



**crossed
sabres
2016**

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policy

Crossed Sabres encourages submissions from all LCHS students and staff. All works showcased in this magazine reflect the opinions of the individual and are not necessarily those of the staff, administration, or student body. Selections need to be appropriate for a high school student body and fall within the parameters of the Loudoun County School Board guidelines. All submissions are critiqued anonymously; are edited for spelling, grammar, and clarity; and are subject to approval by school administration.

staff officers

editors in chief

Leah Bernstein

Millicent Phillips

staff

Kelsey Brooks

Briana Gonzalez

Elyse Kimball

Chelsea Lynde

Alexandra Saravia

Sarah Van Hook

Cat Walters

sponsor

Valerie Egger

technical advisor

Kathy Locraft

**Crossed Sabres, an art and literary magazine,
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letter from the editors

Day and Night.

At the beginning of the year, we chose day and night as our theme, imagining a magazine that would draw together the balance of light and dark. We believed that this theme would serve to unify the school (or at least those whose work would be used). The execution of the magazine, however, brought about a whole different perspective on day and night. Both light and dark could be found in either theme; what we once thought would produce polarizing results came to reveal similarities in the two, such as a sense of tranquility that could be felt throughout.

Contrast can be found not only in the theme of the magazine, but in the colors of our school. Light and dark colors are visible throughout our halls, reflecting the minds behind our light and dark pieces. It would appear as though they were inspired by our day-to-day lives within our school and the bright gold and tranquil blue of our school colors.

This year's new feature, "Flashes of Brilliance," serves as our stars, standing out in the "sky" of our magazine. We hoped through this addition to recognize pieces the magazine would not have had room for otherwise.

We would like to thank our sponsor (and greatest asset) Mrs. Egger, who, even from maternity leave was still able to keep us on track (and she even gave birth during the blizzard, so you know she's the real deal). Also: Mrs. Locraft, who kept an eye over the layout, making sure it looked as awesome as possible. And to the staff, who stepped up to pull everything together.

-Leah B. and Millicent P.



pacific stride

| Jessilla Phou

As I stepped into the indoor pool,
I felt the intense urge to indulge myself in the brisk water.
A rush of excitement electrified my body from head to toe.
Inhaling the calming scent of chlorine, I approached the edge.
Rolling my shoulders back,
I fluidly dove into the water in one elongated motion.



The tips of my fingers tingled at the sensation of the cold aqua water.
Before I knew it, I was enveloped in a blanket of melting ice.
Everything was silent.
The faded, soothing tranquility was an oasis not of this universe.
All that filled my hearing was a faint bubbling noise.
Stroke after stroke, I extended my arms forward in a circular motion
While steadily breathing, a drum beat filled my chest.
Treading further, a grey tile wall came into my sight,
Signaling the end of my fleeting stride.*



falling

| Sarah Van Hook

new: adjective

*Not existing before; made, introduced,
or discovered recently or now for the first time.*

Darcy-Leonid Fitzgerald thundered down the pandemonium of the labyrinth (a.k.a. high school), carrying her sketchbook clenched in the gap between her chest and arms. Considering it was her first day at a new school, Darcy wasn't dressed all that pleasant. Ripped black jeans tugged into her black boots trailed up her long legs – which was rather surprising, acknowledging that she was 5'2" on her tallest day, hanging upside down. A black leather jacket swung with the wind of the passing students, covering her rugged red-cropped top. Her luscious blonde locks tumbled down the side of her face, framing it perfectly. She gave the insidiously gorgeous appearance of being the devil disguised as an angel. But the most intoxicating element about the dangerous blonde was her notorious eyes. They were an electric combination of the magnificent blue that enraptures the great seas, and the carcinogenic beauty of the galaxies fusing into one imperialistic explosion.

“Hi!” An all too cherry voice called to Darcy, motioning the newbie to make her way over to where the pink baboon was leaning against the lockers. Hideous black hair plummeted down her grotesque pink shirt, which was only connected to horrid bright blue pants. A preposterous shade of pink clung to her teeth, dancing across the metal that intertwined her crooked teeth together. “I’m Michelle James, the president of the Welcome the New Students Committee – WNSC, I like to call it!” The pink cotton candy bubbled, giggling viciously at the reference to her inconceivably lame acronym. “Since we don’t get a lot of new students, especially in the fall here in Sacramento, Principle Sandy has agreed for you to receive that exact same schedule as mine! – oh my goodness, we are going to be such great friends, aren’t we?”

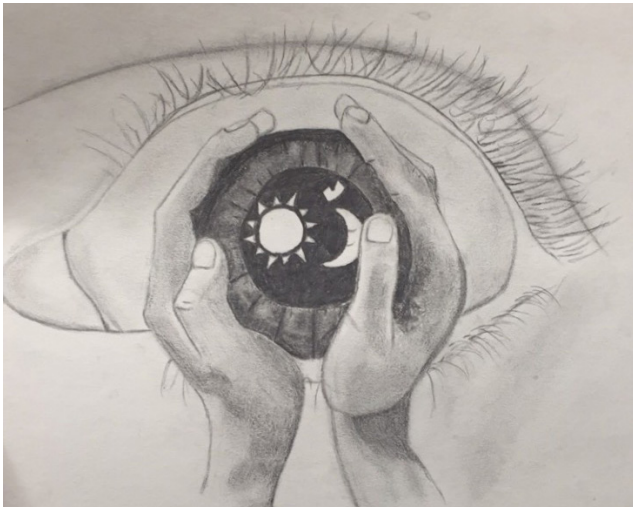
Darcy only nodded, and truth be told she was only listening to half of what Michelle had to say – because it was quite a

lot. The only sense of concentration that inhabited her mind was to open her ludicrous locker, thus shoving all of her junk in the tiny dungeon. The only thing that actually ripped the blonde out of her drunken haze was the fact that someone had just interrupted her rather pleasant activity of ignoring the school's mascot. "Who do we have here?"

The girl waltzed forward, tilting her head to the side, letting her shoulder length red hair drift over the edge of her angular body, hanging over a perilous cliff. Her menacing brown eyes seemed to analyze Darcy's valiant structure, standing confidently as if to challenge the adjudicator. She forced a smile, sticking out her hand into the new girl's personal atmosphere. "I'm Samantha Jones, president of the student body here at Palms High." Fitzgerald's vindictive blue orbs only trailed down to the long fingers sprouting out of her incredibly thin arm, deciding to neglect – and to a wonderful extent, reject – Samantha's unwanted invitation to become one of her idiotic and tedious followers.

"This is Darcy-Leonid," Michelle spoke, concluding that the new blonde wasn't considering uttering her star-struck name.

"Leonid? That's a strange name." A boy's raspy and deep voice vibrated throughout the tangled foyer of scattering adversaries that feared his every movement. Darcy's passionate blue orbs scaled up his extremely tall and broad frame, locking



untitled | Hannah Hickman

her gaze on his sculpted face. The blonde could tell why both Michelle and Samantha were swooning at the sight of him. He had quite a defined jawline, only adding to the rather long list of facts of why this boy was a God. His brown hair was shaggy, the bangs blowing sideways on his tan forehead. However, the real sight to see was when he wrapped his arm lovingly around Samantha – who was concluding the envy of the school – but his eyes still remained locked on the new girl’s form, the prodigious and astonishing color of nature shining exquisitely out of the darkness, and all Darcy could see was an exhilarating green. “Oh, Jason,” Samantha giggled.

“Yeah,” she grumbled, slamming her locker closed as she trudged past the trio. “It is.”

self preservation: noun

The protection of oneself from harm or death, regarded as a basic instinct in human beings and animals.

Darcy’s Art-History teacher had taken a liking to referring the blonde by Darcy-Leonid, much to the student’s dismay. In all reality, it was a hideous name, with an inordinately specialty to it. Mr. Spensley’s busted fingers drilled lightly against her wooden desk as he eyed her intensely. “Who is your favorite artist, Miss Fitzgerald?” The teacher inquired, his blue eyes sparking some sort of rebellious conflict thrashing through Darcy’s pulsing veins.

“Afremov,” the manipulative blonde smiled as a smirk tugged on Mr. Spensley’s lips.

“Excellent choice, Darcy-Leonid,” the redhead replied, his eyes diverting themselves toward Samantha, whose gaze was frozen with a toxic hesitation lingering across her shiny skin. For the first time ever, Samantha and Miss Jones were making sure that she was utterly invisible—unaware that the particular talent was Darcy’s specialty. “I would like you and Miss Jones to study Afremov’s painting: The Silence of the Fall.”

“But, but—” Samantha objected, her brown eyes flickering with rejection, worry, and disappointment. However, the

brunette’s heartless criticism was cut short like a sharp blade as the flat ringing of the school bell echoed through the classroom and winding halls.

game: noun

*A type of activity or business,
especially when regarded as a game*

“You want to know something, Fitzgerald?” Jason’s raspy voice sounded behind the girl who was making her best to exit the classroom quickly.

“What do you want, Jason?” Darcy groaned as she leaned against the lockers. The boy entered her vision, and his typical blue shirt almost blinded her eyes due to its polished material. Jason smirked at the girl, his green eyes drifting mischievously over her small frame. He could easily tell that the humungous textbooks were weighting down the blonde like sins, the edges piercing insidiously into her ribcage. Jason wasn’t all that observant, but a wince was tugging air out from in between Darcy’s busted lip, like an invisible cloaked figure took her breath slowly away. “You’re actually quite an open book.”

Darcy pushed herself off of the cold lockers, a warm feeling spreading like wildfire across the shivering skin of her back. Her eyes were narrow, glaring insidiously at the boy.



brown eyes | Bailey Johnson



binocular | Katie Orrison

standing for so long, you've forgotten why you had to build them in the first place." The gorgeous blue-eyed girl took a step forward, valiance radiating off of her like an intoxicating drug. She opened her mouth to speak, but found that nothing came out. It felt as if the devil had grasped her throat, cutting off all circulation and communication of her body. "And come to find you have become numb to any sort of sign that someone might actually want something to do with you. So, yes, forgetting is inevitable, but I think the bigger factor here is that you don't want to remember why you built those walls—not out of guilt, but shame."

"Stop talking," Darcy growled.

Because deep down you know—"

"I'm warning you." Her blue eyes flashed with fury that was pounding against her Pandroa's box.

"—that you were just a scared little girl—"

Arms crossed, she snarled, "What are you talking about?"

"Much to your apparent dismay, Fitzgerald, we are much more alike than you would care to admit."

Jason pointed at her, tilting his head to the side. "You obviously have these indestructible walls cornering any round edge that your soul can emerge, blocking out any possible human affection. They've been

They've been

“Jason...” It felt as if iron was pounding through her veins, wanting to break the clot.

“—that only wanted to know if there would ever be—”

“Stop!”

“—a person determined enough to break them down.”

“STOP!” Darcy bellowed, and Jason had to break away due to the surprise of the chemical anger that exploded like a nuclear reaction. Her voice was laced with intensity and a desperation that sent tingles down Jason’s curving spine. The blonde’s blue eyes were shadowed by sadness, a grey tone glistening like drizzling clouds. Darcy’s chest was raising and following rigidly, breathing rushed and harsh. The golden locks were tumbling down her shoulders like a chaotic waterfall flowing over a sharp cliff. “You don’t know anything about my life, Lover Boy,” Darcy growled, taking a step forward. They were so close, that their breaths were mingling together to form an addictive spark, vibrating off of both of their charismatic personas. “So why don’t you back off and leave me be?”

Fitzgerald pushed her feet off of the tile floor, walking past the troublesome boy. But as her shoulder brushed past his, his fingers wrapped around Darcy’s tiny wrist, jerking her to a sudden stop. Jason leaned down, his green eyes misting over with a musty fabric. “Afremov?” He rasped darkly, and she felt a part of his brown locks brush over her forehead. “Really, Fitzgerald? You can’t really be more obvious.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Darcy fritted through her teeth, narrowing her blue eyes into tiny slits.

“Darcy-Leonid—did you really think I wouldn’t get around to it?” He smirked, chuckling slightly as his green eyes twinkled with playfulness. “It didn’t take me a while to connect the dots that your favorite artist is Leonid Afremov.”

Fall: verb

Gerund or present participle: falling; move downward, typically rapidly and freely without control, from a higher to a lower level



blind sides

if that line wasn't there
but now i pick up my slingshot
and the pebbles
in a shower of sixteenth notes.
they would say
yours.
and I'm starting to forget why I keep on lifting
and you're starting to wonder where to aim.*

envy

| Drosoula Kountouris

He hated her and she felt sorry for him.
Every day she'd swim in her sea of happiness,
and every night he'd drown in his pain.
She was ignorant of the things he saw.

While she saw kids playing in the morning,
he saw them crying at night.
All she saw was the good of the light
and all he saw was the bad of the dark.

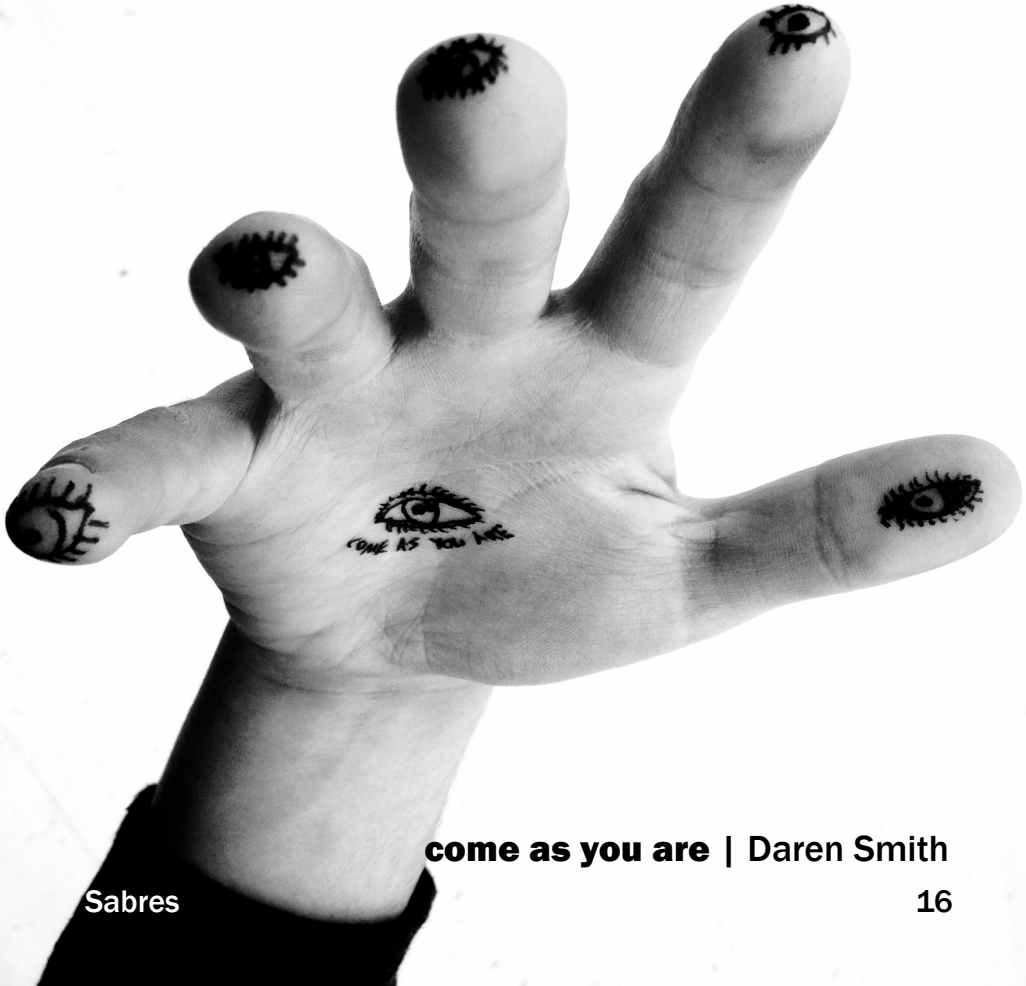
She was a movie and he was reality.
Her ending was always happy,
but his were never that lucky
because he was bound to a life of dread.

Envy of her filled up inside him,
wanting to tell her but not having the heart.
Instead, the Moon suffered every night,
so that the Sun could have a beautiful day. *

| Nori Thurman

we would have been brothers
and so do you
hit our homes

that my side looks exactly like
but stones are silent
the slingshot



come as you are | Daren Smith



her glow | Osama Abbasi

the girl with the sun and the stars

| Audrey Chadwick

When the sun rises, she's always happy; it's weird seeing her happy all the time. I look at her, and all she does is smile, and I wonder how someone can grin in such a way that their happiness latches onto yourself. I had heard the word "stunning" all my life—in movies, books, everywhere—but I had never felt it until I saw her. She's stunning; she's always been stunning with the way her eyes glisten to the way she makes her silly expressions. She was real, maybe too real, because all my life I had never met someone so goddamn happy, but there she was, the happiest person alive with her giant dark brown eyes and acne covered skin. It never bothered her, and I think that's why it never bothered me, either. She had this effortless type of beauty—the type of beauty you see in the movies, the girl who everyone thinks is so mysterious.

The stars come out and the air gets chilly. When the sun sets, she is a different type of beauty, the dark and alone type of gorgeous. She screams cries of terror, burying her blonde curls into a satin pillow as she lets her tears roll down her eyes violently. The happiness that once latched on to every soul she interacted with is suddenly invisible. I so badly wanted to grab a flashlight and open up her mind to see where the vibrant daytime girl went. Those once dark brown eyes now appear hollow and black. She shouts and begs for some sort of simplicity. The smile she wore on her face slowly starts to droop and wipe away without a care. As the air begins to cool, so does her heart. The day time girl allowed her worst demons to venture into the night. *

when two worlds meet:

| Morgan

She woke up to the birds outside
Her white paned window
Stretching out her long pale
Limbs, nudging her glasses'
Rims.

Just a normal day

She lived in the high rises
Overlooking the busy street
Far below, she put on a dress that was
White as snow.

They got up

She gently woke her little
Brother, helped him put on his
Buckled shoes, while saying goodbye to
Her mother.

Out away and

Where paths cross

Her straight blonde hair flew across
Her slim face as her mouth slipped
It was like the cool rain
On a hot summer day

Throats caught,
Diverse like the day
Yet tied like

love in a heartbeat

| Newcomb

He woke up to the gunshots outside
His boarded over window
Swiftly sliding out of his
Bed, roughly tucking down his sister's
Head.

living by the bay.

He lived in the abandoned commons
Looming in the busy streets'
Shadows, he put on a rugged jacket that
Smelled slightly like oregano.

To start their day.

He abruptly threw his sleepy eyed
Sister over his shoulder, along with
His bag, pushing his way through the
Dark room.

into the streets.

and eyes meet.

Dark eyes wide open
Sweat beading in his palms
It was like the dawning sun
On a snowy day

hearts stopped.

and night,

heat and light. ☾

sun | Kiley Turner

late night

| Alexis Huber

A fiery blur dashed across the sky, standing out against the dark clouds blotting the night. The few civilians wandering the city's streets looked up in surprise, though none made a commotion. The fire dipped and swerved, twirling in the wintry air, then up to a towering sky scraper. Just before it could hit the structure, the fire vanished, leaving a black figure to ride the momentum and land neatly by the building's high spire.

The figure, a black-clad young man, leaned against the spire and surveyed the skyline. He was barely bothered by the icy wind whipping around him, bundled in a thick coat, a bright red emblem depicting a bird, and tight pants. His face was hidden by black spandex, his eyes covered by red-lensed goggles. He tapped his foot against the steel beneath him, stretching his sore muscles.

"Couldn't crime take a break for, like, one night?" he groaned. "I guess a hero's work is never done." A scream sounded from below him, and he nodded as though it proved his point.

The figure sighed and leaped from the platform he was standing on, once again morphing into a ball of fire. Wind whipped around the fiery mass, throwing him this way and that, but still brought him closer to the ground. Again, right before impact, the fires vanished, leaving the figure to hit the ground with a thud.

With a yelp and a wince as his sore shoulder was jostled, the figure rolled into a darkened alleyway, where he saw three others. He didn't think, just tackling the one nearest to him, dragging them both to the ground.

Before he could say anything, a pair of warm, solid arms wrapped around his middle, grabbing him from behind. His captor threw him away, and with an indignant cry he collided with the third person in the alley. Both fell.

"Nice job, Taurus!" wheezed the one the figure had first lunged for, as their partner dragged them to their feet. The figure's face heated up under his mask, and he was quietly thankful the black fabric hid the flush from view.

While the other two approached, he made to quickly hold down the one he'd been flung against, preventing him from getting up. When they stopped walking, standing a few feet away, he let out an embarrassed chuckle and turned to face them. Taurus looked almost amused, though it was difficult to tell through his own mask.

"Taurus, Mercury," the nervous figure greeted, "good to see ya! Sorry about that, by the way. It's hard to tell people apart in these sometimes." He tapped his red-lensed goggles for emphasis, and Taurus sighed fondly.

Despite the bitter cold, the more muscular hero's only covering was the simple mask over his eyes, and the heavy fur on his legs. He approached the fallen pair, hooves clacking against the concrete. Taurus knelt down next to them, giving the black-clad figure a light pat on the back. Then, with only the lightest of pinches to a nerve, the one pinned under the figure was unconscious. Taurus helped the figure to his feet, still looking more amused than anything.

"Well," he laughed, "at least you're getting the hang of taking people down."

"Yeah, I mean, that was pretty good!" Mercury chimed in. Unlike their partner, Mercury was bundled tightly, almost as much as the black-clad one was, body entirely hidden. "No harm done, Phoenix. But, thanks for the help!"

Mercury walked over to the unconscious criminal, bending down. They picked up a red purse the man had dropped, and added, "We had it handled, but it's appreciated."

"What do you mean?" Phoenix asked. "I heard a scream."

Taurus smirked, gesturing to the downed criminal. "I may or may not have been a little... enthusiastic. Just a petty thief, though; nothing too exciting or serious."

"I'll just go take this back to the lady now," Mercury volunteered, holding up the bag. "I imagine she'd like it back."

"And I'll bring this one to the police station," Taurus decided, slinging the thief over his muscular shoulders. "You wanna help, Phoenix?"

The shorter hero shook his head and shrugged, smiling

under his mask. “Nah, you guys can get all the credit. I’ll go find something else. Something easy.”

“It’s past midnight,” Taurus said. “You should get home.”

“I know, I know, I’ll be fine!” Phoenix waved him off. “But thank you for the concern.” He patted Taurus’s tattooed arm.

Mercury sped out of the alley, moving too quickly to be a blur, while Taurus trotted behind more slowly. Phoenix offered the more experienced heroes a mock salute before jumping into the air and bursting into the ball of fire. The cold winds carried him over the apartment district, ignoring the skyscrapers altogether.

He flew along for a short while until he noticed something on the roof of one of the flat-topped apartment complexes. The fiery mass dove, with the flames dissipating just before crashing into the building. The figure landed on his feet, rolling forward into a crouch from the momentum.

When he looked up, he saw another duo frozen several yards away. They were dressed for the weather, with thick boots and jackets. Both were carrying heavy trash bags in their gloved hands, faces visible under their grey hoods. They looked at each other in confusion, as he straightened and winced at his injured shoulder.

“Well, hello!” he called. “I don’t really like to stereotype, but I’m going to go ahead and assume you two aren’t here just to take the trash out, and the stuff there doesn’t belong to you.”

The duo shared a look before one of them shouted, “And who are you supposed to be, exactly?” The shouter was a woman, her sickly-thin face obviously marked by vitiligo.

Phoenix gestured in disbelief to the emblem on his chest as he cried, “What, seriously? Does the suit mean nothing to you people? Okay, I get that I’m new to this whole hero thing, but you’d think you’d recognize a masked vigilante when you see one. Do you even watch the news?”

She laughed. “No need to get defensive.” The woman sighed, dropping her trash bag with a thud as she pulled off one of her gloves. “Now, no hard feelings, but my friend and I have to make a living, so...”

She dashed for him, lunging with calloused hands. Phoenix neatly sidestepped, reaching out to trip her with his foot.

While she stumbled, she grabbed his leg and dragged him down with her. The woman whipped out a butterfly knife, slashed the hero across the chest. He recoiled to avoid her drawing any blood, but his coat was torn.

The woman rolled them over, pinning him and slashing again, tearing the spandex covering his face. This time, she nicked his face, leaving a cut across his cheek and lip. He grabbed the hand holding the knife, twisting it out of her grip and tossing it away. With his other hand, he swatted her hard in the stomach. Phoenix tossed her off of him, picking up the knife.

He turned to regard her partner in crime while she struggled to recover, raising an eyebrow. The other thief, a tall man with thick stubble and a pale face, had pulled off one of his gloves as well, and disregarded his own bag. With his gloved hand, he fished a small wad of wet cloth out of his pocket. Phoenix walked towards him, as he brushed his ungloved fingers against it.

The wad of cloth burst into flames, and he threw it at the hero. Phoenix yelped, the knife clattering to the concrete as he rushed to catch the small fire. He smothered it with his hands, then stomped the remaining embers.

“That was dangerous! Seriously, if you’d missed, that could’ve gone to the street, and.... Luckily you didn’t. What were you thinking? I don’t know if you saw my entrance, but fire’s kind of my thing. Neat trick, though.”



apollo | Osama Abbasi

The other thief laughed as he answered, “Oh, I know, don’t worry! But it makes for a pretty good distraction, don’t you think?” He pulled his glove back on as Phoenix, once again, felt an arm wrap around his torso.

“You really are new to the hero thing, aren’t you?” the woman snickered in his ear. “If you weren’t, you’d have heard of us. Ah, well, I guess introductions are in order. Nice to meet you; I’m Variant, and that there is my friend, Flamefinger.” Variant’s cold fingers pressed against Phoenix’s face, through the cuts in his mask, and immediately a sharp pain flared through his torso.

Phoenix’s vision blackened at the edges as he collapsed, Variant letting him go as he did. He gurgled in pain, spasms wracking his body, but soon laid there motionless. Flamefinger made a disgusted face while Variant cackled. She now appeared as a young, short man with a mess of freckles across his face, just like the now-dead hero’s.

“I’ll never get over how weird that is,” he sighed.

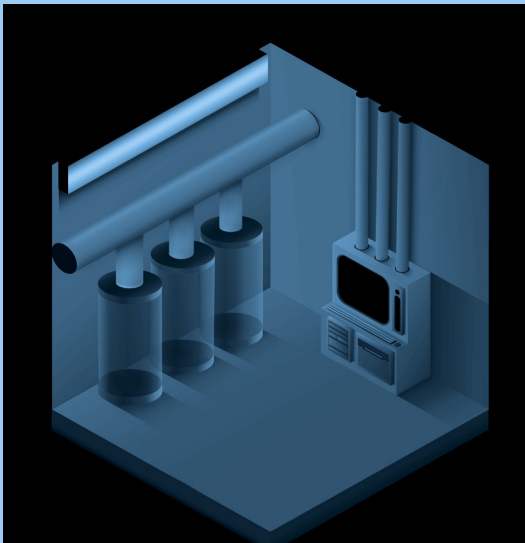
“Oh, hush. You know you love it. Admittedly, I’d prefer shifting into a cute girl, but he’ll do until it wears off.”

Before he could offer a sarcastic reply, Phoenix’s body burst into fire once again, though he didn’t move. Variant cursed, recoiling. She turned to give Flamefinger an angry glare.

“Did you touch him!?” she yelled. “You’re supposed to keep your gloves on when we’re not in a fight!”

“Stop blaming me! Let’s just get out of here.”

The thieves picked up their trash bags and rushed to the fire escape, neither looking back as they hurried down. Once they



were gone, the flames engulfing the fallen hero receded and disappeared.

Phoenix sat up, vision bleary, though his wounds were gone. He pulled off his mask, freckled face contorted with worry and strawberry blond hair damp with sweat. He whimpered when he didn't recognize his surroundings, curling in on himself.

On the other side of the massive city, Luna Vasquez, black hair hanging loosely around her shoulders, stalked out of a midnight marathon of classic films. The movies were still playing, but she couldn't stomach the people around her anymore.

She made her way to her car, tossing her purse in the passenger seat with a sigh. Just as she went to get in, someone tapped her shoulder, and she turned to see a short redhead with too-big glasses, bundled up in a winter coat. The other woman smiled at her.

"Uh, hey," the redhead greeted, "you're Luna, right? I'm Reagan! We both have Mr. Jennings's political science class?"

Luna nodded, forcing a smile. "Oh, uh, yeah. Hey, Reagan. What are you doing here?"

"I'm just getting some Christmas shopping in! Can't save it all for the last minute, am I right?" Reagan laughed, then flushed a little bit. "I, uh, actually wanted to ask you something, too. Would you, maybe, like to get coffee together sometime?"

Luna thought back to her date for the night, a man named Connor she'd met through a dating app her roommate coerced her into getting. Connor had never shown, leaving her on her own to watch movies she didn't even like. Maybe Reagan would be more courteous than that.

"Of course, I'd love to," she started, but was interrupted by her phone vibrating several times, insistently, in her bag. She fished it out, seeing she received a text message.

The message listed off an address across town, along with some GPS coordinates, and "Minor shoulder contusion, abrasions on knees and palms, laceration on face, and total organ failure." She started, frowning as she read the last line.

"You're 23, Pat," she muttered. "How does that happen?"

"Come again?" Reagan asked, looking nervous.

“It’s nothing,” she replied. “Look, I have to go get my roommate. He’s in a bit of trouble. Let’s go get coffee tomorrow morning, okay? On me. Ah, wait, hold on.” She pulled out a notepad, scribbled her number, and handed it to Reagan.

“Call me, okay?”

Reagan nodded, looking more than a little amazed as Luna climbed into her car. She set out immediately, waving at the red-head as she left. Thankfully, being so late at night, there was little traffic, allowing Luna time to calm herself down as she drove.

Finally, she arrived at the apartment building described in the text message. Luna got out and went to her trunk, where she removed a heavy backpack that she slung over her shoulder. She cupped her hands around her mouth.

“Hey, dude, get down here!” she called.

Right as she said that, a burst of fire from the rooftop raced towards her as she lowered her hands. The fire dissipated just before it hit the ground, and her roommate grunted at the impact, still clad in his hero wear. He got to his feet, holding his mask in his hand, and smiled sheepishly.

“Uh, thanks for picking me up,” he said gratefully. Luna patted his shoulder, handing him the backpack and ushering him into the backseat. She climbed into the driver seat, looking away as he changed from the fireproof fabric into his regular clothes.

“So, what happened to your suit, Pat?” she asked.

Pat gave another sheepish smile. “That kind of happened before the regeneration, so I don’t know. How’d I die, exactly?”

“I’d assume the total organ failure,” Luna answered. “Also, dude, you’re way too young for that. Either you have some serious medical problems, or there’s some messed-up villains we don’t know about.”

“Probably the latter one.”

“How much do you remember this time?” Pat looked crestfallen at the question. Luna decided not to press, waiting for him to put his seatbelt on before driving to their apartment.

“Not much,” Pat confessed after a moment of silence. “I remember getting off work, meeting the pet-sitter, leaving my money for the rent, and you leaving for your...” He froze, put-

ting a hand over his mouth. “Oh, no! You had a date! Ah, I’m so sorry!” Luna laughed, shaking her head.

“No, no, it’s fine. Trust me, the date was terrible. ‘Sides, I don’t mind picking you up, you dork. You’re my friend. Plus, you’re not forgetting entire days anymore! That’s good, right?”

“Yeah, but I don’t like forgetting anything!” Pat cried.

“It could be worse,” Luna reminded him. “You could not have that weird regeneration thing. Then I wouldn’t get to say I’m roommates with the Phoenix.”

“I’m not famous enough for you to get anything good out of saying that,” Pat deadpanned. Luna snickered again.

The two were quiet for a moment, before Pat jumped and said, “Wait, I have an idea! You know how you put that thing in my suit and connected it to your phone, so you know when and where I regenerate? Could you add something that keeps track of what I’m doing? That way, you could fill me in later!”

Luna mused, “That could be hard to implement with the tech already sewed in there, but I could probably do it.”

“Aw, yeah, nice!” Pat pumped his fist in the air. “You’re the best friend a hero could have.” ☾



city of dreams | Maddi Peyton

day and night

| Lottie Coleman

In the beginning there was nothing,
Only the grass on the ground
The water in the ocean,
And the sun in the sky.

In the beginning there was me
And there was you.
In the nothingness we found something
So precious due to scarcity.

In the beginning there was daylight;
There was hope in abundance
With spring flowers blooming
And summer's promise.

In the end there was nothing,
Only me left alone
With the moon looking at me,
With winter as my only comfort.

In the end there was a nightmare,
With no hope to be found,
The light snowflakes dusting the ground.
The slow shadows of darkness crept upon us.

In the end there was night
And stars in the sky,
My Nemesis until sunlight.
The loneliness of night fall leaves me quiet. ☾



Sabres

30 **untitled** | Osama Abbasi

Flashes of Brilliance

“Daytime, the start of a creation, creating who you need to be and what you want to appear as... The night sets up a stage for you as your pure, untouched body and soul.”
day and night | Kendra Wagner

“Just one person can make a tremendous difference. Imagine what a group of people could do— We could change the world.”
homelessness | Taylor Mount

“He watched her. Ever since she took her first step into the shop, he was watching her... a simple admiration and curiosity for the way she carried herself and smiled at everyone. There was something so enchanting about her that he couldn't put into words. He decided that he wanted to know her.”
as different as day and night | Maggie Paul

“I try to calm my breathing, ragged from all the walking, and slump against a tree. I try to collect my thoughts, willing myself to not let the hot tears welling up spill. It would be a waste of water, I chuckled mirthlessly.”
a new day will always come | Krishna Tejo

“...looking into the strange but amazing universe, floating stars and lights everywhere, running to jump on the nearest star towards the great statue of the past Lord.”

starry universe | Sabrina Gray

“The sunset filled with the colors of cotton candy. The moon rose and kissed the stars.”

happy and free | Nicole Nealon

“The darkness that encircled me was nauseating and muzzy.”

one of those days | Briana Gonzalez

“A cat, drenched in black, walked the lonely path. Gray swirls dancing off its back... The graveyard filled with life. ... Never seen. Never spoken to. Only listened to the nonsense speech of the living...”

A fallen tear,
your useless fear,
Exchanging prosperity
for an eternity
Of solitude”

willow's bargain | Emily Schechter

“When the daylight disappears
And the night awakens,
I open my curtains
And I feel alive.”

day and night | Elyssa Reveron

pity the night

| Millicent Phillips

I cannot help but pity the night.
So often painted with the brush
of demons and fright.
For it did not chose to lose the light.
To be the one to steal our sight.
I find myself to cherish nights.
Like the ones that I look at the clock
and find that it is oh so late.
And the night has enveloped me
in its quiet embrace.
Because if consciousness
was a race,
that night,
I had won first place. ☪





candles | Stephanie Deason

the wedding ring

| Nick Tupaj

*“The Wedding Ring” is the winner of our
2015 Crossed Sabres Halloween fiction contest.*

I woke up to an empty bed, sat up, and groggily looked around. The first thing I noticed was the wedding ring on my finger. It captivated me for a long moment, and I admired it as I did on the day he proposed. As the memory painted a smile on my face, I threw off the covers and made my way downstairs to find a full breakfast laid out for me, as I enjoyed the eggs (over-easy—he remembered how I liked them), I mindlessly slid over the note that he left for me and began to read his words:

My dearest,

*I know you have a busy day today, so I made you
your favorite breakfast. I’ll have another surprise for
you when you get home.*

Love you always,

Mike

He made the “e” of his name into a little heart-his signature move—making me smile just thinking of him. I finished eating, got ready for work, and pulled out of my driveway. As I drove toward work, it came to me. The color drained from my face as I wrenched my hand up and stared, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, at my wedding ring. My husband died in a car crash a year ago, and I buried the ring with him. ☾



Sabres

snowy me | Stephanie Deason #

36

the secondhand

| Nori Thurman

a flick of a finger on steel and then—
alone in a box not unlike a coffin
except it had a ribbon of sky for a window,
and a carving board for a bed.
but who could sleep?

someone was beating their fists bloody from across the hall.
i could barely hear it because the silence was drowning out the
other noises and pressing in my ears.

but once the darkness crouched over me and pressed its cold body
to mine all i could hear was the water on the roof trying to
escape and it oozed free and it ticked onto dusty concrete like a
nervous secondhand

when had i last seen a clock?

(in a room full of tall and clean people clearing their throats and
shuffling their papers and flickering their false eyes towards a
man with a shadowy robe but no crown)

a grimy rag appears, forced through the food flap.

clean up your mess

i am dimly aware of others,
can sense their presences like ghosts
in an empty house...loud knocks on the walls
and a muffled moaning that never stops
and the ephemeral sense of a chill near the windows that sits
there like a dead friend for long periods of time.

where's the penance in this? watch the windowsill where dust
collects and sits together, you will see it jump suspended into
open space and swirl when you curve your lips and fill your lungs
and let out a ghost. watch that when it catches the phantom

sunbeam, it dances collectively, a silent waltz to the floor,
a comfortable conformity,
the rhythm of footsteps on the sidewalk,
and unfamiliar faces.

(where had i experienced that before?)

press your parched lips to the steel shower,
feel the water drain the warmth from your flesh

(where had i felt that before?)

where is the penance?

and you can't escape this cycle, oh no, you forgive yourself but
will they? the secondhand keeps on ticking and my eye is the
vertex but blinking can-
not stop this clock and i
swear i would never do it
again

(there's the penance)

in your next life you'll
have another chance. now
go to sleep,
the ghost whispers.

did you forget that when
i wake up from this life
i must serve two more
lives... ?

(the secondhand did not
forget) ☾



quiet stars

| Nicole Garnhart

My best friend, my brother, my mom and I
Camping that late summer week.
One night, we walked over the old crunching leaves
Under the dark trees
To an open field.
Laying down.
Gazing up at the pinpricks of light,
We were amazed at how many stars we could see
Without the overwhelming light of home.
The Milky Way stood out with the moon
In the navy sky,
Lighting the field enough to see without false light.
It felt cold for summer,
The kind of cold where your whole body is warm
But your nose and fingers are chilled.
Grass tickling our faces
As we gazed at the heavens.
The clean scent of dew and trees
With the faint smell of camp fire smoke
Filling the surrounding air.
The fading taste of chocolate and marshmallow in our mouths
Mixing with our quiet words
As we watched a satellite drift silently across the sky.
The world was quiet.
Staring up into the vastness of space,
Listening hard we could hear the slow small movements of bugs
through the leaves
The rustle of our coats
Peace and content were words to describe the feeling we shared
As we stared at the stars. ☾



is there life on mars? | LeeAnn Dancy

Sabres

40

below

| Alexis Huber

Mankind has known monsters since its inception,
Great beasts from all walks of life,
Masters of all kinds of combat and deception.
After too long spent in chaos and strife,
The monsters knew they had to leave.
Some flew to the heavens, taking shelters in the stars above,
While, for others, below the ground was their reprieve.
The darkness in the tunnels was eternal,
But the beasts within knew they had to stay.
They lost their memories of a land vernal,
With the tunnels' night shaping their way.
Then, once, a specific monster was born,
With fur as red as the sun's forgotten light,
Serving to give his brown and grey parents nothing but scorn.
His mother could not stand this horrible plight,
And made a decision difficult and terrible in nature,
To abandon her young,
For surely he would die without nurture.
She was wrong, and into a fine adult the pup sprung.
He found himself alone, but thought it just fine,
As something else held his attention.
To a gap in the tunnels he took a shine,
And each time he saw it his body grew tight with tension.
As he spent his time by the aperture,
He was there when the light came in.
The light was small, a fragile creature,
Its lack of fur showing all its skin.
Flowing locks made the monster hold its breath,
For they were just like his, red as anything,
And he knew he could not leave it to its death.
He gathered up the creature in the strong sling

Of his arms, and knew what he must do.
While he had grown up alone,
He still knew it was taboo,
But going to the surface through the gap in the stone,
Was what he would do for the light in his arms.
For how could a creature so soft and pure, so filled with good,
Be from the tunnels that lacked all charms?
He left at once, as quickly as he could,
And found a world he never knew could be real.
All around was light, bursting forth colors and sounds,
With a sky in a color he had never seen: a gentle, pale teal.
He saw beasts of feathers and air making their rounds,
Circling the great plants dotting the area around.
The light in his arms gurgled and laughed,
And he felt a swell of joy in his chest at what he had found.
Nearby, on the gentle breeze's downdraft,
He could hear unfamiliar voices calling.
The monster moved quickly, bringing the light,
And found a group of creatures bawling.
With wonder in his heart, he sought to relieve their blight,
Brought forth the light, setting the small creature gently down.
The creatures reacted with fear, crying out,
Until they saw exactly what he had set on the dirt's brown.
Immediately, from their throats came a great shout,
As they surrounded the light and held it close.
The monster smiled and turned to leave.
But then one of the beasts arose,
And what she did, he almost could not believe.
The creature wrapped her furless arms about him,
Body heaving in relieved cries,
Tears at her eyes beginning to brim.
She spoke in a language he could not surmise,
But somehow he knew, she was thanking him.
And the monster was happy.☾



lights | Stephanie Deason