

# Byways



Central Texas College  
Journal of Arts and Letters  
Spring of 2014

First Edition: Blood Moon

# Tranquility

By Ryan Brady

Medium: Oils

Cover Art



# Foreword: By Brittany Weems

Byways are defined as roads that are not used very much; they are literally the roads less traveled, but we've never been told why. It takes a special kind of person to choose an unknown path, to volunteer to enter an unexplored place. It takes courage and originality. These are the people who aren't content with just living. These are the explorers of our world, the ones who want to learn and create and change. That's who they are, and that's what Byways is made of.

**Oh, Adventure!**

Let us Journey!

Let us be filled with such a hope.

Let us Journey!

Let us experience mercy

As we wander over the globe

And uncover the world's unknown.

Let us Journey!

Oh, Adventure!

It has shown me all life's secrets.

Oh, Adventure!

Nothing rivals the sheer pleasure,

Or even the sticky sweetness,

Of uncovering life's genius.

Oh, Adventure!

# Missing footprints

By Hannah Romo

I find myself retracing my steps  
Searching for hints  
In light of missing footprints.  
Each tree in this forest creaks under  
the burden of steadfast roots.  
Unmoving...  
Thick trunks hunched over amidst  
the quiet sound of rustling leaves  
Watching...  
Listening with unseen ears...  
Where does the journey lie?  
Why is the path hidden in an endless circle?





# Distant View

By Robert Byrd

Medium: Charcoal

# selfdance

by randy rhamy

I was a gypsy long traveled  
Until I found that I am my home

Cobalt blue dancer  
Winding through the wind  
I have danced in the desert  
Unmindful of danger

I have cavorted through sparkling brooks  
Unto the ocean

I have spun through my life as the sun  
Ruler of the heart  
Connection with my moonman  
Ruler of feelings

I bring to myself all I may care for  
And I may care for much  
I am blessed with intrinsic chronos  
For it all took so much time

I have the healed spirit that was once  
A turned away from child  
I am a celebration of all  
The wishes that were made upon stars

All of the booksthe wordsthe phrases  
Joyfully tumble through my thoughts  
They are my pictures  
As I write my dance



# Snow Blue

By Milton Rios

Medium: Oil



# Perplexing Creation – Honorable Mention Written

By Phyllis D Smith

Life is sometimes everything we dream, and often more than we can glean. Creators have heaved heavenly skyscrapers in beautiful Dubai, while we on this side wring our hands, trying not to cry. Our system feels broken beyond repair and there's major hatred in the air. The traffic is still heavy, though we don't know for how long, because we're not sure when the gas will all be gone. Daily, we host twenty-four hour crime while we question the perpetrator's mind. Ladies of the evening and gamblers still have their thrones. For massage parlor scholars, Charles, Willie and John always come along. A brothel within Zumba was once a rumor. Gamblers have been around since the first decade and will endure as long as there are SPADES. Dope dealers and gang bangers are really on the haul, they connect anywhere with a text, or call. Mission accomplished for Mary Jane in some places, (Colorado), leaving it mostly a non-issue.

There continues to be the fresh old man with the cute sports car, who thinks he can interest a frat schoolboy. And, the woeful Wino dreamed of becoming an actor, struggles to hold up the wall, but he's no longer sober enough to attend the cattle-call. Life isn't always fair or actual, but horrible date rapes are factual. Some ministers lay claim too so much, often by way of the unsuspecting church. School students can't pledge in God's name, but executions continue to be carried out to everyone's pain. Doctors and nurses do their share of providing us with the \_\_\_\_\_ of care, but we're all lost in skyrocketing medical costs. We continue to mourn the tragedy of a Princess to Di, Whitney Houston and other socialites on high. We're constantly reading, watching, needing or channeling the ones called celebrities. There's always a small elite horde on the list of Forbes. Plenty continue to die young, because we are a nation that's come undone. Our veteran suffer a lot, and many are among, 'the have not's.'

For years, those in charge have declared war, but it's never really clear what we're fighting for. We deal with the pressures of falling stocks, while trying to remedy problems, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Outrageously, we spend taxpayer money to film a Jodi Arias trial of lies. Billions are spent to help float other boats as ours subside with the tide. Our country has no reason to be broke, and the rising price of petroleum is a national joke. Hideous news headlines reeks of cruelty to animals, children and older folk. The practice is cruel, but tends to be an ongoing rule. Most can't determine if concern should be with evolution, revolution, air pollution or space aviation, but by any measure of understanding or imagination, we are a pitiful, perishing, perplexing creation.

# Creation

By Katherine Hlavaty

I was molded from the long dead  
ashes of my father's cigarettes.  
The Creators cracked my skull open and  
poured mercury into the cavity  
to create what they dared to call a mind.  
They bound me together with  
the sinews of washed up dreams.  
I am fashioned from so many things that  
I am nothing and  
I am everything.

They formed my disgusting heart  
from a lump of overused clay  
and begged it to beat.

They fabricated my hair from the  
colorless void of lost souls.

They carved my bones from the  
glacier that sunk the Titanic  
and warmed me with the heat  
between the cheeks of two lovers.

I am always wanting more, more, more.

I am nothing and

I am everything.



And since I am so sloppily thrown together  
you must handle me with care  
or I will crumble.

The mercury will leak from my mind,  
a selfish wind will come along  
and steal away the ashes.

A reborn spirit will undo my stitching  
and relive their lost dreams.

Then they will pick up the nothingness left  
and leave me under a weeping willow.

The words they write on my stone  
will say nothing and  
will say everything.



# Patterns of Light

Poster Art – First Place Award Art

By Sarah Johnson

Medium: Charcoal

# Cardinal (sestina)

By Saelis Mercado

The scrawny misfit's moth-eaten shirt was stained and torn,  
long since snagged on a sharp, twisted, jutting hook  
of the chained metal fence that his father's car had driven through  
one night.

He was the only sign of movement in the dimness--the moon was  
not particularly bright.

Although the danger had passed, the misfit continued his flight,  
choking as his retinas burned with the ghost of a blood-splattered  
raincoat and a makeshift club.

A jumble of memories flitted through his mind: gathering pebbles for their secret club, random late-night video game marathons, and the way they were both torn between putting the wounded fledgling they'd found to rest or releasing it into flight. He recalled how badly his little brother wanted to save it. Said its talons were like a hook-- "Made for clinging on a branch and singing to the sky. We gotta save it." His smile was bright as they cleaned the bird's wings, and he whistled like that cardinal for the rest of the night.

The misfit would never hear his little brother whistle again. A  
bird, betrayed by the night--  
a bloody, rotten, silenced song, quelled by the driftwood-and-  
broken-glass makeshift club  
and the raincoat, slick with sticky blood, that glistened like a  
warning, dangerous and bright.  
Like the day he and his brother saved the bird, the misfit was  
torn:  
Father's bloody raincoat, reeking of vodka, in their dilapidated  
house pierced him like a hook,  
and he knew he'd never return. There was no home when his  
brother's spirit had taken flight.

The misfit didn't know where to go; his shoes pounded the sidewalk in his breathless flight  
as he thought about the way his brother always saw sunshine where he only saw night,  
able to find a soft strength within those calloused misfit hands, like the bird's talon-hook.

His hands would never harm another soul, would never grip a club

And smite a fragile bird's skull, its boyish youth mashed by broken glass until it was gashed and torn.

He was not his father's son. He oozed with ire so fierce that his cheeks flushed red and bright.



The bitter cold subdued all life--or did the earth grieve as well?--  
and only the stars were bright  
as the misfit trudged as far away from his broken heart as his  
feet could carry him. His flight  
seemed directed towards a goal of safety--not for his body, but  
for his mind and soul, torn  
by the echoes of hysterical shrieks as the light in the bird's eyes  
vanished with the night.

He wished he'd hidden his brother better so he wouldn't have  
been bludgeoned with the club.

He wanted to die instead of the freckle-faced youth, now a  
bloody, fresh cut for a meat hook.

On the fence outside of the misfit's house, there was a sharp, twisted, jutting hook.

It glinted on sunny days like a dazzlingly dangerous trick of the light, warm and bright.

The misfit thought the hook was a perfect beacon for the headquarters of his secret club.

At the time he was twelve, his brother nine. One day they watched a bird take flight near the fence and fall, impaled and twitching on the hook where it remained for the night.

The misfit whistled quietly to the bird until it died; his little brother looked utterly torn.

While his brother wept, the misfit began singing: "It's hurt by the hook, but in heaven takes flight where the trees'll be green and the sun'll be bright. But it has to live through this terrible night."

His brother beamed as he continued, "Next time our club meets, we'll pray. Don't look so torn."

# Africa My Africa – First Place Award Written

By Nafi Zandre

Africa proud warriors in ancestral savannahs

Africa sang me my grandmother

At the edge of the distant river I never knew you

But my eyes are full of your blood

Your beautiful black blood through the fields  
spread

The blood of your sweat The sweat of your work

The work of slavery

The slavery of your children

Africa tell me

Africa Is it you that back that curves And layer  
under the weight of humility

This back trembling with red stripes

Who said yes to the whip on roads noon Then a  
voice answered me seriously

Son impetuous this young and strong tree  
This tree there  
Splendidly alone amidst white and faded flowers  
This is Africa your Africa regrowth  
That pushes patiently obstinately  
And whose fruits have gradually  
The bitter taste of liberty.

# AFRIQUE MON AFRIQUE – Premier

By Nafi Zanre

Afrique des fiers guerriers dans les savanes  
ancestrales

Afrique que je chante ma grande mère

Au bord de son fleuve lointain

Je ne t'ai jamais connu

Mais mon regard est plein de ton sang

Ton beau sang noir à travers les champs répandu

Le sang de ta sueur

La sueur de ton travail

Le travail de l'esclavage

L'esclavage de tes enfants

Afrique dis-moi Afrique

Est-ce donc toi ce dos qui se courbe

Et se couche sur les poids de l'humilité

Ce dos tremblant à zébrures rouges



Qui dit oui au fouet sur les routes de midi  
Alors gravement une voix me répondit  
Fils impétueux cet arbre robuste et jeune  
Cet arbre là-bas  
Splendidement seul au milieu des fleurs  
Blanches et fanées  
C'est l'Afrique ton Afrique qui repousse  
Qui repousse patiemment obstinément  
Et dont les fruits ont peu à peu  
L'amère saveur de la liberté

# Nature's Canvas

By Chondie

Medium: Digital Photography



# Open Heart – Second Place Award Written

By Andersen Jaymes

This world needs to have  
An open heart  
Not always taking from each other  
But each one doing our part  
Neighbor looking after neighbor  
With the utmost concern  
Take a true interest in one another  
One day you teach one day you learn  
Listen  
When our brother's speak  
The strong  
Holding up the weak  
Strive for peace  
At home and aboard  
Our neighbor's accomplishments

We should applaud  
There's plenty  
Of this land to share  
There would be more  
If we took time to care  
Care for each other like family  
Not let the homeless  
Live on the streets  
Clean up the slums  
And end the crime  
Wake up world  
While there's still time  
Time for you  
Time for me  
Time for all  
The world to see

Let's wake tomorrow  
To a much better day  
An open heart  
Can pave the way

By Ket Graves

Or where the sentences just seem to run together into one stream of consciousness with no pauses between the words?

W e o t e t l t r a a v h  
h r s e m s h e e d n e l o e t  
e m i e t s c l r e  
p i t e r a t f a l  
a e l k h a p o b l e  
g e y e r a t.

Some times the letters just seem to be changing size, right on the page.

Where homophones seem to be a complete ~~waist~~ waste of time.

And there is no making sense and reason with rhyme.

And sometimes you have to--  
Sometimes you have to--  
Sometimes you have to--  
Reread an entire page because



A world full of tricks taught to tame the realm of the written.

|Like| |isolating| |each| |word| |to| |unlock| |a| |passage's| |meaning.|

And word de-con-struc-tion de-finite-ly helps.

Clues context find to backwards sentence a reading.

Bigger, easier to read fonts aid in this pursuit.

Having **color films** or colored **glasses** — **lenses** to still the restless words.

**Even color letters on color pages pause the dancing letters.**

Welcome to the hidden universe of dyslexia.

Third Place Award Written



# Figure – Third Place Award Art

By Khadijah Alexander

Medium: Charcoal

# Affairs

By Ashley Cobb

They scratch down my skin, like friction weighed on sandpaper. They don't drop like rain and they don't soothe the layer of my cheeks. They hurt. They remind me of why they are there and it's more than I can bear. Hastily, I wipe away the dreadful tears escaping from the crevice of my ember green eyes. I'm trying to erase history. I'm trying to erase faults, actions, words and heart murmurs palpating, trying to get out of my dead body. I don't want to be reminded. I don't like to be reminded. Yet it is more than written all over my face, it is etching into my soul and it is screaming for recognition. I do feel. I do hurt. I am human, no matter how much I wish I weren't.

“Do you consent to this agreement?”

NO! **NO I DON'T!** He won't LISTEN to me. I flew on a whim. I rapidly bought a ticket on an impulse because I was tired of doing what is right. I ran away unbeknownst to any family member, deserted my obligations, retired the demands of caring for my children, put their dependence in another set of hands, and drove 50 miles in the dead of night to an airport before I could change my mind. I know what I want. I have never NOT known what I want. Visions may be cloudy. Decisions may seem fogged when the choices are dire and alter life as you know it. Not once though, have I ever been unsure of who I am and what I desire. I **WANT** this to work. Isn't that what this is about? Isn't this why we spoke to each other many sunrise and sunsets ago? Even though there have been empty nights in bed. Even though touch wasn't something we could experience whenever we craved, isn't that why we made our commitment? We wanted it to work. I still **WANT** it to work. *But he refuses to even look at me.*

Even now. I cast a sidelong glance his way. My peripherals don't lie to me like I beg them to do. Sometimes I hate senses. Sometimes I wish everything were a dream and we could bend reality to our heart's content. Life would be so beautiful then. It would never fade away. Disappointment would be a memory.

There he stands though. Strong as a rock and cold as the Underworld. A poker face sews the grace of his stare towards the questioner and any emotion that has ever been beautifully depicted on his soft angelic features for me, have now been masked behind this crude soulless encounter.

I'm in jail. Even though I'm free to walk and stand and speak where I please, there's a barrier that holds me down in place. I can't escape it. He won't give me the time of day. He refused my calls last night and didn't care that I was in a rotten side of town, sleeping in a run down, construction site, of a hotel that had only cold water. Answering the phone just once, the single sentence he uttered was *"I don't want to work things out with you anymore, it's over"*

“Ma’am? Are you or are you not in agreement with these documents?”

I **WANT**... I **want**...I want to be happy. I want him to be happy. Regardless of my happiness, what I want is him to feel again. He won’t feel for me. He won’t feel at all....

“Yes.” I whisper with my head held down, resignation pushing me to the ground.

“Very well. I hereby allow and sign this petition for divorce.”

Words drown out. The lock to the cell that I succumb myself to chimes as the key turns it in place. I am no more.

As I walk alone out onto the streets, lights blind me and I am forced to surrender my vision. My world is concaved and trembling. What is right and wrong conflict with what I want and what I really want. Life is such a complicated mess. I stand there with my eyes closed and a little girl that I once cared for at a nursing home rings inside of my head. “*You’re a hot mess,*” she would laugh, but then just as quickly, she would smile.



In that instant it dawned on me like a light bulb. I am a hot mess, but that little girl still smiled at me anyway. I am a hot mess, but brightness still shines through me. If a little girl living in a retirement home because she can't live like everyone else can still smile at such a hot mess, then I am okay. I will be alright.

So I put my hand down from the light that is blinding me. I open my now visibly clear eyes and smile at the sun.

I can't see. But I'll be okay.

# Restless Soul

By Shanelle G. Fisher

Medium: Charcoal





# The Horse

By Lavay Byrd

Wild

Free

Formed in majesty,  
Nobility and courage.

His mane and tail fly like banners in the wind.  
His nostrils explode in his breath.  
The ground shakes beneath his hooves  
As he thunders across the plains.

His cry—  
A trumpet's blast!—  
Resonates in the air  
As if to laugh at the face of danger.

Across the land he soars,  
His blazing eyes fixed ahead.  
Flying, flying, flying  
Into eternity.



# At the Heart of Texas

By Sarah Johnson

Medium: Charcoal

# Monsters to Men

By Katherine Hlavaty

God created  
monsters out  
of men  
but refused  
to give women  
venomous blood  
so now  
the monsters  
pick  
their  
teeth  
clean  
with  
my  
bones.





# Pissed and Tired

Honorable Mention Art

By Jennifer Walters

Medium: Charcoal

# Flowers

By Ashley Cobb

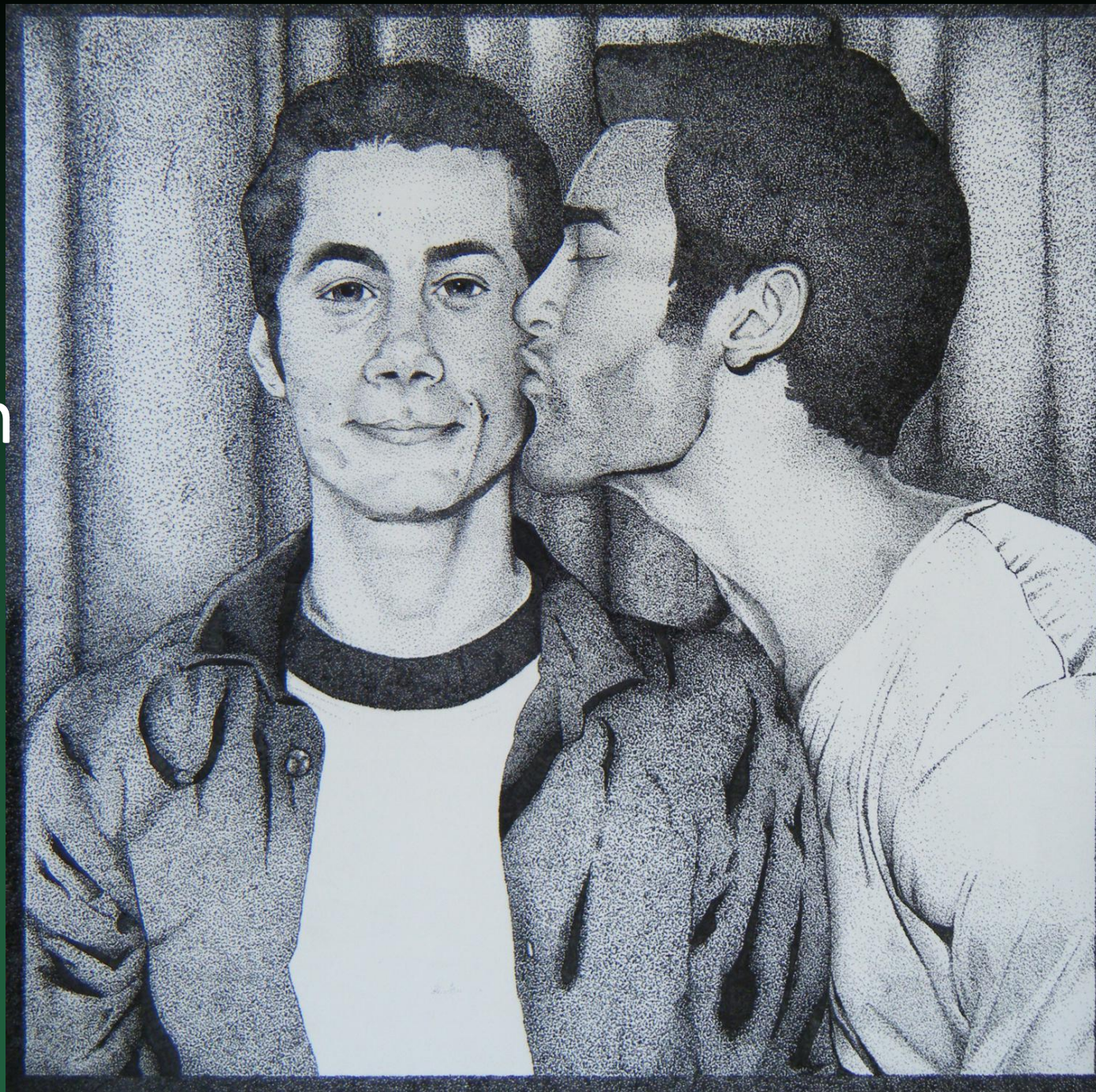
Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
For all of their beauty,  
They can't match the hue,  
Of your skin as it glistens  
In the evening shade,  
As the light warmly bathes,  
And rolls off in waves  
With you life has beauty,  
It holds purpose and grace,  
From the warmth of your hand,  
To the smile on your face  
Sometimes life is hard,

The world can be cruel,  
And leave you exposed,  
Feeling a fool  
But no matter what troubles,  
I'll be there to tend,  
You're the love of my life,  
From beginning to end.



# Photobooth Kiss

Second Place Award  
By Ryan Brady  
Medium: Ink





# Dungeons & Doofuses

By Chris Rosebrock

## REAL WORLD CAST (Stage Left)

DAVID.....The Dungeon Master, late twenties  
JOHN.....College student, Tall, early twenties  
NICK.....Glasses, early twenties  
TIM.....early twenties

## FANTASY WORLD CAST (Stage Right)

SPIRIT.....'Monster' controlled by DAVID. A ghostly figure  
KERGAN.....JOHN'S character, a knight  
JULIUS.....NICK'S character, an elf wizard  
VIRGIL.....TIM'S character, a ranger

## REAL WORLD SETTING (Stage Left)

Has a card table with four seats. The table has rule books, miniatures, dice, and a cell phone on it.

## FANTASY WORLD CAST (Stage Right)

A campfire scene deep in a forest at night.

**\*\***While the two settings will run parallel to each other, they do not intersect. However, the real world does have an influence on the fantasy world.

- - -

(At rise DAVID is sitting at the head of the card table. He is jotting down some notes. TIM enters stage left after a few moments.)

TIM: Hey David! (pause) am I early?

DAVID: (Continues to write down notes) Hey Tim. Nick called, and said he'll be a little late. Don't know about John.

TIM: Oh. (Takes his seat)

DAVID: (Closes his notebook) So did you guys come up with a plan for today's session?

TIM: Well I don't know about the rest of the party, but I've got plans. Big plans Dave!

(JOHN enters stage left, looking disheveled)

JOHN: Sorry I'm late! I lost track of the time looking for my phone and-- (Text alert from cell phone on table) .... Oh.

TIM: Real observant there buddy.

JOHN: Shut it. (John takes his seat and pockets the phone on the table)

DAVID: Well that just leaves Nick. (Pause) So, any big news since last week?

TIM: Eh, not really (Returns to playing with his phone)

JOHN: School as usual. You know how it goes David.

DAVID: Yeah, I know the drill.

JOHN: So do we know how long Nick is gonna take?

TIM: (Text alert from TIM's phone.) He says he's almost here.  
(Types a response)

DAVID: Well tell him to hurry up. We haven't got all night.

TIM: Way ahead of you.

JOHN: So where did we leave off again?

DAVID: Well when we last left our heroes they had just defeated the evil wizard and saved the townsfolk from his schemes.

TIM: Not to mention looted his tower for any magical goodies!

DAVID: Can I continue? (Pause) As I was saying. On their way back to town, weighed down by the spoils of battle, they had stopped and set up camp for the night. The sun had just set.

(Stage right lights up, with KERGAN, JULIUS, and VIRGIL sitting around a campfire. While KERGAN and VIRGIL are relaxing, JULIUS is sitting up straight and staring blankly ahead.)

JOHN: Who's taking first watch for the night?

DAVID: Shouldn't you wait until Nick shows up to decide that?

TIM: Nah, he got beat up pretty bad fighting that wizard.

DAVID: From where I was sitting you ALL got the tar beat out of you, I almost had a total party kill last week.

JOHN: He's got a point though, Nick got the worst of it.

TIM: That's what happens when you challenge the big bad evil guy to a wizardly duel. Anyway, since I've got the best perception, I'll take first watch.

VIRGIL: (Stands) Rest easy friends, I'll take first watch

DAVID: Alright (reaches for his dice) so while the rest of the party is asleep--

JOHN: Hey wait! Shouldn't the guy with the best perception be awake in the late night? Leave first watch to me.

KERGAN: No, you should take the second shift. (Stands) Your eyes are keen in the dark!

DAVID: Well in that case--

TIM: No way man, I called it!

VIRGIL: Save your strength for when its needed!

KERGAN: What good would it do, if I were asleep?

DAVID: Guys guys! Settle this with rock paper scissors or something!

(A few moments pass before VIRGIL and KERGAN play rock paper scissors. At the same time TIM and JOHN do the same)

TIM: HA! I win, better luck next time!

(KERGAN grudgingly lays down to sleep, and VIRGIL paces about the campfire)

DAVID: Well now that that's out of the way lets get on with it.

During your watch (Rolls dice and checks his notes) nothing out of the ordinary happens.

TIM: What! All that for nothing?

JOHN: HA! Better luck next time!

(VIRGIL wakes KERGAN before laying down to rest. KERGAN takes up watch.)

DAVID: And during Kergan's watch (rolls and checks his chart again) A strange mist rolls in, and the temperature drops enough to give you chills. Out of the mist comes a spirit, coming up to your campfire!

TIM: I shoot it with an arrow!

VIRGIL: (Sits up suddenly, aiming his bow at the ghost) Not tonight foul beast!

DAVID: You're asleep, you can't do anything until John wakes you up!

TIM: Dammit!

VIRGIL: (Falls back asleep and slumps to the ground)

SPIRIT: (Stops at the campfire opposite of KERGAN)

JOHN: Does this thing look hostile?

DAVID: It hasn't done anything, but it is a creepy looking ghost.

JOHN: Alright then... I guess I'll ask it what it wants?

TIM: You don't just ask a ghost what it wants, it's here to haunt us, or worse!

(NICK enters stage left.)

NICK: Hey guys, sorry I'm late.

TIM: It's about time Nick! Quick, Kergan's about to get possessed by a ghost!

NICK: Am I there? I cast a Holy Light if I am!

TIM: And then I shoot it!

JULIUS: (Having been sitting unnaturally straight suddenly relaxes. When he sees the ghost he throws out his hands) Be gone undead abomination!

VIRGIL: (Sits up suddenly aiming his bow again)

DAVID: You're both ASLEEP! You can't cast anything, and you can't shoot it! John was on watch, and he hasn't done anything that would wake either of you up yet!

JULIUS: Oops. (passes out suddenly)

VIRGIL: Damn! (passes out again)

JOHN: Well I'm trying to! I ask it what it wants... But I make sure to draw my sword just in case.

KERGAN: Halt spirit! (Draws sword) State your business.

DAVID: The spirit raises its arms, and gives you a piercing gaze (mimes its actions for the players) And then says in a wispy voice-  
-

SPIRIT: (Raises arms in time with DAVID)

TIM: Hey wait, didn't the wizard disintegrate that sword?



JOHN: (Searches for his character sheet) Um... No? I don't think so.

NICK: Yes he did, I remember you whining that I didn't counter spell it!

(KERGAN hurriedly throws his sword to back stage right)

DAVID: In a wispy voice it answers your question:

SPIRIT: I am here to--

TIM: Shouldn't this wake us up? John isn't exactly a quiet guy.

NICK: Yeah we should be awake!

DAVID: Stop interrupting my ghost and let it talk!

SPIRIT: (Crosses its arms in frustration and taps a foot impatiently)  
(Long pause before DAVID continues)

DAVID: No more interruptions? Good! The spirit raises its arms, and gives John a piercing gaze before saying-

Spirit: I am guardian of these woods, and you the trespassers! I have kept these lands safe for centuries immemorial, waiting for The Chosen, and I will defend it for centuries to come! I give you this chance to leave this sacred place, before I remove you from it!

TIM: Ok, that should be enough to wake us up right?

NICK: He was shouting after all.

DAVID: Yes, fine, you're awake now, but you won't be able to act for two rounds!

TIM: Not so fast! My character has combat reflexes, he doesn't get surprised in combat.

DAVID: But--

NICK: And elf wizards don't suffer penalties for sleep.

DAVID: That's true--

JOHN: And we all know Tim is paranoid enough that he sleeps with his bow.

DAVID: Munchkins! The lot of you! Fine, take your turns.

TIM: Alright I aim at the spirit. You can borrow my broadsword for now John, and Nick can cast Ghost Blade to let us hurt this thing.

NICK: Guys, I don't have Ghost Blade prepped today. I used up almost everything against the boss last session!

TIM: Hell! What do you have left?

NICK: Just Holy Light and a few Minor Illusions.

TIM: Well Holy Light can deal damage at least...

JOHN: Why don't we talk to it? It said it was giving us a chance after all.

DAVID: You guys need to hurry up. It won't wait around forever.

TIM: We're planning!

DAVID: Yeah but if you guys can dredge up obscure rules so can I. You've only got another minute before I skip your turns.

NICK: I guess diplomacy is our best bet. I'm the only one who can hurt it, and Holy Light doesn't do that much damage.

TIM: Well, let's hope this guardian doesn't try and kill us.

JOHN: I ask the ghost who the 'chosen' are.

TIM: Yeah, how does it know we're not the chosen, we're heroes! We just killed an evil wizard and saved the townsfolk!

(VIRGIL and JULIUS both wake up, and stand by KERGAN)

KERGAN: (steps forward) Who are these chosen you're waiting for?

SPIRIT: The chosen are heroes of legend, but this is no concern of yours. You need only know that you are not the chosen, and have no place in these woods. Begone!

VIRGIL: Are you so sure we aren't your 'Chosen'? We happen to be heroes, grand heroes! We are returning from having vanquished the dark wizard and his forces!

SPIRIT: Many before you have claimed much the same, that they were heroes of epic proportions, that they were The Chosen!

Many have made this claim, but none have ever passed my test. If you truly are The Chosen then you should have no trouble. To the south is a tomb of an ancient warrior who is denied his eternal rest, and unjustly so! Go there, and let him know peace.

NICK: Wait, what? You're making us run off to fight another undead? That's not fair! We just want to get back to town!

TIM: Yeah, and why's this guy showing up now? This is the same route we took to get to the tower in the first place!

DAVID: (shrugs) That's the way the dice work. You missed him last time through.

JOHN: Well can't we just go around him? I have the feeling if we 'prove' that we're The Chosen he's looking for we'll get side tracked again.

NICK: And the last time we got sidetracked that village got burnt down.

DAVID: No, that's just because you're all bloodthirsty, and no, you can't go around him, not without a fight.

JOHN: Well you're not giving us much choice here, are you?

NICK: Lets just say we're going to take his test, head back to town, and never speak of this again.

TIM: Works for me.

JOHN: I just hope this doesn't come back to bite us in the ass.

DAVID: Would I ever do that to you guys?

(All three answer at the same time)

JOHN, NICK, and JOHN: Yes

DAVID: Spoilsports. Fine then, the spirit lets you pass once you agree to take his test and-

(NICK's cellphone rings)

NICK: Ah, sorry, sorry (answers his phone) Hello? (pause) Now? (pause) ok, ok, see you soon. (Hangs up and puts his phone away)  
Sorry guys but I gotta run. You know how Sarah gets if I keep her waiting! (Stands and hurries off stage left)

JOHN: Man. She sure knows how to crack the whip doesn't she?

TIM: Whip? She's got him on a leash.

DAVID: Well if Nick's out I'm calling it a night. You'll need your full party for what comes next.

JOHN: Don't tell me we're getting into another big battle.

DAVID: (chuckles) You'll just have to tune in next week to see what your heroes will do next.

(Blackout)



# Inspiration

By Jennifer Walters

## Medium: Marker







# Ferocity

By Isabela Mendoza

Medium: Oil



## Student Editors:

Khadijah Alexander - Chieftress of Divine Design

Brittany Weems - Chieftress Editor of Decisions

randy ramy - chieftress of morale

Ket Graves - Chieftress of Moke Up and Presentation Design