. Scott

The sun had shone through Vimond Palace's windows for six hours now, and it would for ten hours more. Felix, sleepless, was not tired, and he was convinced that he would stay that way. Not tired after such a tragic bout of insomnia, not when he sat down for dinner after the evening's dances, not even once the last guest had finally left the gardens! It was work, of course, and it was hard work, but the summer heat left him sparkling—and with the sort of calluses yesterday's archery had left on his poor, soft hands, he couldn't imagine doing much else.

Decorations were up in the ballroom; invites were counted, collected and organized; food was prepared; outfits were coordinated, cleaned, and hung upstairs. Felix considered this criteria enough. He knocked on the door to the kitchen, noted that he most likely wouldn't be heard over the din inside, then opened it and stuck his head in. The smell of spices hit him all at once, rosemary, garlic, then cooking meat, something fresh and candied, maybe a sauce of some kind simmering? A maid noticed him, nearly dropped her spoon into a massive pot of half-finished soup, and her senior knowingly passed him an open bundle of cloth.

Inside, glazed bread with raisins, and apricots ripe enough for bruising. These asides were always his favourite.

The library's doors were a pale, heavy wood, etched with maps of the kingdom and notes in slight, tilted handwriting. The grandest library in Dawnyth, to be sure, but quite possibly of all its neighbours, as Felix liked to presume.

He nudged one of the doors open with his shoulder, leaning inside. "Olive?"

Seated across from the doorway, at a desk in the bookshelves' centre, a young man perked up from the paper he scribbled on. "Yes, sire?"

Felix slipped through the doorway, shaking the cloth he held. "I brought something for you."

"It's delicious."

"Oh, good. I was worried you weren't one for raisins."

Olive smiled. He was a reticent kind of man, with dark hair and gently freckled cheeks and a slightly crooked posture from the sort of work he did. Cordial in a mild way.

"Well. Longest day of the year, then." Olive paused, his brows drawing together. "With the festival, you must have a lot to do, don't you, sire?"

Felix shrugged. "Of course! But one always has time for a quick break, right? Especially after getting some done, especially for a good friend..."

"I'd love nothing more, but I'm sure for an event so noteworthy—"

"I believe I've already arranged enough to warrant this."

"Well—"

"I've brought snacks and you'll be eating them! You wouldn't want to question the crown prince, now would you?" Felix joked, nudging Olive gently with his elbow. They both laughed. The cinnamon buns were nearly gone at this point, and he had started to poke holes into the skin of his apricot with his thumb.

Olive sighed. "It must be a hassle, bringing this sort of thing over so consistently. Thank you as usual, sire."

"No, no. Not at all." Felix said after swallowing a mouthful of fruit, waving dismissively. "The kitchen staff should hardly mind if I take a little something extra. If Mother's looking the other way, I'm often able to slide a portion right off the table without her noticing. But that's a rarity, isn't it? You're welcome."

Olive smiled, pulling out the apricot stone and popping the rest of it in his mouth. He sat back down behind his desk, grabbing a pen only to tap a mid-sized but heavy-looking book, resting on top of some papers. Its cover was coloured with shades of green-blue; Felix couldn't quite make out the title through the glint of its golden lettering. "If you're interested, sire, I'll lend you this one tomorrow? It's nonfiction, but quite riveting. I think you'll be a great match."

"Of course! What's it about, then?"

"About asterisms—like constellations, but more in the domain of the colloquial, so it's got plenty of—"

A series of loud knocks rang out through the library, before the door opened and a girl with bushels of red-brown curls stuck her head in. "Prince Feeeelix!"

"Yes, Rosie?" Felix said.

Rosemary bent her head, clearing her throat before looking up again. "Your mother says people will be showing up for the festival soon and you should be putting on your better clothes," she recited, as though reading off a page.

Felix patted Olive's forearm apologetically, muttering an "I'll be back later" and following her out to the hallway.

Up North

by Sasha C.

"Momma?" I whispered in the darkness while Momma was doing my hair.

"Yes, baby?" she whispers, using her fingers to tightly braid my hair.

"I'm scared to leave tomorrow. What if Massa figures it out?" I ask, holding my doll close.

"It'll all be okay, Mary, we will make it to the North. Because Daddy and James are waiting there to help us," Momma replies, finishing my braids.

"Will we finally be free?" I ask for the fifth time tonight.

"I've told you already," Momma says, laughing. "We will be as free as the birds that fly in the woods nearby. We will be able to have a house and job. And we will be with Daddy and James again. Are you excited to see them?"

"Of course, Momma. I can't wait to wear a pretty dress like Elizabeth has." I thought of Massa's daughter Elizabeth, and how we used to play. She would twirl her pretty dress all the time, and she would always show me her pretty dolls as well. I miss her.

The next day, Momma goes to The Big House to cook. I stay in the fields and pick cotton with my friend Maggie., I quietly tell her I'm leaving tomorrow. She tears up and hopes I can make it. I hug her and we quickly get back to work, so we don't get in trouble.

That night, Momma and I leave when The Big House's lights go out. We are quiet and quick through the night, and we go straight to the forest next to the cotton field. We run all night, following the Drinking Gourd. I quietly sing the song Momma taught me in my head so I wouldn't get scared of the noises of the forest.

In the morning, Momma and I hide under leaves and bushes so we won't be found. Momma whispers stories to me all day. That night we run again.

We are almost there, Momma tells me. We run for three more days.

We finally see a house with a quilt, which Momma tells me is a safe house.

The white lady tells us to hide in her secret compartment while she gets our transportation ready to go. We are gonna make it! The lady comes back and gives us food and water and says she'll be back that night.

The lady, whose name is Helen, comes back and we get in the back of her horse cart and hide underneath a quilt.

We're silent until Helen stops the cart and says, "I'm carrying one Mare and one Foal to the stalls up North."

"Keep on going, I heard there were some horse stealers somewhere around here, so go carefully," a man says.

"Thank you for your help," Helen says, and then it's silent and the cart moves again.

It seems like forever until Helen says, "We are close, I'm going to leave you in the more-than-capable hands of Mr. Jones. Good luck."

We say thank you and goodbye to Helen Mr. Jones takes us to his house and gives us more food and water.

"Your husband and son are a few miles away from here. They are getting ready for your arrival," Mr. Jones says., "We will leave once it gets dark again."

"Did Daddy get me a dress? Do you know, Mr. Jones?" I ask as politely as I can.

"I don't know yet, but I'm sure you'll get a pretty dress, Mary." Mr. Jones smiles at me.

We leave in the late night in Mr. Jones' horse cart. We drive for forever until we finally stop again. Are we at Daddy's house?

"Come on out, ladies, you're finally in the North," Mr. Jones says happily.

I sit up and I have to close my eyes when I'm met with the bright light. I open my eyes and see the sun coming up. I swear on my life, seeing the sun come up in the North is so much prettier than in the South.



Delicious Microfiction!

by Megan the Moon Knight

“Just two more drops, and... Perfect!”

“Are you sure that’s enough chloride to balance the sodium we’re about to put in? Remember, if one calculation is off—”

“Yeah, yeah, the experiment won’t work. Only one way to find out, isn’t there? Plus if we fail, we can always readjust the measurements and record it for next time! That’s science.”

“I suppose so. Okay, gently lowering the sodium sample in... Now!”

“Success! We’ve made salt! One sec, lemme write everything down.”

“You didn’t think to write things down while they were happening? Also, can we please have our eggs now? I’m starving!”



Artwork by Xan

Travelers Guide to Sleeping Sailors Bay

by Adorn

Hello there, traveler, and welcome! If you are reading this handy dandy pamphlet then you must be planning on or currently traveling to Sleeping Sailors Bay. And we hope you enjoy our town to its fullest! See its great views, visit our 5 star pubs, and learn the local folklore! And lucky you, I'm here to help!

And before we go any further, here is a quick reminder for first time visitors:

Never follow the music, no matter how loud it gets.

And with that out of the way let's learn about our first great sight!

Diamond Moon Beach

Diamond Moon Beach is the beach on which sailors first came to this town, mistaking the gleaming sand for a town. Instead of leaving they settled here, and you can now see the very spot where they landed! Good for any day when you want to have fun in the sun, or some tranquil sightseeing! And during full moons you can view the sparkling sand from our viewing decks. But remember that this beach is closed during the night due to it being a hotspot for auditory lures.

William and Sons Pub

Feeling thirsty after a long day at the beach? Come on down to William and Sons for a refreshing beverage! This top-rated establishment is one of the longest-standing buildings in all of Sleeping Sailors Bay and is a cornerstone of any visit. Try its famous, locally made seawater whiskey! Be warned, it's an acquired taste! And feel free to get as loud as you want while inside, the whole building is sound-proofed to a tee. So your drunken karaoke stays on the inside, and those pesky auditory lures stay on the outside!

Dan's Light House

Dan's Light House is a newer building in the town of Sleeping Sailors Bay, due to the peculiar difficulties of running such an establishment this close to the sea in this town. But low and behold it had been done! It has been a challenge to soundproof the whole building but through community funding, the building has been built! It just goes to show the power of community in Sleeping Sailors Bay!

Missing persons

Now you may have heard about disappearances in Sleeping Sailors Bay, due to auditory lures. If you have any information about the cause of the auditory lures or the locations of any of the following people, please contact the local authorities of Sleeping Sailors Bay immediately:

Luca Johnson, 23, F, blonde, 5'3, last seen 2002

Phil Anderson, 33, M, auburn, 5,8, last seen 2008

Jim Oak, 18, M, dirty blonde, 6'0, last seen 2010

Wesly Floyd, 14, M, black, 5'5, last seen 2015

Jacob Dwier, 40, M, brown, 5'6, last seen 2010

Akhila Lasha, 22, F, black, 5'0, last seen 2011

Note: These are only some of the disappearances that happened in the last twenty years. Please go to the local police department for a more comprehensive list of the missing individuals.

Dispatcher guide

Hello, and congratulations on being chosen as a dispatcher for Sleeping Sailors Bay. This instructional booklet has been made for you to be able to reference quickly in the case of an emergency.

In the case of a medical emergency, ask the caller for their address and relay it to the local hospital. If the caller is exceptionally distressed, do your best to calm them and assure them that help is on the way.

In the case of a crime, ask the caller for their address and relay it to the SSB police department. Direct the caller to safety if possible and ask for details regarding the criminal. If they claim to have seen a missing person, have the caller describe the person in question before cross-referencing with the current list of missing persons. If there's a match, dispatch all available police to the missing person's area immediately.

In the case of a fire, ask the caller for their address and relay it to the local fire department.

In the case of someone reporting hearing auditory lures, hang up the phone. Do not call any first responders. Block the caller's number.

dear homophobes

by molly torinus

dear homophobes
 this may shock you, but sometimes i see another womxn
 a walking angel cliché
 juliet-meets-romea queen of my heart
 she's the promise i've made to myself a million times at night
 and the promise to you that i long to break
 in your tiny mind, love's a personal choice
 but i just love a person

dear homophobes
 this definitely shocks you, but like anyone, i try to be myself
 i open zoom sheathed in pride gear and anxiety
 one of those beautiful queer things internet trolls gossip in the chat about
 for the first time not on mute, figuratively if not truly
 i'm trying to live, to let my queerness shine through
 but in your mind i'm "flaunting the unnatural"
 this is my nature, even if you can't deal with it

dear homophobes
 i hope it shocks you when i speak up
 i advocate for gay rights, for awkward yet romantic nights
 for the freedom to kiss another girl in the rain
 —with or without you watching—
 all that romantic garbage, as necessary as the air we both breathe
 because you're small minded; you hate my mind

dear homophobes, you say you hate how i live
 but queer doesn't have an off switch.
 if i do it, i'll do it gay
 attack my queer joy, and you attack me

witness my homosexuality
 like a second heartbeat
 like the life force no societal standard can suppress



Artwork by Xan

Elevator

by Violet Jensen

Cala leans on the wall of the elevator, looking for an image to show Amoret. Amoret is gnawing on a claw, flapping their wings a bit and tapping their feet. The elevator stops.

"Not our floor," Cala says. "Someone getting on."

"Oh, hi Cala!!"

"DRAVEN??"

The angel steps into the elevator, red and black feathers trailing behind him like the rose petals an annoying man who couldn't take no for an answer would leave on your doorstep, just to be vacuumed up and thrown away.

"Hello!!"

Amoret twitches, stepping closer to Cala.

"Cala, how have you been?"

"As I haven't seen you in a while, great," Cala says curtly.

"Now shut up and leave me alone."

The elevator stops.

"Uh..." Amoret says.

"Huh?"

"We're, not on a floor?"

"... The elevator stuck," Cala says. "Just hit the emergency button, no biggie."

Amo gestures to Draven and Cala, purses her lips.

Draven leans on the wall, putting one hand in his jean pocket.

"Well! All the more time to spend with you!"

"Right."

He starts pacing a bit, shaking out his hair ostentatiously.

"Ugh," Cala mutters. "Amo, have any snacks?"

"Maybe..."

"Cala, you are a snack," Draven says.

"I have goldfish!!" Amo says. "Here! Obviously—cracker goldfish."

"Thanks," Cala says, taking the crinkly bag from them, ignoring their unnecessary explanation.

"No problem, Cala."

She starts eating them and Draven reaches into the bag to take one. She smacks his hand away.

"Ooh, feisty mami. I like it," Draven says. "Hit me again."

Cala crosses to the other side of the elevator, fuming.

Amo hides in their hoodie.

"Cala, can I have a goldfish?"

She holds one out to them, sticking it in their mouth herself. Amo giggles and eats it, running their hand in their hair.

"I want one!!" Draven says.

"Go ** yourself," Cala mutters.

Amo twitches when they swear and Draven chuckles.

"Not by myself!"

Amo snaps and walks over to Draven.

"That's—that's ENOUGH!! Leave... leave my girlfriend alone!!" Amo says, sticking their clawed finger in his face.

Cala raises an eyebrow and Amo shoots her a glare. She nods.

"Yeah."

"... You're dating her?" Draven says to Cala, voice tinged with resentment.

"Them. And yes."

The elevator starts to move and Amo sighs with relief, rushing out the door as soon as it opens with a cheerful ding! Cala follows, looking behind to make sure Draven doesn't follow.

"Glad he's gone," Cala says. "Ugh."

"Yeah."

"Thanks for being my fake s/o. Jeez," Cala says, sighing.

"No prob," Amo says.

They hope that one day the "fake" will be dropped from that...

...to be continued.

