

Harbinger

2019







More Than Myth

n. har•bin•ger [här•bin•jər]

a person or thing that comes before to
announce or to give indication of what will follow



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The Many Faces of Myth

If the gods were mortal, they would be artists, writers, mothers, and lovers. *Harbinger 2019: More Than Myth* has been spun together with literature brought to us by the Fates. Much of what they offered delves into spirituality, myth, and, quite literally, the antics of gods and goddesses—old and new. We see that the more the world changes, the more it stays the same.

While mythic narratives as a way of explaining the universe have been with humanity since the beginning of time, some of the earliest written myths can be traced to more than 3000 years ago. During what is called the “Common Era” in Mesopotamia, scribes wrote stories in cuneiform on clay and stone tablets. These tablets nearly disappeared in 400 CE, but several lengthy pieces survived and are considered some of the oldest written stories in the world. Mythology can never truly disappear, not even if what is written is destroyed. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is one of the most well-known ancient Mesopotamian stories, heralded as the earliest surviving work of great literature. While in these pages you may not find an epic tale of heroic adventure, nor historical tablets engraved with myths from the beginning of time, *More Than Myth* offers the narratives of modern mortals—today’s writers and artists who carry the torch as storytellers.

In *Symposium*, Plato tells the myth of Zeus who, fearing that humans have become too powerful, splits them down the middle, scatters the pieces, and leaves them to wander the earth in search of their other half. Aristophanes, the character depicting this “eulogy to love,” claims that when humans find their “soul mates,” they become whole once more, never again to be separated. The art, stories, and poetry collected in the pages of *Harbinger 2019: More Than Myth* belong together, each making up a part of a more complex, larger narrative.

At first glance, these pieces may seem unrelated to myth, but a closer reading reveals an active interest in the narratives of the past and present. While most of the poetry highlights spirituality and myth, the fiction pieces’ mythological references are subtle. The presence of myth resides in the idea that the characters are gods of their own destinies.

Gabrielle Dooley’s “My Name Is” tells the story of Marcus, an orphan who moves through the foster care system. To survive the brutality of cruel classmates, indifferent teachers, and negligent foster parents, he escapes into books about myth: “I had five books in my backpack at all times. I’d gone through Odysseus, the Amazons, Persephone, Prometheus, Perseus, Andromeda, Adonis and Aphrodite, and the rest. And I wasn’t done. I thirsted for more stories, more myths to devour.” Through the kindness and support of a beloved librarian, Marcus learns like a phoenix he can rise from the flames and become the creator of his own destiny. In “Paper Crowned King,” Cindy Harbour tells the story of Ritchie, an imaginative young boy who turns his stuffed animals into members of a treacherous English kingdom. Ritchie’s monarchy parallels the gods with their petty jealousies and feuds.

Madison Crist’s poem “No More Footprints on the Ground” embarks on a spiritual journey that unites the speaker with the natural world as she transcends time like a god moving through the rise and fall of civilizations. “Soul Mate,” a poem by Mary Peña, is a contemporary take on Plato’s story of Zeus splitting humanity into two halves: “we know that our love is as old as an echo. / It may be a well-known story / that Zeus trembled at the power of hearts like ours.” Destinee Noice’s poem “Icarus and I” employs the story of Greek inventor Daedalus’s son, Icarus, to convey the strength of the speaker’s love. Icarus melted his wings when he flew too close to the sun and fell back to earth, drowning in a sea. Yet, he came close to touching “the divine heavens.” We ask that you let your imaginations soar and journey with us through the world of myth, remembering that it is always with us.

Through the generous support of the Pittman Family Foundation, we are able to carry on the tradition of awarding the Pittman prize in prose and poetry. Congratulations to this year’s winners: Gabrielle Dooley for her short story “My Name Is” and Destinee Noice for her poem “Icarus and I.”

We hope you enjoy *Harbinger 2019: More Than Myth*, remembering that we are more than our stories, and our stories are more than myth.

pain is a woman now

by Castor Santee

pain used to be genderless
maybe
it used to hit every mother and son
soul and star
time and place
pain used to be subjective
objective and transcendent
everyone felt it
equally, right?
maybe
maybe now that has changed
maybe somewhere in the era of domesticity and
shoe polish and baking soda
pain became a deciding factor within a political movement and
that is terrifying.

now pain has a face
and breasts and hips
and an “f” stamped on its birth certificate
pain is
“no i’m not pregnant”
pain is
“you can never be too sure these days”
pain is
“i need to go to the hospital”
pain is
“you’re being a little dramatic don’t you think”
pain is
biting back a scream on the floor and
sobbing from fear and

sobbing from pain and
anger and betrayal and pain pain pain
all because your school
never taught you the difference
between ovarian cancer,
a ruptured cyst,
period cramps and
appendicitis
pain is
“don’t worry this is normal”
pain is
a woman squeezing her eyes shut and praying for numbness because
pleasure seems so out of reach
pain is
“there’s something fucking wrong and i will scream cry bleed break
everything until you listen to me”
pain is
a woman healing



phallic woman

by Castor Santee

my goddess's womb
isn't shaped like the letter T
or the skull of a bull

my goddess's womb
protrudes from the
space between her legs like
hands reaching for salvation

my goddess's womb was named
Jack when she was forced into
this existence

my goddess's womb was kicked out of her
house when her father
caught her wearing her sister's jeans

my goddess's womb
told me that she is more
she is so much more

my goddess is more
than a womb
my goddess is more
than your metaphorical
cave, marshland, your
crevices, your velvet, your folds, your stickiness, your
secret untold lover lying spread eagle
on a bed of silk red silk
writhing as you gawk at the shallowness of her skin
my goddess is more than a pair of
fallopian tubes

my goddess is
too tall
too hairy
my goddess is
bursting with sound and frustration and
exhaustion
my goddess is

my goddess is my mother
and she is my father
and this is something people don't always
know, but yes
yes
my goddess is my father
and don't ever forget
she is always paying attention

of lesbos

by Castor Santee

somewhere beyond the rocks
where rosewater and
honey lap at the
ankles of nymphs

she sits and waits for the sun to rise over orange
tinted horizons

in a millennia, they
will remember how her
hands trembled as she
scribbled lines of devotion to
soft skin and violet fingertips

in a millennia, she will
gaze down from her place
in Artemis's arms and
see every single star and wildfire
killed and created in her name

in a millennia, she will
be the spearhead for a love
no one understands
except the two gilded souls
unlocking closet doors
and squeezing their eyes
closed as they dunk their heads under
in a baptism of glitter and pink wine

in a millennia, she will be love

but now, as the god so gold
and his lyre rises to greet
mortals below,
she bows her head
and writes of longing



drowning

by Castor Santee

There are some energies that cause
catastrophic shifts in the foundation of being.

They manifest in waves,
moments, dreams, but most
commonly
on a smaller scale
they appear in the way that
70 percent of your body sways and ebbs when
someone created under pure
catalyst holds your gaze too long.

The result is not graceful.

Ripples turn to waves
and before the warning sirens
get a chance to fill up the sky,
you are struck with the sudden
sensation of your feet not being on the ground
anymore.

They call this shock.

You can't rationally pinpoint why
this happens but when it does
reality takes a step to the side to
usher in lists and lists and lists of
ways to lose yourself in that
intangible
half undiscovered
half terrifying
energy that's pulling you
farther and farther below
separating and shifting and merging



two bodies, two energies, two moments
into the feeling of breathing
in nothing but water and a fatal kind of relief.

The cosmic movement subsides.

You don't think it will but it does
and you're left with
tight skin, heavy lungs,
a deep and unrelenting mindfulness of
where your eyes go and the
distinct burn of salt on the tip of your tongue.

Before We Come Together

by Victoria Patrick

I

I die every day.

In a darkened room, slats of golden sun streak the pale yellow walls. A fan rotates lazily above me. A clock ticks. I hum. I vibrate. I gasp, yelp, moan. I am alone. Small circles, a steady pulse deep inside. I am tightly wound from throat to thigh. The sheets stick to my calves. The air is warm and damp. I am saturated with desire, with color, with thoughts and images, lost on a private playground I've built out of stolen glances and swollen lips.

My tongue laps at my honey-sweet and sticky fingers. I stare, unfocused, at the shadowed corners of the room where I imagine I can feel your presence. The clock tick-tock-ticks, but time flows backwards, unraveling me. I'm taken to a moment, in the future so long ago, when my skin grazes yours. I am tightening, tighter, pulling taut. I cut myself free with a twist and a push, spiraling in and out of time, place, your gaze, myself.

My chest heaves. I taste you on my breath. I hear your sighs from the edge of consciousness. The short gasps of breath from your own lungs heard across time and space, defying all logic, all boundaries of science and math. We cannot, on paper, exist. I am here, alone in this room; I am there, in your bed, next to you. We are together, in our bed, in our house, in our future. I can see no future without you. You can see no future within me.

II

The stars glow in our eyes. Looking at you is like looking into the sun. You used to call me your supernova. That was when you called me. I cannot remember the taste of my name on your lips. I cannot recall how your name sounds in a sentence. I know its flavor only now in isolation. The shape of the syllables changes when I try to not be heard. These yellow walls are painted with my secrets. I think of "The Yellow Wallpaper." You read it out loud to me in bed before leaving for classes. I want to scratch the paint off these dry walls until my nails are cracked and bleeding and the walls stain red, red, red like my cheek after the slap of your rejection. I told you

we wouldn't be another tragedy. You said you understood, but you didn't promise. There is honor in your honesty.

III

We planned a summer wedding. In your parents' church, with the same minister who baptized you and your sister. The minister was much older now because that is how time works, but you still seemed surprised when we arrived at her office and her hair was gray and her eyes were wrinkled in a deep smile. She wore no wedding band, but after half an hour she mentioned her wife, and I knew why you vibrated when you looked at her. I looked at her, and I saw our future. One where we would wear matching rings and say *wife* and sigh about finances and take turns brushing the kids' teeth.

And then she said the C word. The big C that sucks the air out of every room. My stomach dropped, and so did my hand from yours. Would there never be a happy lesbian couple, aged and secure in their lives and love? Your minister noticed, and she smiled at me and leaned forward and said, *We were together 31 years when she passed. I'm grateful for how quick it was. I hated seeing her suffer, and so did our son.*

You looked at me, both of you wearing the same expectant face. *How old is your son?* I wondered out loud. *Eighteen, and he's graduating from high school in June. We wish she could have been here to see, but we know that she is watching us from heaven.* I look to you, and neither of us believe in heaven. We believe in each other.

IV

We built a frame of a house that was meant to be a home, and now I have this emptiness piled in the corner where we were going to put the armchair. Heartache clogs the toilets, and anger rusts the nails. There's a spot of wall above the landing, right when you round the corner after coming off the stairs. I wanted to hang our wedding picture there. Everyone would see it on their way to the bathroom or to the office I secretly hoped would evolve into a nursery. You had to have known this because you painted those walls light purple and trimmed the doorway with lavender sprigs. The door has been locked for so long that the air has turned purple. When I walk past, I choke on the sweetness.

U

We met on a Tuesday. You said Tuesday had always been your least favorite day of the week. Like a continuation of Monday blues but with the added tease of hump day. I never thought that much about the days. I barely remembered the day we met. It was you who marked August 8th on every new calendar. Every year you'd bring home the same flowers you gave me that first day. *Pretty flowers for a pretty lady*, you'd say, just like you did the first time, as you'd thrust the bouquet into my hands.

On our one year anniversary, I had the nerve to ask you why you had those flowers on that Tuesday afternoon. Your cheeks paled as you stirred the simmering sauce on the stovetop. We were making dinner. I continued mixing the salad and pretended I wasn't looking at you. *I was taking them somewhere*. What, like on a date? Your silence blared like an alarm. It was an alarm. The smoke detector screamed as you pulled the burning garlic bread from the toaster oven. *Yeah, a date*, you replied long after the smoke had cleared. *I was seeing another woman. For a little bit. But then I saw you, in that dress, and I gave you her flowers, and I went to her house and broke up with her*.

My hands shook. I stood by the open window, the humidity flooding in and sucking out the cool air from the kitchen. I thought of bonfires. I thought of the yellow dress I wore to Sarah's wedding shower. I thought of stopping at the store for beef jerky and potato chips after the party. All the food had been vegan and gluten free, and I hadn't brought a dish, something Sarah's mother reminded me of every time I eyed the buffet. I thought of the woman who handed me the daisies. *Pretty flowers for a pretty lady*.

The same woman who I ran into again, this time at the library, where she was paying a fifteen dollar fine, and how I had slid a twenty across the counter to the librarian *for the flowers*. I thought about how her eyes glistened, and she said that was a three dollar bouquet. A quiet laugh stuck in her throat. *Then buy me lunch*. I had never flirted so brazenly, and the librarian asked us to step aside because patrons needed to check out. And you took me to a diner where we got sandwiches, and you smiled when the mayo dripped down my chin.

UI

Packed boxes sit, stacked, against the walls. We set up the bed first thing. We vibrated at the same anticipatory frequency. Once we had the mattress on the frame, you threw towels down on the bed in place of fresh linens, and I threw you down on

top of them. We hadn't even turned on the AC yet. I propped open a window and leaned down. You melted. Dripping down my chin like strawberry ice cream, sticky sweet. I pursed my lips against you like I was sucking up a milkshake on a hot summer day. Touching you was scorching heat. Tasting you was a refreshing drink. Your stare left me with sunburned cheeks.

After, I laid on the damp spot where you soaked through the towels. The sun was high in the sky and the breeze moved around the room, mixing the scent of our love with the air of our new home. You returned with a damp cloth to clean us both up, and a pint of ice cream, one spoon.

VII

Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see the day you left me. It wasn't all at once. Your clothes had been disappearing from the closet. I asked you why, and you told me the washing machine was broken. It kept eating your clothes. So buy new ones, I pleaded. Longevity is defined by how many pairs of socks are in your drawer. Commitment is how many holes are in your favorite pair of sweats. On that day, you were wearing jeans. I couldn't remember the last time I had seen you in sweats. Now, I can.

We were curled on the gray couch your sister had bought us. The sleet was tick-tacking the windows behind us, the curtains pulled tight. Three empty mugs sat on the coffee table. A fourth was cradled in your hands. My hands were tucked under your thighs. Your back rested on the arm of the couch, and your legs sprawled over my lap. There was a hole in the inner thigh of your sweats. If you shifted, I could see the soft blue of your underwear. I moved my hands slowly as you sipped your coffee and watched the flashing television. I poked one finger into the hole. I stroked the soft skin of your thigh. You jerked up, coffee spilling down your shirt. We both paused. I don't think we ever pressed play again.

VIII

When it's too silent to fall asleep, I think about the night you met my parents.

Your hands were trembling in your lap. You held a bouquet of flowers and a bottle of wine and a pie and a tray of cheese. We had argued about the price in the parking lot just an hour earlier. You stared out the window, away from me. I was driving your car. Hands at ten and two, knuckles relaxed but firm. The road was

smooth, and the view was breathtaking. The water shining, pinks and reds reflected on its surface as the sun dipped out of sight. Remember how you told me you and your sister would hold your breath as you drove over bridges? I kept thinking about that story. I watched your chest as I drove. This bridge was too long. I was afraid your skin would turn as pale blue as the car and I would have to yank the wheel to the left and pull you out of the seat into my arms and push life back into your mouth and . . .

You turned to look at me. Your hair was down. The sun was behind you, and your hair glowed like a halo. I couldn't see your eyes. When we pulled into my parents' driveway, and they met us at the threshold with outstretched arms, my father commented on your eyes. *One green, one blue, just like in a fairytale.* I agreed. I said, *she is my fairytale.* We ate dinner on the deck and while you and my mother cleaned up the dishes, my father took me upstairs to his office. He opened his hutch, then pulled out a drawer, then lifted out a box, then slid out a small bag, and handed me a ring. *My mother's, my grandmother's.* Vines of silver wound together and propped up a tiny diamond. It shone like the water of the river; like your eyes did when I handed you this ring.

IX

If I saw you again, ran into you at the convenience store or the library checkout line, I would ask when you started leaving me. I don't mean when, exactly, did you pack your bag and get in my car with your keys and drive away from your church where I stood in a lounge with our mothers while we struggled to tighten the corset on my dress. I mean when did you decide this fairytale life was yours to live? When did you start moving your clothes into that storage unit on the south side of town? When did you rent the storage unit, and what did the woman behind the counter think when she handed you the key and saw the ring on your finger? When did you take the money out for the rental deposit? Was it the same month we reserved our reception venue, or was it the day we picked up the flowers for the bouquets, and you cried when you saw they were daisies? That was the only secret I kept from you. That our wedding bouquets would be the very flowers you gave me seven years before, and meanwhile you cried and still didn't tell me about the storage unit or your new bank account.

It's what hurts the most when I sit in the green chair in my therapist's office on rainy days. That you didn't leave suddenly and altogether, but slow and meticulous and planned out for days, weeks, months. Years? Was it all some trick? No one stays

engaged for two years, that's what all my friends said. Two years too long. Well, they weren't wrong. If I had pushed harder for that courthouse shotgun wedding the day I slid the ring on your finger, would you still be in my bed? If I had argued against the church or questioned the price of your dress, would you have left me in the night? Would it have been painless if it had been sudden? Like ripping off a Band-Aid or yanking a tooth? If I had asked you why you cried over the flowers, would anything have changed?

X

Your mother's birthday party was the day after we got engaged. I felt bad as we drove up the incline to the restaurant, bad that we would steal her spotlight. Sixty years old is nothing next to a diamond. We didn't even make it to the table before it was spotted. Your sister screamed. An adjacent server dropped his platter, glass shattering. Your parents paid for that table's bill, and your mom cried over the ring, and your dad smiled and took pictures, and we got two rounds of dessert, and your sister toasted us with ginger ale since she was pregnant.

On the way home we joked that we wouldn't need an engagement party after that, but then I had to call and tell my parents, and by the time we slid into bed, we had a venue booked for our party and a guest list and blown-out eardrums from all the cheering. We were, are, so lucky to have the support and acceptance of our families. That's what you would say whenever I got mad at my mom for being overbearing or short with your mother for sending me so many emails while I was at work. We were, and are, lucky to have families who were so excited to merge and share. Remember when we saw the Facebook post of our moms getting lunch together? When your mom asked if we wanted to host Thanksgiving so both families could spend the holiday together? Did you know that even now, six months later, our moms are still Facebook friends?

Dinosaur Piñata

by Raina Johnson

She holds me high,
her hands wrapped
in delicate care.

I perch, my hip cocked,
expression intense
as I focus ahead.

My eyes are locked
on the unblinking form
of the hanging piñata.

We have a staring contest,
neither will win, immortalized
by the lens of the camera.

My mother shall forever stay
a reminder of loss
in this picture of mine.



Paper Crowned King

by *Cindy Harbour*

“Long live the King! Long live the King!”

A plush gray mouse with black button eyes perches on the oak stool that acts as his throne. A king with rosy pink paws and a thin tail; a crown crafted with tape and yellow construction paper sits on his soft head. The button-eyed lion queen sits next to her king on the closed lid of the wicker sewing basket. On the floor on the red embroidered rug, the Parliament waits. An otter, turtle, dog, wren, and squirrel are among the king’s court.

The little boy is the only one present in court without stuffing under his skin and stitching down his body. He holds a stuffed horse in his arms and crouches down to fix his toys when they fall over. He walks them along the carpet as Parliament bickers. The horse is a seasoned military commander and rules his noble house well. He had fought hard in the battle of the laundry room and led his men to victory at the staircase. The little boy cuddles his stuffed horse, his favorite of them all. He separates the wren and the fowl when their arguments get too heated. The squirrel tries to talk over them about the royal coffers. Parliament always dissolves into chaos, and yet the king remains quiet as a mouse.

The little boy’s aunt peers into the parlor. Her nephew continues his play without even glancing up at her. She places the extra construction paper the little boy had asked for next to the plush toad.

She kneels down next to him. “How are things in the kingdom today?”

The boy sighs. “Not good. The king is too meek.”

“Why is the mouse king then?” she asks. “Why not the lion?”

“He was anointed by God. The lion is the queen. The nobles would never accept that.”

“The king of the jungle married to a mouse!” she exclaims.

“She was disappointed,” he replies. “The kingdom can’t handle such a feeble king. They don’t even have a child yet. They need to have a true heir.”

His aunt ruffles his hair before she stands up. “Well, it’s a good thing Mr. Horse can support the king.”

The little boy hugs his horse tighter. “He’s a duke, Auntie.”

She curtsies. “Forgive my words, Lord Horsie. I meant no offense, M’Lord.”

The little boy makes his horse politely bow and neigh his forgiveness for her mistake.

“Lunch will be ready soon,” she says.

The little boy nods and returns to his game.

His toy horse can do nothing but watch in horror when people storm the city. The king should be able to put down a revolt, but instead he offers up nobles to appease them. The Lord High Treasurer even. The little boy shakes his head. What can be done? Such anarchy cannot be handled by a weak coward. He holds his horse in front of his face and gazes into the shiny beaded eyes. It must be him. It is his job, nay, his duty to save the country from total anarchy.

He remembered the ride to Westminster Palace, the clip-clop of the horses, and the sharp smell of the city. He could feel the gentle sway of his saddle beneath him. The Thames emitted an overwhelming stench, but he didn't cover his nose. He had five thousand men at his back. He mustn't look weak. He met with Parliament. He knew only he could protect the kingdom as Lord Protector of the Realm. That cowardly Lord Somerset had led a disastrous campaign against the French, and yet he was honored with the title of Lord Protector.

The little boy glares at the button-eyed lioness. It's her fault. She wished to play her court games around the king, and she needed an amenable puppet to do it. Who better than her own kin?

“This man is not worthy of the captaincy of the realm! He is barely worthy of his title. I would name him a traitor and a coward!”

No one listened. He disbanded his army as he was asked. He met with the king as commanded. He was tricked.

He knelt before the king in the grand cathedral of Old Saint Paul's. The anger and humiliation swirling in his stomach grew when he swore an oath of allegiance before so many harsh eyes. Any more treasonous behavior, it was said, will see him imprisoned.

He bit his tongue to keep from arguing. Someone needed to think of the good of the country and the people. He knelt before the

king, but it felt as if it were the French queen and her puppet he knelt before.

Gascony had fallen. Under their weak king, a three-hundred-year-old empire where more of France was controlled by them than the French was lost. The greatest legacy of the king's dynasty. He had fought long and hard in France, even having to deal with the coward Somerset's follies, and it sent a bitter taste to his mouth. No one listened.

A prince was born.

He knew that woman would try to gain power again through her infant son. The

“Parliament always dissolves into chaos, and yet the king remains quiet as a mouse.”

king was compromised after Gascony. It would be up to him to try again. He couldn't be sidelined. He denounced Somerset as a traitor again. This time there was no king for the coward to plead to. With Somerset sent to the tower, the queen lost her best pawn. That woman had tried to push a bill to give her the power of the king. As if anyone would accept such a thing! She used her son as a shield well enough, but she could not manage it forever. He knew he made an enemy of the queen, but it was for the good of the country.

Stability.

Protector of the Realm.

All he wanted was this until the king finally woke.

Somerset was released from the Tower of London. He was stripped of power.

He was right all along. He brought stability to the country when he was protector. Long running noble feuds were stamped out. He tried to protect the realm. No one listened.

He raised an army. He went back to London. He wanted Somerset dead and the king captured. They brought the king to the Abbey. Watching Somerset be put to the sword made him think of the queen's puppet, dancing only to have his strings cut. Walking through the fallen bodies of Englishmen, he thought of how he wanted peace. There could not have been peace. The cries of crows filled the air as he walked around the carnage. Carrion picked through chainmail and lost swords to get to the corpses. He had wanted peace.

He, Warwick, and Salisbury proclaimed loyalty to the king and asked to be advisors. He was Lord Protector once again. The king was not compromised like the last time. But the royal coffers were broke. No one wanted to sign over land to the king. He could do nothing. It all was for nothing. He resigned and headed north. The queen's troops followed him to Ludlow Castle. He was outnumbered two to one. He told the king he was his faithful subject. He was asked to surrender. He declined. His troops defected. Left with no other choice, he ran. The shame of it burned. He thought of Somerset in France.

He and his allies were stripped of all lands and titles.

The queen was nothing if not thorough in her revenge.

Less than a year later, his greatest ally Warwick attacked the royal army at Northampton. The king was captured, while the queen escaped.

He returned to England. Not under the banner of the House of York, instead he returned under the arms of England on his flag. The king would lead them all to ruin with his puppet master queen. He needed to do what he must for the good of the realm.

He had a legitimate claim, as strong as the weak king's claim. The king's own grandfather had taken the throne from the rightful king. The Lords would not proclaim him king. He became Lord Protector once more. They said when the king died, he or his children would take the throne.

The queen needed to be taken care of. She was still a threat. He went north to bring her back. He was cocky. He underestimated her. He was outnumbered again.

A foraging party was attacked, and so they retaliated. He was unhorsed. He was captured.

They dragged him away from the road and

forced him to his knees. He'd repeated the mantra to himself many times before: for the good of the realm, for the good of the realm, for the good of the realm. They mocked him. They laughed. They never listened.

**"He tried to protect the realm.
No one listened."**

The little boy curls a paper crown in his hands and then puts it on the head of his stuffed horse. He places the larger crown on his own head. They mocked him. It was for the good of the country. It had to be him. The queen's men took her revenge for her. He takes his aunt's letter opener and tears the head off his horse, paper crown still in place.

"Ritchie, what's wrong?"

His aunt asks why he did that. His aunt tells him she will sew it. Nothing she says will stop his crying.



La Petite Mort

by MJ Jonen

Writing is like sex. The first kiss is the first flash of inspiration. The moment your lips touch for the first time is the lightbulb moment. The word or phrase, the picture or poem, the first revelation that drives your story starts there. After the first kiss, comes the second, the third, and soon the passion builds. The kissing is the approach. It's not the act of sex or writing itself, but it is what gets you there. Kissing is like brainstorming. You're thinking of new ideas and fantasizing about things to come. Your anticipation builds. The tension before the first words, before the first real touch, is visceral.

The first few touches, the first few words you write, are clumsy. You know that they will get you to the next moment and that later edits and actions will either fix them, outshine them, or make you forget them. No matter how much sex you have or how many stories you write, you are always nervous. There is always a hesitation, that performance anxiety. Will they like it? Will it be good? Will this make them a loyal reader, a loyal partner?

Then you get into the groove. Your words, your hands, get more passionate. Your heartbeat, your breathing, your fingers on the keys, quicken. Your actions catch up with your fantasies, and as soon as you think of what you want to do next, you are doing it. You don't hesitate. You kiss, you touch, you grind your hips. You write word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. You get closer and closer until there are no longer any spaces, any pauses, any hesitation. You don't notice the paragraph breaks, the grammar, the punctuation. Your eyes glaze over. Your body moves on its own. And soon, you're near the end. You can feel the tension rising. The plot, the sensation in your core, builds. Finally, you reach your climax, your ecstasy, the euphoric moment when everything is aligned and all of your energy can be released.

Afterwards, you catch your breath. Now it is your responsibility to care for your partner, your reader. You should bring them down gently, softly, tenderly. After care is important. Some writers, some partners, leave as soon as the climax hits. They leave their counterpart in need, clinging to the empty space, to the last bit of warmth that they left behind. Other writers, other partners, linger. They latch on to the moment a little too long. They obsess. They become protective and possessive. They won't let the reader, their partner, go. But eventually, everything must move onward. The reader

moves on; the partner moves on. The writer moves on; you move on. No matter how good it was, everyone, everything moves on.

Now, good writing, like good sex, is acceptable but not memorable, especially if you are on the receiving end. You go through the motions. You may not even climax. It's just okay, and you move on even quicker. If you are stuck in a relationship with a writer, with a partner, you get used to the good sex, the good writing, but it all blends together, and you begin to resent the writer, your partner. Soon, you get tired of reading altogether. It becomes a chore. Once, you were full of passion, full of lust, but now you are an empty shell of the harlot you once were.

Finally, you get up the nerve to leave, you stop reading. You worry you are forever ruined. That you will no longer feel the ecstasy, the euphoric moment when everything is aligned. You don't let people in, you don't read new writers until that one who rekindles the spark buried within you comes into your life, into your library, into your bed, and you can truly live again.



An Interview with Carey Salerno

By Sara Barfknecht and Raina Johnson

In Loving Memory of Monica A. Hand



Carey Salerno is the executive editor and director of Alice James Books where she has been serving underrepresented voices in the literary community since 2008. She is also the author of *Shelter* (2009) and coeditor of *Lit From Inside: 40 Years of Poetry from Alice James Books* (2013). She teaches poetry writing for the University of Maine at Farmington and currently serves as a literary curator for Pen + Brush, an international nonprofit organization offering an outlet for women in both the literary and visual arts in the city of New York.

Sara Barfknecht and Raina Johnson Diving right in, what attracted you to publishing?

Carey Salerno Initially when I was getting my education in high school and undergraduate school, I was actually planning to study medicine. I didn't really have publishing or English on my radar until I was a sophomore or junior doing my undergraduate work. I took an English class, Shakespeare, and loved it. Then I proceeded to enroll in creative writing and a lot of other English classes. From there, I was encouraged to do an internship at the campus literary journal, *Third Coast*. I loved it. I was sold. That was my first experience. It was hard to tell my family that I had decided to study English and to go into publishing. They were reluctant to accept that. They came around after a while, at least I think they have. But looking back on it, when I was a child I loved to make books. I remember on Father's Day one year, when I was very small—maybe 6 or 7 years old—I made a book for my father. I cut up his bathrobe in order to make a soft cover. I guess what I'm saying is that I should have seen this coming.

SB and RJ Could you describe the aspect of publishing that you love most?

CS One of the things that we are able to do at Alice James is to be personable with our authors and give them more attention than they would get at a bigger house. We collaborate with them very closely. They weigh in on cover art and interior design. We work with them on the editing process. In a bigger house, your manuscript could be changed, and you get a notification: "Here's what it looks like now." At Alice James, I make my marks, write down my ideas, and then have a conversation with the writer about what I'm thinking and why, and on the scale of importance where does it fall. We allow them to make the final decisions. We can offer our writers a close collaboration. There is a "family-like" aspect to it all.

SB I like the term "family."

CS Oh, me too. I love it. Maybe some people shy away from that, but I feel like Alice James Books has become my family over the years.

SB and RJ On the flip side, what are the drawbacks to having a small press?

CS It can sometimes be harder to get recognition for our books. We recently hired a publicist that pitches our books for us, but we have been in existence for 43 years before we were able to do something like that. I would say the resources and our ability to make ourselves known and be present amongst the other giants such as Random House, Penguin, and Norton. These giants all have lots of funds at their disposal. It can be difficult to compete against them, but we do.

SB and RJ Earlier this week, we met with someone who is an editor of an online magazine in Canada. We were wondering if you could talk about not just the differences between online publishing versus print publishing, but why you have chosen a career in print publishing.

CS We do e-books as well as print edition books. But journal publishing is different than book publishing. For me, there's something really spectacular about having an artifact. I like putting together a book that you can hold, that you can smell. The way you crack a spine. The way you cherish it. You can put a book out and even the cover will resonate with you. All of those elements are sort of wrapped up in my love for print publishing. One of my values at Alice James is to make a book's aesthetics align with the content. So, when you're looking at the book, it just feels fully organic. I'm not saying that you can't accomplish that in online publishing. There are some major benefits to online publishing, including access. The accessibility for online is huge.

SB and RJ What do you believe the publishing industry can do better?

CS Pay people what they're worth. Also, there needs to be more inclusivity, a balance of powers at the top. There are so many positions at the highest levels that are still homogenous. There's a lot of ceiling to be broken in that regard. And I'd love to see it. Being charged with one of these positions and being a rare entity as a woman, that's something of concern.

SB and RJ Discuss your commitment to publishing minority voices. For example what obligation did you feel to publish Monica Hand's poetry? Not just because she is an amazing poet, but because she is a minority voice.

CS I came to Alice James after being at a press where there was a lack of inclusiveness. I learned that people didn't know how to go about it. When I came to Alice James I made sure that we were honoring the American voice, which is not only white guys. It is obviously more nuanced than this, and there's more intention than this, but for me it was common sense. There is an urgency in writing, undeniably so. And that urgency does not come from one type of person. What I tried to do was to recalibrate our mission. We were founded as a feminist press. Because we have this already written into our language that we are here to publish and lift up underrepresented voices, it became a matter of putting that idea to work. When I read Monica's book I thought, "Oh yeah, there's no way I can't do this book." Working as a nonprofit in the literary arts with our mission allows me to make decisions that I might not be able to make at a commercial press where I have to think about book sales or numbers. At the time I didn't know that Monica would pass away in a few weeks. A legacy press might not publish a poetry collection posthumously. It became important to publish Monica's works. I'm a white, middle-class woman so I feel very intensely the disparity of fairness. Part of my idea about what constitutes an equitable landscape is making sure that every voice is being listened to, considered, and heard. That's a priority for me.

RJ Are you open submission, do you solicit, or how do these books come to you?

CS : We have our Alice James Award, which is our national annual book competition. Then, sometimes I solicit manuscripts. I will see someone's work like Kaveh Akbar and

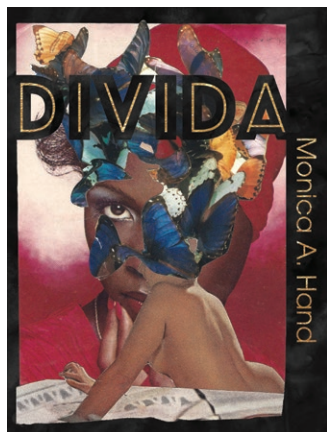
his book *Calling a Wolf a Wolf* and reach out. Sometimes our authors send us books and manuscripts as well. Work comes to us in different ways.

SB and RJ You already talked about it a little bit, but describe the process of editing and publishing Monica's book of poetry before and after her death?

CS We did *Me and Nina*, which came out in 2012. It usually takes us a couple of years from the time we accept a book to the time that we print it. Monica was a book artist. That had to be taken into consideration fully when you're working to put together a book. We needed to give her a more central role. Monica and I worked closely on building that book aesthetically. She wanted the title and her name to be part of the art and infiltrate the image. We also had simpatico ideas regarding the interior design. We worked really closely on it, and, at that time, she was also part of the editorial board, so we were working together in that capacity as well. Thinking back on it now, it's really nice that we had that experience of putting together a book. It was a gift.

SB and RJ What advice do you have for young writers trying to get published?

CS Persevere. And write what you feel is urgent and important to you. When I was writing and working on my first manuscript, I was voraciously reading and often wished I wrote like the poet I was reading at the time. I was thinking, "I'm never going to write like that" or "I wish I could write like that." But that's not the point at all. The point about being a writer is to write how you write. Express what you want to express. You're the only person who can do you. It's a betrayal if you're not honest, available, urgent, and open in your work.



SB and RJ What is poetry about, to you?

CS Everything. I mean, what is it not about? Poetry is about us. It is about seeing your mother through the last days of her life. Poetry is about living undocumented in America. Poetry is about your experiences as a soldier in Iraq. Poetry is about being incarcerated in an adult prison as a juvenile. Your poetry is about so much. In it is a language that can speak to things that we feel deeply and can articulate those things to others in ways that no other art form can. Poetry has that unique power to it.

SB and RJ What poetry do you like to write?

CS I have been concerned with disenfranchisement and giving voice to the powerless or seeking justice in situations that feel wrong to me. I once worked as a vet tech in an animal shelter, and that was a kill shelter. So my first book of poems delves into those experiences. The book that I'm writing now deals largely with my brother's excommunication from our family. He converted to Islam and then part of my family decided that he didn't belong.

SB and RJ Do you have any hobbies outside of your work?

CS I'll say as a mother, mothers don't really have hobbies. I really love reading historical nonfiction so that's my jam outside of poetry. There's a great book by Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, and I also love Heather Ann Thompson's *Blood in the Water*, which is about the Attica prison uprising of 1971. I love traveling. Traveling would be my other big interest. Last year I went to Peru, and, in a couple of months, we're going to the Galapagos.

SB It's a little bit more fun than Columbia.

CS No. Your town is amazing. Downtown is cute, and you have two bookstores on the same block!

My Name Is

by Gabrielle Dooley

My name is Marcus Castillo.

February 21st, 1998, was a dark, bitter day. The day I was born. The day I was dropped off at the doors of St. Teresa's Hospital. A tiny bloody baby, wailing in his cocoon of dirty hotel linen. Purple face and blue lips screaming for love. Screaming for help. Among the howling winter wind and the vivacious nightlife of the city, Nurse Emily Castillo found me.

She wrote me a letter that I carry with me today. She said I was the most beautiful baby boy she'd ever seen with eyes the color of a koi pond—algae green. She wanted to take me home but couldn't. If she took me home from the hospital, she could lose her job. A social worker needed to be contacted. And the police. She explained all this in a handwritten letter in beautiful cursive. I used to spend hours tracing the words with my fingertips, hoping that one day she'd find me and take me home with her. This morsel of hope was dangerous, but I was still young. I didn't understand the consequences of hopes and dreams.

"I couldn't take you home, mijó, but I could give you a name. Marcus, for the little winter soldier you are. And Castillo to keep you in my heart forever. I wish nothing but good things for you, mi amor."

My name is Drug Baby.

Weighing only five pounds when I was born, I was a sickly baby, and I grew into a sickly child. Shaking limbs, bruised eyes, and a slight delay in reflexes. Sitting on the mustard-yellow shag carpet of Alistair's Home for Boys, I played with a wooden train missing one of its wonky wheels. All the other boys tossed around a football or watched cartoons on TV, always yelling and breaking one thing or another. They'd yell at me as I ran the train up and down my bare calf, clothed in hand-me-down shorts too big for me. Hey, drug baby! Catch! And then a ball or a shoe or a hard object smacked against the back of my head. I'd pause, stopping the train from its ascent and fix my dark hair, but I never responded.

Little shit can't even talk 'cause he came out his momma all doped up on crack.

Little drug baby that even druggie mommy didn't want.

I heard she made a deal with one of the doctors. A baby for cocaine. Sounds like a good deal to me.

The truth: I wasn't incapable of speaking. I could talk your ear off. I could name all of the constellations and talk about outer space for hours. Ask me about penguins and I could name every species. But I felt unheard. I learned that if you didn't talk back to the older, tougher kids and foster parents, you got fewer cuts and bruises. Talking got you into trouble. So I discarded my voice like my mother discarded me.

My name is Useless.

Miss Francis didn't want children, but her food stamps didn't cover her living expenses, so she signed up for foster care. I transferred from Alistair's Home for Boys because I'd shown up at the school nurse or the free clinic many times with a broken rib or a crooked jaw. I suppose I asked for these beatings because I didn't properly respond. My too-small-for-my-age body was bruised like a bad apple 'cause I didn't fight back. My nose was broken 'cause I looked at one of the other boys too long.

Living with Miss Francis was easy enough if I stayed out of her way. It was me and a six-year-old girl named Abby. Miss Francis was happy if the dishes were cleaned and stacked by size and color in her oak cabinets. Her clothes were to be folded and sorted—shirts, pants, socks, underwear, and sweaters. Folded blankets were placed on top of mismatched couches and coats hung up on the leaning coat rack by the front door. Abby and I worked as a team to get everything done before she got home from bingo at the rec center down the street.

One day Abby forgot to separate the colors and the whites before starting a load of laundry, and Miss Francis's white Fruit of the Looms turned an angry-looking brown. Abby didn't quite understand the rules of washing clothes, so I took the brunt of Miss Francis' wrath. I pushed Abby behind me as Miss Francis spewed anger. I was useless, a bastard, a waste of space. My eyes burned with tears that day.

It took her time to calm down, but eventually life went back to normal. The whites were white and the colors still vivid, and Abby learned from her mistake. Everything was okay until July 4th, 2006, when the police hauled off Miss Francis in cuffs. While the officer spoke loudly about Miss Francis's right to an attorney, a young social worker opened her car door for Abby and me to get in. I could tell she was new because she looked happy to help us—ready to change our lives and send us to the best foster home ever. The wrinkles had yet to appear on her forehead, and her eyes weren't dark underneath from exhaustion. Soon she would discover the flaws of the system. Like Abby, she had a lot to learn.

My fate was decided while sitting in a white room with gray furniture, a Styrofoam cup of hot cocoa in my hand. I overheard some social workers talking about why Miss

Francis was arrested. She'd been photocopying her government checks at the Mid-Continent Public Library and cashing them multiple times.

Did she think it would go unnoticed? That's a felony!

Maybe Miss Francis got what she deserved, but did me and Abby? That was the last day I saw her. I thought about her for months, wondering if she could cook her SpaghettiOs for herself, if she messed up the laundry again, or if instead she was taking the brunt for some other younger foster kid. I think about her from time to time—what she'd look like and sound like as a 16-year-old. Did she get adopted? Or is she still suffering, waiting for her 18th birthday when she'll finally be free? I'll never know.

My name is 3:98fcs5267 MRT(RLD).

Pages upon pages of legal documents are printed with this foster name of mine. I am a docket number. A case number. Nothing more and nothing less.

Each time I was pulled from a foster home and placed in a new one, I saw this case number sitting in front of the social worker. Sometimes I still see it when I sleep, when I eat. It's tattooed on the inside of my eyelid, haunting me. 3:98fcs5267 MRT(RLD). I don't think I will ever escape it.

Social workers opened a file folder with this name pasted on the side, glanced at the pages of information with this name printed across the top, and filled out foster placement sheets with this name written in the header. They knew when I was born—date, time, and location. They knew my legal name and my first foster home and my second and third. And fourth and fifth. And even my fifteenth foster home. They thought they knew everything about me, but they didn't. All they needed to know was that series of numbers and letters, and then they made decisions about my life without any say from me.

My name is Mentally Handicapped.

School was my safe space. It gave me room to breathe when my home life wasn't great. For eight hours, school silenced the noise inside my head. I wasn't tense or nervous, waiting for chaos to ensue. Instead, I stared down at words on pages of textbooks, numbers on multiplication tables, and my name written on the tops of all my pages: Marcus Castillo, Mark Castillo, Marcus Castillo.

I usually stayed inside during recess to sit in the big green beanbag chair situated against the wall of the "Reading Corner." I stayed inside because kids like Henry Burke

and Nicholas Reeves liked to push me around in their version of Red Rover.

Red Rover, Red Rover, send cry baby back over.

This game lasted twenty minutes, them pushing me back and forth, my glasses falling to the asphalt and my knees scrapping the ground. I didn't like explaining to my foster father, Evan Jacobs, why I'd bloodied up the goddamn jeans he just bought me, so I opted out of recess. Instead I read books: *The Magic Tree House*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Charlotte's Web*, and many more. For a small slice of my day, I could escape reality through literature. But of course there came a day when I hated staying inside to read.

It was late October, the biting wind whistling through the trees and carrying the leaves across the schoolyard. I was reading *Coyote Autumn* by Bill Wallace, wishing I had a pet wolf too when I heard Miss Payne say my name out in the hallway.

"I know foster kids are usually behind from a lack of early education. But this one kid I have, Marcus, he's terrible. He sleeps in class, he never knows the answer when I call on him, and sometimes he doesn't do the homework. He comes to class with excuses as to why he couldn't complete the assignment. I don't know how to teach him. I'm really struggling with the boy. I'm going to have to talk to Mr. Williams about holding him back."

"I am a docket number. A case number. Nothing more and nothing less."

Hearing a teacher I admired talk about me that way made me snap like a twig under a boot. Everything anyone had ever called me rushed back: drug baby, useless, cry baby, foster kid, stupid, waste of time. For the first time I let myself believe that I was just a foster kid, but now I saw myself the way the world saw me—a juvenile delinquent with no future. And so I started acting like one.

My name is Trouble.

At seventeen, in my new foster home, I was the eldest of six kids. I made sure the little ones got enough food to eat before I grabbed a plate. Sometimes I didn't eat at all. I got free breakfast and lunch from Parker High School, but dinner was always a gamble.

On bad days a gnawing in my stomach beat at the same pace as my heart. Water helped fill my stomach. Chewing gum helped too. I could usually sleep through the hunger and get breakfast in the morning at school. But sometimes I couldn't stand the feeling of my stomach nearly devouring itself.

One spring day I was walking around town when my stomach rippled with hunger

at the smell of beef franks. Among the tall office buildings, small local shops, and crowds of anxious people, there it was—a hotdog stand. Those beautifully browned 100% Angus beef hot dogs beckoned me as they slow roasted over metal rollers. Fresh buns from Oscar’s bakery and chopped onions, relish, ketchup, mustard, chili, cheese. I looked down at my brown hands, shaking from low blood sugar and fingernails chewed bloody. My stomach growled, and I imagined the taste of that hot dog, the tartness of the ketchup mixed with the sourdough bread and relish. It was all too much.

Head bowed and hood up, I pushed my way through the crowd, avoiding eye contact. I already felt like a criminal, and I hadn’t done anything yet. The sounds of the city made my head pound, and I could feel my cheeks heating up. I was going to get caught. How would I explain this to the best foster parents I ever had?

“Hey watch it, buddy!” a man said as I brushed against his shoulder.

I could feel the sweat dripping down my forehead, could taste it in my mouth. I was right next to the vendor. I smelled the hot dogs and onions. My stomach gurgled loudly, and I placed my palm flat against my abdomen trying to muffle the sound. The guy had to have heard it. I was going to get caught. The rumbling inside of me became too much to ignore, so I grabbed the hot dog the man was preparing for a customer and ran.

“Hey! Come back here!” the vendor screamed. As he chased me, a police officer joined him.

“Police! Stop right there!”

I remember thinking shit, I’m done for. I’m going to juvie.

I ran faster than I’d ever run in my life, sliding around corners and pushing past people who stood in my way, the hot dog clenched in my fist. Ketchup gushed through my fingers and dripped onto the pavement as I ran up steps, past huge white columns and into the giant golden doors of the Parker Hill Public Library. I didn’t stop there. I ran to the small private restroom in back where I locked the door.

I devoured the squished hot dog in seconds and then waited, listening. Silence. Slowly I opened the door and heard the policeman say, “Well if you ever see him in here, be careful. He’s trouble.”

“Will do. Thank you, Officer.” The librarian nodded as he tipped his hat.

As I watched from where I kneeled behind a bookshelf, the police officer walked out the door. My heart hammered in my chest. I waited another minute before standing up straight. In front of me was a bright orange book with the words *Greek Mythology* written in red print. I pulled it off the shelf.

“Do you like Greek mythology?” The woman’s voice startled me, and I slammed the

book shut with a loud thwap.

“Sorry, young man. I didn’t mean to scare you. I saw you running in here.” She smiled at me as I backed up, ready to run at any moment.

“No, ma’am. That wasn’t me.”

“It’s all right. I’m not going to turn you over to the police. My name is Mrs. Tolliver. But you can call me Irene.”

“Marcus.”

“Do you like Greek mythology?”

“Um, I don’t know. I just liked the colors.”

“Well, we can make you a library card, and if you’re interested in any books you can take them home with you.”

“Um, that’s okay. I should get going. I have to get home.”

“It’ll only take a moment. Come on.” Mrs. Tolliver waved for me to follow her. I didn’t know what else to do, so I trailed after her.

My name is Nerd.

Several months after I met Mrs. Tolliver, I visited the library every afternoon before heading home. I had five books in my backpack at all times. I’d gone through *Odysseus*, the Amazons, *Persephone*, *Prometheus*, *Perseus*, *Andromeda*, *Adonis* and *Aphrodite*, and the rest. And I wasn’t done. I thirsted for more stories, more mythology to devour.

My newest book was Homer’s *Iliad*, and I was completely entranced by the Trojan War and Achilles. I was so entranced while reading it on the small red sofa of my foster home that I didn’t noticed my foster brother Aaron walk in.

He ripped the book from my hands. “What a nerd. Why do you read so many of these stupid books?”

“First of all, they’re not stupid. Second of all, they aren’t mine so be careful!” As soon as the words left my mouth, I regretted it. Tell Aaron one thing, and he’ll do the exact opposite.

“Oh. It’s not yours? So it would be okay if I just . . .” He grinned, reaching for the book’s title page.

“Aaron! I’m not kidding. Give it back.” I narrowed my eyes and ground my teeth in

anger.

“Oh. Give it back? Is that what I heard you say? Okay, here ya go,” he said. The book smacked against the living room wall. He smirked and saluted before turning around and running up the steps.

Carefully picking up the book, I adjusted its jacket and smoothed out the crinkled pages as I cried for the first time in years. How was I going to explain this to Mrs. Tolliver? She was going to hate me.

I avoided the library for a few days, dreading the look on her face when I presented her with the destroyed book, the binding unraveling and a page completely torn out. I didn't want to disappoint her. Mostly, I didn't want to lose her, but I had to face my fears.

**“I thirsted for more stories,
more mythology to devour.”**

“Marcus!” Mrs. Tolliver greeted me with a wide smile, which faded when she saw my face. “What’s wrong, Marcus?”

I unzipped my backpack and pulled out the book. As I put it on the counter, I avoided looking at Mrs. Tolliver.

“I’m so sorry, Mrs. Tolliver. I was reading, and my foster brother took it. I told him to give it back, but he wouldn’t. I’m so sorry. I will pay you back, I promise.”

With small, wrinkled hands, Mrs. Tolliver picked up the book and then examined the pages.

“It’s all right, Marcus. It wasn’t your fault. I’ll order another copy. It’s not a big deal.” She reached out and tilted my face up to meet hers. She was smiling. “Really, Marcus, it’s okay.”

I matched her smile with one of my own. She didn’t think of me as a bad kid. She was the first.

My name is Sweet Boy.

“I thought you might like this one.” Mrs. Tolliver placed a dark gray book on the desk in front of me. After that day, I spent almost every afternoon at the library reading books and talking with Mrs. Tolliver.

“Thank you. Another Greek mythology?” I opened the front cover and read the title page: *Claudian, Volume 2*.

“I think you’ll find the story of the phoenix particularly interesting.”

I flipped through the pages, found the story of the phoenix and began to read, but I stopped. I looked up at Mrs. Tolliver and asked a question that I had spent my entire life trying to answer.

“Hey, Mrs. Tolliver. Do you think life will ever get easier?” I closed the cover of the book and glanced up at this woman I’d grown to love in the months I’ve known her. I liked to think she was like my mother or maybe Emily Castillo. She sighed and sat down across from me.

“Life is never easy, but you’re a sweet boy Marcus. If you really want to change something about your life, you can,” she said, grasping my hand in hers, soft and wrinkled with age—mine dark and smooth.

“But I’ve never been able to make any decisions for myself. Why would I be able to now?”

“In less than a year you will be 18 years old. You’ll be a young man, and you will be free from the system. You could do anything you wanted.”

I didn’t have the heart to tell her that I would always be a foster kid. Like the police officer had said, I’m trouble. That’s all anyone would ever see me as. I would have to work twice as hard as everyone else to get a job, find a place to live, survive. But I didn’t want to worry Mrs. Tolliver. I nodded and opened the book, studying the pages. I hadn’t realized she’d left or that I had read nearly half the book until someone dropped a book in the aisle right next to me. I was absorbed in the words on the page and this mythical creature. The phoenix rises from the ashes and is reborn. How I longed for the power to create a new version of myself.

My name is Marcus Castillo.

I stared at the envelope in my hand. My name was scrawled in big loopy letters. Marcus Castillo. And underneath Mrs. Tolliver had signed her name, Irene Tolliver. I used a letter opener to cut into it and then pulled out the pages inside. On top was a note from Mrs. Tolliver.

“You are a very bright young man, Marcus. And I have enjoyed getting to know you. I wanted to send this to you as a way of saying happy birthday! I know I will see you on your birthday in a couple of days, but I thought you should look at this now. Think it over. I love you very much! Happy birthday, Marcus!”

Underneath her note was a petition for a legal name change. My hand shook as

I stared at the document. For 18 years my name had been Marcus, and it was the only thing I had that stayed the same. But it was also one of the many things I had no say in. I had no say in what I was called: Marcus, drug baby, useless, 3:98fcs5267 MRT(RLD), mentally handicapped, trouble, nerd. My whole life I was pushed around and called names that I didn't deserve, and I had to take it.

"The phoenix rises from the ashes and is reborn. How I longed for the power to create a new version of myself."

I slammed the pages onto the counter and shook open the tiny junk drawer in my foster parents' kitchen. I grabbed an ink pen and wrote my name on that page.

My name is Phoenix Marcus Tolliver Castillo.



Character Reliefs

by Kylie Naumann

This series started as an experiment and study in line work. In previous pieces I've struggled with the intentions behind my lines, as well as their consistency. For this series I decided that rather than minimizing or hiding the line work, I would lean into it. Stylistically I was inspired by animations from the Cartoon Saloon Studio. The work was influential because the lines complement the artwork rather than serve as borders for color. My subject matter served as visual images for my senior project; each illustration represented a character from one of my stories. I used the depictions to explore the imagery behind a few key characters, embracing a more abstract and symbol-based composition. With the figures I also explored ideas of religious iconography and motifs from children's storybooks.



Ark

2018, Pencil Drawing, Digital Coloring



Petra

2018, Pencil Drawing, Digital Coloring



Queen

2018, Pencil Drawing, Digital Coloring



Shadowstar

2018, Pencil Drawing, Digital Coloring



Stormwend

2018, Pencil Drawing, Digital Coloring

One More

by Madison Crist

her little hands don't reach gently
like a child, abruptly grabbing, pulling and twisting off each one
the wonder is in her eyes

strawberry hunting

we watch as children become prey
predators hunting, leaving little hands bruised
faces the complexion of overripe plums

boxes of blushed fruits in perfect season
one more, one more, one more
“no more little one, the box is full”

strawberry hunting

one more lost to the war
one more taken too soon
one more lacking the love always deserved

the world we have for children
one more baby, one more . . .

No More Footprints on the Ground

by Madison Crist

emerge into the endlessly vast world
in light explore green lands that dip into oceans blue

then night falls to the center of the Earth, red and scorched
when all inhabitants are gone

clouds will diffuse, leaving glowing lights in an infinite sky,
but will the breeze blow the air?

the calm vacant feeling of an empty surface brimming,
but will the thunderous waterfalls still pound?

beneath the ground flowers rise,
then fall, the flowers are waiting for rays of heat

the world will seem simply alive,
seeing the end of the rainbow for the last time

but will there be room for both the sun and moon in the sky?
the sand stretched wide was swallowed by the waves

no more footprints on the ground

Arctic Hum

by Madison Crist

they are speaking to me,
from under the ocean
the depths where no human soul exists

I can hear their moan-like echoes vibrating through open seas
what is it they are telling me?
I cannot understand

the words are not full, and sentences don't rush through
their tones are resting under me floating somewhere in between
if you stop and float you will find they don't seem to hear you

the worst scientific fears come true
the glaciers are calling out to you



The Types of Guys You Befriend on the Internet

by Jasmine Flores

All you wanted to do was play video games. Is that so hard? Apparently yes, it is. If your username doesn't give you away, then your voice certainly will. The moment they hear you, they freak out. "GIRL, IT'S A GIRL! OH MY GOD!" They apologize for every bad thing they might have said to you or for their behavior. They change their personality for you. You should feel special.

Some of these boys, however, will not care that you're a girl. To them, it doesn't matter who you are. They're there to win. Or sometimes, if it's not that kind of game, they're jerks and ruin everyone's fun. These boys will be suspiciously nice to you. If you learned your lesson from the first time, then you will not trust them. If not, then you're about to fall for the same trick. They will compliment you when you first meet them. They will tell you how you sound like a beautiful person or how great you are at the game. Once they have your trust, they will purposefully crash your game. Some of them are smart enough to hack into a computer or a console. They might do that to you, just for fun, so keep a lookout for these types of guys.

Once you have become acquainted with some of them, you might even start to become friends. A few of them genuinely want to be your friend—the rest, well, they want to be something more. They're the hopeful type of guy that you need to be careful around. They would never want to see you hurt so don't worry about them spreading rumors or leaking personal conversations/pictures of you on the internet. The problem with them isn't that they're annoying (okay that is a problem, but isn't the main one), it's how they are good with words. They'll compliment you; tell you how nice you are. They are always ready to listen if you need someone to talk to. And they mean it. No matter what they're doing, they will stop everything to talk.

If you don't want to be in a relationship with them, which you most likely won't, you must make it clear right away. If not, they will start to believe that all the late-night talks or the sharing of personal problems are signs that you want them. Don't get them excited. All you want is friendship. They will respect your wishes if you let them down easy. They might even back off. They will probably stop sending you "good morning" and "good night" texts. They're trying to respect your space.

There is always that one who does respect that you don't want to be with him, but he'll still message you the same number of times every day. If this becomes too much, remind him who he is to you. If you're a bit shy and don't like hurting someone's feelings by being blunt, casually drop "friend" in the conversation. Keep saying it too. It'll get the message across. If you are the type of girl who doesn't mind

straightforwardness, then tell him he's forgotten that you only want to be friends. And if he freaks out and says he knows, he's just being friendly, pull out all the messages he's sent that make it seem as if he didn't get it the first time. That should put him in his place. Don't worry about his feelings. He'll be fine.

Another guy is the young one. Way too young for you. But he's a sweet talker too. He knows what you want to hear, and he'll be smooth about it. Watch out for this one. It's easy to understand why you shouldn't trust him, but sometimes not everything is what it seems. Hang out with him more and get to see how he really is. See how he acts around his friends and when he's alone. There's a big difference. He's a nice kid who wants to have fun. He means no harm. You will find that he's got a nice personality, but he's also hard on himself. He needs a lot of advice. Think of him as a brother or as a close friend. Either way, he will need to be looked after.

The next type of guy ends up being a friend for life. You're going to wonder how you got through your days without him. It will start off as an awkward friendship. Neither of you will know each other very well, but you'll end up finding yourselves spending a lot of time together playing video games. He'll know all your secrets, and you'll know all of his. Both of you aren't quite sure how the two of you ended up being so close, but don't question it. You're going to want to keep this guy. You can talk to him about anything, and he will respect you. Some people might think you are dating but ignore them. Don't let it change the way you are around your best friend. Don't stop being yourself around him, or you'll lose the friendship.

The final one is the guy who you will fall for. Whether you want to or not, you will end up with feelings for him. You'll never know if he feels the same way. This guy is an enigma. You never know what he's thinking or what he's going to say next. He's also the type of person you hate—the player, the “bad boy.” He's very experienced, and you are not. There are a lot of firsts with this one, but don't get carried away. He will break your heart many times, but you will keep giving him chances. Don't believe his excuses, even when he sounds sincere. He is the one who will change you if you let him. Don't let his deep voice and handsome face fool you. Get to know the real him, not the sweet nothings he says on the phone at night. Learn about his insecurities. Be his friend first, not his plaything.

These four fine gentlemen are the main types you will find yourself being around as a girl on the internet. Of course, there are other kinds of guys, but these four are the ones who need the most attention because you will inevitably meet them. It won't be so bad; you will make great memories. There will be ups and downs, regrets, and things unsaid, but it will still be an exciting journey.

Icarus and I

by Destinee Noice

I wonder if Icarus smiled
even as wax seared a burning path over tender flesh
even as feathers fell from his back like
the tears of the gods who would not save him.
do you think he smiled as he fell
knowing that even for a moment
he touched the divine heavens?
I smile when I touch you
even when it feels like falling,
I can't stop myself.
you are my divine absolution,
a holy being worthy of bowing down to.
I fall to my knees and pray
for you to touch me a little longer.
gods, please, one more moment.
did Icarus pray for more time?
one more second and he might have reached home.
some days I think I might pray for home
and then I found a home in your smile and
I don't need wings to get there.
you taste like forbidden fruit
you taste like stone temples and aching knees
you taste like a goddess
you taste like the sun
and I
am Icarus,
filled with nothing but a dream of reaching the heavens
and tasting you
one more time.

Confessional

by Sara Barfknecht

Prayers have lost their flavor.

“Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.”

They grow sour the longer they sit in my mouth.

“It has been three years, five months, and thirteen days since my last confession.”

They weigh down the tip of my tongue; it is easy to bite them back.

But I have different prayers, now.

“These are my sins.”

I confess to her my love every night, my head between her legs, or hers between mine. My fingers loop themselves into her hair and pull. Pull her to my mouth to whisper my love again between her lips. She says it back to me, tears wet on her cheeks.

“I worship another god.”

My prayers to her have turned to tongues and teeth and touch.

“I bow down to her.”

The photographs I’ve taken of her decorate my walls: a Polaroid map of what she’s done to me.

“I serve her.”

Every morning she wakes after me, and I bring her coffee, on my knees by her side of the bed.

You didn’t have to do that.

I wanted to.

“She is unlike any wonders in heaven above or in the earth beneath.”

I take her hand when we are together for the world to see.

“I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life, and I ask for absolution and penance of thee, my father.”

She is my past, my present, my future.

“For your penance, please say ten Hail Marys.”

I make the sign of the cross with my thumb at the apex between her thighs because she moans with the power of gods in her lungs.

“I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to confess my sins, to do penance, amend my life. Amen.”

She confesses again, between my lips. I love you.

“I absolve you of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

The spirit of her life flows through her fingertips, burning my skin in their wake.

“Amen.”



I travel universes under the guidance of her hands, with the wetness of her lips, and the absolution in her voice.

“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good.”

“For Her mercy endures forever.”



Soul Mate

by Mary Peña

like the ghost-itch of a lost limb
I feel your absence,
and I reach over to hold you at night
even though you are stars away.
but I know better than that
because you are only as far as my reflection.
my other half,
we know that our love is as old as an echo.
it may be a well-known story
that Zeus trembled at the power of hearts like ours.
our ancestors with four arms, legs, eyes—
two noses, two mouths.
and so, he split them down the middle
and sent them in search of their missing parts.
I am you, and you me.
but when my body is here
and yours is not,
I hold my two arms
and I feel your hands, my other fragments.
“I love you,” I say
and then
there is echo
my whisper—your ringing reply
“I love you too.”

Bigfoot Kept Lumberjack as Love Slave

by Madison Shaughnessy

Nothing is the same. Ever since I was found on the side of Highway 54 and brought home, things haven't felt right. I look at my wife, but I feel nothing. I used to love the way she hummed while making breakfast. Now, the sound grates on me. It's too clear and high pitched. When I go to work, axe in hand, my thoughts drift deeper into the woods. Staring out, I look for what I yearn for. I feel too big in this world. The way I tower over my wife unnerves me. It doesn't feel natural anymore. I don't want her to look up at me. I want to be the one looking up at somebody else.

The day old McAllen found me sitting on the side of Highway 54 was a whirlwind for everybody in town. I had been gone for a month. I didn't know. I didn't feel the need to count the days. Everyone lamented over how long I was missing, presuming me dead. Perhaps killed by a falling tree or a misstep off the side of a cliff. I felt as if I wasn't gone long enough. With each question the townsfolk ask, I wished I was back in the woods. My wife's never-ending flow of tears only heightened my desire to return to the pines. It was my first day back in civilization, and already I wanted to break the promise I made him.

My cup of coffee is untouched on the table next to me as I stare out the window at the forest. My buzzing thoughts block out the world. I wonder what he's doing. I wonder if he looks toward the town like I look toward the forest. Does he feel too small without me? I know he wanted me to go back, to live the life he couldn't provide for me, but does he regret that? Does he wish he was selfish? It's what I wish.

"Michael."

I am back in reality when I hear my name. My wife is standing in front of me, arms crossed. I can't make out the expression on her face, but then again, I don't care enough to really try. I hum in acknowledgement.

"I've been calling you for ten minutes."

"Oh."

A sigh escapes her lips. "What are you thinking about when you stare off like that?"

"Nothing." I glance out the window at the dark green pines.

"It's not nothing. Ever since you came back you've been like this. There's something different about you. You're not the same."

I stay silent.

"Why can't you tell me what's wrong? Something is bugging you."

"You wouldn't understand."

Her fists clench, and she walks away, leaving me to my thoughts. They drift back to him like they always do when I'm alone (and even when I'm not). A smile curves my

lips as I think about the month we had together. When he saved me from that falling tree, I was scared. Not just from almost dying, but also because of him. He was too big. Too hairy. Too obviously not human. He took me away, and I realized the difference between the real him and the stories he inspired.

I watch a lone bird soar above the canopy of trees. I make up my mind. I grab my jacket and leave my old home. The forest is calling me, and I know he is waiting for my return.



An Interview with Nicole Martin

by Madison Crist

Nicole Martin has a passion for discovery, organization and strategy that transcends her variety of interests and has propelled her to leadership positions throughout her career. She moved to California in 2009 after her internship with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and was offered a position as a Production Assistant (PA) on the TBS show *Glory Daze*. She continued to expand her expertise from post-production on *Falling Skies*, *Rizzoli & Isles* and *American Dad*, to ratings analytics and strategy for Pop TV, with hit shows *Schitt's Creek* and *Big Brother After Dark*. Nicole's determination, optimism and solid work ethic gained her four titles in three years, most recently including the Director of Research. When not data diving, Nicole spends her time taking in the Los Angeles scenery from the distance of her kayak, visiting local breweries, or traveling abroad.

Pop TV is a joint venture of CBS Corporation and Lionsgate. Pop TV gives fans a dedicated channel that loves being a fan as much as they do. It is a channel filled with optimism, humor, excitement and a passion for the great times in life—those you remember and those still to come.



MADISON CRIST As the Director of Research at POP TV, would you start off by telling me about what your position entails or what you do on a daily basis?

NICOLE MARTIN Basically, as Director of Research, I work with a team to analyze data on show and network performance. We use this information to help other departments determine the influence of a variety of elements, whether that is growth or decline of an individual show, the viewer demographics of a show or network, how one show or network is comparing to another, or even where opportunities are for marketing to certain viewers. We interpret data, explain what is going on with viewership, and bring actionable measures to sustain company longevity.

MC I know that Nielsen is a big part of ratings and audience measurement systems. What is your relationship with Nielsen, and do you use data from other sources?

NM Nielsen works on a subscription level. We have a contract allowing us access to Nielsen's data through two of their main systems, and are able to pull data on how many viewers watched the day before, what provider they were using (AT&T, Dish, etc.), if the viewers were watching on demand or through a subscription service, how long viewers were watching for, what they had tuned to before and after. It also provides other demographics such as income level, education level, regions, and how many children the household has. Nielsen collects a substantial amount of information on viewers. There are other companies that also collect user information—Google, YouTube, Facebook, or Hulu—but Nielsen has the advantage of being the oldest player on the block. As technology changes how people watch content, the ways we measure television will also change, and while we may currently only use Nielsen for our TV viewing, POP TV does use other sources for measuring social media and digital interactions.

MC During your recent lecture at Stephens College, you mentioned that you use your research to help program the schedule for POP TV. What are some things that you keep in mind when doing this, and how do television networks account for “time-shifted” viewing while scheduling?

NM Research and scheduling departments work closely to understand a broader sense of industry trends. While we know technology has allowed people to record and watch shows at their convenience, or to time-shift their viewing, we also know that a large portion of viewers will give a brand the opportunity to entice them once they're there. Our goal is to provide a casual flow of shows that could be a day-to-day companion for each viewer, enlightening the day with nostalgia, inspiration, dramatic intrigue, and comedy. Often there will be an opportunity to add a show to our network that has aired elsewhere, and we will provide background research on its performance on other networks and what could be expected if it were to air on ours at a certain time of day.

MC Your presentation focused on how research shapes television ratings and the changes in viewership over time, but how have you noticed viewership change since technology has become overwhelmingly mobile? How has POP TV taken this into consideration?

NM The way we watch content has dramatically changed given the new opportunities of technology. And this will only continue to evolve. The entire concept of how and why we envelop our lives in stories is expanding. People watch to keep traditions, to bond with family and friends, to speak out and influence others, to escape from their realities, to understand or see something different, or to solidify what they know to be true. They want content to be wherever they are, to be as independent, provocative, and free as they feel they are themselves. They're able to broadcast their thoughts, ideas and emotions on social media in words and expect there to be supporting visual content to back their claims. Most companies are aware of this and are navigating through various apps, partnerships, and social presences to provide this support. POP TV is a part of the movement with the POPnow app, an active social media presence, and partnerships with social influencers. There is a long way to go. In order to have an impact, one must trek past the current movement and offer something original that will pave the way rather than follow the pack. Your generation, Madison, will take technology and storytelling to a whole new level, and that is really exciting.

MC What is your favorite part of your job?

NM Not all aspects of a job are perfect, and no matter how fun or strenuous your day might be, there has to be something that keeps you going, an idea that you dream about, a goal to work for. For me, it's the endless opportunities. Any idea, notion or theory I have, I can pull data on and find an answer. Usually that answer not only pertains to the original question, but sheds light on the industry as a whole. Every job I've had has put me in a position where I create order in the chaos and find patterns in the normalcy. That's something I really enjoy.

MC What advice do you have for individuals who want to do similar things?

NM Know the core of what you want from life. It's your adventure. What propels you to do one thing will most likely draw you in similar directions, and you will never be bored. Having determination in your career or in your passion results in unwavering pride in yourself. If you set your mind to a few core values, use them as your compass, and never give up on yourself. I never thought I'd be where I am now. Doors have opened for me in the most usual ways, and instead of saying no, or I'm not ready yet because I have no experience, I said yes, and was willing to learn, grow, and understand. All of the notions that I should know something already went out the window, and I put myself in the seat of humility to try to understand the environment deeper.

MC How did Stephens College prepare you for this part of your life?

NM Stephens gave me an incredible opportunity. Not every school allows students to take an active role in the community or to meet and work with such skilled professionals. I originally went to Stephens because I wanted to work in documentaries for National Geographic, and every class I was in had an option to go beyond the coursework and do more in the field, which I fully took advantage of, adding real-life experience. On top of the extensive coursework and extracurricular activities, the professors were the backbone of the college, taking my interests and bringing them to higher levels by introducing contacts that soon became coworkers. At Stephens, I was never just a number in a class. My professors were already training me to become a part of their vast network, to build another pathway into the industry as all the women before me had succeeded in accomplishing.

MC Can you tell me a little bit about the opportunities for women in television and what that looks like now?

NM Opportunities are increasing every day. It's an interesting era with ultra-sensitive and inclusive environments, which has opened a door for women to find a company that best fits them. Don't get me wrong, we still have a long way to go before equality will meet expectations, but progress is being made.



Kerri Yost, Nicole Martin, and Chase Thompson, 2018

Dancing Lady

by Cindy Harbour

Quetzalcoatl dances with Nuestra Señora Guadalupe.

Santisima Muerte dances with Christ.

They dance around one another,

hands closed

barely touching.

Canta en Español

You can't sing in a language

you do not know,

listen to the bones click

as the damas dance.

Bailas balias balias.

Follow the orange petals.

Smell their strong scent.

Follow them home.

Dance your way home.

Pretty Lady

by Cindy Harbour

God watches her bony hips sway as she walks
God is a bit of a pervert
God and I fistfight outside a 7-Eleven
When I call him out
On being a pervert
We get Slurpees afterwards
Thankfully, Mary raised Jesus right
Jesus respects women
Jesus kisses her skeleton hand
Even if he only kisses it for a moment
Before he lets go
Lady Death
Men whistle at her
Mi flaquita es muy muy bonita!
Ven aquí, mamá!
Bailas, Ruca, Bailas!
They all dance around her.
Everyone dances with Lady Death
Her bony hips sway and sashay as she waits to hold you
God cannot hold Lady Death
Jesus cannot be held by Lady Death
We are all held by Lady Death
Held against her bleached bones
Gently
She smiles

Where's the Lady

by Cindy Harbour

Everyone needs something to believe in
Where do you come from?
Everyone needs somewhere to go
Where do you come from?
Everyone needs something to want

I want to hear the Spanish on your tongue
I still want to hear it on my tongue
I want to hear Náhuatl on tongues
Before the Spanish were there

Dónde Dónde Dónde!
I want to hear English on her tongue
I've never heard her voice

¿Dónde está la dama?
¿Dónde está la dama?
¿Dónde está la dama?

Where where where!
Dónde Dónde Dónde!

Where do you come from?

Artist's Statement

Enclosed in *Harbinger 2019: More Than Myth* are stories, poems and artwork that provoke ideas of how we can define ourselves in multiple ways in terms of old and new myths. The images on the cover and in the interior pages depict the fierceness and wonder of the natural world. For me, nature is a central form of a beauty embodied by Mother Nature who often acts as my muse when I am creating art. Embracing the storm is a common theme in myth, and it is a concept I played with when interpreting this year's theme. There is a tempestuousness to the magazine's look and mood.

My favorite colors are from both the warm and cool palettes. I am intrigued by complimentary colors and how their polarity harmonizes design. I also wanted to have the hint of a classical look mixed with the contemporary era to show how we progress and still keep our traditions and maintain our roots.

Harbinger 2019: More Than Myth is a powerful record of the inner gods and goddesses who give us the strength and spirituality to build strong, enduring identities. Our stories are all wonders that will be read and lived for years to come. I am honored as the designer of *Harbinger 2019: More Than Myth* to help bring to life this vision of the enduring power of storytelling.

Steph LeBlanc
2019 Graphic Designer

Contributors' Notes



SARA BARFKNECHT

Sara Barfknecht, co-Editor-in-Chief of *Harbinger 2019*, served on staff last year as the prose editor. She is vice president of Stephens' chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, membership chair of Mortar Board, resident director of Tower Hall, and a Stephens Scholar. Sara is the author of *Everything's Coming Up Roses*, a novella-in-progress. She plans to obtain an MFA in fiction and become a novelist. She lives with her cat, Loki.



MADISON CRIST

Madison Crist is a junior from Denver, Colorado, who is pursuing a degree in digital filmmaking with minors in creative writing and music. She is a member of Sigma Tau Delta, Stephens Scholars, and Mortar Board Athena Chapter. She volunteers for Citizen Jane Film Festival and enjoys defying labels, listening to music, analyzing movies, and experimenting in the kitchen.



GABRIELLE DOOLEY

Gabrielle Dooley, a junior English major, is a member of Sigma Tau Delta and Alpha Lambda Delta. She enjoys psychological thrillers and Bollywood films. This will be her second publication in *Harbinger*.



JASMINE FLORES

Jasmine Flores, a sophomore majoring in creative writing, enjoys writing fantasy and fiction and hopes to publish works for young adults. She is the vice president of Stephens' Conspiracy Club. This is her first publication.



CINDY HARBOUR

Cindy Harbour is a junior creative writing major. She is a member of Sigma Tau Delta, Poets of Infinity, and *Harbinger's* editorial staff. She enjoys reading historical fiction and work by Kurt Vonnegut.



RAINA JOHNSON

Raina Johnson is co-Editor-in-Chief of *Harbinger 2019*. She is a senior, completing her Bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing. She dabbles in all genres, including fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and more. She plans to pursue a master's in business with an emphasis in marketing. She enjoys Telemark skiing, horses, and her two dogs.



MJ JONEN

MJ Jonen, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing with a minor in women's studies. They are a member of Sigma Tau Delta, and their poetry has appeared in *Wisconsin's Best Emerging Poets: An Anthology*.



STEPH LeBLANC

Stephanie LeBlanc is a senior design major and a filmmaking minor. She is the director of Creative Ink, a student-run marketing firm. She is also a residential director on campus and a foster parent for Second Chance dogs. She appreciates art that leaves an impactful message and hopes to continue painting, designing, and filming visuals that accomplish this.



KYLIE NAUMANN

Kylie Naumann, a senior creative writing major, enjoys reading fantasy and science fiction. Aside from ambitions in art and writing, she likes walks in the woods, marathon-watching history documentaries, and discussing the concept of conspicuous consumption.



DESTINEE NOICE

Destinee Noice, originally from Ohio, is a sophomore majoring in creative writing. They are a member of Poets of Infinity and work with writers on campus to encourage writing skills. Their hobbies include reading, cooking, and traveling.



VICTORIA PATRICK

Victoria Patrick graduated with a degree in creative writing in December 2018. She continues to write as she pursues a career working in public libraries. This is her fourth publication in *Harbinger*.



MARY PEÑA

Mary Peña is an education major with a love for writing. Her hobbies include being outside, traveling, and having brunch with friends. She is thankful to have her poetry appear in *Harbinger* for the second time.



CASTOR SANTEE

Castor Santee is a senior creative writing major and cat parent. They have been writing poetry their entire life. After graduation and then earning several PhD's in an array of subjects, they hope to have a career in academia.



MADISON SHAUGHNESSY

Madison Shaughnessy is a sophomore creative writing major who enjoys writing about the unusual, and her motto for writing is "Why not?" She is the president of Stephens' Conspiracy Club. This will is her first publication.



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