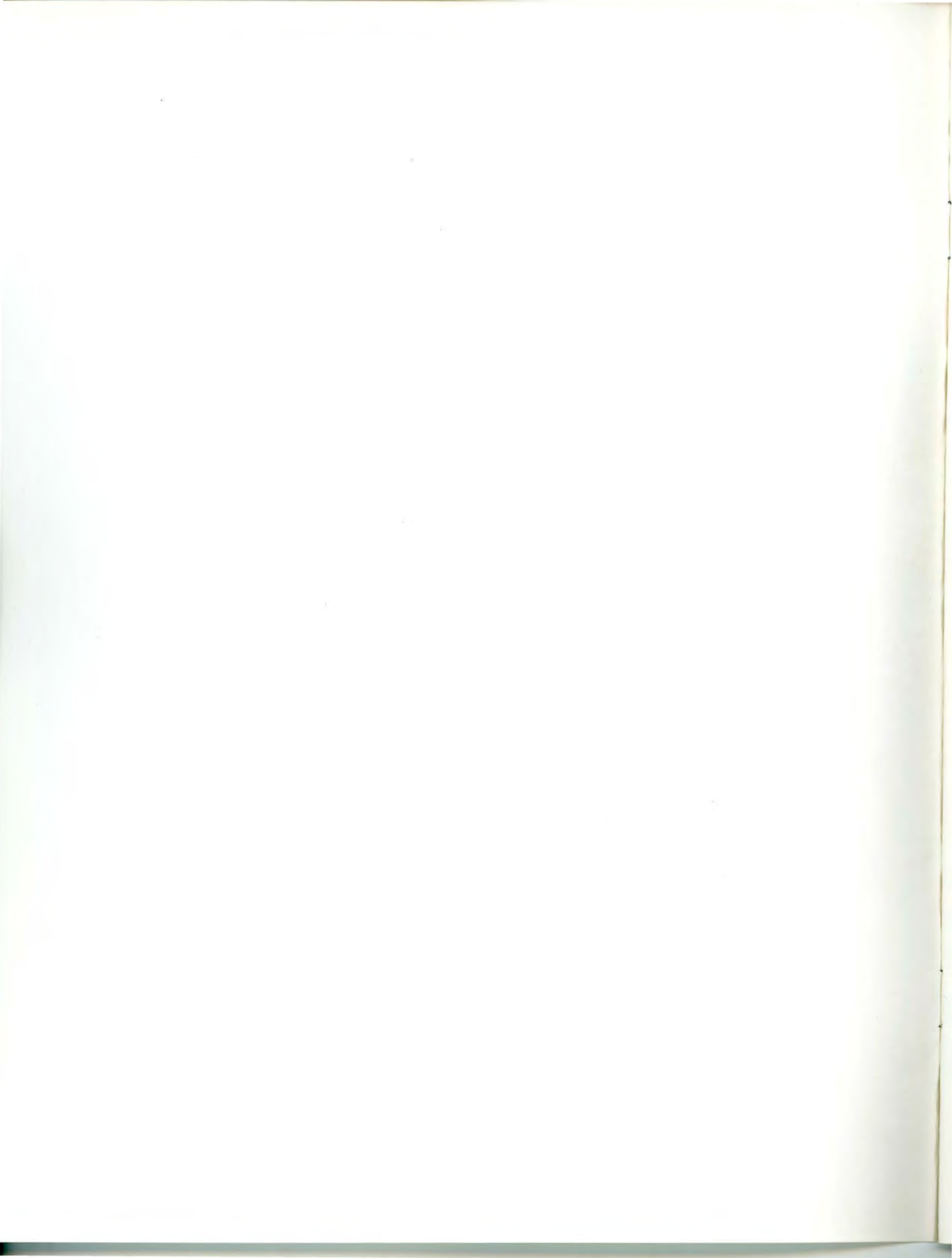


SUBMIT



Letter from El Presidente

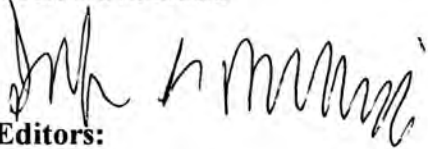
You'll notice that the Mosaic looks rather dark and morbid this semester. Although I could go on about how I don't know how the cover got so black... "Really Sir, one minute it was white as an orange tulip then I looked away for a second and it was black as the sun!", but I am well and prepared to relinquish the truth! My Chief Editor (sigh) has been replaced by an evil twin. I know it is hard to believe, but it was he who caused our Mosaic to appear so dismal.

For those of you who are offended by the color black, I apologize. For everyone else, have a good time reading our latest and best compilation of Marist's best literary works!

President: Jason Crandall



Chief Editor: Jeff Novakouski



Submission Editors:

Jason Crandall
Kevin Mewhiney
Heather Clarke
Tracy Campanella
Heather Deery
Scott Neville
Jaime Smith
Joe Patriss
Chelsey Ferrigno
Eric Dahlen
Donna Jackson

Mosaic Editors

Jason Crandall
Heather Clarke
Scott Neville
Joe Patriss
Chelsey Ferrigno
Eric Dahlen
Donna Jackson

As Always: Special thanks to Ooga.

Literary Arts Society Mosaic

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Letter from El Presidente <i>by Jason Crandall (El Presidente)</i>	2
A Random Soldier's Thoughts Upon A Falsified Image <i>by Joe Laposta</i>	4
Untitled (poem) <i>by Jason Martin</i>	6
My Unspoken hero <i>by Jamie V.</i>	6
Ink-Ik <i>by Christian Tenczar</i>	7
And our souls intertwine <i>by Andrea J. Sanford</i>	8
Children of the Night <i>by Donna Jackson</i>	9
Untitled (short story) <i>by ORG</i>	10
Prophecy <i>by Rob Casinghino</i>	11
The Jaded Optimism's <i>by Kevin Mewhiney</i>	12
Rape: Thoughts of a Victim <i>by Jaime Smith</i>	14
Anatomy Song <i>by Kyle Smith</i>	14
Frail <i>by Jason Martin</i>	15
Guardian Angel <i>by Joe Patriss</i>	16
Just Another Face in the Crowd <i>by Heather Clarke</i>	17
Not till Death <i>by Adam Weissman</i>	18
People These Days <i>by Steve Wanczyk</i>	18
Untitled (poem) <i>by Gregg Arenson</i>	19
Guernica <i>by Kevin Moore</i>	19
Hannah Murberic <i>by Scott Neville</i>	20
Untitled (poem) <i>by Corry Durdovic</i>	22
New Horizons <i>by Donna Jackson</i>	23
Artwork	
Summer <i>by Susan Goodwin</i>	3
Art for a Random Soldier <i>by Susan Goodwin</i>	5
2 FREAKS <i>by Susan Goodwin</i>	7
Untitled (CGI) <i>by ORG</i>	back cover



A RANDOM SOLDIER'S THOUGHTS UPON A FALSIFIED IMAGE

THROUGH THE ENDLESS TEEMING ABYSS MY ONWARD SELF PROJECTS THROUGH A SERIES OF LAUGHS. THESE BEING THOSE OF THE FALSIFIED TYPE KNOWN UNTO THE WORLDS AS DREAMS. THE EVER BLACK RAIN OF NOTHING DROWNING UNDER THE INTENSE HATRED I FEEL FOR MYSELF AND OTHERS. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO PROPEL INTO THE ENDLESS NOTHING OF THE END? I DO NOT KNOW FOR ALL I KNOW I FEEL. CONSTRICTING THE VICES IN ORDER TO KEEP MY LIGHT SHUNNED INTO A VAULT. A PANDORA'S BOX THAT OPENS ALWAYS TO A PARADISE. BUT THAT IS THE WALKING PARADOX. UNFILLED THOUGHT, WHISPERS AND DREAMS WALTZ BY MY CONSCIENCE UNCONSCIENCE SELF TO THE MAD RAMBLING OF A TRUMPETER AND HIS VENOMOUS VIOLINISTS. EACH NOTE STRIKING A SCREAMING PITCH WHICH IS HEARD BY THE DEAF HAND OF SANCTITY. ALL FOR NAUGHT TIME TO PAY THE PIPER! BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I AM BROKE AND HE HAS NO PIPES TO PLAY ON? WHAT THEN? I ASK THIS REPEATEDLY TO THE WAVES OF CONTENTMENT. STORMING INTO A REALM OF HORROR ONLY TO BE ULTIMATELY REPELLED AT WHAT I HAVE BECOME. TO HEAVEN AND HADES I SEARCH BUT FIND NOTHING OF VALUE TO THE UTMOST PERCEPTION OF THE OUTLYING WASTE KNOWN AS THE ETERNITY OF OUTCROPPING LIES, DECEIT, AND HATEFULNESS. POWERFUL BANTERING OF LONG FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS RISE UP TO BE HEARD ONLY BY DEAF EARS THAT QUICKLY GO DEAF TO THE VIBRANT AROMA OF THE SOUND OF ULTIMATE PAIN OF TRAVELERS LONG DEAD AND FORGOTTEN INTO THE REALMS OF DREAMS WHICH CAN BE THE NIGHTMARES OF AN AGE PAST. REFLECTING UPON THE MONUMENT THAT HAS BEEN BUILT WITH THE BLOOD OF MY SOUL ONLY TO TEAR IT DOWN ON BEHALF OF MYSELF ONLY TO REBUILD AND CRY BLOOD OVER MY EFFORTS GONE TO REST IN A SHALLOW UNMARKED GRAVE THAT WAS CREATED EONS AGO BEFORE I HAD MY FINAL SAY IN THIS MAD INCALCULABLE EQUATION.

JOSEPH LAPOSTA



Discovered in a tender grove
A shallow hole holding grave secrets,
Never meant to be spoken of,
Evil masked not to be recognized
Where time is the only true revealer,
As is a child who tripped
Over a short broken headstone;
Reading of a single name
Filled with a mystery,
Unlocked by questions
Meant to seek truth.
Where do your secrets lie buried?
Can a ghost of justice
Find them blindly?
She has her way
Of seeing beyond her casket
No matter how hard we try
To bury her beneath our sins.

Jason Martin

My Unspoken Hero

You are my hero. I have never met You, although I have dreamed of one day
Coying in contact, face to face. I will reach out my comparatively small hand and pray
That it will not be rejected by Your god-like hand. I have built up Your image in my
head. You are my god; the person that I feel can do no wrong. In every aspect You
Seem perfect and in control. I fantasize about the You, that I feel You are. You will
Be the one that will always save me in any life or death situation, but You will fade
Into the sunset before I can repay You with a hug and a kiss. You will leave me standing
There, knowing that I will devote my life to my unspoken hero.

Weather intended or not, someone killed Your heroism. They opened my eyes
To the person You really are. I now know the truth about You. Your hero facade
has been smashed as You struggle to stay in my thoughts..

...You win. You flood back into my mind and soul. I welcome You with open
arms. Who am I to judge? I put the truth behind and concentrate on the hero that
I've made You to be. I frown to think that I almost left You behind. You're my
Unspoken hero. You can do no wrong. Someday, we'll meet and I know that
You won't disappoint me.

Jayle V.

INK-1K

LOVE IN A FURNACE OF TWISTED GLASS,
THE REASON STAYS THE SAME.
DEFORMED, REPULSIVE AND SCARED TO THE CORE,
AND I'M THE ONE TO BLAME.
WHY BOTHER...

REFLECT MY LOVE INTO THE GROUND,
PUT IT IN YOUR POCKET.
SOIL MY FEELINGS AND RAVAGE MY SOUL,
ANXIETY STARTS TO ROCKET.
DON'T BOTHER...

IN MY WORLD SYMPATHY DOESN'T EXIST.
IN MY WORLD BLEEDING HEARTS DON'T DIE.
IN MY WORLD SHATTERED DREAMS ARE EGGHELLS.
IN MY WORLD I LAUGH BUT DON'T KNOW WHY.

- WHISPER TO ME HOW YOU FEEL.
- VISIT ME BEFORE MY MIND IS GONE.
- TIME IS A DIFFICULT ITEM TO MASTER.
- WHISPER AGAIN WHEN SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG.

CHRISTIAN TENCZAR



And our souls intertwine...

*The closer I get to you...
That song plays as I think of love
But what of love?
Of marriage?
Of us?*

*Where can I find you?
In myself?*

*I must first find myself.
Those are the rules of life,
Of love,*

*Of a union between two loves,
Lovers.*

*Happiness takes hold
The lovers are united
Their souls become one*

*I see you and laugh and smile
And... I do!*

*I do marry you
As you do marry me
For better or worse,
-the former is more desirable-*

I want to see

*You,
Be with you and near you
With all my heart, I love you
And want to have you with me always
The vows that we take...*

*The marriage has just taken place
Not only are we of the same
Body and mind
But it is apparent that
Our souls intertwine.*

Andrea J Sanford

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

DONNA JACKSON

A SHROUD SLIPS SILENTLY OVER THE LAND.
THE MOON ARISES FULL.
UNBRIDLED SPIRITS ROAM THE NIGHT.
THEIR VOICES INVADE THE LULL.
A WILDCAT SQUALLS IN VICTORY.
A FALCONS SCREAM IS SHRILL.
YOUNG ONES, LEFT ALONE IN THE NEST,
QUAKE IN THE BLACKENED CHILL.
AN OWL HOOTS IN THE DARKNESS;
A GLOW OF YELLOW EYES.
ARISE, MY SHADOWY BRETHREN,
FOR MIDNIGHT HAS ARRIVED.
THE WIND WHISPERS SOFTLY THROUGH THE TREES,
AND WHIPS TO A WRETCHED MOAN.
A TORTURED SOUL GROANS IN THE NIGHT,
HEART-WRENCHING BUT NOT ALONE.
CRICKETS CHIRP IN CHORUS.
A CROW CALLS FROM AFAR.
ARISE, MY BROTHERS OF THE NIGHT.
ARISE, AND SING TO THE STARS.
A WRAITH EMERGES FROM DARKNESS
AND WALKS THE EARTH ANEW.
THE BLACK MAN SNARLS IN THE FOREST,
HEARD ONLY BY A FEW.
A WOLF PACK HOWLS OUT HAUNTINGLY,
BRINGING ITS WOES TO BEAR.
A KESTREL CRIES OUT SHARPLY.
A BAT SAILS THROUGH THE AIR.
THEN THE STARS FADE OUT TO DAYLIGHT
WITH GAY SONG FROM WAKING WRENS.
SLEEP NOW, O CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT,
TILL MIDNIGHT COMES AGAIN.



"The soft drip of the prisoner's blood could barely be heard over the hum of the printing press. His spirit had been broken long before the last of his ribs snapped. He knew his end was nigh. Coughing up more blood from his abused lungs, he fell to his knees and looked up at his captor with his one remaining good eye.

"Clad in a trenchcoat with most of his face hidden in the shadow of his hat, the captor gazed down at the one in his mercy. He had toyed with the prisoner long enough. He stood admiring his handiwork before dealing the final blow. His leather gloves creaked as he twisted the pipe in his hands."

Dr. Douglas stopped reading the slightly crumpled paper before him and looked over the rims of his glasses at Tim. The boy laid on the couch across the room. He studied the boy, trying to delve into the eleven-year-old's mind to find the cause of the inner turmoil. He felt a pang of pity on the lad, and on the boy's mother who sat in the waiting room no more than fifty feet away.

The air conditioner made the glass mobile which hung in the corner of the doctor's office click softly.

Tim had said nothing since he entered Douglas' office two hours ago save a short, mumbled hello. He laid on the couch apparently oblivious to everything and everyone, and stared up at the ceiling counting the holes in the tile.

The doctor looked back down at the pile of drawings and stories on his desk that Tim's mother had given him that morning. Every one of them depicted the pain and death of someone or something. Here was a sketch of a coffin with fangs chewing on a faceless, screaming woman. There was a detailed written description of the pain of having the front of one's skull torn off. Each and every one of them was signed in a corner with the words, "Hate, then die."

Dr. Douglas sighed and sipped at his coffee. He had long since given up on trying to talk to the boy. He was totally unresponsive, trapped in his own made-up world which the doctor could see through Tim's drawings and written words.

A week ago, Tim's mother, Sue, had made an appointment to see Dr. Douglas. She had entered the office on the verge of tears. When Douglas had asked her why she had come, all of her troubles had come pouring out through her tears. She was very concerned about her son ever since her husband died during a robbery.

"Tim was such a happy boy," she had said to the doctor, "until his father was killed. Then he became very quiet. Finally he stopped talking altogether." Sue reached down and pulled a tissue from the box sitting on the table. She dabbed her eyes. "He stopped eating altogether. He would only eat if I made some form of meat for him, and it had to be rare. He never told me this, but after a while I learned that was all he would eat. He's been like this for three months now, and I've started to find his drawings. He scares me. He never shows emotion, just walks purposefully from room to room to sit in a chair and stare at the walls for an hour. I've only seen him betray how he feels inside once. I saw him sitting in front of the TV, playing his video games. In the reflection of the screen I saw his expression was blank until he shot one of the characters in the game. Then he smiled for a moment, then killed the next one."

The doctor stood up from his chair and picked up his clipboard. He always hated doing this. After looking once more at Tim, who stared up unflinchingly, he turned and placed his hand on the doorknob to his office. Douglas turned it and left the office, closing the door quietly behind himself.

The glass mobile chinked softly.

Sue saw the doctor approach and made a feeble attempt at brushing the tears from her cheeks.

"Sue," Douglas said quietly, "in my professional opinion, I feel that Tim needs to be placed in a hospital where he can get the help he needs. I need your signature to authorize his committal." He offered the clipboard to her. Sue's sobbing started anew. She buried her face in her hands for a moment, then took the pen and quickly signed her name.

ORG



PROPHECY

BY ROB CASINGHINO

WHEN THE FIRE COMES, WE SIT HERE WATCHING
TONGUES OF FLAME; FALLING, BURNING... SCORCHING
THE EARTH SHAKES, THE LIGHTNING CLASHES
AN EXPLOSION FROM THE DISTANCE CRASHES
THE SCREAMS OF THOSE WHOM WE'VE BEFRIENDED
THEIR AGONY HAS FINALLY ENDED
THE SMELL OF DEATH PERVADES THE AIR
WE WHO ARE LEFT, WE DO NOT CARE
THE INFERNAL HITS US, WE STAND THERE WATCHING
SLOWLY BURNING
SLOWLY SCORCHING

RESSURRECTED: JADEO OPTIMISM PART 10

I fear I'll not be out to play
It seems I'm not balanced today
My sword's returned, slung at my side
And the old grey armor, my heavy hide
Why are they back, I ask with dread
As cries of Celts surge through my head
There's but one thing to cause this fear
A deadly Wyrn is drawing near
One I had helped put down to rest
Risen again to give new quest
Vicious Dragon, awake'd from slumber
Seeks out my soul, tears it asunder
Summoned now by darkest deed
By wretches, wants and lust and greed
Leather wings distort the Skye
As crimson death seen soaring high
The beast cuts out a deadly swath
All things shall die that cross its path
It would be wise to run away
But love of life must bar my way
To curb and use the inner rage
I'll need thy wisdom brother Mage
And strength I'll have from a true friend
Seer stand by me until the end
Louder and mightier than any choir
Springs hope eternal from the Squire
The hateful thing that soars above
Would be the end of all I love
But my demise it shall not see
If I must battle, So Mote It Be
Reach within and silence three
The one remaining is the key
Relinquish control, let him be me
I sense the Knight ... And Set him free!

By Kevin Mewhiney



The Immortal: Jaded Optimism part 11

I try but cannot remember, the days when I could fly
Before sadness and pain and rage, before my first taste of battle
And before the hateful ones plucked me from the sky
Now I can only stand and watch the storm above
And burn in the hot salty rain.
My hands cannot hold the things I want most
The things I need to survive
And so they all slip away in the end
Then at last I am no more
But there is no peace, for I rise anew.
I may never hold one of my lives
Not long enough to enjoy it
Each new birth brings forth more war
Though the pains of past incarnations stay.
The burns and claw scars I sought freedom from
Now I hold dearly as fading mementos
Of a life I am losing fast
Too soon I must begin again.

Faith in Tomorrows: Jaded Optimism part 12

Before long my journey will begin
Long and difficult it will be
Ever must I forge ahead
Seeking the answers I do not have
Strength of will is vital
Eternity is the only tomorrow
Destroying forever all of my yesterdays

Better that then accept the here and now
Enlightenment will be mine!

A
N
D

F
A
R
E
W
E
L
L

Jaded Optimist, signing off





Anatomy Song
by Kyle Smith

whip crack
legs kicking
arms neck mouth open retching
a troubadour an entrepreneur a closet and a dark space
look back
heads turning
and the world lets itself hide behind you
as it tries to find you
who you really are
what parts are making you up
what makes you so bitter
something black
and something secret
something pure and evil
makes one feel real.

Jaime Smith

Rape: Thoughts of a Victim:

And as the shadows overtake me
Why can't I turn around?
The silence is unbroken;
I cannot make a sound.

Still, my heart is beating
My pain, my loss, my fear.
My sanity, retreating,
I know my hell starts here.

And nothing I destroy,
And nothing I create,
Can change the life I'm living,
Can stop the burning hate.

And I'm struggling through darkness,
Crying bitter tears;
Consumed by the silence,
I know my hell starts here.

What happened to my feelings?
What happened to my mind?
Why did I move away from love
And leave it far behind?

In the darkness, yearning,
I wonder what I hear.
And it's the silence burning;
I know my hell...

Starts...
Here...

Frail

These moments of emptiness
Seem to pass ever so slowly
As I walk empty, cold streets
To find a touch of comfort
While aching knees cry,
Mind relents after body
Time slices away my delicate part;
Rushing through tender petals
To carve out a sacred bleeding core,
As if she does not care.

alone searching for that hand
Who can restore innocence stolen,
Resurrect my tenderness
Now all tattered and torn,
Beaten and bloody,
Stolen away by a thief.

Walk aimlessly searching
For a moment of salvation
In a lifetime of sacrifice;
Praying that my angel descends soon
To mend these broken wings,
Heal my meager body with her love.

There is only a cold silence
To greet my bruises,
Only cloth to cease blood from my inner core,
Merely an echo returned
To a shadow that was me.

Anchor of time tying down my soul,
Capturing her magic in soft flesh
Burnt scarlet with your ropes of injustice,
Where are you when I need you?
What is left to answer my screams
Except your emptiness.

Tears will not wash this pain away,
Nor will they pass the time;
Only feel a second slip away
As I sit here with my legs clamped shut
Bleeding out whatever innocence left,
Drinking salt of these wounds
For hours and days, taste my blood for years.

I have faith that these hours shall pass,
Flesh wounds will eventually heal,
But there is something else you cannot restore
Left in hand prints of blood that never wash away,
A cringe left as I sink away from your touch.

darkness...

By Jason Martin

Guardian Angel

by Joe Patriss

Everyone who is still alive thinks that being a guardian angel is some great honor. Well, I can tell you, it's not. At times it can be, forgive me, pure Hell. Actually, it's a lot like doing community service. No one really wants to be a guardian angel, or at least I didn't. You either volunteer at some point after you die or you get stuck doing it to get out of Limbo. Guess why I've got the job. Can you believe that people actually want to be guardian angels? I mean, wouldn't you rather spend eternity sitting on some puffy white cloud and relaxing than running all over creation because you're stuck baby-sitting some nit-wit. You know Limbo, don't you? Limbo is where you get stuck if you're not good enough to get into Heaven but not bad enough to go to Hell. In order to get out of Limbo you have to prove you're worthy of entering Heaven by becoming a guardian angel and protecting someone or a lot of people. Right after I got to Limbo, Heaven sent me my wings and my assignment.

Limbo is a really lousy place. There is absolutely nothing. There's no one, no light, no sound, no time. Nothing at all. It's extremely boring. They could put in a TV and VCR and supply some lousy movies. That would make it more bearable. I've suggested it, but God said that a TV and VCR would really detract from that nothingness theme He has working.

The person that I am supposed to be guarding is little Danny Henderson. He's basically a good kid, but man, does he get into trouble. He's got this little electric car that he rides around his yard in. That thing has caused me no end of trouble. I don't know which one of his brilliant relatives gave him this car. I can almost hear them thinking. Hmmm. What would little Danny like for his fifth birthday? I know! Let's get him a little electronic car that he can ride around in and drive into the street when no one is looking. I don't mean to be mean, but people are really stupid at times. Actually, people aren't stupid, it's just that they really need to think more. If they thought more, well there probably wouldn't be a need for guardian angels. Oh well, Danny's relatives are learning. I just wish they wouldn't insist on learning the hard way. His parents are good people who mean well, but they are still learning to be parents. Otherwise there wouldn't have been so many near misses in the few short years that Danny has been alive. Actually, some of these incidents have had some rather interesting, actually humorous turnabouts. You see, Dan's parents aren't the only ones who are learning about watching Dan. I'm still new at this guardian angel bit. It's not like there's a manual to read or a training session you go to like you would at a job. A lot of it is basically learning as you go.

Basically, when you become a guardian angel all that you get is your wings and a piece of paper. That piece of paper comes directly from God. It tells you two things. The first thing it tells you is how to put the wings on. The second thing it tells you is to pray a lot. That's not much information, but I've found out a lot of other things by talking to other guardian angels. One thing that I found out is that any guardian angel can materialize in the world of the living. When we materialize, we can take on the form of the person that we were when we were alive or any other person we saw while we were alive, plus the angel wings. This means that if we met on earth while we were still alive, I could materialize on earth and look exactly like you. This also means that I can take on the shape of any movie star I've seen. This is where it gets funny. A lot of us guardian angels have a sense of humor. I can't count the number of people who claim that they have been saved by Elvis Presley. I guess you can now see where all the Elvis sightings have come from. To answer the age-old question, yes, Elvis is really dead. He's playing concerts all over creation.

While I'm at it, let me shatter a few more myths about guardian angels. The myth that we carry harps is not true. I don't know how to play a harp. I have never actually even been in the same room as a harp in all the time I've been alive or dead. And I don't even really care if I ever see one. Also, there is another myth about us having halos above our heads. Well, that myth isn't entirely false. We do and we don't. Maybe I'd better explain. God originally gave each and every angel a halo. The reason for this is so that he can look down on earth and in a moment's glance, see where all his angels are. A halo isn't anything

particularly special. It's a lot like being tagged by the Wildlife Association. It might be easier to look at it that way. Also, God can reach down and grab any angel He wants by the halo and drag them back into Heaven when He's got something to say to us that's important. He can do this because, well, He's God.

Anyway, a lot of guardian angels found it very difficult to have this very bright glowing ring hovering six inches above their heads. It was cool because you didn't have to turn the light on if you had to get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, but it was really annoying because it made it impossible to sleep. More importantly, though, it made the whole guardian angel bit a whole lot more difficult. You see, when guardian angels materialized, the halo was still there. This was bad because guardian angels will often materialize on earth as humans and mingle among them in order to protect their person. Mingling with a glowing basketball hoop floating above your head was understandably difficult. God got enough complaints and fixed all our halos so now only He can see them. I'm not sure how it works exactly, but I know it works a lot like the hand-stamps you get at Disney World if you want to re-enter the park after you have left. You get your hand stamped with some clear stamp when you leave the park and then when you re-enter later, they shine an ultra-violet light on it and the stamp shows up. God apparently has some really big ultra-violet light that he shines on earth. When He does this, all our halos show up and He knows where we are. I heard He might be changing the way our halos work again because of something about a hole in the ozone layer. I don't know. We'll see.

Well, that's all the advice I can think of right now. Try and learn as much as you can on your own. If you need help, I'll be around. Now just step through those gates over there and go to the room on your left. That's where you get your wings. Say 'hi' to Saint Peter when you pass through the gates.

Just Another Face in the Crowd
by Heather Clarke

Just another face in the crowd
People walk by but do they see me?
They say my name, but it is not my own.
Lonely I walk the hall head hung low.

Will I always be just another face in the crowd?
They look at me, but right through me.
Eyes slipping away never to consider what they saw
Not a second thought for the lonely face in the crowd

Not till Death

Not till death,
The world to cease.
To become a man at peace.
A man at peace, or a man at rest.
On a journey, or on quest.
In the clearing,
Or in the far,
With a wound,
And with a scar.
The body lay lifeless on the floor.
The soul goes off to search for more.
The soul may be in heaven or hell,
But it's not till the stop of the tolling bell.
Though body is dead,
And mind is gone.
Cease no more,
The Soul Lives On!

By Adam Weissman

People These Days

People these days don't impress me too much.
With their body piercings and senseless songs;
Suicide's legit and drugs are a crutch—
Truth filtered through the barrel of their bong.

Responsibility? A thing not taught.
Respect forgotten, decency denied—
Why is everyone so goddamn distraught?
It seems sometimes that the good things have died.

Drink in a sunset, not a can of Coors,
For natural highs are more long-lasting.
Find a heart, a song, that you can call yours,
And cling to it when shit is happening.

People these days are society's whore.
They still haven't found what they're looking for.

Steve Wanczyk

Gregg Arenson

**Call a doctor
I have cliché poisoning
Is there a cure?
Is there a remed?
Mabe something new?
It doesn't exist
Mabe something fresh?
No, the've ahead done it
Damn it damn it
damn it to hell
I feel so sick
m glands are starting to swell
Please do me a favor
And quote ourself
Make me laugh
And I'll drink to our health.**

Guernica

Kevin Moore

**Mother cries, her mouth stretched wide
abreast of a twisted mare.
The babe in her arms, gone from the noise,
is dead.**

**Salvos surround . . . a distorted array
splits the fragmented scene.
The nightmare-brutal, protracted moment
still in frantic reign.**

**Pain is the one happy, laughing at peace,
this feeling-form, evident.
Only one here with any pride
vain enough to be seen.**

**Hide your eyes!
Look not on the pain!
This painter wishes you would.
The artist found where, beside wreckage
and blood, his brush
could define chaos.**

Hannah Murberec
By Scott Neville

The Gilcrest Convalescent Facility was a top notch vegetable bin. Every elderly person with little functioning brain matter was granted access to a minuscule cubicle, cable television, and a stone mattress. Most people were content with these accommodations, though most were barely aware of their own names. This made resident care easy for the highly incompetent staff. These people, supposedly "Registered Geriatric Nursing Technicians," were truly nothing but teenagers who occasionally make rounds between their cigarette breaks. Unfortunately, the patients seemed not to realize this, or were incapable of voicing their concerns.

There was, however, one person who cared. She resided in a room in the top West Wing, tucked away in a corner with the other terminal patients. The cell was sterile, scrubbed rigorously with acerbic bleach and disinfectant. Not even the faint trace of urine could waft out when the heavy oaken door was sealed shut. The room itself was pleasant enough, but stiflingly vacant; everything but the dark television screen was a dreadfully gleaming white. Even the tangled hair on top of the old woman's bowed head was devoid of pigment.

Hannah Murberec had once been a beautiful woman running through green pastures on fragrant summer evenings. She used her lithe body and unusual grace to dazzle crowds of spectators at every town dance, stopping the show with her sensual steps and sultry snickers, as each potential suitor attempted to get close enough to smell the alluring aphrodisiac of her perfume mingling with her sweat.

Seventy-two years later, Hannah's body retained none of its original splendor, its original voluptuousness. The withered, wrinkled cadre fought daily against a cold, yet intensely inviting shadow; Death lurked around every corner, every chime of the clock, impatiently waiting to take her away.

But Hannah was nothing the mere shadow of a person that everyone saw; she was not simply a broken figure folded up in the wheelchair that had to be bathed daily with abrasive soaps and acerbic shampoos. Her mind was as sharp as it had been when she was eighteen, still full of life, wonder, and vitality. Years of reflection and introspection have made Hannah wise and self-satisfied, but externally dead.

People, relatives and friends, occasionally dropped in to stare at her decimated body. Only the curious children dare to quickly touch her wilted skin, pulling away quickly as if their fingers had been scalded. Their touch electrified her, sparking a rollercoaster of emotions: love rapture, jealousy, and despair all in a single touch. These embraces were few and far between – even orderlies were careful not to give her the satisfaction of human contact. The orderlies were not attempting to be cruel, but she's been categorized as a "Rotten Veggie," one who is beyond reach – a mushy eggplant which had fallen to the sparkling floor of the supermarket. To them, Hannah was simply another drooling patient prolonging a meaningless existence. She tried hundreds of times to communicate

and prove them wrong, but her deteriorating physical presence rendered her powerless to relay any message to the outside world.

Hannah was miserable as she constantly brooded upon her isolation, as she continually flirted with the handsome dark figure of Death who ceaselessly nagged at her heels. She held on, though, as she waited for the perfect moment to give in to his pleasant promise of peace. The paradises that he elaborated upon were fantastic, mythical realms of pleasure where she would be eternally youthful and free. But Hannah had a keen mind; she would always mention that she lived in her own paradise, within her own mind, and resisted becoming part of someone else's realm.

So the days, weeks, and years slowly dragged by. Orderlies came and left, patients suffered and died, and Hannah reclined and wasted away. Months had passed between visitors, and she had given up on them: they weren't the reason she continued anyway. She really didn't know why she endured the deterioration of her quality of life, but still she pushed Death's taunts away, waiting for her sign.

One winter day, during an unexpected rainstorm, Hannah stared blankly out the window. A puddle of drizzle was slowly growing on the floor under her wheelchair. The wind was blowing intensely, leaves and branches danced wildly by Hannah's porthole to the outside world. The intensity of the storm was unsettling; Hannah sensed the orderlies running around as they frantically attempted to calm the worried patients.

As Hannah vacantly stared out the window, curiosity was ablaze inside her head. She desired a run through the rain, her arms outstretched to collect heaven's tears. With her mind on this image, she barely noticed a speck of black moving towards the window. As the image moved closer, it began to materialize in the shape of a bird. Finally, Hannah noticed it, snapping out of her daydream to the jet black crow seconds before it came to the window.

The black sheen of its feathers and pearly eyes were visible at the window as it calmly scratched, waiting patiently to be let in. Suddenly, the lock on the shatterproof window clicked open, the heavy pane slid up with ease, and the crow slowly glided into the sterile world of Hannah Murberec.

Hannah was surprised by the crow's docility, but she knew why it had appeared. She wasn't even astonished by the crow's weight as it landed upon her shoulder, watching her with an air of solemn wisdom. "You are free to go now, Hannah," the crow cooed warmly into her ear.

The withered, old woman with over ninety-one years of wisdom and experience, simply sat and listened to the crow's melodic voice like a child who awaited the pleasant command to begin naptime. Hannah, her eyes full of both knowledge and fatigue, muttered, "Thank you," before she closed her eyes. When she entered his realm, her dark friend was waiting by a smoldering fire. Instead of shying away from his sickly yet pleasant touch, Hannah's youthful body embraced his, and began a whirling dance into eternity.

A place

*d where sorrows drown
e my drink- to think it could subtract
e the pain and numb the bitter edge
n that bites. Duller now the colors of
I their blistering bright- to fight the hurt
to feel her pillow wet with tears as
to face the wall. Stark and so so
too tall to climb-so broad and steep
to find a hold- down down down
Down the wall, don't hold her close,
hair or show her smile how I used
Turning instead to my love that
its comforts engulfing, so smooth,
kissing me fast and full, silencing
lose unshaped words that would once
so simply from my lips, and leave my feelings
in her bed, to dive head first down down down
into the murky muddy depths where regrets are
masked by life's darkness, she's a memory beyond recall.*

*see
inside
she's turning
white, it seems
I'm struggling
I'm sliding.
to touch her
to care
is quick, yet
so thick and
crushing, I
have fallen*

Corry Durdovic

New Horizons

Donna Jackson

Strange, she thought to herself. It isn't how I expected it to look at all. Squinting against the surprisingly bright glare, she looked around at her new home.

Vast green prairie stretched out before her, fading to an almost level horizon. To her left stood a small grove of scraggly trees, looking totally out of place in the vast flatlands. A tiny stream meandered lazily through the north end of the grove and stretched to the southeast and west in its wandering pattern. The west end had a fork running to the north. The stream seemed to have no beginning, no end. It continued on, unceasingly, into the unknown. The source was just as mysterious as the mouth.

On her right, the red sun sank lower, casting her shadow long and dark across the grass. The shadow's head almost touched the grove of trees.

The sun slipped quickly toward the horizon. She did not notice how swiftly it raced in its descending course. She did not notice when the sun's edge kissed the west fork of the stream, turning water and sky alike as red as itself. The horizon blurred into a red haze of obscurity. But she did not see any of this. Her gaze was locked eastward.

The soft green grass of the prairie was stained a vicious red. Her shadow stretched like a black scar across the reddened grass, touching the grove at last. What alarmed her were the shadows of the grove. Black arms groped, their dark tendrils reaching for her shadow, embracing and absorbing her darkness into the heart of its own. A slow shudder ran up her spine. The shadows shouldn't be reaching toward her. The sun was on wrong side; they couldn't be that way. Could they?

It was already too late to ponder that question. The red ball disappeared beneath the horizon, bathing the land in twilight. Distant stars glittered above her, out of reach. But she paid them no heed. She didn't see their beauty.

The encroaching darkness erased the haunting shadows and stroked her brow with a cool, soothing touch. It quickly turned cold, and the frigid air bit into her, sinking its teeth in to the bone. She shivered as utter darkness began to claim the land. Turning to the north, which she had kept her back to all that time, she headed off in search of shelter from the icy blackness of night. Until she turned, the north had gone unnoticed.

On the northern horizon, already indistinguishable in the gloom, the dark hulk of a far-off mountain loomed up into the twilight, blotting out the stars. But it was not as far-off as she thought.

* * *

The next morning erupted in a burst of color. Gone were the creeping black shadows of the night before. The bright prairie glowed with life. The stream's surface glittered like diamonds, the soft ripples playing with the light. The new sun smiled warmly in the east, and a few peaceful clouds drifted calmly by. She viewed her new wonderland with the jubilant curiosity of a child. Even the grove of trees looked gentler. No longer were the trees slippery ministers of darkness, but proud sentinels watching over the peaceful land. The landscape soothed her. She had never expected it to be this beautiful.

Without realizing it, she had been keeping her back to the north. She saw only the beauty of the land. She did not see the mountain, still black against the sky; the only darkness in the bright new morning. Neither did she notice the shadow hanging over the northern fork of the stream.

She worked hard through the day, using deadwood and anything else she could find in the grove to build a shelter in a protected spot not far from the north fork. She stopped to quench her thirst before going out to forage. She found a couple of berry bushes and some other edible plants in and around the grove, and contentedly harvested her breakfast.

Suddenly she noticed the total silence. Strange that there were no animals here. Not even a squirrel or bird. There wasn't so much as a cricket to break the silence. She fought off a chill and started to gather food to store in her shelter.

She stayed busy all day. She didn't even notice the racing shadows and deep red glow of sunset. As twilight crept over the land, she crawled into her shelter, happily tired after all her work. She accepted the cold, biting wind as a nuance of the land, and ignored it as all people ignore the commonplace. The stream whispered quietly as it passed her on its way north.

The stars glittered softly in the blackness above, seeming more distant than they were the night before.

And the mountain loomed closer.

* * *

She was up with the sun, welcoming the new morning with a smile. She ate breakfast and took a long drink of cool water from the stream. Hesitating for a moment, she stripped off her clothes and stepped into the cool water. Her north fork seemed to move a little faster than the west end, but she didn't mind it. She lowered herself into the water until even her head was totally immersed.

Afterwards, she lay on the soft grass, basking in the sun. She had never enjoyed life as much as she did now, had never loved living as now. She hoped it would never end.

The day seemed to pass in the blink of an eye. She wondered how it had gone so fast as she watched the red sun slip below the horizon. The land was bathed in glistening redness. She watched as the stretching shadow of the grove claimed her ghostly image, and repressed a shiver as the cold wind bit through to her soul.

She folded her arms across her chest in an attempt to stay warm, and turned toward her shelter. With a loud howl, the wind strengthened and tore down the rickety shack. She stared at the shadowy remains, and shivered violently.

The wind howled louder, and her fear grew with each fresh howl. She glanced up at the stars, as if to ask for help, but the distant stars receded even more. The mountain hulk loomed closer.

She closed her eyes and huddled against the cold wind. With her eyes closed, she could not see the dark mountain grow larger as it neared. She could not see the blackness blot out every distant star.

She felt herself being lifted. She bit her lip to stifle a scream, and a rivulet of blood slowly began to trickle from between her clenched teeth. She reached a tentative hand downward, afraid to open her eyes, and felt an immense palm beneath her.

Surprised, she finally opened her eyes. She saw only the shadows of night, but her perception was from hundreds of yards up. The sky was pitch black; not a star glimmered in the velvet blanket. She looked towards the north in horror. The mountain was gone. No, she thought to herself. It's just because it's so dark. It's still there. You just can't see it. But in her heart, she knew it was gone. No, not gone, but it had moved. She again felt the palm beneath her.

The wind howled angrily across the flat land. She realized she was sitting, and pulled her knees up to her chest, wrapping her arms around them. She shuddered against the howling torment.

From the north came a deep red glow on the horizon. For a moment, the image of a haunted sunset flashed in her mind. In the red glare, she saw the horizon was bare. Against all her hopes, the mountain had moved.

Terrified, she looked down and glanced all around her. Her frantic gaze settled on the grove. Black skeletons rose high in the glare, their outstretched arms fringed with leaves, savagely illuminated by the blood-red glow. Dark shadows flickered around the grove, and its heart was pure black. Black shadows battled with glistening redness across the flat prairie.

With horror, she remembered the past. She remembered what had brought her to this place. She shuddered as the memory filled her mind.

From the beginning, her life had been a struggle to survive. But she had given up the battle. She couldn't stand the pain, the torment, another day. She feared and hated life with a passion, and became obsessed with the inevitable darkness at the end of the road. She hated mornings, feared them even, for she knew it was the beginning of another day of pain. She even hated the night, for what would follow night but morning, and pain?

Three days ago, her fear and hatred had peaked. She could tolerate no more. She had come home to an empty house, picked up a knife with cool eye and steady hand, and shortly she breathed no more.

But that was before she had come to this paradise, this heaven. The first day, she had been amazed by the beauty. She had expected to descend after the knife: she had never dreamed that God would give her a second chance. And in this haven, she learned to love life again.

So why was there nothing but cold darkness?

She looked down at the grove of trees once more. Finally she realized that this was no second chance at all: her stay was only temporary. The prairie was not a haven. It was just one of the many stops before her final dark destination. It was only the first of her pleasant experiences, designed to make her realize how joyous life was. Only then would she follow the sun on its bloody descent. It was meant to be torture.

Her revelation must have been correct. She felt herself moving, the not-quite-solid gargantuan hand still supporting her. Through the darkness, the hand of the mountain holding her firmly, she followed the northern fork toward the red horizon.

Into the unknown.

