

# Hollin's Kritick

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Hollin's University, Virginia

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## Not the Novels of Dashiell Hammett

from Avery James Stroh



Above is a rendering of poet, of person, of iconic exemplar of the absurd, R.H.W. Dillard, known also as Richard, known also as a professor of words and editor of *The Hollins Critic* which is, perhaps, the “real” version of whatever it is you are holding in your hands. But what is real? No one knows nor is this a question we have attempted to answer on these pages. It is just a thing to wonder about when alone, laughing, scared, smiling, and trembling.



**Founding Directorial Editor-in-Mayhem:** Maggie Dillow

**Managing Editor-in-Mayhem:** Marin Harrington

David **“Put Me Down As Secretary”** Heinen

**Technology Officer (Created Email Address):** Laura Schmitt

**Oceanographer/Caterer:** Garth Robinson

**Mysterious Muse:** Meghana Mysore

**Translations Editor (We’re still holding out hope she shows up to an editorial meeting one day):** Elina Katrin

**Cover Art:** Avery James Stroh, 7 years old (Avery was the winner of our inaugural Front Cover Contest! Congratulations, Avery!)

This literary journal is the highest art you will likely come across in all times spanning the known and unknowable universe. That is to say: it is priceless and perfect. You can have a copy for free. Because fuck capitalism. And also because we have no treasurer on staff. In unrelated news, we are hiring for a treasurer. Please send resumes to [hollinskritick@gmail.com](mailto:hollinskritick@gmail.com). Serious inquirers only. This paragraph was started in order to say the following but really got away from us: All works of literary masterworks written in sincerity by the hopeful, youthful past selves of the MFA students at Hollins University. But this publication isn’t technically affiliated with Hollins University in an official way for legal reasons we aren’t sure really exist. Which reminds us- we are also hiring for a Legal Team because honestly we are hoping to get sued at least once because all press is good press or so we’ve heard.

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# INTRODUCTION

You might have noticed, and could be wondering, why we have specified that this elite literary journal has nothing to do with the novels of Dashiell Hammett. This is because- while R.H.W. Dillard's living spirit haunts these pages- his undying appreciation for novelist Dashiell Hammett does not. You see, during a course on "The Novel" taught by Richard himself, many of us grad students were consistently awe-struck by Richard's ability to make Hammett's work relevant to literally everything that has ever happened in the entire world and beyond. So we felt it was important to note that Hammett's work is not relevant here. Although perhaps this foreword undermines that statement since so far this entire journal has essentially been about how it's not about Dashiell Hammett, therefore making this entire journal about Dashiell Hammett. So maybe Richard was right. **But our intended purpose is to celebrate our earnest, lacking-in-self-awareness, and void-of-all-inhibition juvenilia. This journal is a tender, humorous treatment of youthful musings. Our intention is to honor the integrity of those early writerly attempts to add to the canon, those fledgling reflections on life that had us bleeding our formative little hearts out onto the page, unabashedly, unapologetically, with an amount of audacity we might all do well to find again.**

# PREFACE

*as written by Richard “Dickie” Dillard himself*

Not since the publication of Daisy Ashford’s *The Young Visitors* in 1919, written when its author was all of nine years old, has there been a book of such quality written by such a young person (in this case, many young persons) as the volume you now hold in your hands. Remarkable in the youth of its authors, it is even more remarkable that each and every one of them, years later, looks exactly the same as they did in that not-so-all-that-very-long-ago. Their various talents may have grown and been tested by time, but, by gum, as the picture prove, they are precisely the same people. I’ll swear to it, if you insist, on any handy dictionary.

I offer to you here, with considerable fear and trepidation, an early work of my own, the earliest I could find. I no longer know exactly how old its young author was, but the poem reveals his love of dogs (beloved Trixie, Oliver, Agnetha, and numerous farm working dogs, hounds and collies), although his awareness of the true nature of beer at the time was limited to a single sip, urged on him in order for his generous hosts to witness the look of total disgust that would soon distort the little fellow’s face. Mnemosyne reports that it tasted awful, and that great laughter ensued.

In any case, here is Dickie Dillard’s poem:

**The dog is here,  
Here for his beer.  
The dog drinks beer?  
He drinks it here.**

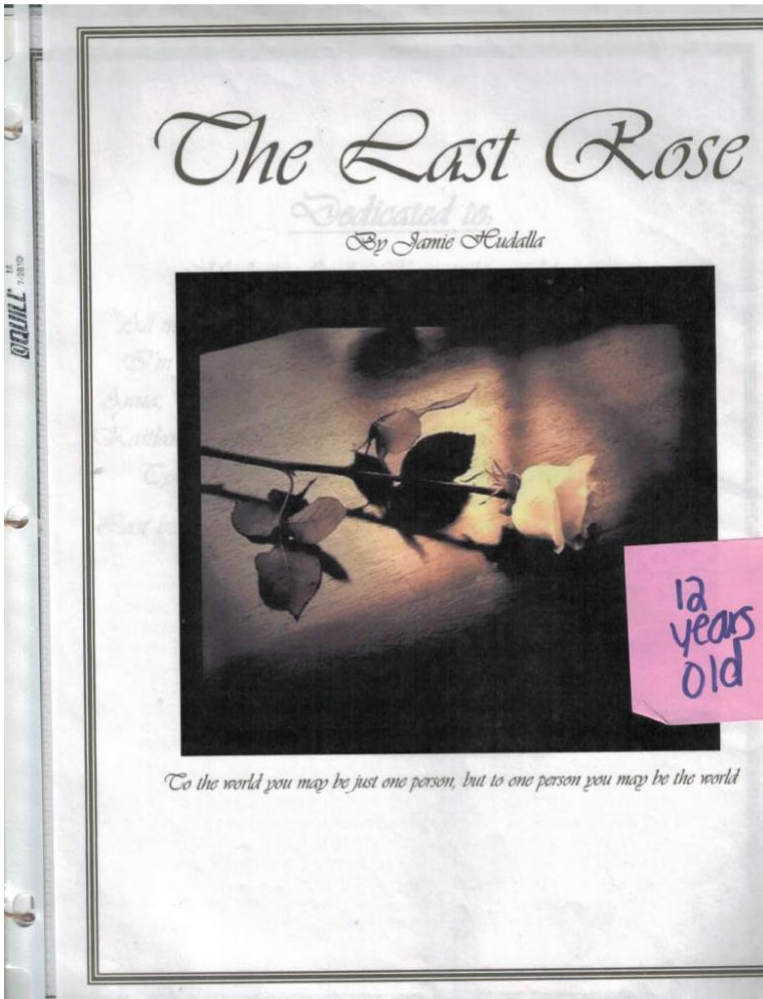
The young poet's accompanying photograph has no reference to dogs, beer, or poetry. It preserves an early occasion when he heard someone confuse the verbs *lay* and *lie*.



Read on, dear reader, and I promise you literary delights galore, a carnival of young genius, a treasure of pure gold.

**Jamie Hudalla, MFA '22**

The following excerpt comes from a deeply emotional “novel” about a boy who gifts a girl twelve roses and claims he’ll love her until the last one dies. She assumes one of them is fake, then learns they’re all real after the boy dies of Cancer -- which the author decided not to specify or research for aesthetic purposes. Ninety percent of the plot was borrowed from Pinterest, ten percent from Googling “life quotes.” Content warning: pre-feminist ideologies, secondhand embarrassment.





### About The Author



Born in St. Paul in 1997, August 19.

Lives in New Richmond Wisconsin

Twelve years old when completed this book

Loves to write, draw, sing, play sports, and collect baseball cards.

Has one 16 year old sister jenny, to very supporting parents, Kris and Mike

Wants' to be an art teacher

#### Favorites

- Loves orange and yellow and bright green
- Loves the movies, *Grease*, *Anchor Man*, *Failure to Launch*, *Twilight*, and *New Moon*.
- Loves the whole twilight saga with a passion
- Loves peanut butter toast, apples, Ritz crackers, bacon, and butter scotch chips
- Loves pugs, koala bears, and Bernie's Mt. Dogs
- Loves face book and the Sims 3, also Microsoft word to right my

## CHAPTER 7

THE THOUGHT OF REVENGE IS SWEET BUT THE FEELING OF GETTING IT TO HAPPEN IS A COMPLETE  
EMPTYNESS NO ONE CAN DESCRIBE.

Libby stepped out her bedroom "this morning" was going well as it had  
and walked out to her bedroom and closed the door. "You know what the hell you got the  
home, huh?" Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
tired and was alone and I was thinking of my life. I was thinking of  
happen. "Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
the first time I was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
room was empty and "Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
and you know what the hell you got the home, huh?" Libby was sitting up in bed and  
back to Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
and you know what the hell you got the home, huh?" Libby was sitting up in bed and  
thought that was the end of the world. "Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
check the things in my life and I was thinking of my life. I was thinking of  
Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I  
Libby was sitting up in bed and walked away to her room. "I

May 11<sup>th</sup>

When I got out of bed this Morning my eyes were blurry and the  
sides of my hair and face were still a little damp for the tears that had no right to  
spill for Ollie. Well it would never happen again because I did my best to try and  
avoid him. It wasn't easy though considering we had classes together. I sat alone  
at lunch today I did not feel like talking to anyone. Lunch was one of the worst I  
have had in my life. Not just the food either, Ollie was trying to dangle Libby  
right in my face. Probably to make me jealous so I would come running back to  
him right now. I now believe that he has had no experience with breaking up  
with a girl. If he just lost a relationship with her because of another girl that was  
supposedly not as special as her, you wouldn't go and take that girl and be all  
lovey dovey with her in front of the other girls face. It might be hard to fallow  
written out but when it comes to thinking its just plain common sense. That is  
why I gave him a tip and very well destroyed the last spark of the flame of our  
friendship. "Ollie, obviously I'm not interested in getting you back so pretending

to like Libby in front of me is going to make me much more angry with you and possibly even gag a little so let's give up the charade, shall we?" I announced to practically half the tables in the lunch rooms. I heard some people giggle; even some yelled 'burn!' but I pretended not to hear them. Ollie looked as if I punched him in the gut.

Libby slapped him and shouted, "Pretending?" she got up off of his lap and stoked off in her Minnie skirt and heels. "You mess with the bull you get the horns, buddy." I said cleverly. I half smiled and walked away. I'd like to say I told him off and sound like a super hero except of one tiny thing made that not happen. "Melody Cox is a Horror and is full of herself because I never liked her in the first place." He yelled at me and the bystanders. By now the whole lunch room was watching. "Really now Olls, because as I recall you said I was different and you like me a lot. You even risked a detention to get me out of one." I shot back. Still sounding like a super hero huh? Wait till you get a load of this, I accidently slipped on a banana peel stocking out of the cafeteria. And I only thought that happened in movies... like usual I was wrong. About Ollie, about cheesy things in books, and mostly about the path I have been paving this year. I realized I needed my mother more than ever and that scared me. She was currently unavailable for my life in the making. I'm sure she's watching my life play out like a horrible movie.

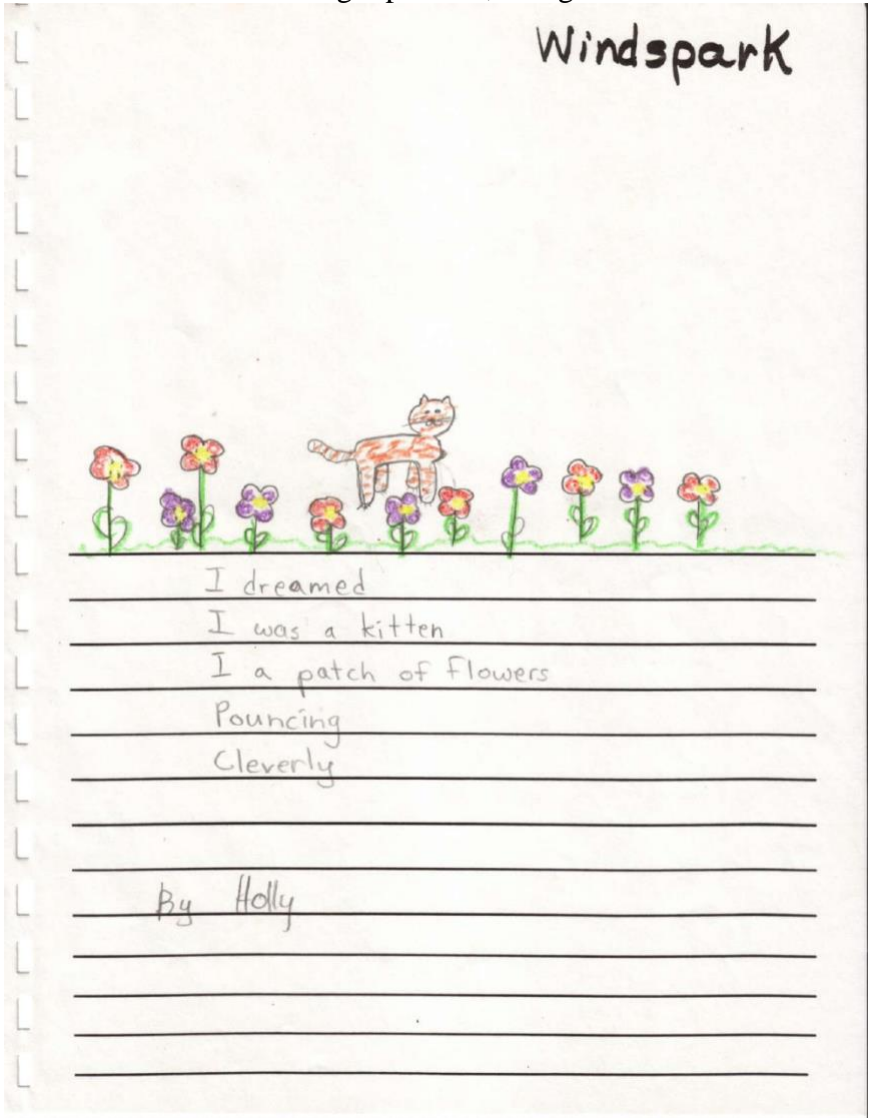
I sat there crying in my room for the second night in a row. Wondering why life even has a reason when everyone close to you is going to die someday, including you. What do you have to live for? I know now that everyone one just wants to be happy and feel good. And life is just about stringing along all the little things. Such as your favorite team winning, or for favorite meal for dinner, maybe even seeing a sappy love story that makes you cry tears of joy for someone else rather than yourself. I let myself go to deep though, I refuse to go deeper. In case of I might end up like my mom, and even though I'm not happy with this lame ass world that's killing our planet every second of the day I don't want to be taken out of it. I want to know what happens when it goes too far, good luck finding another planet to live on. Yeah Venus's hot lava surface sounds pretty welcoming to me. I'd love to live on a planet that rhymes with penis. Or maybe even Uranus's two hundred and twenty five degrees below temperature, the tornado's there sound like a blast. I'd love to live on a planet when you say its name it sounds as if you're saying 'your anis'. These little things bother the heck out of me; my dad always said I'd be a great lawyer. Probably because I am very strongly opinionated and have never lost a fight. Anyways I stayed up way to late forcing myself to laugh at the now repulsive, even stupid jokes that I once thought was funny on the 'J Leno' show. I guess once you

have lived through some pretty crappy experiences you can look life in its face and say 'bite me'. Or as one of my favorite people would say 'spite me oh mighty spiter!' which is exactly what I will do tomorrow. I tear down all the pictures of me and Ollie taped to my walls. Threw away his number twenty five football jersey he gave my before home coming. Erased his number from my phone and ripped the seventy two various cards he has made me sense we met. The hardest thing to do was throw the drawing of us together in a heart he made for me in his art class in the recycling bin. Ollie was quite talented at drawing, but then again he was good at most things. Before I did I thought yeah, 'never like me Olls, keep telling yourself that'. I had a flash back to when we ran down the aisles of Wal-Mart at twelve O' Clock at night. Memories were painful life was harder though and tonight I was going to let go for good.

I called some of the girl's school I needed to have my plan set in action. Mercedes because Ollie dumped her in public, Ladonna because Ollie did some pretty risky things with her then never spoke to her again, and Saffron because he stole her heart in kindergarten and forgot to give it back. I found this all out after I trip to the bathroom at school when I actually read all the vandalism on the stall's walls. Any ways they came over for a little while at about twelve thirty. My dad was asleep on the couch snoring loudly so I left a note saying me and some friends went to go get some coffee. When we got out the door Saffron showed me all the ammo. There were tomatoes, eggs, toilet paper, silly sting, and shaving cream. We snuck out across the road watching for car's headlights and stopped when we hit Ollie's yard. I bet you could guess what we did that night; and let me tell you, that house looked like it was hit up by some girls sweet revenge.

**Holly Rudolph, MFA '23**

Young Holly knew which animals were cool— cats and coyotes — and Older Holly continues to agree, having also added wolves and sharks to her writing over the years. Alas, Older Holly has not added much to her drawing repertoire, though.





# Windspark



I dreamed

I was a coyote

In a forest

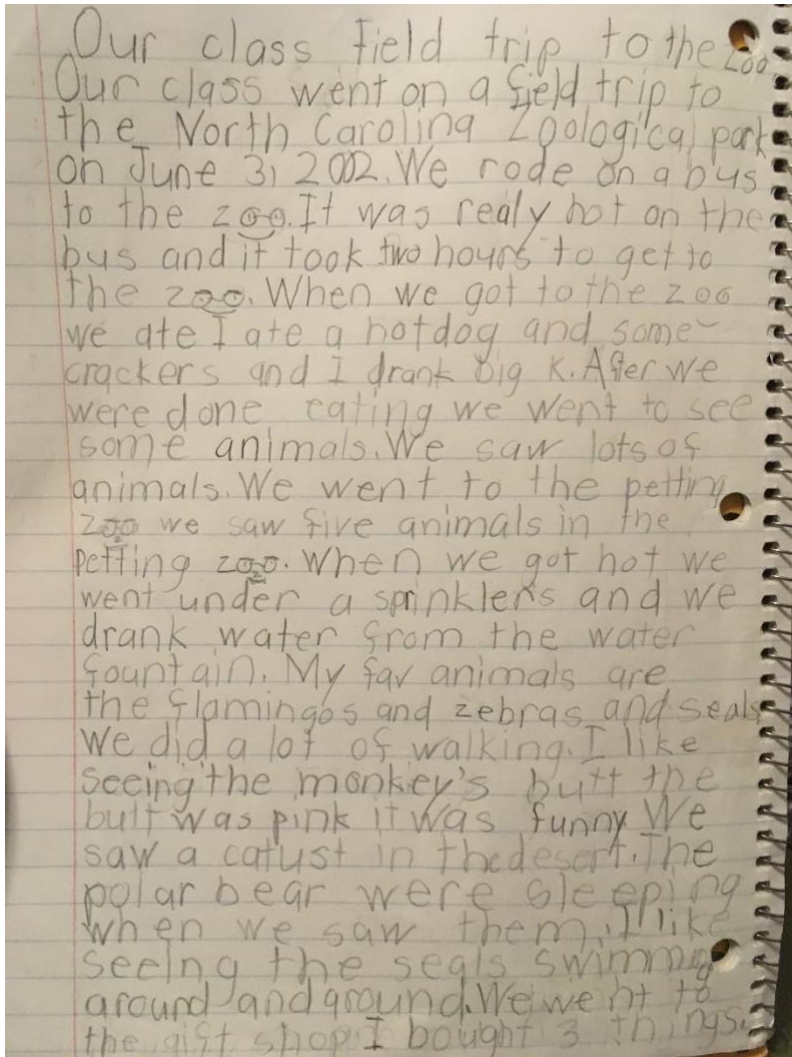
Hunting

Swiftly

By Holly

### Chanlee Luu, MFA '23

Chanlee Luu has a love-hate relationship with most things, mostly because of capitalism. Zoos are indeed great places for wonder and conservation efforts but can also trap animals. Proof? The massively underrated *Madagascar* franchise. Finally, Halloween is consumerist hell, and while some people enjoy the vibes, she personally never got the memo past childhood.



Our class field trip to the Zoo  
Our class went on a field trip to  
the North Carolina Zoological park  
on June 31 2002. We rode on a bus  
to the zoo. It was really hot on the  
bus and it took two hours to get to  
the zoo. When we got to the zoo  
we ate I ate a hotdog and some  
crackers and I drank big K. After we  
were done eating we went to see  
some animals. We saw lots of  
animals. We went to the petting  
zoo we saw five animals in the  
petting zoo. When we got hot we  
went under a sprinklers and we  
drank water from the water  
fountain. My fav animals are  
the flamingos and zebras and seals.  
We did a lot of walking. I like  
seeing the monkey's butt the  
butt was pink it was funny. We  
saw a catfish in the desert. The  
polar bear were sleeping  
when we saw them. I like  
seeing the seals swimming  
around and around. We went to  
the gift shop I bought 3 things.

I bought candy a rock and  
stickers. I had a great time  
at the zoo

cute!  
25/25

10-22-08

On Halloween night,  
things are a-whirling.  
Black cats are in sight,  
witches are a-stirring.  
Kids are trick-or-treating,  
while vampires are blood-sucking.  
Candy is everywhere,  
lollipops bubble gum, and jawbreakers too.  
Pumpkins are here and there.  
While ghosts are going "Boo!"  
All through the night,  
zombies moan and groan.  
Then something comes in sight,  
the sun has a sheen.  
Halloween is over.

Every monster takes cover.  
"I can't wait until next year!"  
says one cute little kid.  
I guess they have no fear.



## Elina Katrin, MFA '22

Not wanting the anime *Fairy Tail* to end, 12-year-old Elina discovered the beauty of storytelling by imagining her favorite characters falling in love with one another on a steamy seaside vacation. The submitted chapter has everything we love to see in early work driven by raging hormones: an abundance of exclamation points, generous shifts in pov, the author's remarks inserted right into the narrative, and an easy guide to figuring out whether one is *actually* in love. I hope you have a good laugh reading this skillfully translated piece of work that solidified a passion for writing in teenage Elina.



### Отдохнем, так отдохнем! или Every day I'm shufflin!

Fairy Tail

Гет R Завершён 409

автор Вэнди Чудесная Бета Плюшка and Печенька Бета

**Пэйринг и персонажи:**  
Нацу/Люси, Эльза/Жерар, Грей/Лина, Леви/Гажил, Дождя/Леон, остальные банальные пейринги и другие члены гильдии. Нацу Драгнил, Люси Хартфилия, Грей Фуллбастер, Эрза Скарлет

**Размер:**  
123 страницы, 31 часть

**Жанры:**  
Hurt/Comfort Романтика Фэнтези Экшн Юмор

**Предупреждения:**  
Нецензурная лексика 18+ ОЖП

**Другие метки:**  
Повествование от первого лица Самовставка

**Описание:**  
Неожиданно для всех Макаров решает устроить гильдии каникулы на море. Эта поездочка надолго всем запомнится, ведь произошло столько всего, причем с каждым...

**Посвящение:**  
Всем, всем, всем))))

**Примечания:**  
Мой первый фанфик! Надеюсь понравится, но все же, любую критику принимаю!  
\*Восстановлены некоторые главы после неполадок на сайте\*

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## Глава 10. Диагноз ясен.

Десятая глава - юбилейчик))))))

POV Люси.

Мы с Эльзой зашли первую комнату, которая располагалась на первом этаже. Войдя внутрь, мы ахнули. Все было на высшем уровне. Две светло-бежевые кровати. Одна у окошка, из которого было видно лес и речку, а вторая [ кровать ] находилась рядом с первой. На бежевых обоях, под тон кроватям, красовались несколько картин на летнюю тематику. Было два дубовых шкафа и два письменных стола с лампами. На потолке ярко горела люстра. В общем, все только радовало глаз, так как ни я, ни Эльза ярких и вызывающих расцветок не любим. Был всего один минус - это общая ванная и туалетная комната. Но к этому можно было привыкнуть, ведь на нашем этаже жили только девочки. Мы с Эльзой разложились за полчаса и сидели на своих кроватях. Разумеется, я выбрала кроватку у окошка. Хоть и лил дождь - погода была на удивление теплой. Уже конец мая. Осталась всего неделя до начала лета. Ничего, я потерплю, ведь рядом со мной - мои друзья...они моя семья...Мои мысли прервал демонстративный кашель Эльзы.

- Что такое? - спросила я.

- Люсь, уже десять. Давай ляжем спать. - на полном серьёзе говорила аловолосая, зарываясь поглубже в одеяло.

- Не-ет!!!!!! Правильно говорить не "уже десять", а "еще десять". - возразила я. Просто мне спать очень не хотелось. Если честно, я думала, что она посмотрит на меня своим строгим взглядом, или просто начнет медленно убивать, а она - нет...

- Мастер, одному человеку на одну комнату, сказал, что завтрак в 10:00 утра и до 11:00. Мы же встанем по-раньше. И даже не спрашивай зачем - завтра все и узнаешь. Я тебя разбудю где-то в 8:00 утра. Спокойной ночи, Люси. - закончила объяснять Эльза и отвернулась от меня в другую сторону.

- Ну ладно... - неохотно согласилась я, так как меня распырало любопытство. - Спокойной ночи, Эльза.

И мы выключили свет.

Конец POV Люси.

Комната N11. Второй этаж.

POV Нацу.

Нас поселили на втором этаже. Зайдя туда, мы увидели две кровати. Уж спасибо, что не одну двухместную! А то не очень горю желание спать вместе с Греем. А вот с Люси не отказался бы...если представить её и меня голыми на одной кровати. ...ТАК ДРАГНИЛ! СТОП! СТОП! СТОП! В какую задницу тебя понесло? Так успокойся...вдох, выдох, вдох, выдох...Так уже лучше...И вообще почему меня беспокоит Люси? Ах да, я ж её, это, люблю...да 100% люблю! Но мы не об этом. Где я там остановился? А все, вспомнил...

Ага...вот теперь я понимаю почему Отморозенного и меня поселили именно в эту комнату. Часть её была огненно-красной, под цвет моей магии. Там находились кровать у окна, с видом на море, шкаф (а зачем он мне?) и письменный стол (к нему у меня такой же вопрос). Потом, по середине комнаты была проведена невидимая граница. Нет, я не спятил, просто я сделал такой вывод, так как за ней все было в светло-голубых и темно-синих тонах, под цвет магии Грея. Там точно также были и кровать, только теперь не около окна, а около двери, и шкаф, и стол. Мы зашли и положили чемоданы на пол. Я еще стоял где-то пять минут и все осматривал. Грей это заметил и дерзким тоном спросил:

- Эй, головёшка! Чё стоишь разинув рот?! Разбирай чемоданы!

- Я и без тебя знаю, что делать, Отморозенный! - ответил я и вышел из транс.

Через полчаса мы сидели на своих кроватях. Я прекрасно помнил обещание данное мною в автобусе. (Прим.Авт.:Нацу-то помнит, а вот читатели наверняка подзабыли!Поэтому ребятки на несколько секунд вернитесь к 8-ой главе и быренько прочитайте POV Нацу,чтобы все вспомнить!Все, я ухожу :P) Я все-таки решился прервать тишину и поговорить с Фулбастером.

- Грей... - начал я.

- Чего тебе? - язвительно, но все же с каким-то интересом в голосе, спросил брютен.

- Я все хотел у тебя уточнить... - наудивление робко продолжил я, - ну...вообщем...тебе Люси нравится?  
Договорив в итоге предложение, я закинул руку за голову и улыбнулся во все 32 зубика. Да-а-а, видимо такого вопроса Грей не ожидал, так как подавился соком, который пил, и выплюнул его. В итоге, вся его кровать была в маленьких каплях яблочного напитка. Я думаю, он мысленно меня проклинал, потому что на его месте я бы делал тоже самое. Но он тоже не промах, и решил мне напрямую не отвечать и совсем чудоточно поиздеваться, задав логичный, для меня немного лишний вопрос:

- Хммм...А с чего вдруг такой вопрос? - с каким-то сарказмом спросил он.

- Ну...просто в автобусе она на тебе спала, а ты обнимал её... - пробубнил я, пряча глаза под чёлкой...

- И что? Ей просто было холодно...Да, и к тому же, мы с ней просто друзья. - и он тоже широко улыбнулся. - А тебе? Нравится Люси?

- Ну я ещё не понял до конца... - я решил для него немного по сомневаться.

- Так уж и быть, я тебе помогу! - ехидно сказал Грей.

- Да сдалась мне твоя помощь! Сам как-нибудь справлюсь! - я раздраженно прикрикнул и отвернулся от "почти друга".

- Молчи и слушай! Не забывай ещё на мои вопросы отвечать! - он тоже повысил тон. Вот такого Грея я узнаю. А он продолжал...

- Когда ты рядом с ней, сердце бешено стучит в груди?

- Да.

- Всё и все, кроме неё и тебя перестают существовать, когда вы вместе?
- Да.
- И последний вопрос: Чувствовал ли ты адскую боль в сердце, когда видел меня с ней в обнимку в автобусе?
- Да.
- Хорошо... - закончил свой опрос Фулбастер и начал демонстративно что-то писать в блокноте. Просидев так долгих пять минут я не выдержал и закричал:
- Да, что мать твою ты там строчишь?! Помочь вообще-то обещал! - в моем голосе явно присутствовало раздражение.
- Ну все с вами ясно, мистер Драгил. Вы по уши влюблены в мисс Люсьену Хартфелию!- выявил наконец свой диагноз доктор-самоучка.  
Если честно, то по его вопросам и моим ответам, я и сам все это понял. Просто хотел услышать от постороннего человека.
- Спасибо...спасибо большое! - искренне поблагодарил друга я.
- Всегда пожалуйста! - ответил тот , и добавил- уже пол одиннадцатого, а в 10:00 утра завтрак, так что давай спать!
- Конечно!- сказал я, но не забыл поставить будильник на 6:00 утра. Просто мне надо будет сделать нечто очень важное. И я укрывшись одеялом с головой, а в моих ногах уже как час, мирно спал Хэпли...

## **A vacation we deserve! or Every day I'm shuffling!**

Fandom: Fairy Tail

Orientation: Het

Rating: R

Upvotes: 409

Comments: 345

Length: 123 pages, 31 chapters

Genres: Hurt/Comfort, Romance, Fantasy, Action, Humor

Warnings: Swearing, OFC

Description: All of a sudden, Makarov decides that the whole guild should go on a vacation at sea. Everyone will remember this trip for a long time, because so much has happened, and with everyone...

Dedication: To all, all, all :))))

Notes: This is my first fanfic :) I hope you'll like it, but I accept all criticism :)

## **Chapter 10. The diagnosis is clear.**

**June 14 2012, 21:38**

**Tenth chapter – that's an anniversary :))))**

### **POV Lucy.**

Elsa and I went the first room, which was located on the first floor. When we went inside, we gasped. Everything was top notch. Two light beige beds. One by the window, from which the forest and the river were visible, and the second [ bed ] was next to the first. Beige wallpaper, matching the tone of the beds, featured several summer-themed paintings. There were two oak cabinets and two desks with lamps. A chandelier shined brightly on the ceiling. All in all, everything was just pleasing to the eye, since neither I nor Elsa like bright and defiant colors.

There was only one minus - a shared bathroom and toilet room. But one could get used to this, because only girls lived on our floor. Elsa and I unpacked in half an hour and sat on our beds. Of course, I chose the crib by the window. Although it was raining, the weather was surprisingly warm. It's already the end of May. There's only a week left before summer starts. It's okay, I'll wait. after all, my friends are with me...they are my family ... Elsa's demonstrative cough interrupted my thoughts.

- What's up? - I asked.

- Lucy, it's already ten. Let's go to sleep. - the scarlet-haired said in full seriousness, burrowing deeper into the blanket.

- No-o-o!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You should say "it's only ten", not "already ten".

- I objected. I just didn't feel like sleeping. To be honest, I thought that she would look at me with her stern look, or would just start to kill me slowly, but - she didn't...

- The master said to one person in each room that breakfast is from 10:00 am and until 11:00 am. But we'll get up earlier. And do not even ask why - tomorrow you will know everything. I'll wake you up at about 8:00 in the morning. Good night, Lucy. - Elsa finished explaining and turned away from me in the other direction.

- Well, okay ... - I reluctantly agreed, as I was bursting with curiosity,

- Good night, Elsa.

And we turned off the lights.

### **End of Lucy's POV.**

### **Room N11. Second floor.**

### **POV Natsu.**

We were assigned a room on the second floor. When we entered, we saw two beds. Thank god there were two, and not one King bed! Because I don't really want to sleep with Gray... But I wouldn't say no to Lucy... Just imagining her and me naked on the same bed....OKAY, DRAGNEEL! STOP! STOP! STOP! What ass got you into? You need to calm down...inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale...That's better... Why am I even thinking about Lucy anyway? Oh yes, I guess, I love her...yes I love her 100%! But we're not talking about that. Where did I left off? That's right, I remember...

Yeah...now I understand why Frostbite and I were assigned this particular room. One part of it was fiery red, the color of my magic. There was a bed by the window, overlooking the sea, a wardrobe (why

do I need one?) and a desk (same question). Then, in the middle of the room, an invisible border was drawn. No, I'm not crazy, I just came to this conclusion, since everything behind it was in light blue and dark blue tones, the color of Gray's magic. There were also a bed there, only now not near the window, but near the door, and a wardrobe, and a table. We went in and put our suitcases on the floor. I still stood somewhere for five minutes and examined everything. Gray noticed that and asked in a bold tone:

- Hey firebrand! What are you standing there with a mouth wide open?! Unpack the suitcases!

- I know what to do without you, Frostbite! - I answered and came out of the trance.

After an hour and a half we were sitting on our beds. I perfectly remembered the promise that I gave on the bus. (Author's note: Natsu remembers, but the readers probably forgot! That's why everyone go back to chapter 8 and skim through Natsu's POV to remember everything! Okay, I'm leaving :P) I finally decided to break the silence and talk to Fullbuster.

- Gray... - I began.

- What do you want? - harshly, but still with some interest in his voice, asked the brunette.

- I wanted to clear the air with you... - I continued surprisingly timidly, - well...allinall...do you like Lucy? Finally finishing the sentence, I threw my hand behind my head and smiled with all 32 teeth. Yea-a-ah, apparently Gray didn't expect such a question, as he choked on the juice he was drinking, and spat it out. In the end, his whole bed was covered in small drops of apple drink. I think he mentally cursed me, because in his place I would have done the same. But he wasn't a fool, and decided not to answer me directly and to torture me a little by asking a logical, but for me an unnecessary question:

- Hmmmm....Why such a question all of a sudden? - asked he with somewhat a sarcasm.

- Well...she just slept on you on the bus, and you were hugging her... - I muttered, hiding my eyes under bangs...

- So what? She was just cold...Yeah, and besides, we're just friends. - and he also smiled wide. - And you? You like Lucy?

- Well, I have not yet fully figured it out... - I decided to doubt a little for him.

- So be it, I'll help you! - Gray said maliciously.

- As if I need your help! I'll manage somehow! - I yelled irritably and turned away from "almost a friend."

- Shut up and listen! Also don't forget to answer my questions! - he also raised his tone. That's the Gray I recognize. And he continued...

- When you are next to her, does your heart beat wildly in your chest?

- Yes.

- Everyone and everything except her and you cease to exist when you are together?

- Yes.

- And the last question: Did you feel a hell of a pain in your heart when you saw me hugging her on the bus?

- Yes.

- Good... - Fullbuster finished his survey and began defiantly writing something in a notebook. After sitting like this for five long minutes, I could not stand it any longer and shouted:

- What the hell, are you scribbling there?! You actually promised to help!

- there was a obvious annoyance in my voice.

- Well, everything is clear with you, Mr. Dragneel. You are head over heels in love with Miss Lucien Heartfilia! - the self-taught doctor finally revealed his diagnosis.

To be honest, from his questions and my answers, I myself understood all this. Just wanted to hear from an outsider.

- Thank you...thank you very much! - I sincerely thanked my friend.

- You're always welcome! - he answered, and added- it's already half past ten, and breakfast is at 10:00 in the morning, so let's sleep!

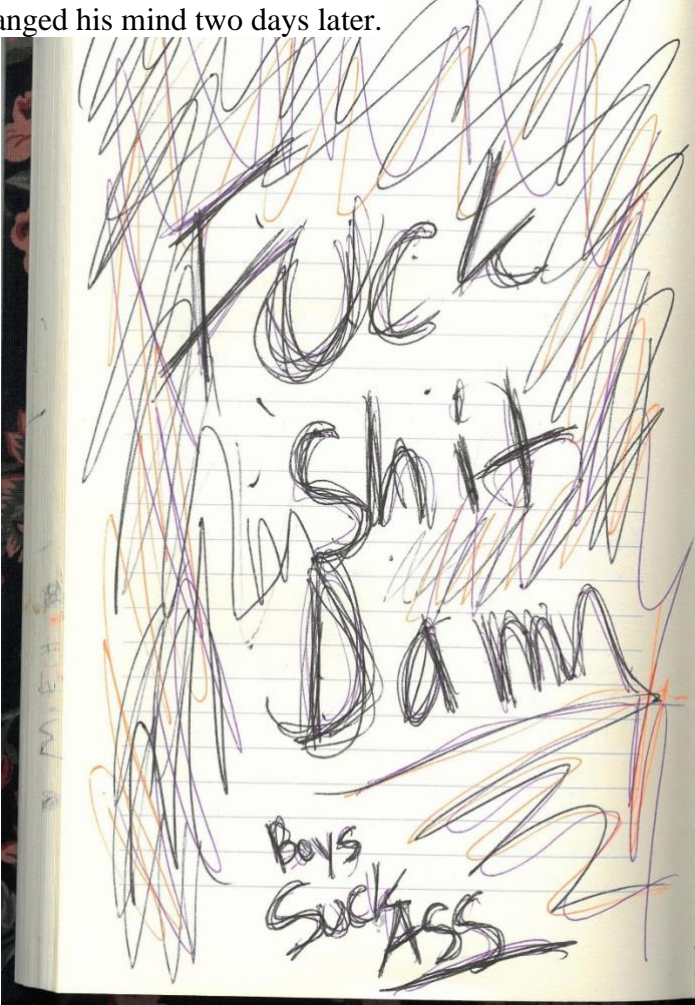
- Of course!- I said, but I did not forget to set the alarm for 6:00 in the morning. I just need to do something very important. And I covered myself with a blanket up to my head, and at my feet for the past hour, Happy was sleeping peacefully...



**Marin Harrington, MFA '23**

“Eighth Grade Feminist Proverb” is an entry from my middle school diary. It was written in response to a morally dubious romance I found myself swept up in. I was the *other woman* in a love triangle involving my best-friend-who-

was-a-boy and his girlfriend who modeled in local fashion shows. After confessing our feelings to each other, he promised me that he was going to break up with his girlfriend for me, but then he changed his mind two days later.



“The Midday Castle Invasion” is one of my very first attempts at the classic “literary essay.” I wrote this piece for my high school creative writing class when I was 15. I can now see that the extended metaphor is not nearly as smart as I initially thought it was. Like the best essays, though, it remains timeless, as my bladder is still, nearly a decade later, quite weak. I most recently peed my pants at my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party after getting drunk off Watermelon Schnapps and making myself laugh when I observed that “If hippos showed up on campus, then it would be a *hippocampus*.”

### **The Midday Castle Invasion**

The jarring need to suddenly pee is such a buzzkill. It's a paralyzing moment when your bladder becomes a castle and that rapidly rising fluid the townspeople complete with torches and pitchforks who have one goal--destruction.

Take seven-year-old me, hunched over first grade level math problems. I am the damsel who has yet to learn she is in distress. Wrapped in the cottony comfort of billowing tights that bunched at my ankles, I thought my legs were safe. The first signs of rebellion were unsettling. Straightening into hyperdrive, I geared myself up to stride over to my teacher with a purpose and ask, “May I *please* use the restroom?”

Luck jabbed me harshly in the ribs just as I was to make my grand proclamation. My teacher sauntered out the door to have one of those Hallway Discussions with another teacher. This would typically be something that would prompt a hushed eagerness to fall over the classroom in an attempt to divulge the juicy gossip of grade school-dom. I was a polite child, which, unfortunately, during my pre-adolescent years, often coincided with brown-nosing. I don't know why I waited, but I was convinced that allowing my bladder to expand like a balloon while my teacher yakked about hellion children was the right thing to do.

Looking back, it wasn't. The livid townspeople's rebellion had shaken the castle wall's foundation until the drawbridge flung open, flooding chaos all over the village. At that point, I was gone.



Forget permission, I needed to take cover. Lying to myself, I said that all children's bladders slacked off sometimes, it was only as embarrassing as I made it, but let's face it: you all remember the kids that leaked urine onto their thighs in grade school.

I wasn't naive enough to think I could trudge through the rest of the day in a jumper hardening with liquid, but I tried with all my might to fool the secretary. Citing it as an "incident" that prompted a change of clothes, her brows arched too roundly and her head nodded too slowly as she offered me the phone to call my mother. Each shrill ring was like a pound on my skull as I scrambled for words to say. My out-of-turn urination was something that brewed denial. I left a squeaky-voiced message on our answering machine, again ambiguously labeling my escapade as an "incident" and sweetly asked for the deliverance of new clothes, underwear essential.

Slouched in the nurse's office on a couch that reeked of estate sales and looked like regurgitated carrots, I waited. Thirty minutes later, my mother's stretched breaths and voice that flowed sweetly and slowly, like honey, greeted me with an, "Oh, *sweetie*." Springing my head up, I reached for my clothes with too-rigid fingers, and we reached an agreement. The events of the day never became a story.

Until now. Lately it has become a cassette tape I replay in my mind. Every Sunday, sitting with my mom and her two sisters over breakfasts of steamy mugs of caffeine and Girl Scout cookies, I see my future, and it's one riddled with bladder deficiencies. As they recount scandalous tales of the street where they grew up, with hiccupping laughter and crossed legs, one of them always sticks her arms out to fervently to announce, "STOP! I'M DRIBBLING!" One day, in between bouts of senile memories and excessive amounts of Old Lady Profanity in front of my grandchildren, I may become acquainted with diapers, and I aspire to not be hostile about it. I hope that, for a split-second, I'll reminisce about seven-year-old me and all her pants-wetting shame, and I'll laugh, maybe so hard that my bladder squeezes out just a few drops of pee.

**Brian Ellis, MFA '22** One of my favorite books in high school was Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, a collection of poems narrated by deceased former citizens of a small town. Mr. Naylor, my wonderful English teacher junior year, assigned us to write our own entry into this world. My first attempt landed some laughs from classmates over the final line, a joke about the character wetting himself. Mr. Naylor said he liked everything in the poem except the last line. I decided that I would show him I could be serious, that I could rise above all-too-common trappings of urine-based humor. And so I wrote this poem in response. Enjoy.



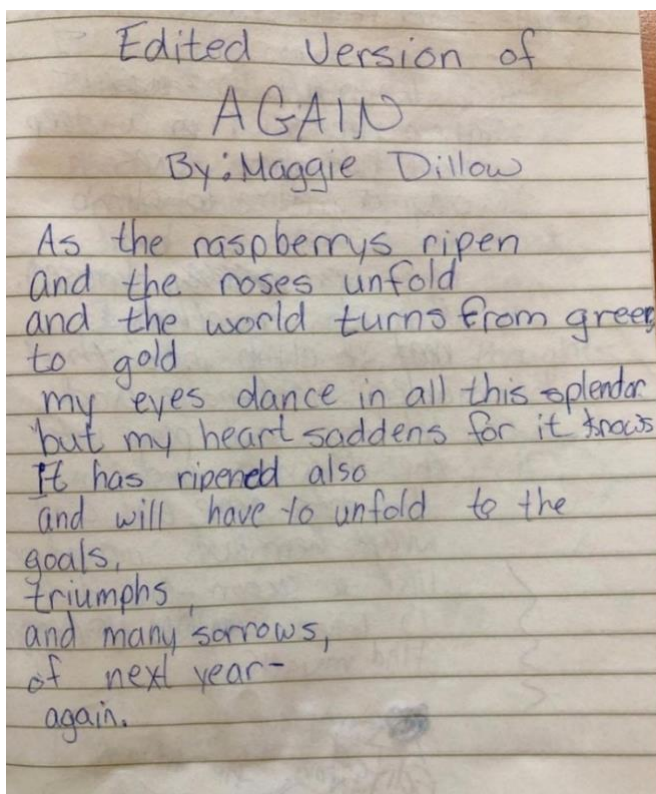
A Nameless Face  
 "Was it worth it?" I don't know,  
 All thirty-five years summed up  
 in four minutes  
 Left dangling like a pinata that  
 nobody tried to get the good stuff out of.  
 No fuss, nobody cares; Just a  
 waste of space and stone.  
 Hope's been gone so long, it's nothing  
 but a memory of which I had all but forgotten.  
 Ignorance served no purpose in my life,  
 I saw everything as clear as day and  
 as dark as night.  
 How can things happen so good for those undergoing?  
 They don't know what it's like,  
 Nothing but smiles and enjoyment in their life.  
 No tear will touch this stone,  
 Nor heartbreak at its presence  
 I'd cry, but there'd be no one there to make it better.  
 Love, the one thing that we all need;  
 The one thing I never had  
 There'd be times I'd ask "Why Lord,  
 Why to me?" But I knew it wasn't his fault  
 Now there's nothing left, but all time in the world.



### **Maggie Dillow, MFA '23**

The following poems were written in a *101 Dalmatians* journal circa 1999. In it I kept my deepest speculations about the world which was, from my 11-year-old vantage point, exceedingly tumultuous after my best friend (a boy) told me

we couldn't play together anymore because I was a girl, the emotional fallout of which is evident in the evocative free verse poem "Anyone But Me." The first poem, "Again," is a celebration of the changing seasons via a free verse vessel entirely reliant on unnecessary lyrical decadence, an impulse that started at such a young age it's impossible to root out now. Also evident in this first poem is my burgeoning love affair with the em dash.



# Anyone But Me By: Maggie All

Sometimes, I feel like a knife has stabbed  
my soul  
which bleeds,  
eternally.



Sometimes,  
I don't want to be me,  
but

Someone else  
Anyone,  
Why?



Because.

I am being pushed into the ground  
by some

unknown force x  
or

is that  
my heart?



Sometimes,

I want to fly away,  
away...

## David Heinen, MFA '23

The website for Creative Communication's "Young Poets Contest" says that the top 45% of submissions get published, so ten-year-old David's accomplishment feels middling in hindsight. Nevertheless, twenty-seven-year-old David can't shake the suspicion that when Mrs. Larson handed him that slim green hardcover booklet - when he stood in that white-tiled fifth-grade classroom and found words he had written, extant, in print, it must have sparked within him the desire to find his name in other books. So thanks a lot, Mrs. Larson.

### God

I can almost feel Him,  
I know that He is there,  
It's almost like He is the wind,  
Blowing through my hair,  
I know that He is here with me,  
Although I see Him not,  
I can feel he's by my side,  
I talk to him a lot,  
He gives me courage every day,  
The courage that I lack,  
He helps me when I'm feeling down,  
He sets me back on track,  
He'll never leave me, no He won't,  
That I know is true,  
He'll never even think of leaving,  
As sure as the sky is blue,  
I know for sure the day is near,  
When face to face I'll stand,  
With Jesus Christ my Savior,  
Finally hand in hand,  
While on earth I'll praise Him,  
All the days of my life,  
His words have really pierced me,  
As though they were a knife.



**Meghana Mysore, MFA '22** Pictured here is the poem cube my mother made with my poetic "creations" uttered when I was two years old. That weirdo thought she was deep and misunderstood! Perhaps I thought I was the ladybug in question. Or the mashed potatoes. Definitely not the girl with curls. That's too obvious, and these poems are works of the imagination, ripe with self-effacing!

-still a weirdo

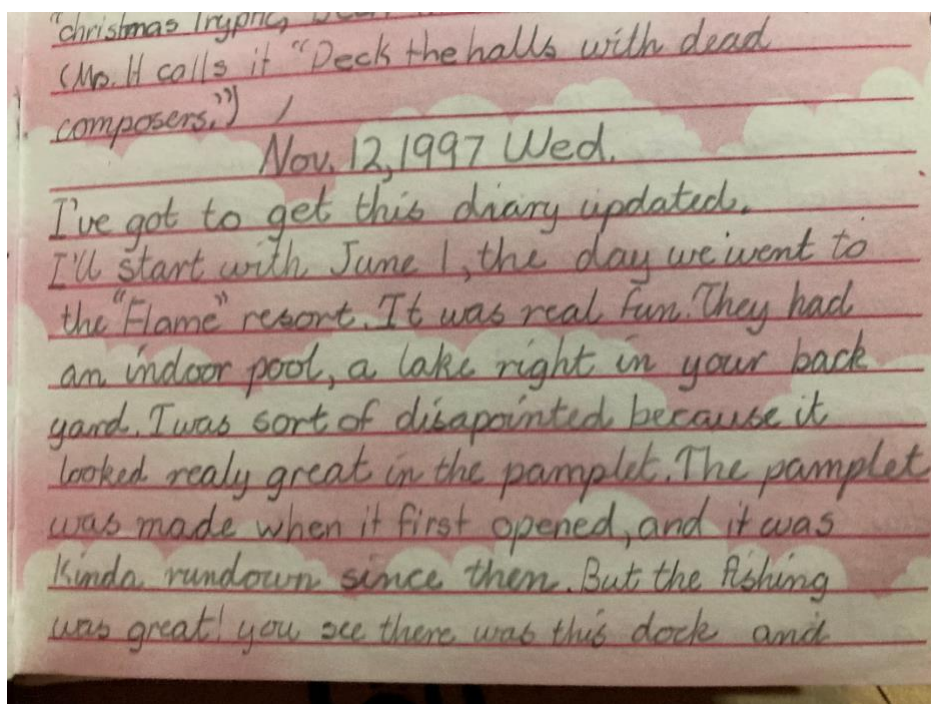


Once there was a little  
ladybug  
It crawled up to my head  
When it crawled up to  
my head, it ate some  
mashed potatoes

and then there  
was a girl with  
curls and there  
were flowers and  
birds too. And of  
course, there were  
weeds to pick.

## Anna Crumpecker, MFA '22

First of all, I just want to say I am tremendously grateful for this incredible recognition. I'd like to thank my parents, my teachers and God for recognizing and encouraging my youthful budding heart!!! You never discouraged me or made me feel like there wasn't enough Jesus in my writing. I'd also like to thank my cat Lassie, may she Rest In Peace. Oh...right...and thanks to the Hollin Kritick. Second of all, I'd like to note that my true genius reveals itself in that dark turn towards the end of a litany of events: "Now for my feelings." What incredible insight! To write about one's feelings! -Anna the Crumbpecker



like a thousand blue gill underneath.  
Inside the dock (it had an inside and outside)  
a huge cat fish circling in the corner  
now and then. You could see the fish and  
put your worm beside him, and he'd gobble  
it up. Now my birthday. I invited Sarah  
Rickett, Sarah Hietzman, Faith Joyce, Niki Garden,  
and Leah and Evan. Leah's 13 and I didn't  
think she would want to hang out with 10 & 11  
year olds, so I let her invite Lorretta, her friend.  
We made our own icecream sundae's and  
played Mad Libs and Guess who you are  
before we ate. Then we went to the pool. Mom  
picked us up and dropped them off all except  
Niki who spent the night, because it was the  
only way to have her come because she  
lives far away. The next day was my real birth-  
day wich is the 4th of July and Faith and her  
family were going to Niki's house for the  
day. So we dropped Niki at Faith's house  
and went to the Balous. They have one  
girl Leah's age and a boy about 22.



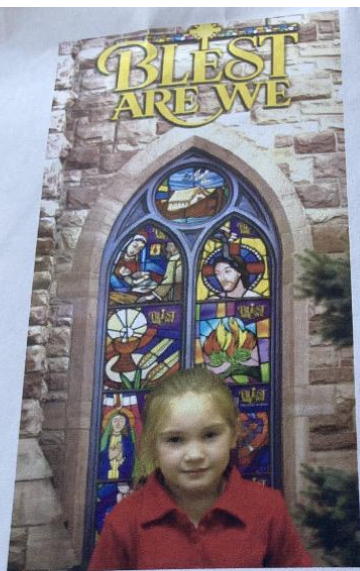
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He wasn't there. I got a clarinet for my birthday and Johanna plays also so we (the) played duets. That night we watched fireworks over the river. (They live in Louisiana Missouri.) Oh, also Leah had gone with a friend to take of the Ozaks. The friend she went with was Horretta Toot and Michelle Friend. Then we went home. Now my feelings. I used to be best friends with Faith, but now I dislike her. Why? one reason is she always is with Eliza, and seems to act like she doesn't want me for a friend. But when I'm with someone else she looks hurt. I don't get it. Also she is good at lots of stuff and I'm used to being the best. That's a stupid reason, but it seems to me she tries to beat me at things. She also steals all my friends and makes them like her better than me. Maybe it's just her charm. Maybe all my friends just like her more because she's nicer. I'll think on this.

gotta go, my hand is killing me.

Anna Crumpecker

**Laura Schmitt, MFA '22** "Laura Schmitt" was written in the second grade under the guidance of Sister Leannette, a nun who was quite scary and smelled of Carmex lip balm. While the rhyme scheme is rather uninspired and predictable ("cat" and "fat", please), I admire young Laura's decision to push creative boundaries and use multicolored lines for no discernible reason. "Visualize It" was written sometime in middle school during my Twin Phase. Most of my teen writing featured twins or triplets because my two older sisters, who are two years apart, share the same birthday, and I felt left out. I'm over it now. I think.



Laura Schmitt

There once was a little girl named Laura Schmitt  
She would play tag and always be fit  
Then she quit and had a fit  
So she played with her cat  
Who was rather fat

## Visualize it

The problem with being a twin is that everyone has their favorite. There is always the prettier one, even if we are identical. There is always the funnier one, the smarter one, the more athletic one. Brooke was all of these things. She was the better twin.

I first realized that Brooke had the upper hand in our twin thing when we started ballet class, but before then I always thought we were equal, besides the fact that I was born 7 and a half minutes before her. In ballet class, Brooke had more friends than me and the teacher said she had "the natural talent" the teacher even told my parents to invest in private lessons for Brooke, but for me, it would be totally fine if I stayed in the level one. In ballet class, was the first time Brooke was mean to me. She may not have intended for what she did to be mean, but for me it broke my heart. Every Tuesday and Thursday, halfway through ballet class, Ms. Cindy would tell everyone to partner up for a floor exercise. Brooke and I were always partners, but one day when I walked over to her to begin the exercise she looked at me and said, "Sorry Maggie, but I'm partnering with Shanon today. Maybe next time."



### Garth Robinson, MFA '23

I wrote this poem while wearing athletic shorts, a “Give Peace a Chance” t-shirt, a blue Billabong sweatshirt (I would compulsively chew on the sleeves of this sweatshirt), a duct tape anklet, and orange Crocs.

