

WINTER  
2023



*writers' clubhouse presents...*

INKLINGS.

***Inklings is Nerinx Hall's student-run literary  
magazine.***

***Issues have been published since 1960.***

***Inklings Editors:***

***Nora O'Connor (2024)***

***Sam Lueke (2024)***

***Jay Graham (2024)***

***Lottie Wheeler (2024)***

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***Ms. Mulhall***

***Cover art:***

***The woman watching - Lottie Wheeler (2024)***

**Nora O'Connor -**

Times change, *Inklings* editors graduate, but there will always be students writing poetry, crafting stories, and dedicating themselves to visual art, so there will always be a need for *Inklings*.

This year, *Inklings* was added to Writers' Clubhouse in order for it to remain in production. Because of this transition, there were many questions surrounding the future of the magazine. However, the amount of submissions and support the magazine received in only one semester brings me great hope. There are so many passionate creators at Nerinx Hall. *Inklings* has been, and will continue to be, a safe place for them.

**Lottie Wheeler -**

To create, to breathe life into a page, is one of the most beautiful things someone can do. This is my fourth year submitting to *Inklings* and the first I have been an editor. The vulnerability, the strength, the overwhelming power of sharing your creations with the community is so special to me. I hope while reading this edition of *Inklings*, you dive into the mind of someone else for a bit. It is a beautiful place to be. Massive shoutout to Nora O' Connor, for her exceptional work of keeping this tradition alive.

**Jay Graham -**

*Inklings* has always been exciting to me - I love seeing the art created by the community. The space that it provides for students to express themselves is invaluable. The amount of support that *Inklings* has received this semester has been overwhelming, and given me hope that *Inklings* will continue to run for many years to come. I want to thank everyone who has submitted their work, it means a lot to all of us.

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*to be concise*

**E Mullins (2025)**

concise,  
/kən-sīs'/.

it is an adjective, for expressing much in few words;  
clear and succinct. it can also be a noun, as  
conciseness, for a quality, as a property of being or  
even, it can be, an adverb, as concisely.

you have never been called concise. succinct. clear.  
you have been called blunt (one of the synonyms for concise in  
merriam) on many occasions. you have been told it is a good and bad  
trait, that your bluntness is cruel but everyone laughs when you  
express it, that your bluntness is kind but it does sound like you're  
insulting. your bluntness is a dichotomy.  
and you've come to learn that for you, bluntness is not conciseness.  
conciseness, as you've found, requires clarity and simplicity.  
conciseness, as says the dictionaries, is short and not wordy.  
it finishes quickly. conciseness, as you believe is implied, is  
anything you are not.

it is a skill to be concise, as you have been taught in school.  
it is easy to be concise, as you have been told—  
you just say it in a word.

but it is difficult to say something in a word.  
there is no word for the feeling of cold soda and the tingle in your  
throat. there is no word for the feeling in your stomach from the smile  
of a mentor. there is no word for the smell of fresh turpentine,  
shattering on the floor of the studio. there is no word for what  
happened last weekend and if someone wants to know, they really  
ought to be prepared for a few sentences of verbal description.  
there is no word for when your mother is late because she's been  
working too much and there is no word for when he has a ritual

watching of a sport with his father and he can't pick you up for another two hours, so you have to accept the waiting. so, being asked to just say it in a word, is not really helpful to you.

the common theme of your 'in-conciseness' is the understanding. the point of brevity is to be understood. but, is an over-explanation not to the same point? when you try to tell them, in a paragraph of spoken conversation, why you feel a certain way or, why you speak like this or, why, really, it is not helpful to be treated like a child!, or even an answer to such a simple question as to "what does your weekend look like?" is more, not more? is your detail pointless? in trying to have them please, please, understand you, and to know you in that supposedly mortifying ordeal, have you only confused them more? have shrouded yourself in more secret? have you spoke for eons just to be misunderstood? you have been informed that the writing you do is wordy. you have been informed that the way you speak can be confusing. you have been informed that the way you act is strange. you have been informed that conciseness is a virtue, and conciseness makes people understand.

but you are not concise. you are muttering, and wondering, and debating, and considering so many ideas, and trying so, fatally to be understood. but you are not concise.

*One Way Mirror*  
Jude Evans (2024)



***This again?***

**Margo Tuffli (2025)**

So,

you have a lot of work that needs to get done.

huh

strange

you piled everything up till the last minute again, didn't you?

That's why you're here, writing this, avoiding your work

well this is for the next time,

this is your nail to the head:

You cannot go on like this.

You're never going to be perfect, I would say obviously but you

can't comprehend that

you never follow any schedule of any sort

you never drink water

heck, you don't make your bed every morning

but guess what,

you're still here

still struggling

but

still going

So here's this:

**You can do.**

## ***Le Corps d'Étoiles/Le Mur de Verre***

**Par Celia Schaeffer (2024)**

Je viens de la nébuleuse  
Mais tous les jours je suis interdite d'y retourner  
Il y a un obstacle invisible, je suis entourée  
L'atmosphère  
Retient ma place sur la terre

Et d'une manière similaire

Je viens du passé, je vis au présent, et  
Toute seconde qui passe, je traverse dans l'avenir  
Mais le passé ne me donne pas ce plaisir  
Donc je me désespère  
À cause de ce mur de verre

Et dans cette galère

J'habite dans l'espace juste devant le mur  
Je pousse mon visage contre le verre attendu  
Mon visage aplatit, le verre s'embue  
Bien que mes pieds tiennent fermement  
Il me repousse (dans l'avenir) comme un tapis roulant

...Mais d'une manière rassurante

Les étoiles scintillent  
Mon passé déforme  
Car je les vois à travers le plus grand vitrail du monde

(Ce n'est pas certainement  
la vie en sinistrose  
mais elle est filtrée quand même)

Filtrée d'une manière que j'aime

Encore, je viens du passé  
Je ne peux jamais y retourner  
Mais les souvenirs continuent à m'entourer  
Il me tarde de les toucher, même pour un instant  
(Pourtant, c'est une raison pour laquelle ces sont les règles de  
l'espace-temps)

Donc,  
Je me demande:  
Est-ce qu'on veut reculer dans les entrailles de nos mamans?  
Est-ce qu'on veut vraiment retourner aux moments précédents?  
Ou veut-on seulement regarder  
(Sauvegarder)  
Les souvenirs  
Le bon temps?

## *Two Wings to Fly*

**Maille O'Donnell (2026)**



As a child, I was exposed to many things that scared me thanks to my parents. But now that I am a teenager and have become more independent, I tend to stray away from things I am afraid of. This piece is almost a self insert for me because I often find myself cutting off my own wings. Fear of judgment, embarrassment, failure, and the unknown sharpen the scissors I use to cut them off. This person is in an almost fetal position to represent being ashamed of herself. She just limited herself to land and feels shame knowing that. She wants to fly but is afraid of falling, so she eliminated the cause of fear. In life, especially as a teenager, it is important to fall. It teaches you the importance of getting back up and not immediately shutting down. Your wings may become fractured from the damage you took, but a broken wing can be healed whilst a severed wing is irreplaceable. I made this piece to urge anyone who sees it to put down their scissors and take life by the reins. Your teenage years are only so long, don't spend them afraid of things you have never done before.

*I, the sea*

**Lottie Wheeler (2024)**

I, the sea

Have lived a thousand lives in two rooms

Back and forth, I took myself dreaming

The weight of wonder but a breath on my back

The sky, like a lover, in its heat of the world below

Has shown me a thousand days veiled in night

I, the sea

Have marred a thousand memories in these walls

Back and forth, I sang myself for longing

Down the walk- down the walk again

I, the sea

Have dwelled a thousand days through that door

Back and forth I, this pentatonic ocean of living-

Have lurked, have loved, have lied

In the forgetful in between of being alive

But, the tide is racing now, quickly

And I must go with it

*Here's to the*

**Maddie Nolfo (2027)**

Here's to the restless sleeper  
The undoubtful dreamer  
The shaky speaker  
And the proud the leader

Here's to the next door Neighbor  
The scared to ride the elevator  
The patient waiter  
And the wants to make things greater

Here's to the i know you're scared's  
And the its to much to bears  
And not to forget, the They really do cares

Here's to the ones that stand out in a crowd  
And really don't care about wants both spoken and unspoken aloud

Heres to the ones that will never speak their mind, no matter how  
many times we know they've tried

Heres to the snow and the rain, and the sun, and that sewage drain  
that we've all dropped something down at least once

Heres to the things that "don't matter" in our big world, that get eaten  
up, spit out, and pushed all around

Heres the love yous, and the I dos, and the honeymoons that we all  
dream for

Heres to the first loves, and big hugs, and the “will you be my best friends?”

Here to when it was simple, to when life was simple, to when the world was simple, but it never really was simple was it? We just saw as

So here’s to bad days, and the harsh I says, and the things we want to give up

Heres to the try to believe, and even to those dog fleas, and way they must see the world

I know I’m young, and i know pretty much nothing about life yet.  
But i do know it worth it  
Even when it seems like its not

I know it can be hard, and i know this must sound cheesy

But here’s to the small things and the big things, and everything in between

Heres to the people, and the animals, and even those really weird the trees

Heres to being here  
And here’s to being the only one out of 7.753 billion to get to experience here the way you do

*Chihuly*

**Annie Smith (2027)**



## ***Some Words Between the Cricket and the Angel***

**Sam Lueke (2024)**

The cricket has infiltrated a brown Honda Civic, finding itself crammed inside with four angels, one of whom has broken the window crank. The cricket complains, being a rather prolix cricket.

One angel presses its face against the glass of the window. The dying Midwest prairie scrapes against its vision, and it momentarily mourns the clean, grandiose mountains.

Then it looks up into the setting sun. In the periphery, the horizon is graced with cotton-candy dreamsicle hues, leading inevitably up towards that infinite alien blue of the sky's keystone.

*No wonder they all believe in God here,* thinks the angel.

## ***asterisks***

**Nora O'Connor (2024)**

i made you my earth's axis,  
studied you just like the classics,  
didn't find out what the catch is -  
til you led me to the asterisks

and the whole world seemed to shift,  
you said you couldn't handle it,  
i had so much left to give -  
so much love just turned to anguish

## ***My Garden***

**Mack Leonard (2025)**

There's a little garden I go to  
Once a week  
Maybe twice  
There are yellow roses made of plastic  
A green grass made of paper  
A tree made of little rocks  
Held together with sap made of Elmer's  
I have to sneak to my garden  
I'm not really allowed to go to it  
Because gardens are for kids  
When I am there I weave in yarn  
Into the petals of my plastic flowers  
I trim the ends of my paper grass  
I readjust the dipping of my tree made of rocks  
And I add more of my Elmer's sap  
It smells, looks, and feels  
Like a memory that I can't quite place  
But I know there are other people who have gardens  
Who want to be a kid again  
With their plastic roses and paper grass  
And their trees made of rock held by sap made of Elmer's  
And I'm okay with the fact that  
There's a little garden I go to

## *Silver*

### **Anonymous**

In the shadow of achievement, I dwell,  
Forever bound to silver's pride.  
Endless efforts, striving for the peak,  
But each time I found second place, so to speak.

Everyday silver constant in my refrain.  
A cold metal platform for my silent pain.  
The deception of gold tempts with its glow,  
Yet silver's welcome is what I've come to know

I long for more, not to settle in grey,  
But silver comfort stays every day  
In this division I find my pursuit,  
To escape the silver nest of absolute.

**1:07 PM**

**Jay Graham (2024)**



*A friend called quiet*

**Lottie Wheeler (2024)**

crickets

wane and wax a thin aria.

The disciple of the night croaks;

Yet silence is what me invokes

The washing-machine

bellows a warbling tune

but I shall smile a lullful noon'

For quiet gives and quiet takes,

A stranger none it ever makes

A friend, a fiend, a fool to some

But over our days, it always drum

Steady, beating, hear it now!

Our hearts, our worlds, make little sound!

But step into another bend,

And sound upon sound, shall never end!

*In the Pallottine Retreat Center Solarium*

**Ms. Sarah Hoeynck**

I sit in a room made of windows,  
a long and narrow space, where light  
beams through the glass, passing warmth  
through a translucent ribcage. The clear  
cavity is full of burnished sun. Still.  
Tranquility hums at the center of this place.  
Also at its center stands a fireplace.  
Dusty black matte, it absorbs the windows'  
reflections. This heart of the room is now still,  
cold, no crack of kindling or snap of firelight  
comes from its core. But the flue is clear  
and ready to keep me warm.  
Even without it, I'm surrounded by warmth.  
Marine blue cushions, soft and lumpy, are placed  
on curvy wrought iron frames. Outside, in a clearing,  
brown and white horses eat green grass. Against the window,  
a magnolia tree's cheery yellow buds open to sunlight.  
Though the wind batters the glass, all is still.  
The quiet is my friend. My pen needs such stillness.  
This room is my cocoon of creativity, a warm,  
silent sanctuary where my thoughts become light  
enough to transform into written words. My place  
to create. I've been here before, touched these windows  
with my palms and felt my thoughts run clear.  
But when night comes and the moon clears  
the horizon, voices invade the stillness,  
and reflections of women talking paint the windows.  
We fill glasses with ruby wine and warm

the air with stories, laughter, logs in the fireplace.  
An orange glow replaces the yellow sunlight,  
and I know in my heart that I require both lights  
to thrive—the pulse of fiery community and the clear  
quiet of creativity. If I place  
myself in this very spot, year after year, it instills  
this balance and keeps me warm  
in and outside, looking through and between life's windows.  
As sunlight fades into stillness,  
I clear the couch and ready it for another's warmth.  
This is a sacred place. Put your hand on its window.

***Quiet Morning***

**Annie Smith (2027)**



## ***Trapped on paper***

**Sissy Knobbe (2025)**

A photograph is a captured memory

Click! And it is saved forever.

Red eyes, resting faces, Road behind you

When I look back I can feel your hot breath pushing on to me

And I can smell the sweet flowery perfume of you

I can look back and feel what happens

It is trapped forever

As I age the photo will too

It will get ripped and tattered

The memory with fade with it

I will not remember the sound of your laughter ringing in my ears

My mind will become a jumble of harsh, bitter, bleak, and grim

I will forget you

All that we have

Is here

Trapped on this paper

## ***Author's note***

**The inspiration behind this poem is my grandfather's alzheimer.**

**How everything he remembers will be lost. All that we will have is trapped in photographs**

*That's okay, no really. It's alright*

**Anonymous**

That's okay. No, really. It's alright. You don't need to worry about me forgiving you. I already did. I ignored how you treated me, leading me on. With your suggestive words and attitude towards me, the clear body language that somehow was misinterpreted. That was my bad. Don't worry about it. I should blame myself for not understanding what you really meant. When you said, you loved me in those exact words. I didn't realize you didn't mean it so passionately. I guess that must've been a problem. No! I'm sorry for assuming that you wanted something more with me. The subliminal messaging you dropped for me to pick up. Maybe I read it backward or upside down. That was on me, and that's okay. No, really. It's alright

***Scarlet Touch***

**Maddie Nolfo (2027)**

Red, glow, glimmer, shine  
These words keep filling up my mind  
I fight the urge to light the match  
But In my dreams, it's you they snatch  
You say goodnight like you think we're leaving  
But not in till the we hear the screaming  
So scarlet touch, let the light go away  
Just sit on your bed, and sway and sway  
I'll be back tomorrow, i hear you say  
But silent wish, your gone to stay

## *What Proof of Life*

**Sam Lueke (2024)**

*A story, and a Sky.*

*A fish hook, and a Sun.*

*Your chalice runneth over with acid.*

It sits and it thinks with many faces. It remembers places, people, farces- all at once, as if it is not one, but many. The tales that it once envied bury it like riches, itches, binding it up like the guts of its sons. Biting its mouth like so many stitches.

It has grown incongruent, over the years. Mercredi, Wednesday... it matters very little in the face of its very own pieces warring, memories stored in disputed land. It lies and tricks and flickers.

One life floats before its eyes: a storied lie, a spider scared stiff that he won't be remembered. A wife, brilliant, reticent: Aso was her name. She told him: lying to the sky isn't easy. If you want your stories, you'll have to be *smart*.

She didn't know that *she* would have to be smart. All he had to do was flame, unpredictable and untamed.

But he was right to lie, wasn't he? He is remembered- Aunt Nancy, *Anansi*, countless scamps in books for new lives and old wives alike. But Aso barely registers. After all, *he* set the python straight, *he* dug the leopard out of the ground, *he* shook the fire under the hornets' nest- who cares whose idea it was? *He* turned them all in to the Sky for the stories; the Sky doesn't know how to lie- although, he didn't know how to laugh, either, until Anansi taught him. Anansi knows what awaits him in Heaven. He's been there, and robbed it for all it's worth, to bring the hoarder's treasure back to Earth, back to mortals who stomp him and smack him because they don't understand the life he has lived yet. A spider might be feared, but at least he can say he's creative.

But this thing doesn't die. There is no afterlife for the liar, because lies won't even stop with the heat death of the universe. Not as long as it knows love. Even the last star tells itself that someone loves it, from somewhere far away and fallen.

Another lie before its eyes- a deathly lie, an earthly lie. A demigod- Māui- with a boat and the Sun in tow, off to win immortality for a human race who has no earthly idea what that means. He wanted more for them. That's all, that's *all*. They're so close to beautiful, so close to perfection. Close to the Gods. Well, nobody is *closer to the Gods* than he is right now. In the damp and dark and death he feels the teeth and he knows all along what it is like to be imperfect. The symmetric poetry of the situation does not escape him, and he stifles a laugh even as he is dying. What beautiful proof of life.

It shakes that thought more quickly than it shakes the thought of Aso.

Remember? Wives, in another time, in many lives. Each life sucked dry. Sigyn, unwearying- or did it just not notice?- carrying its sons to the pyre, staving off the fire devouring its face. Too smart to try *saving* it, too dumb-dutiful to save herself. But at least Sigyn has an epithet.

Because Loki got what he wanted again: laughs. He is known- too known, he knows, he was drunk. He thinks that if he had been less drunk, he may have come up with a funnier insult for Thor than "fart-master." But it drew a laugh out of Freyja, a tinkling thing that sounded not unlike her red-gold tears falling for her missing husband. Gods, right? Immortal, so they act like nothing ever breaks, or burns, or changes. Well, Loki went out like a solar flare, not even scared as he stood up to give his toast, not even under Odin's one-eyed raven-beaked stare. If thought and memory serve, even alongside the mead, nobody was amused by his innovative new "Roast." Certainly the snake they poised to leak acid-fire on his face is not, and the screams of his sons as they were flayed for his words were... not

delighted. But his wife, Sigyn, standing by his stone slab, bearing a cup that only belongs to him when she takes it away to empty it of its flame- well, he could find anything in that impassive face. He believes he sees laughter, and love, and in the later years when his eyes begin to succumb to the hung snake's venom, even amusement. He thinks she prays. For remembrance, maybe.

But he never, *ever* sees why she stays.

Wives and sedent mortals are not remembered. Those are the rules of the trade- but this creature deals in *tricks* of the trade, because it remembers. It thinks about the lies it has told, the lives it holds now, closer to it than the Gods ever were. Embers of guilt should smolder away in the dregs of a mind dragged through time tied together with spit and string and light- but embers imply that a fire has died.

And something of a laugh bubbles up in it. It tries to stifle it, and laughs anyway, and the poetry is not lost on it. It thinks of humans, imperfect, telling stories around a fire. It thinks of humans, mired in fear and hate for engendering a *strangeness*, a union between man and woman and everything else, a hand in a hand under a face that changes and is always recognized. Humans change, too. Against all odds, from the weeds, it *leads*- not disciples, companions- plants seeds of Something New.

It never belonged with the gods. Gods are honor and justice and truth, and this thing is chaos and desire and youth- something primal and somehow refined. Reflective of a human race as willing to burn bright as they are to flicker and die.

To flicker: what beautiful proof of life.

Echoing, it revels in the laughter.

*Lily Pad*

**Annie Smith (2027)**



*tragedy*

**Nora O'Connor (2024)**

i'm looking at the mirror, but who's looking back at me?

who took the pen and turned this to a tragedy?

i'll accept my faults, the ones i have and ones i don't

i'll later regret this, the words i spared and words i spoke

*Average*  
**Caroline Arens (2027)**

We were never rich  
    But never poor,  
Never less  
    But nevermore,  
We loved to sing  
    But never dance,  
Never chosen  
    But never chance,  
We always dreamt  
    But never slept,  
Never gave  
    But never kept,  
We loved to think  
    But never thought,  
Always in trouble  
    But never caught,

We were never rotten  
    But never fresh,  
Never formal  
    But not underdressed,  
We would always talk  
    But never chat,  
Never this  
    But never that,  
We were never happy  
    But never sad,  
Always nice  
    But always bad,  
We liked to walk  
    But never run,  
Always stars  
    But never sun,  
We never had faith  
    But never did we doubt,

Never indoors  
    But never out,  
We were never bright  
    But never dark,  
Always light  
    But never stark,  
We had to fall  
    But never drop,  
Never go  
    But never stop,  
We liked sweets  
    But never sour,  
Never minutes  
    But never hours,  
We never laughed  
    But never cried,  
Never said yes  
    But never denied,

We had to eat  
    But never drink,  
Never connect  
    But never link,  
We loved the warmth  
    But were always cold,  
Never young  
    But never old,  
We had to fight  
    But never fought,  
Never prance  
    And never trot,  
We were never smart  
    But never dumb,  
Couldn't feel pain  
    But couldn't be numb,  
We will never live  
    But never die,  
Always on the ground  
    But always in the sky.

*The woman watching*

Lottie Wheeler (2024)



*“for me”*

**Julie Clayton (2024)**

what do i want? let's see  
what do you want me to be?  
taller, shorter?  
smarter, funnier?  
prettier?  
do you want me to be her?  
i'll be her

i want you  
to tell me there is something i could do  
to become bewitching,  
godlike in your eyes.  
divine.

i want for you  
to want me like  
i am the air,  
or water,  
in your lungs

don't just love me,  
do better,  
as i have.

## ***Disillusionment***

**Lottie Wheeler (2024)**

I want to be great, greatness itself  
Hung like a prize upon a wooden shelf  
I want the world  
to bounce like a marble in my hand  
I want to be god, like god-  
I want to be desperate, say desperate things  
to plead, be pleaded for, to pity  
I want now and never and tomorrow and Sunday  
I want time to hold open doors for me  
where there never were doors  
I want to gorge myself with lowliness  
Until I am starved from being  
I want to do nothing, say nothing, think nothing  
be a silhouette of a person  
broad enough to be everyone, anyone  
I want to be anyone, anyone at all,  
Anywhere at all  
But here, it can't be here  
I want a dream  
I want nothing *but the* dream  
A dream so brittle I could never be satisfied  
But I bite down nonetheless  
I want to want nothing

Be someone who wants nothing, who needs nothing  
Be better than what I am  
What I ever will be  
Someone who can Pry open the world  
and stuff their guts in the gaps

*Marina*

**Ana Schirmer (2024)**



## *Two cardinals fluttering around my backyard*

**Meredith Cox (2027)**

“Is Religion Ethical?” It is a common query asked by most people who study the physical world or base their knowledge entirely on cut-and-dry facts. Well, it is not a science. A science needs to be proven correct every single time it is tested. If I prayed to God right now and asked him to bless me with 1 million dollars under my bed, I would most likely not be one million dollars richer. Another common query asked by all types of people is “What made you believe in God”, or, “What HELPS you estrange your doubt?” (I was raised Catholic, I can’t quite recall a time that I didn’t believe.) Now, a common one-word answer to this question is simple; miracles.

The technical definition for a miracle is “a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.” (Oxford Languages). There have been many miracles throughout my life that I like to think about whenever I am feeling doubtful. An example of this is the night of my grandmother's passing.

On the night of my grandmother’s passing, many events could be described as “coincidences”. However, the probability of all of these events occurring at the same time, when we needed them the most leads me to conclude that there is a creator somewhere blessing me with these miracles.

My Grandmother passed away in 2016. At the time, my father was the executive chef at Flemmings, which was a very demanding job with tremendous hours. Due to this, he rarely had days off, especially on Friday nights. However, on May 6th, 2016, he was home. He was making dinner when my Mom was on the phone with my grandmother (whom we called Momo). Momo loved people so in

her later years she was devastated to feel locked away in a sad nursing home.

It was around 4:00 when Momo called my Mother. You would think that because of this dilemma, she would call my Mom to “Get me out of here”, or make weekly Saturday plans. Instead, she shocked my mom by saying “I’m so happy.”

Momo had three children. Andrew, the oldest. Bridget, the middle child. And Colleen, My Mother and the youngest. At this point in her life, Bridget lived in Florida. When Andrew got the call that he had to identify his Mother’s dead body, he called my Mom. When my Mom got the call that her Mother had unexpectedly passed from a heart attack just hours after talking to my mom on the phone, she had the luxury of only needing to walk up the stairs to tell my Dad. While my Dad was breaking the news to me and my brother, my Mom called Bridget.

When Bridget got the call that her Mother had passed away, she was at a baseball game for her son Trey. Trey was playing in the same field that Momo’s father had played in many years ago when he played baseball in the minor leagues. These miracles may not have been my Grandmother's resurrection, but they were subtle reminders that we were going to be okay.

The trip that Bridget and her family took to St. Louis days later would go on to be one of the most memorable trips of my life. The love and connection between the children of Bridget, Andrew, and Colleen is yet another miracle from God that I tend to overlook. I feel the blessings from my Mother’s parents every day. There’s no way that placing Me and my Mother at Nerinx in the same year was not my Grandmother’s doing. I see them in the radiant sunrise on the day of my district choir performance. I see them in the male and female cardinals fluttering around my backyard when I’m having a bad day. They may not be here physically, but they are everywhere

guiding me through my life and holding my hand when I'm going through tough times.

I may not have one million dollars under my bed, but I do have something much more valuable; a loving, spiritual family. There is a saying; thank God for unanswered prayers. So, if I prayed for a million dollars and didn't get it, it's not because God isn't real; having a million dollars just isn't a part of his plan. Religion may be too complicated to be considered a science, but if everyone went through what I went through, it would be ethical.

Some may say that it's a coincidence that on the night of Momo's death, my father was conveniently home, that my grandmother was at peace, and that Trey was playing in the same field that my great-grandfather had played in, but I say that it was God. "The work of the holy spirit", as my Grandmother would say. After all, she was a nun, until she gave it all up for a family. And that was the best decision she ever made.

## ***What If?***

**Katarina Hertell (2024)**

How much more do we keep our journals

Closed

rather than

Opened?

It's a pity... all of those words

passed through one's head

that don't make it down for others

to read.

to experience.

to understand.

They are all lost in time,

like fresh water pouring into salt.

Sometimes I guess we are afraid of

Vulnerability

when opening our hearts to another.

Sure-

One could lose a lot, but

just think

of everything you could

Gain?

*art*

**Nora Duffy (2025)**

to read her like a book would be the tragedy;  
inside the box, word after word;  
not read her like a drawing, with shapes, and lines, and colors,  
criss-crossing and zig-zagging,  
changing directions and ideas like we change our clothes.

to read her like a book would be to read her without knowledge;  
to read her without longing, without passion,  
without wonderment.

to read her like a book would be a grave mistake.

read her like a sketch, like a drawing, like a painting.

read her from the inside out.

read her from the view of the paintbrush, swooping and running across  
the canvas.

walk through the halls of her museum and take the time to stop at each  
artifact and learn.

learn her ups and downs,  
her swoops and runs,  
her criss-crosses and zig-zags and colors.

read her with knowledge.

read her with longing.

read her with passion and wonderment.

read her like art.

***A Shot in the Dark***  
**Maddie Nolfo (2027)**

A shot in the light, can heard for miles  
The bullets glaze the air's apparel  
The silky, grim see through gown that pushes fast,  
No slowing down  
People cower in the shadows, to dodge bullets that were not at  
them  
So tell me why and tell me clear that a shot in dark, enhances no  
fear  
To the people around, to the people that watch  
They don't care about the shot  
For a Shot in the Dark is quick and quiet  
It leaves wet blood from the ground of the riot  
The shallow voices of those who hurt  
But do not dare to speak a word  
I feel your pain, the flashing alert  
That screams and shocks that leaves you stirred  
Rest now little one, uneasy you are  
The bullet clashed, leaving more than a single scar

*Defiance*

**Bayley Rowe**

**(2024)**



*Innocence*

**Bayley Rowe**

**(2024)**



## ***Why do Deer Freeze in Headlights?***

**Bayley Rowe (2024)**

People tend to assume that deer are freezing due to shock, even using “a deer in the headlights” as figurative language for a reactive immobility response. Though we tend to think of this stopping as a panic, deer are typically flightier than that under perceived stress. According to biologists, deer are “crepuscular”—their activity peaking around dawn and dusk—so their eyes are optimized to take in low light. The sudden bright beam of headlights that an unsuspecting deer crossing a street is blasted with fully blinds them. Their pupils are fully dilated for the lower light, so they innocently freeze and wait for their eyes to adjust. The sad truth is that a deer in that position will typically get smoked before that can happen, leaving people with the conception that deer intentionally throw away their lives.

Well, it’s not an instinct of freezing and it’s not suicide or submitting to fate. It’s simply a waiting— a waiting for clearer vision, a waiting for a plan of action. It’s a pleading, a pressing of their desperate little hooves together, a begging to the universe for one more second for things to clear up before making a move. They’d cry out against their biology in their last seconds if they could—if they knew—cursing their eyes for betraying them when their lives were on the line.

Like the deer, I have had to learn the hard way that the world won’t put itself on hold for me to adjust. I was born with nystagmus, a condition

that causes repetitive, uncontrollable movements of the eyes along with a multitude of side effects ranging from chronic headaches to poor coordination and balance. Despite two surgeries, I'm still unfairly disadvantaged when it comes to activities that I love. I often find myself furious at my eyes for being a painful setback, similar to how I imagine an unlucky deer to be in its final seconds. I'm unfortunately hindered, having to slowly adapt my sensitive eyes to a fast-moving, bright world, not only on a physical level, but metaphorically too.

I tend to try and desperately hold on to the past as the world around me keeps on turning. I've had to learn the lesson that time keeps moving forward whether I'm ready and adjusted or still caught up in the past. Not in a hopeless way, though- with the self-awareness that comes with this knowledge, I've been able to manifest a different mindset. I've found that if I convince myself and remind myself to live in the present, it's much easier to focus on controlling what I can in the moment and to take action. Instead of waiting for the perfect moment- or rather, the slim chance that a perfect moment is even a thing- to take action now, pushing in the right direction.

A white-tailed buck poised for his untimely death gets hit waiting for his dilated pupils to shrink. Unlike him, I'll choose to prioritize the present and act now, taking my fate- or destiny, or future, or whatever you prefer to call it- into my own hands.

## **Canon**

*to Gerard Manley Hopkins*

**Ms. Sarah Hoeynck**

Austerity governs priestly pursuits of time, dress, taste, yet  
your Jesuit mind finds beauty's explosion in creation;  
enamored with nature—a burnished passion for feather,  
sunlight, soil—all things of surprise and elation  
fall on fallow page, sowing blankness into nourishment.

Everyday animals, beings leap to life, alive,  
enlivened by the pen's scratching out rhythm,  
infusing song with Holy Spirit, a mystery  
of diction known only to you, with Him  
as guide: perfection sprung from the divine.

And yet, for all your innovative skill,  
the men you wrote beside rejected you.  
They followed rules, enforced their earthly will,  
ripped off your wings to keep you mortal, too.

Praise be, some protecting power rescued poems  
from profane flames of self-sacrifice, raised them on gusty breath,

so now you, god of poetry, fly like the Windhover,  
brood over modern Pantheon of Thomas, Eliot—no death  
stalks your stirrings. I look for you above them:

Some creature kinder than the Sphinx,  
bright wings spread, shining like foil,  
hovering on the air with miraculous mastery.

## ***Wolves***

**Mack Leonard (2025)**

I can hear the snarls  
already. My informant tells me that I've been discovered.  
They're following me, closing in. They're so  
close. I can smell the potent scent of anticipation  
that's dripping from their tongues.  
I make eye contact with the people near me  
but they heed me no mind.  
No time of day will be given to me.  
I'm not worth it, not worth breaking through that  
thin safety net that is already ripping.  
Safety is currency and this economy is crumbling.  
The wolves are back and  
they're leaving their shadows. I'm suddenly running.  
I can feel the air snap as their jaws close on open air  
My ankles are on fire, my calves are strained  
and stretched past their limits, tearing  
There's a wall, slick and steep  
I am falling and they're smiling  
Teeth sharp and wet  
A hand reaches out to catch me, pulling me up with  
support and I've found my salvation

I raise my head to the sky and look into big eyes  
They're attentive and calculating  
But further down  
her teeth are bared  
and shining.  
Another wolf.

*Heaven as a tragedy*

**Lottie Wheeler (2024)**

And unto every man- a precipice  
For there, over there, is the world;  
Who wears beauty as a disease  
Seeped flecks of skin, porcelain youth  
Unraveling and unflowing- never satisfied in shape  
Here we are, not so much damned  
-as to crave damnation  
For there is the beauteous! The sheepskin truth  
But we rot, are rotten, pitied by decay  
Crest over the wings of solitude  
Our lagers are not our own  
for There is no one like us! Therefore everyone is like us!  
Those who wrestle with gods-  
And are never satisfied  
With Heaven as a tragedy

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