

The Lantern



*Senior Spotlight 2024:
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Note from the Author

Hello to any person picking this up!

I am currently a senior at Houghton University completing my Bachelor's degree in History with a minor in Art. I came to Houghton from South Carolina after two years at Greenville Technical College. Poetry has been a longtime interest of mine and was supported by my family, especially my mother. Poetry and prose were very important in our household and often read aloud and discussed.

This collection of poems can be seen as a journey through some of the harder feelings I've learned to process. The collection progresses from feelings of anger to feelings of joy, touching on ideas of divinity, comfort, and more, as I have tried to explore the intricacies of humanity and the depth of what we feel.

I hope that as you read these poems you are able to reflect on the nature of humanity and the infinite possibilities we hold as God's creation.

Sincerely,
Johanna Lamont

Cover: Fields of Gold
Opposite: Golden Hour

Anguis Daor

If I can't have this feeling erased,
If I can't lose the pain
If my skin will forever feel this hunger
An itch that spreads and burns
If I can't be close
Then I hope you can,

I hope you feel the intimacy
I hope your body is safe
With those you choose
I hope that you never feel this
I hope the pain is gone
I hope you're loved by who remains

My skin can burn,
I know the feeling
I can take this better than you
I don't want this for you
I will hold the pain close,
My dear friend, for you

It's not the worst pain to bear
Not when I could see you crumble
So close to me
You held your own pain
I would hold yours to see your smile
I can hold this too

Mourning

You were a language I had forgotten how to stop speaking
Existing in the woven membrane of my body
You cling still to life now, through the daily actions I complete
It isn't intentional, you were meant to die as you lived
Your passion once suited to life, now drives my bones crazy
How dare you haunt me in my own mind
I can't drive you out of this once joyous space
I've tried,
Burning our pictures, destroying the home we had
You still persist, a pest, a termite eating my supports away,
Grief poured at your grave, unsure if rain or tears stung my eyes
You blurred the edges of life and death too many times for it not to stick
And yet you still can't commit, you never could, torn between here
and there
I am condemned to this life of restlessness in your spirit
How can this still be love when all that's left is grief?

Aching Existence

It takes a while to wake up
Each morning my eyes peel open
They wish they stayed closed
Red and dry they blink
Begging for moisture I rub them

My joints ache, I'm only twenty two
I shouldn't feel this old, this tired
I dress myself, avoid the mirror
If my eyes meet I'll lose myself
A routine arises out of the void

Pieces of emotion break through
Cutting the velvet-like void
Soft edges curl around and mute the world
Bleak and soft, a contradiction
Numbed and warm I exist

Lines of Life

Lies can't save you,
They never could
Didn't mean we stopped trying

Using them to heal
Patch over the cracks
The little lines scaring our hearts

Shaking our foundations
The words pressed on like a Band-Aid
Some lies repeated

Told by us, by you, by them
Over and over again
A new motto discovered through denial

They could have saved us
A little lie to cover the truth
The broken truth

I wish they saved

Forgetful Sorrows

It's funny, how ill-humored life is at times
We laugh to forget the tears threatening to brim
We shelve our sorrows for a rainy day
Only to play in the rain ignoring our grief
The shelf grows dusty, pain becomes art
Decorating our home, it leaves a scar

"I can't pick it up or throw it out!"
Outraged cries come up, "It belongs there!"
A memorial to hurts long forgotten,
To change now would be uncomfortable
Dust would outline what was once broken
Loss offers confusion in its stead

Balance and Dependance

It's dependent on everything
One moment I'm dancing on the high wire
A horizon before me so clear
The next I'm plummeting
The ground dangerously close
But I never crash
Instead, the earth separates
Torn apart it opens to a familiar scene
Balancing again
I never seem to stop falling
Worse, now I'm aware I'm falling
I used to be ignorant of it
Just moments of rage
With no explanation
Cries of despair and death wishes
Frustration and pain tied in a bow
Limbs shaky
Strained from the flood
Emotions swirl and choke me
I can barely contain myself
Then a switch flips
I'm calm, peaceful even
Mania gone
For a brief second, it's all good
Then I'm falling again
You know what I really want
Deep in my heart
I want the wind in my hair
Waves lapping my toes
The road a quick jog away
Sunlight or moonlight
Doesn't matter

(...continued)

I want the beauty of time
Time spent in security
Security in the insecurity
I want a little paradox
My own little puzzle of life
Independent of society
Can you imagine it
A little life all to yourself
Not lonely, it's not devoid of friends
But it's yours, nothing pressures you
You decide where to go
How to spend your time
Your money, your love
I think that sounds nice
Don't you?

Bacchanal

Revelry, so close to madness, eases my mind
I dance through life, trying to spot the elusive ones
Mad with their own revelry, blood dried between their nails
Fellow spirits to the reckless nature of life
We dance and dive to the wind, distant sirens fading
As voices in our heads sing louder than the civil lives behind us
Bearing down on our desperate realities responsibilities
Ready to drain and curdle the blood that runs so free within us
So we sacrifice our minds for the sanity we can gain

Whispers in my mind singing softly as I

Free fall from the heights of unsteady branches
Wondering, will my dancers catch me or will they laugh
Their recklessness will catch them later
For now though, they laugh and dance around me
Little Icarus unsteady in his path they chant

Rising and falling my lot in life, yet

My fate can't be sealed quite yet though I still have my wings
I'll rise up above them and close my eyes again
The voices sing louder in my head pulling me into the chaos
Numbing the fear flowing in these veins
I can't stop the thrumming noise pushing between my ears
The city crumbles around me in the quiet of my mind
To the sound of laughter and song
Civilization loses itself to the natural breakdown
In this reckless revelry we breathe life again

Broken Altars

Aphrodite, born of blood and waterfalls
Beauty didn't come easy, a sacrifice was made
How much shall we sacrifice on our altars
What does society call for us to lose before we win
Shall we risk our blood, our souls for praise
Breath, flesh, blood, souls lost to beauty
Aphrodite weeps in her fallen temples
Nothing is left of true beauty, nothing but ash
A kiss of grief is brief
It tastes of love and loss
promises of a future unfulfilled
perhaps the most devastating kiss.
It's cold, smooth, gliding over you
intimate, it sinks into your mind
visions held dear are lost
sealing your heart.
Brief recollections of the natural order
Remain in our souls as we connect
Love lost to age sealed in our hearts
Loss and love mingle creating a dance
Our feet follow, through the paths of old
Remains scattered and broken
Offer remnants and visions of glory
A hymn to the fallen altar of Love

More Than This

The reckless nature of my divine birth
Breathed life into by an entity beyond our imagination
Stolen from his sight and tied to a world
Tight with order and walls stifling the nature I'd been given
A likeness in every mirror and every face
Parallels between here and there you push my heart
Away from this world and to the madness in yours
A chaotic unbridled love for the world
So untrue to the laws of these illegitimate rules



You

Your art is an escape
It decorates your humor and hands
Like the steam above your mug
Distracting questioning eyes
From all you sought to hide
Your art is a distraction
Hiding your hopes
From reality's prying eyes
It felt safe, secure and solely yours
You never figured you could follow it
Never thought it could be more
Than this hideaway and home
Art wasn't your future, escapes aren't practical
But here you are - with chalk on your hands
Crooked smile distracted by thoughts

Eloquent Unpredictability

Maybe honesty comes from inside
I might have to face my reality
Before I can share it with you
You would embrace the honesty
Like I know you've embraced my lies
The lies that have been so carefully crafted
Formed around the subtle beliefs
Held by others surrounding me
Preserving the safety imagined in words
With my feeble attempt
To placate the world I live in
Lying to myself as surely as I lie to you
This life so precious can longer survive
Without the relief of truth
Bearing the weight of expected safety
In a world so cruel and kind
Lies became predictable but painful
Honesty, kind honesty, might pave the way
For a new stability, grounded inside

Youth

These are my skeletons in the closet
The way I still have your picture hidden
The stolen ring from your floor
The tear soaked carpet
That held my anger
A shadow self dances behind the doors
Amidst the forgotten socks and scattered shoes
Laughing until tears come out
The past lives I've lived reminisce as one
A childish giggle met with an angry glare
The rambles of an obsessed teenager
Rumble over the space
Contained in this room
More than just a childhood lay here
The emerging mind of a woman
Angry, joyful, regret filled, and infinite
Closet doors closed with peace
My skeletons can lay in rest now

In-Between

Liminal in my own existence
Brushing the border of here and there
Existing in one place, yet without roots
With my existence fading with each face
Each new role I fall in and out of
Blurred like the reflection in the window



Space and Time

It's a comforting kind of thing
To be in a place so unknown
Soft sounds echoing
Pushing off the tile
People crowd around ready to go
A place of travel and flow

My heart is full here, in this moment
Creating space in these hallways
Wind expands tunneling through
I step out onto the platform
A slight shush closes the door
My past erased, places changing once more

Keychains

Shiny memories locked in a box
Dangling one day from my hands
Saved in a box then next
Small and compact, easy to hold close to me
Keychains with no keys
No way back to those places
No doors to unlock or homes to create
Memories of all I've done
Tied to cheap little kitsch
I'm holding my past with each one
One day I'll have more
More memories and a concrete place to hold them
I'll have a home with keys enclosed
Giving purpose to those memories
Holding my home in their shiny grasp
My past and future entwined in the present

Bindings

Bookshelves decorate my home
Stacks of books on couches, benches, baskets
Everywhere I look knowledge overflows
Libraries were our playgrounds
Peaceful silence surrounding our searches
Victory when you found coveted titles
Pages rustled and breathed
Tea and cookies crumbled beside them
Mornings and nights devouring fictional sunrises
Still now, in my room, books litter the space
Stacked in crevices and shelves
Favorites marked with ink and folded pages

Magic of Yellow

Yellow is the buttery taste of cookies
It's the soft spread of warmth when your friend laughs
It's cozy calm, the feeling of chai cradled in your hand
Sunlight is bouncing off the yellow walls of my kitchen
Pleasure is when chocolate melts under my fingertips
The smell of coffee as it drips down into the pot
The blend of spices that greets your nose from the cabinet
Mugs decorate the table with cream and sugar
Flowers, dried and fresh, litter the space like fairies
This is home, a happy space with friends
Half sprawled on the chairs and couches
The other half perched on counters and stools
People telling stories and sonnets and songs
It's soft, like a pillow that greets your head with pleasant dreams
It's a contented hum that you sound when you take a sip
Warmth spreads through your body when you simply exist
Allowing peace to overwhelm your senses with the fragrant steam
You drain your cup but before you realize it's being topped off
A friendly hand passes a cookie to go along with it
Yellow decorates my life and leaves me with these simple pleasures

My Home

Dusty, bright and spacious
Heat, pressing down on my shoulders
My home here, still on the border
Of the sea and sky
Sand from distant shores roaming in
Coating my sheets and my soles
In their multitude of stories
Days and nights blur together
As life moves past these memorials

The sharp sounds from the highway
Intermingled with the singing that wafts
From the villa down the street
Celebrating milestones and joy
Sunset orange compliments the lemons
Growing over the laundry lines
Metal squeaks as the shutters close
Light leaking in through the gaps
Bringing this time to a slow end



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