



The Leonardtown Lexicon
A Journal of Prose and Poetry

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Editor's Note

When the idea for this magazine first fluttered into my head, I was but a member of Leonardtown's Global and International Studies program (GIS) looking to raise awareness about my Capstone project. The meaning of this project evolved beyond a grade. I realized that I was not starting a literary magazine for Leonardtown to fulfill a service requirement for my project's efforts to showcase the importance of writing and literature. I realized it was about building a platform for Leonardtown's talented writers to present their talent and open a dialogue of understanding with readers. I realized that this project was my mark on Leonardtown High School. The students whose work has been polished and published in this anthology are dedicated to their craft and will only continue to inspire me as a member of Leonardtown's creative writing club, as a writer, and as a person. I hope you find something in these pages that pulls your heart strings, that speaks to the lexicon of your life as they have mine.

Sincerely,

Jason Ferris, Editor-in-chief

Prose

Superman

by Jason Ferris

When I was three, we were always watching birds. I waddled into the grass with Dad and he pointed to the colorful streaks beating their wings through the forest and making piano sounds. Grey-crowned Crane. Grey-headed gull. White-headed buffalo-Weaver. White-naped raven. Dad pointed them all out to me and something lifted my cheeks. I wiggled my toes in the grass and smiled under Kenyan skies.

When I was five, a bird landed on my window sill. I set down the bird-watching book I was reading and crawled over the carpet. Careful. Quiet. Feeling the threads in the carpet like blades of grass. Feeling warm breaths rising from my nostrils. I identified it like Dad taught me. It ruffled its long black feathers, wearing them like a cape over its white body, and sporting red underwear. I inched closer. Its eyes were dark, hidden under black goggles. I was about to touch noses with it when Dad tossed open my bedroom door.

“Breakfast is ready.” My caped friend beat its wings and sailed into the morning.

“Dad, why’d you do that,” I groaned.

“Do what?”

“You made Superman go away.”

“Superman?” How much TV have you been watching?”

“But I saw him Dad. I did.”

“Alright Sport, our eggs aren’t going to wait.” Over breakfast, I told Dad about Superman, about his black cape and goggles and red underwear.

“Oh, a white-headed buffalo-weaver,” he asked.

“Yeah, Superman.” He laughed and told me we needed to get my eyes checked, that Superman didn’t wear a mask and that his cape was blue, but I knew what I saw. I knew what it was.

When I was eight, Dad taught me what it meant to “make a living.” I asked him what he did.

“I study birds.”

“I like birds,” I said.

“So do I Sport. So do I.”

When I was twelve, Dad settled at the foot of my bed. His brown hair was in a nest. He looked like he was wearing purple goggles but he wasn’t. His eyes were glazed and his shoulders low.

“Remember, when we talked about making a living?” I set my bird watching book aside.

“Well, sometimes it doesn’t always work out.”

“What do you mean?”

“What I mean is, we’re leaving Kenya.”

When I was thirteen, I stepped off a giant winged bird, a plan Dad called it. There was no grass, only miles and miles of hard earth. Buildings touched the sky and parted the clouds and there were lights everywhere. I thought everything was burning until Dad explained that was just how things were.

“Where are the birds,” I asked, scanning the pale sky. Dad didn’t answer.

“Where is the grass,” I asked. Dad didn’t answer.

“Where are we,” I asked.

“New York City,” Dad said. I held his hand while we passed through a crowd of people bigger than any swarm of flies I had seen in Kenya.

When I was thirteen, Dad stopped homeschooling me. He said I need to meet people.

When I was thirteen, I started school at Baccalaureate School for Global Education. Dad thought I would do best in a school focused on global learning.

I rode the public bus there, hugging the smudged metal poles in its body. Everyone smelled. Not like sweat. Artificial. When I asked Dad about the strange-smelling people, he told me that was just how things were. Apparently smells were deliberate in New York City. They were changed.

I didn't know my teachers. They didn't greet me with plates of toast. They tossed bulky textbooks on my desk and scribbled on the wall across the room. I almost asked why they would graffiti the wall but no one else was alarmed. They were too busy sleepily passing notes and fiddling with their pencils.

When I was thirteen and fourteen, I didn't know anyone at school. I tried to chat with my classmates in class or in the cafeteria but everyone wrinkled their foreheads when I talked about birds. I wondered if they had ever seen a bird.

When I was fourteen, I told Dad I hated school, that I missed learning about birds in Kenya with him. His lips drooped and his eyes widened like bird eyes. He told me there was nothing he could do and I dreamed of Kenya. I vowed I would find my way back there when I had the money to ride the big white bird.

When I was fourteen, I met Anna. She had a wave of black hair and was the first one to talk to me. She settled beside me at lunch. No one did that.

“So you're from Africa,” she chirped.

“Kenya.”

“You don’t look very African.” I laughed.

“I know.” I told her about asking my father why I couldn’t have the bark skin of my friends.

“Being of part of something isn’t about how you look.” She folded her hands and tapped her nails together. I smiled.

“What?” I didn’t answer.

“What?”

“It’s nothing,” I said, “your nails just sound like talons.”

When I was fourteen, Anna had lunch with me every day. I learned that she loved Superman. She had read all the comics and watched all the TV adaptations. Superman was the one thing I knew about America when I lived in Kenya.

When I was fifteen, Anna invited me over for dinner. Her mother cooked Githeri, a Kenyan meal of beans and corn. I smiled and inhaled her mother’s cooking.

When I am eighteen, I think I’ll spend my money on college. I think I’ll eat Githeri and find people like Anna and read about birds and call Dad on weekends. When I am eighteen, I think I’ll know what it means to be Superman. When I am eighteen, I think I’ll know what it means to be Kenyan.

The Birds

by Alex Adler

I woke to birds. Birds, flying, falling, grasping, lunging. Birds as far away as a state, as close as a length of hair. I can't remember what kind, just that they were there. The birds raised me, brought me up, and I can't remember what kind.

They were there. They were always there. Every day, they were there. Flying, falling, grasping, lunging. No people, no friends, just birds. I was their child, their one, and I can't remember what kind they were.

One day they went away. My family. My birds. One day they weren't there for me. Instead, I woke up to strangers. Strangers weeping, crying with joy. For me. They wept for me. They hugged me, kissed me, and wept. For me.

They said I should remember. "Give it time, give it time." They said I should remember, but I don't. I only remember the birds.

Now the birds are gone. They've left me. They've left me alone, raised by strangers. My family is gone. I can't see them, hear them, feel them. My family has left me alone.

The strangers say they love me. They've been waiting for me. They said I dreamed, and they dreamed I would wake. I don't remember. I can't remember. I only remember the birds.

There are birds here, too. Small, unfamiliar, cawing birds. But they don't listen, they don't hear. They only sing. The song is nice, but is a lonely sound, because I know it will never be for me.

The strangers ask if I remember. There are lots of things I remember, but not them. Never them. I remember the birds. The ones that flew, fell, grasped, and lunged. For me. Just for me.

There's nothing here just for me anymore. The strangers have each other, and a little stranger, which they call daughter. They call me that, too. I'm still not sure what it means.

The birds are fading. Their caws echoing more silently in the deep abyss of time. They screech, but I cannot hear anymore. I cannot listen. Their words mean nothing now.

Snaps from another life invade my mind. The strangers are there, but not the little one. Never the little one. The birds morph into them, and I can hear them again. I almost weep for the joy of it, but they are no longer birds. The birds are gone. I can only tell you what the strangers did. They are not so strange now. When I look at them, they have wings. They are the birds, yet they still are the people I once called strangers. The birds have gone, yet they have returned.

My family asks if I remember. They ask if I need more time. I say no. They have given me all the time I needed. They weep and cry with joy. For me. They hug me, and kiss me. The little one gurgles. I have never met the little one, but I want to. She is family. She is a bird. My birds have returned, and they will never leave me again.

Speed Limits

by Hannah Timmons

Big cars are made for big dreams, like a V8 engine that can drive up a mountain and scream its lungs out on the way back down. I'll pay for the gas later; who cares about that, anyway?

Leather driving gloves add so much to the experience, and my hands just fit in the women's sizes. Always pushing the limits.

Turn the ignition. Listen to the rumble – oh, so sweet. Emergency brake off, set to drive, and floor the gas. Rooftop down, hair down, and the wind snatches my sunglasses. I don't mind; they only cost five dollars. 25 miles per hour? But switchbacks are the best part! They're even more fun on the way down. The engine growls its agreement. A saucy truck driver honks; even the truck seems to grin. It hoots, "The sun's out, the breeze is mellow, and the road is yours!"

Finally, the mountaintop. Furry green stretches for miles, rolling and rocking over the range. A wall of earth and stone wraps around one side of the road, and a line of guardrails traces the edge of the cliff drop. It looks like something Charles Courtney Curran could capture. How cute.

Push the gas. I think that sign said 35, but 45 miles per hour barely teases my hair. C'mon, faster. 50 catches in my throat and sends tears into my eyes. Grip the wheel; how I love those leather gloves!

35 miles per hour? Ha! But there better not be any cops around. Not today. Not in this sun, not on the ride back down. The blacktop is mine.

Here come the switchbacks. Tap the brakes, just to let 'em see that I know how to use them. Take the first turn at 55, and be careful not to swerve into the other lane.

Another dip and turn; here we go! 59! 62! 66! Big dreams, big dreams! 71--!

There was a brake, but I never touched the pedal. Old Trucker Boy dialed 911 while I embraced the guardrail. The doctor says they made those just for me, since everyone else simply obeys the speed limit.

Gloved

by Jason Ferris

The pink glove lay on the ground, almost covered. Lily picked it out of the flaky autumn leaves and slipped it on her hand, wiggling her fingers in the fabric. She dashed around the yard and imagined that she was a princess in a far off land and that whoever possessed the glove had magical powers. Lily dashed and dared and danced until her mother called her in for dinner.

“Hun,” her mother asked, “what’s that?” Lily glanced at the glove as her mother sliced the crust off her peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

“It’s the princess’ glove.”

“You’re a princess huh?” Lily nodded.

“Well can the princess finish her dinner and take her bath.” Lily wrinkled her nose but agreed that a princess was a proper lady and that she would follow the law of the land.

When Lily slipped into her bath, the pink glove was still on her hand. It gave her the power to control the water hugging her smooth skin and matting her brunette hair.

Lily paraded her glove around school and squeezed it in her sleep. Her teachers started calling her pinky. Lily corrected them: Lily the gloved, a title befitting a princess. But pinky stuck. She was pinky all through elementary school.

But, on the first day of middle school her hand was naked and white. No one knew she was pinky or Lily the gloved. She was just a girl in algebra and English and social studies. Her mother was shocked to find the pink glove tossed on her daughter’s nightstand. She scooped the cotton bundle into her arms and cradled it like a baby. She held it to her nose. It had Pinky’s scent.

Lily didn't take it to the bath or squeeze it in her sleep. She didn't take baths anymore, standing in the shower, flicking the lonely drops of water from her gangly limbs and soft hands. She didn't curl around her glove in her sleep anymore, spreading flat on her back.

Lily's mother found the pink glove in the trash a few weeks later with old lasagna and wet paper towels. Her mother scooped its contents from the trash heap, rinsed it under the sink and smoothed it on the counter. She returned it to her daughter's desk that afternoon, wondering what happened to the princess.

When Lily found the glove after school, her teeth tightened and she ruffled her brow. She pulled open a drawer in her desk and stuffed the glove in along with old coloring books and colored pencils. She had friends coming over that afternoon and needed to make a good impression.

When Lily started high school, she was slight and slender. Her nails were painted and her hair was violet with dye. Her legs seemed to extend for miles below her skirt. Her mother's jaw fell that morning like chocolate melting in the sun. But she let her daughter go. She let the princess go into a magicless world.

Lily brought more friends home. She brought books and papers and a laundry list of activities. She brought home gossip and whispers of enemies.

When Lily was a junior, her mother found something on her nightstand. A notebook. Her mother bit at her nail, trying to convince herself her daughter wouldn't mind. She turned and backed into the nightstand under the notebook fell to the floor, the pages ruffling like feathers. She collected its contents and found a story. It was a story about a princess with a host of ladies to impress and court jesters and enemies whispering in the shadows. Her mother smiled and squeezed the notebook against her belly. She returned it to the nightstand.

When Lily graduated high school, her mother gave her a gift. Lily unraveled the bowed lace and tore through the wrapping paper. She expected a check or earrings or some other pool of gold jewelry. But it was a note. "A princess once covered is now shown." Lily smiled and rummaged through the tissue paper below the note. It was her pink glove. She slipped it on the tips of her fingers and tried to wiggle into the cotton. Her fingers had grown too long and her palms too wide. She struggled with it until her mother grabbed her hand.

"I guess my princess is now a queen."

Living in Red

by Julia Webster

Ruby saw a shooting star and didn't make a wish. Wishes were useless. They accomplished nothing. You want something, go get it. Make your own wishes come true. Don't wait for a hunk of rock in outer space to do it for you. Ruby knew it was hard for some people to accept, but life was evanescent and wishing on stars was a waste of time. Life is meant to be lived.

Fall is a time to be living, before the cold numb of winter chases it away. Lazy hot summer nights with lemonade and fireworks couldn't compare to the sunsets with silhouettes of fleeting leaves and the chilly night air full of possibilities. Pollen-filled spring days with blinding sunlight and hope didn't hold a candle to the feeling of making every moment last.

Fall is quick. There and gone with a flash. No regrets or hesitation. Just go. Summer was lazy and spring was hopeful and winter was numb. But every second counted with fall. Fall ended violently and abruptly. No time for second guessing or making excuses. Too late to go back.

Fall is red and dark.

It is a time for late nights and stars and lightning in a bottle and pictures taken with no posing and falling in love and wearing leather and being delighted by simply living.

Fall is looking up at the sky and seeing your destiny and following it and taking a road trip with nothing but the jacket on your back and a dream in your eyes and singing at the top of your lungs and piercing your belly button and listening to hard rock and painting in blacks and leaving and never looking back.

You could see it when the leaves fall down from the trees in swirling reds, oranges, yellows. The reds are vibrant and alive. The oranges are deep and emotional. The yellows are blazing and bright.

The sun is red and the clouds are burning. Fire dances in the sky and the leaves sway along to the music of fall.

Ruby thinks she can hear the echo of summer but the vivid sounds of fall drown it out.

Summer didn't look like this. Summer was hazy and lazy and hot. Summer was laying out by the pool and thinking and wearing a bikini and going to the beach and getting a tan and going to bed on your stomach because you have a sunburn on your back.

Winter didn't look like this. Winter was sadness blue and white and cold. Winter was snow and bundling up in coats and knitting mittens and searching for a carrot for a nose and drinking hot chocolate by the fire.

Spring didn't look like this. Spring was green and bright and hopeful. Pink and green. Pastels and baby blues. Fall was dark. Spring was light.

Fall is red and spring is green. Red is thriving. Green is budding.

Blood is red. Apples are red. Leaves are red and living is red.

Grass is green. Frogs are green. Leaves are green and being alive is green.

To be alive and to be living were two different things.

Being alive means breathing and eating and sleeping under the covers and learning in school. It means going to bed and dreaming about what could have been and wishing you could make a difference. It means drowning in a sea of what ifs.

Living means dancing in the rain and traveling and sleeping under the stars and learning by immersion. It means going to bed and knowing reality is better than dreams and not caring

about making a difference because you've made a difference in yourself. It means swimming in an ocean of I did it.

Life could be either. But Ruby's was deep dark red. Ruby's life was spontaneous and never stopping. And as she watched it spill, she reveled in how not green her blood was.

That Was the Year

by Katharine Cognard-Black

My mother often says it looks like she wasn't even involved in reference to my existence, my birth. I look just like my dad. When I was one month old, the pair of them defied the stereotypes, my mother hard at work earning her Mama PhD and my stay-at-home dad holding me.

When I was five, we made our way to England, and she smiled her way through her teaching and presentations and people like I do now. The foreign foods and cobblestones dripping in July heat was enough to make any small one stretch her fingers and grab at the fading memories of home. Yet, with soft hands, like the old papers we examined, I brushed my tears away. And after some tea, the fantastic fantasy of old bricks and daring chivalrous plays returned. And I wanted to go the marmalade maze. A lifelong dream since suggested by a personal hero...Paddington the bear. And since Mom was busy with her followers, my father was ever so graciously blessed with the art of hauling a five-year-old to a maze outside London.

July 7th, two hours before we rode the tube to a sticky palace, where I was sure I would meet a marmalade obsessed stuffed bear, the trains were bombed. At the time, my only thought was of the unfair nature of my father who dragged me to some pub rather than the thickets of my self-woven shrubbery. But, years after, when all was revealed, I must wonder how my mother was sitting back in Strafford, before she received a call from some old pub with the words "we're ok."

When I was twelve, we lived in Slovenia. The small country no one has heard of. And though my face belonged to my mother, it was the first time I heard my mother's words slip out.

I missed my friends and my home and the lime green walls of our single bedroom apartment left much to be desired.

That was the year I rode the public busses alone. That was the year I had the first friend my mom called a “bad influence,” and we found needles behind the bushes near the school on earth day. That was the year I first held a boy’s hand, dry and soft, and that was the first year my mother held my head in her arms after my first heartbreak.

The next summer, my mother won the music battle. Between Billy Joel and Led Zeppelin, I chose the first as I liked how smooth and dancy it was to my father’s dismay. That was the summer she cried in the car, and told me it was hard to be a mother.

When I was fourteen, we lived in Nebraska. And the year was a daze, her work put off for a year, and for a dash chance, she was the stay-at-home-let-me-bake-over-1000-cookies-for-your-theater-department-mom. And, at the end of the year, I got on a plane alone and she cried like I’m told she did when I left for kindergarten, and I cried because I missed home.

When I was fifteen, we came back to Maryland. And I missed the five friends my mother called good influences back in the corn state. That was the year I got a therapist. That was the year I only remember flashes of. When I lay on the rain-soaked pavement late at night and my mother walked me to the house and brushed the mix of rain water and salt water from my features.

That was the year we drove to New York because the morning we were supposed to hop on the train there, the radio said there had been an Amtrak accident. That was the year my friends were weird and my mom said I had chosen wisely.

At times, I had thrown her words back at her, agreed that, yes, “I am orphaned by the profession,” the profession being her incessant teaching.

When I am eighteen, I will once again leave and go to college. And though I have lived through eleven schools, five houses, and two countries, it will be the first time I leave home. And my mother will cry like she did when I left for kindergarten and I will cry because I miss home.

My mother always said it looks like she wasn't even involved and its true I look exactly like my father but the masses of spider-mapped veins and soft muscle memories have given me her gestures, my throat her voice, my ears her music, my cloths her style and my brain her capability to smile and present through the people. And I must pioneer the world alone and my mother must trust that I will always just avoid disaster.

Elephant Bones

(A Parable)

by Jason Ferris

When Baby Elephant was young, he was always with Mama Elephant. They did everything together. They drank water from the water hole. They munched on grass. They plucked leaves from the bushes and fruits from the trees. They watched the amber sunset. They were inseparable.

But one day, Mama Elephant left and Baby Elephant didn't know why.

Mama Elephant wasn't at the water hole when Baby Elephant drank water. Mama Elephant wasn't there when Baby Elephant munched on grass. Mama Elephant wasn't there to pluck leaves from the bushes and fruits from the trees. Mama Elephant wasn't there to watch the amber sunset. Baby Elephant waited for days for his mother to return, his routine rising with the sun and setting on the colorless sunset. He waited and waited but Mama Elephant didn't return.

One day, Baby Elephant's herd decided to move on. They trumpeted their long trunks, an order for everyone to gather their things and move onto a new pasture of rolling hills and lush grass. Baby Elephant moved with the herd many times before but never without his Mama.

He swallowed his tears and continued everything he did with Mama Elephant. He decided to drink water from the water hole. He decided to munch on grass. He decided to pluck leaves from the bushes and fruits from the trees. He decided to watch the colorless sunset.

That's when Chief Elephant came to talk to Baby Elephant. He planted himself in the grass by Baby Elephant while he drank water.

"Baby Elephant," Chief Elephant asked, "why won't you come with the herd?"

“Mama Elephant hasn’t returned,” Baby Elephant answered. Chief Elephant bowed his trunk and listened.

“I can’t leave until Mama Elephant is here to drink water from the water hole and munch on grass and pluck leaves from the bushes and fruit from the trees and watch an amber sunset.”

“And you remember Mama Elephant being there?”

“Yes. I remember how much smoother water tasted when Mama Elephant flavored it with stories. I remember how easy it was to find tall grass and reach sweet fruit when Mama Elephant was there to teach me. I remember how peaceful the amber sunset was when I fell asleep in a pool of Mama Elephant’s trunk.”

“It sounds like Mama Elephant hasn’t left you.” Baby Elephant’s eyes glazed and he swallowed his sniffles when he realized how much of Mama Elephant was still in his life, following his every lumbering step.

“I guess she hasn’t,” Baby Elephant told Chief Elephant.

“So are you ready to follow the rest of the herd,” Chief Elephant asked. Baby Elephant nodded and picked himself off the grass by the water hole.

When the herd rumbled through the fields, Baby Elephant thought he could still hear the pile of bones by the water hole rattling, but he smiled because he knew Mama Elephant would be there at the next water hole, at the next patch of grass, at the next fruit trees, at the next amber sunset.

Counting

by Allison Guy

She counts the number of red cars she passes on the way to school. She counts the number of freckles on her left arm. She counts the number of days until summer comes.

Summer is almost here and summer means freedom. Twenty-nine days until summer. The number teases her. The end of the countdown to freedom is so close but feels so far away.

Twenty-eight days until summer and she is pushing her little sister on a swing at the playground. She counts the number of times the swing goes up and down and she envies her sister, who doesn't notice the long stretch of time between where she is and where she wants to be.

Twenty-one days until summer and she is sitting at the small desk in her bedroom, writing an essay for school. She doesn't want to be writing some essay. So she stays for a moment and starts counting.

Fifteen days until summer. She is eating lunch in the school cafeteria. In fifteen days, she won't have to eat in the stuffy, noisy room anymore. She won't have to walk the crowded, foul-smelling hallways anymore. She won't have to see the people that make her jaw tighten.

Eleven days until summer and she is stepping outside, moving one foot in front of the other until she reaches her bike. She gets on it and rides all through the neighborhood, no one telling her what to do or where to go. This is what freedom will be like, she thinks. Freedom is so close she can feel it in the air around her. Eleven days. The numbers tease her once more. She wants to finish it all, to stop counting the days.

Seven days until freedom, and she is staring at the calendar on the blank white walls of her room. In the summer, she will fill her walls up with posters and drawings and photographs and she will fill her heart up with the feeling of choice.

Four days until freedom and she is sitting on her front porch, humming, watching a bird perch on a tree, then fly away. In summer, she thinks, I will be a bird. I will spread my wings and fly, only four more days.

Two days until summer, and she is taking in the sensation of her wings beginning to unfold. She can see herself fly high above the treetops, her school, her house, the park. She can see all those faces gazing up at her, marveling as she escapes that which was weighing her down. She will say goodbye to them, soon enough.

One day until freedom, and she is rehearsing for her high school graduation. Tomorrow, she will walk up on stage and get her diploma. Then she will walk off stage, sit through the rest of the ceremony, and be released. She will run, outstretched arms, grin wide, and she will perch on treetops.

Today, freedom arrives. The air is hot and it's hard to breathe in the large room where graduation takes place. As her name is called, she glides and floats towards the stage, her eyes and her soul bright. A diploma is handed to her. She eagerly grabs it. Her parents and her little sister watch as an era of her life ends. They clap their hands together. Her father takes a ridiculous amount of photographs to capture this one small moment. She beams at them, beams at all the faces in the crowd, both the faces of those who know her and those who do not. Freedom is upon her, welcoming her with its warm glow. She wonders whether anyone else is feeling this way.

When the last diplomas have been parceled out and the final speakers have run out of words to say, she can't get out of the room fast enough. Her parents want to stay and talk with the other adults, but she doesn't want to. She wants to become one with freedom as soon as she possibly can. She counts the minutes until the time her parents promised she could leave. Fifteen minutes, ten minutes, five minutes, zero minutes. She steps through the doors into the outside world, the real world. She steps into freedom.

Five days into summer, she begins to feel a little lonely. She misses her friends from school, though she only had a few of them.

Ten days into summer, and she struggles to understand how freedom can't deliver on its promises. She will never go back to high school. She will never suffer through advanced chemistry, never eat lunch in the cafeteria with her friends, never see all of her friends from school in the same configuration. It was strange to think about. A hollowness seeped into her bones as she sat in her room alone, struggling to understand that her life had changed. She couldn't believe she ever wanted to be free so badly, wanted to leave everything behind.

What was so great about freedom?

Freedom was not what she imagined it would be. She had gained her freedom—now what?

What had all that counting been for?

The Pink Glove

by Allison Guy

The pink glove lay on the ground, almost covered. The fall leaves whirled around in the wind, and when they landed, they fell on the small, thin glove.

She wouldn't have ordinarily noticed the glove, but when the leaves rose into the air, it was no longer obscured.

She stared at it for a moment. Somewhere deep in her mind, a memory stirred, too far buried to be brought forth to consciousness. Although she didn't know why, she picked it up and put it in her pocket. When she got home, she set it on an old shelf in her basement.

Ten years later was the next time she saw a pink glove. Her daughter came home from her first day of school, a sparkly glove in her hand. "Look, Mom!" she said. "I found this today."

"Where'd you get that?" her mother asked.

"On the playground."

Later that day, the daughter went downstairs to find a stuffed bear that she had lost. She happened to pass by an old bookshelf, and as she did, she noticed a pink glove sitting on one of its shelves, a glove that looked just like the one she found on the playground.

She held the new glove in her left hand and the old glove in her right. They were identical, practically mirror images, but one was covered in dust and the other in dirt.

The daughter took them to her mother, who cleaned them off so her daughter could wear them. The next morning, the daughter wore the gloves as she walked to the school bus, a newfound spring in her step.

The daughter's kindergarten teacher stared at the little girl's gloves. Somewhere deep in her mind, a memory stirred, too far buried to be brought forth to consciousness. She thought that maybe she used to own the gloves, or maybe they were her daughter's. She wasn't really sure.

"Where'd you get those gloves from?" the teacher asked the girl.

"On the playground," the girl replied, which was only half the truth.

That weekend, the girl wandered to a lake on the outskirts of her neighborhood, accompanied by her grandmother. The gloves began to make the girl's hands itch. She took them off and they fell to the ground, nearly touching the water, but not quite. In a few minutes, they were almost covered by drifting leaves. They sat waiting to be discovered by another soul, who would find them and have a faint sense of childhood bubbling up in their mind.

Poetry

A Mother's Sorrow

by Alex Adler

Where will I go from here?

In the snow, a red mitten lies.

Where can I go from here?

It is dirtied from the ground.

How will I live?

The red string is tangled in a knot.

How can I live?

A knot no one was supposed to break.

Will I see her again?

The string reaches towards the ice.

Can I see her again?

The cracked and watery ice.

I will never see her grow.

The gaping hole swallows all.

I can never see her grow.

All that dare to test the surface.