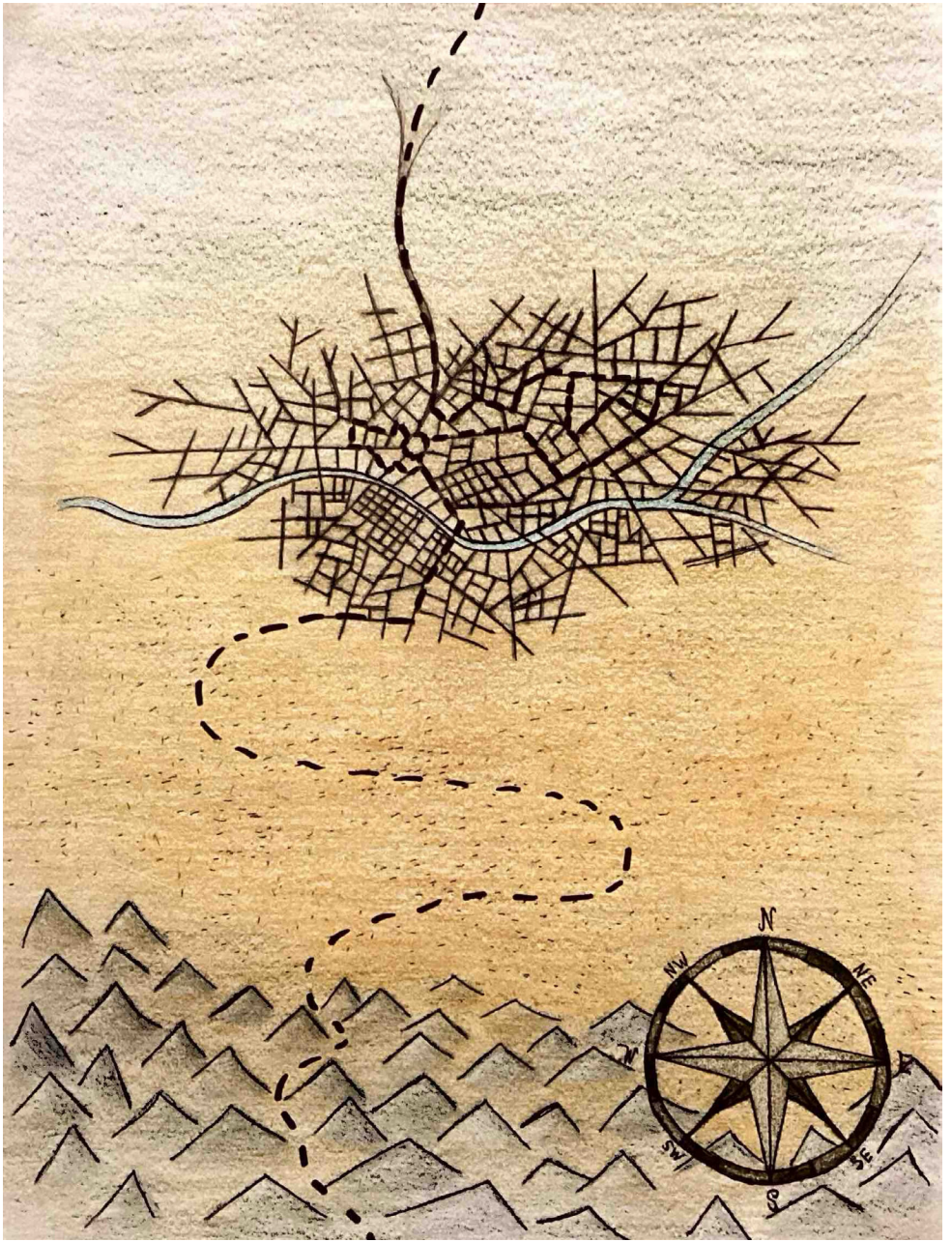
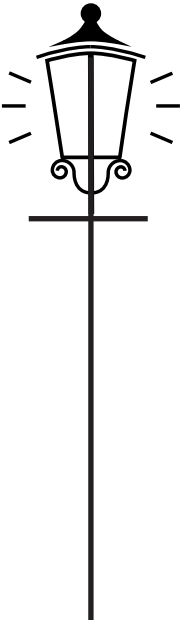


A stylized illustration of a winding road, colored in a light brown or tan hue. The road curves from the top left towards the bottom right. Along the center of the road, there is a series of dark brown, oval-shaped footprints that follow the path. The background is a solid, light green color.

The Road

The
Lantern
April
2026





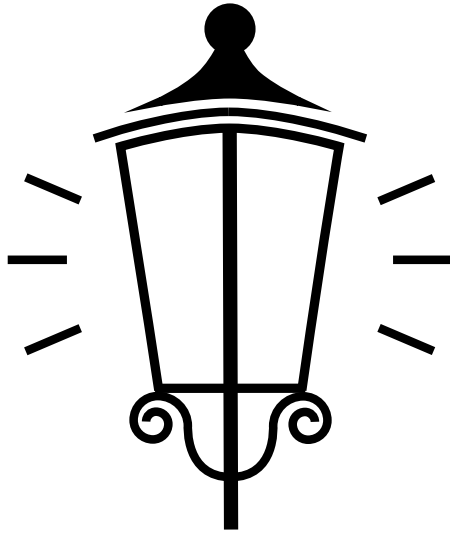
The Lantern

***The Lantern**, begun in 1932, is Houghton University's student-run literary journal that exists to illuminate the thoughts and expressions of students and the greater Houghton community through works of literary and visual art.*

The Lantern began as an offshoot of a literary competition that existed for over a decade before 1932. After that date, the Lantern, previously known as the Lanthorn, began printing the works of students and has continued to do so ever since.

The Road

April 2026



Letter from the Editors

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

~Luke 24:13-16

Dear Readers,

We had a dual meaning in mind when we chose The Road as our theme for April. This is the last formal issue of the year, and as we go out to finish the semester, we will travel home or elsewhere into the summer. Some of us will return to Houghton and some of us will continue on a new path. The road, while we are on it, can seem indeterminate. We don't know what is around the turn, beyond the horizon, or even where we will lay our head to rest. Whether as weary travelers or energetic wanderers, we continue on.

Also, we have just returned from Easter break. The resurrection of Christ may still be lingering with us as we travel back to this middle-of-nowhere university. But Christ appears on our road, too. Even though the two men walking to Emmaus do not recognize him, Christ was with them and spoke with them, taught them and broke bread for them. For now, as we journey, we see a reflection as in a mirror. Our own limitations or God's choice may keep us from recognizing Him beside us, but we will never walk alone. May you journey well, friends, whether in the rainy spring days, the hot summer nights, the frigid winter mornings, or the calm fall sun.

The road we take may be unknown, but the destination has been promised. Christ has walked among us, behind us, and before us.

Yours for lighting up the world,
Keiryn, Jonathan, Emma, and Warren

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A Long Road, A Blank Map

Kanta Ueno

*A long road opened when I was a boy.
In Japan, eighteen years ran smooth and bright.
Baseball and books, no hunger at my door.
I kept on walking, certain of the right.*

*Then I stopped short, as if the path could speak.
It asked my heart, What life are you to be?
Is this the only version I can live?
Or is my name still waiting to be said?*

*Two roads split dark beneath a stand of pines.
I chose to step outside the painted lines.
I left the safe, familiar, measured lane.
I took the unwritten road, for unknown signs.*

*Four years in America, far from home.
Seven thousand miles hung on my chest still.
Airport coffee, bitter; neon signs burned.
I crossed that distance, step by step, in time.*

*Language was rock; it scraped my mouth raw, slow.
Culture was fog that soaked my sleeves with doubt.
Prejudice, clear wire, tightened at my heel.
Some nights I heard the gate go click—shut out.*

*A long road opened when I was
My mind grew sick; I wanted to lie down.
I searched for signs that said, Stop here. Be still.
The calendar showed teeth; time ran ahead.
Tick-tick, it went; my silence paid the bill.*

*I change my pace; I change my path; I choose.
I choose who walks beside me, near or far.
I choose the reason—love, not pride or fear.
I choose my steps; my steps choose what I am.*

*Past is a record—footprints in the dust.
It reels like film across my sleepless eyes.
First school bells; dawn drills; salt sweat on my tongue.
Late walks to town-house, bone-tired, under skies.*

*Blizzards bit; I pedaled through the white wind.
The air went whoosh; the road went crunch below.
Bus windows hummed; my teammates breathed as one.
No rewinds; the miles refuse to slow now.*

*A compass sits, cold metal, in my palm.
The future is a blank map—wide, unmade.
I sprint ninety feet on red-brown clay, here.
I guard the hall's small lamp; I carve new roads.
A long road waits; I choose my way today.
I walk to choose; I choose to walk each day.*



**Jungle Bridge in the Morning Sun, Wes Anderson
Photography**

Within the dense jungle, a way across is hidden, but there.

A Forgotten Tale

Morley Sharpe

Once upon a time, there was, as there were in those times, a kingdom by the great ocean. It was like all kingdoms in the old stories, with peace and plenty and a forest nearby with magical creatures. It had brave knights who battled each other in tournaments, battles, and the occasional argument over the best way to polish armor. And, of course, it was ruled by a well-loved king and queen. But it had one difference from all those tales—a truly major difference.

Its princess was a monster.

What sort of monster? Well, she was not an ogre. Nor was she a dragon. Or a gorgon. Or a vampire. Or a werewolf. In fact, no one knew what sort of monster she was.

Oh, but there was no doubt that she was a monster. Her teeth were sharp as butchers' knives, her hands had horrible claws, and instead of skin, sickly blue-green scales covered her. But her eyes were the worst of all. They were bright white, with no depth in them at all. They just looked like two eerie will-o'-the-wisps, ready to terrorize anyone who saw them in the darkest moments of the night. Indeed, she was the most terrifying person in all the kingdom and the one all wanted to avoid.

But how did she become a monster? To put it simply, she had been born a monster. You see, the king and queen had found the poor creature as an infant at the entrance of the castle drawbridge on a particularly rainy afternoon. While they had been revolted by her when they first spied her there, the way she wailed and shivered in the biting cold (it was a windy day as well) struck them, and their consciences could not allow them to let her remain there and most likely perish. Therefore, they brought the little beast inside and cared for her. Later, after weeks of unsuccessful searching for any sign of monsters who could be her family, the king and queen decided to adopt the monster, making her the Feared Princess Revila.

Years went by, and we now come to the time of the story, when Revila was grown up. During her growth, she had been raised in a loving family where she was both loved and respected, which she deserved very much. She was a mild-mannered princess and not at all spoiled. She helped the staff with their chores, became friends with their children, and even gave rallying speeches for knights about to enter the tournaments. Of course, she had her flaws, such as a fiery temper, a hard head, and a little too much impulsiveness, but she was still a benevolent person at heart, which all in the castle knew.

But the kingdom outside the castle had different thoughts about her. At night, parents would tell their children to be good, lest the Blue Monster in Their Majesties' Court came out and prowled around for children to feast on. All would watch the tower where Revila's bedchambers were with loathing and deep fear. Houses were constructed with spikey fences sharp enough to pierce her scales in case she wanted a snack from outside her home. Each day, smugglers brought in weapons and helped stock them away in a secret place so that they could be used in an angry mob should the day come when Revila needed to be taken out. They had to keep those weapons hidden, you see, for the king and queen knew all too well that Revila's life was in danger from the people of the land, and not just the villagers but the nobles as well, who saw her not only as a monster but also as a threat to their own chances of ruling the kingdom—as such, the monarchs had outlawed all weapons in the kingdom, except for those needed for the soldiers who protected the outskirts of the forest from attacks by wolves and ghouls. This only angered the people more, however, and they decided that action must be done before the Monster came for them.

They got their chance one horrible day. Both the king and queen died of a foul illness, leaving Revila as the rightful queen. But the people would not stand for it. Having the monster as their queen was too much. With yells and roars, they grabbed the weapons and stormed the castle. Revila, who had known nothing but love from the humans around her, was horrified and confused as the villagers and nobles burst in, baying for her blood. The

knights who had befriended her throughout her life ran to protect her, but they could not stop the overpowering mob. In terror, Revila fled from the castle with them after her. They chased her deep into the forest, though they stopped when they saw that the area of the forest which she had was home to the most terrible creatures in the land. Deciding that she would be eaten up by them, the people left for their homes.

But she was not. She watched them leave from behind some trees, shock and bitterness in her heart.

“Why did they do that?? I’ve done nothing to them my entire life! Yet they say I’m the Blue Monster of Their Majesties’ Court! An infant-gobbler! A beast who has humans for breakfast! What do they think I am, an ogre?” Revila asked herself. She sat down, thinking. As she thought, her heart grew rageful and fierce at the injustice.

“Well! If they want a monster, I’ll oblige! Let’s see how they like having a Blue Monster of the Forest now!” she growled. So, she crept deeper into the forest and found a nice place to build a hut. There, she vowed to wreck her vengeance upon the kingdom. Of course, her past kindness still remained there, which kept her from killing anyone. What she did instead was rob the villagers of their livestock in the night, usually devouring them on the farmland to leave their remains behind as proof that she had struck.

It worked. The kingdom realized that their monster was anything but gone. Each day, the villagers would hunt the forest for Revila and at night set traps for her. However, she was too sneaky and slipped past their attempts. For years she enacted this revenge, bringing more terror upon the kingdom. The hunts increased. The killing of the Blue Monster grew to be the great mission of the kingdom, its driving force.

Then one year, it ended abruptly. No more livestock were attacked. The kingdom fell into bewilderment. What had happened to the Monster? Had she been slain without their knowledge? Had she died of disease or the other monsters? Or was she waiting to strike in a surprise attack? They never found out.

The truth is actually quite a happy one. For Revila found companionship once again in a human who did not fear her.

It was a summer morning when the change happened. Revila had just chowed down a couple of nice dairy cows and was heading back into the forest when she heard screams coming from inside it. They were high-pitched screams, like those belonging to a child. Alarmed, Revila headed in the direction of those screams. Soon she came upon a clearing and saw a terrible scene in front of her eyes.

There was a wagon, all broken and bent, with the two bodies of a man and woman lying next to it. Under the wagon, cowering in terror, was a little girl of around four. And atop the wagon, waiting for the girl to come out, was a monstrous, hideous witch with a sneering mouth and cruel little eyes.

Appalled at this, Revila rushed out with a roar. The witch fell over in shock and scrambled away. For while she was a beast, she had never seen any creature like Revila before and did not want to take any chances.

Revila watched the witch flee, then bent down and looked under the wagon at the girl.

“She’s gone, child. You’re safe,” she said sweetly. But the girl backed away, her eyes full of pure horror.

“No, no, I’m good! I won’t eat you!” Revila insisted. “I can get you to a safe place.” And she could, for she planned to leave the girl at one of the farms so that she could be cared for by the kindly family that lived there. However, the girl still curled up in fright.

Revila’s heart broke. This child would remain lost in those terrible woods because of her. If she were a human, the girl would come with her to be brought to safety. But since she was a monster, the girl would avoid her at all costs. In fact, if she tried to pull the girl out, she would just run away and end up in more danger than before. All because Revila was a blue monster.

She stood up, her face crumpled in guilt and grief as she turned and began to run into the forest, sobbing. She paused for a moment, then turned to look back one last time at the wagon. To her surprise, the girl was out and coming slowly toward her. No longer was fear on the child’s face. Instead, there was curiosity and...sorrow? The girl came up to her and looked into her face.

“Did I make you cry?” the girl asked, her face apologetic. Revila was startled, but nodded.

“I just wanted to help you,” she replied. The girl stared at her feet in shame.

“I’m sorry. I thought you wanted to eat me,” she mumbled.

“I know,” Revila sighed. They stood there in silence. Then Revila bent down and smiled kindly at the girl.

“Come on. There’s a farm on the edge of the forest, that way, and it’s run by a very nice family. They can take you in,” she explained, taking the girl’s hand in hers and pointing in the direction of the farm. Upon seeing the direction the farm was in, however, the girl hugged Revila tightly.

“No! I’m not going back there! Those people are mean!” she wailed.

“Pardon?” Revila was befuddled. Surely the humans had no qualms against the girl?

“They hated us! They wanted to kill us because they said Mommy and Daddy were witches! But they weren’t! They were making stuff to heal people! That’s why we had to leave! But now Mommy and Daddy are...!” She sobbed very hard into Revila’s rags.

Revila was horrified. She hugged the girl and cooed comfortingly to her, glaring in the kingdom’s direction. Once again, its close-minded ways had ruined another life. She then glanced down at the child. Or had they?

“How about you stay with me? Those people are terrified of me. Once they learn that I have you, they wouldn’t touch you at all,” she asked. The girl looked up. Her face was hopeful.

“Really?” she asked with growing joy. Revila’s answer was a smile.

After that, what is there to say? Revila took the young girl to her hut and raised her as her daughter. Without a world persecuting them because of what it thought they were, they were able to be themselves in this lovely little family. And in the end, even though there were hard times mixed in with the good times, they both lived happily ever after.

Goin' Somewhere

Musa

“Doesn't it feel good to be alive?”
~Colin Hay, “Going Somewhere”

*Born of the sea, of winters wild,
We grew and grew, grew beating hearts,
Grew limbs, grew wills that drove us out
And onto land, forming its parts:*

*Pillars of life and flying things,
Exchanging breath and life and love,
Joining our hands in war and peace,
Learning something of what's above.*

*Our magic hooves scaled mountain-walls,
Our forked tongues licked life out of sand,
And crawling still further along,
Crafted our homes out of the land.*

*And we grew more and more aligned
And farther still from the divine,
Our wisdom shaken by the stars
Our nature startled by the shine.*

*And we would ask, “what is the rain,
The snow, the sand, that we would care
So deeply for a drop, a flake,
A grain?” Yet we press on: we dare.*

*And I myself, a drop, a flake,
Fall zig-zagging with wild wind's blow.
Sometimes I see the dreaded ground,
Or else I marvel at the flow.*

*For God's bright road is loose, unknown,
Inviting and spontaneous—
Not steady as the falcon's dive,
Nor circling and vulturous.*

*Along the road, I stop to think—
How small we would be to a star!
And yet how glorious within*

*The heartbeat of a moment—
The places we call home—
The roads we take to get there.*



Allons! The Road is Before Us!, Sophia Golden
Photography

The title comes from an 1856 poem called “Song of the Open Road” by Walt Whitman. “Allons” is French for “let’s go.”

Long Trip

D. A. Bythe

He sat in his car, dead on the side of a road in Nowhere, New York. The tow was Normally, I am stimulated all day, from all directions, and from every corner of campus—a beautiful, hectic chaos that keeps my mind racing and busy with TO-DOS. It's that drive, the annoying commute—the brief stretch when my thoughts pause, only to go wild again. I could listen to music, a podcast, or maybe a national broadcast, but nothing helps. My thoughts turn blank, somewhere between the faded signs and dissolving streetlamps. Perhaps it was off exit 41 when the back roads shift into an endless expanse; a void of white lines and loose thought. I should be grateful, relieved even to have a spare moment. No deadlines, no incessant gossip. Instead, my mind is racing. Congested by traffic, hitting every possible mental pothole. The past and present are crashing together to create something that vaguely resembles regret. but it would be a while, and he had to do the one thing he'd been avoiding: sit with his thoughts. Once he sat with them too much, then decided to give them a certificate of divorce and send them on their way. But now they were back to cut up old times. He glanced at the road in his rearview mirror, twisting and turning away through a sea of dead, early spring trees. Each jagged cliff on the roadside, every sharp turn, all the blind spots, reminded him of the road he'd left behind. He thought about his parents' marriage, which he had lost years of his youth trying to fix, who were still content to live in misery. The sharp turns seemed to echo of the girl who had left him without reason or warning, a girl he had thought to spend his entire life with. And surely the jagged cliff was the unforeseen disaster of his career, falling off the edge and out of reach until there was nothing left to even see.

He wrenched his gaze away from that rear view and glanced around his car. Ten years he had spent running, searching, gradually losing hope. His vehicle was evidence of that, strewn

with luggage, empty food containers, maps, and bedding. In a cruel sort of irony, his dying car seemed like a foreshadow that he could not run forever.

So, he looked ahead at a road that looked depressingly similar to the one he'd left behind, twisting, turning, forsaken, and endless. Sure, he was headed towards the most promising job offer he'd had in years. There was a hotel room waiting that he should be able to work himself out of within a year if he saved like a miser, which he had no reason not to do. But what of it? Much like the bleak, late February scene, life had lost much of its color. Try as he might, he had failed to breathe life back into it and had long since given up trying.

A rugged engine and blinking lights shattered the silent, empty scene. A gruff man who smelled of cigarettes approached his car as he stepped out to greet him.

“Long trip, mister?”

He looked back at his dead car.

“Yeah, you could say that.”

Remote Road

Naviana Sullix

*What a journey we've been on
Through valleys, mountains, and more.
Now we stand on the edge of a road
And I wonder if this is the way home.
But where is home anymore?
You've disappeared;
So,
With confusion flooding my mind
I know there is only one solution now.
One foot in front of the other,
Following the road's path.
I must learn to travel alone
In all terrains
And to continue my journey
By walking down this remote road.*

Opposite:

Did You Know?, H.C.

Photography, Apple iPhone 13 mini

I didn't know it yet, but this photo was taken the last time I visited my grandparents' house in central Michigan, the house they built and that I'd grown up in as my family moved from place to place. It was my last bastion of stability, but people age, so they sold the house, and moved to a small condo. One of them has now passed, and the other struggles with degenerative memory issues. This image reminds me of how often we walk down a road for the last time without realizing it. The road of life is not one that can be backtracked, so we must be grateful for the time we have in the sun.



Where Roads Meet

Lykaion Theron

*You call out with an unspoken train
of emotions so deeply ingrained*

**THAT I, WHO YOU HURT STILL FOUND PEACE
AND SO IN THAT PASSENGER FREIGHT**
of emotions I pray you see

and understand that
NEITHER YOU NOR I AM ALONE
although we ride in separate freights

as Fear rides between us
**AND YOU WIELD A SHIELD TO ME
BUT CHRIST COMES WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS.**
AND I, KNOWING YOU, CHOOSE PEACE
while I pray for you to do the

same —

NOT TO DWELL ON GUILT NOR SORROW
but to uncouple the freight Fear rides
SO THAT ONE DAY WE MAY FIND
each other again —

**COUPLING AS FRIENDS OR MORE;
IF THIS LIFE STILL HAS PATHS**
left for us to cross.

~Lykaion Theron

Travel Collage

Keiryn I. Sandahl

Anticipation

White sheets covered the furniture, to gather the dust. That was the beginning of it. The suitcases, packed and padlocked, stood by a wall. The grown-ups bustled, talking in loud voices, cleaning and making phone calls and trying to find a home for the last milk carton in the fridge that we hadn't used in time.

I skidded, sock-footed, through a house transformed. The sheets concealed all the familiar things: the living room couches, the foosball table, Dad's office desk. The dining room table was a funny shape under its shroud with all the chairs resting on it. Their upturned legs protruded like too many tent poles. Everything had been pushed away from the walls and the rooms reconfigured.

The patterns of ordinary life dissolved further when Mom gave us permission to watch as many movies as we wanted, so long as we sat still in one place, out of the way. We sat on the bare living room floor, my brother, my sister, our three friends, and I. The friends came every afternoon, so of course they had to come and say good-bye.

By the middle of our second movie, we all feared not getting to finish it. Already they were loading the car. Dad lifted the suitcases two at a time and hauled them outside, leaving the screen door swinging. Soon I would crawl into my nest in the back row, next to the luggage. We would leave behind a house with the lights out, the curtains closed, the fridge unplugged, the bedrooms locked, and the furniture, so carefully tucked in its bedding and abandoned to the emptiness, awaiting our return.

Departure

Dawn was coming. The train was coming. The men sleeping on mats on the platform began to stir. As the sky shifted imperceptibly to gray, then to pink, people drifted onto the platform, huddled together in the smoky air.

My brother and I, our toes just behind the yellow line—DO NOT CROSS—craned our necks to peer down the length of the tracks. The occasional dog trotted along the gravel in the valley between the platforms. A man with a broom hopped down and crossed it on foot, while we watched him in awe.

A distant horn blared. Our parents called us back from the edge. The people pressed closer together. The gravel trembled and the din of train wheels drowned our voices. Then the grimy diesel engines thundered past the platform, blocking the sky. My brother, overwhelmed with the mighty mechanical noise of it, danced for joy.

As soon as it stopped, Mom and Dad seized our hands. The crowd rushed for the door, carrying us with them. I was propelled toward the gap between the edge of the platform and the step onto the train. When I hesitated, afraid of it, my hand almost slipped out of Mom's. She forced me forward—I had to jump. For a moment my feet kicked the air, but then they caught the step and I squeezed onto the train, Mom firm behind me.

Transit

Hoodie, earbuds, greasy hair. My music muffled the world, my eyes still bleary from the dry air on the plane. I wove through the ranks of quick-walking people, pleased that I could walk as quickly and purposefully as any of them. Did anyone study my face, as I studied theirs? To myself, reflected by fluorescent light on black glass, I appeared confident, alert, experienced. But so many others looked like that, and it betrays nothing. They could have nine hours ahead of them in this airport, or be counting the last thirty minutes. They might have just arrived or they might be leaving or they might be late. Some of them might, like me, have been dragging suitcases through airports all their lives, or perhaps

they had embarked on their first great adventure.

I was alone, sitting on a ledge by a travelator in Ho Chi Minh City. The terminal lacked benches, but I needed to get my bag off my aching shoulders. Other people sat there, too. An old woman, resting her back, perhaps, while her husband hovered. Australian tourists talking loudly about some bar somewhere. A young European couple with a toddler stopped for a time, speaking a language I couldn't place. The little curly-haired boy might have recently learned to walk, from his mother's attentiveness. He balanced himself by clutching the bars of the baggage cart, playing peek-a-boo with her between them. Then her husband knelt to show her something on his phone, and the boy, remarkably steady on his legs, decided to make an experiment of his freedom. He wandered determinedly into the oncoming stream of people. His father chased after him and cut him off, laughing – the whole family laughing. How far had they come today, and how far had they to go? Did they read on my face that I thought they were beautiful?

Tenderly, the couple strapped the boy onto his mother's back. They disappeared into the procession of strangers, wheeling their stack of suitcases. I felt I had lost traveling companions, though they probably hadn't noticed me. The toddler would not remember me, or the few minutes when we made faces at each other. All travelers part ways eventually, and our journeys are our own. Only in imagination could I play at being a passenger in someone else's mind.

Wait

Dad at the baggage check was haggling interminably with the people behind the counter. My brother and I had been spinning the empty luggage cart round in circles. We sat our little sister on the tongue of it and gave her rides to the pillar and back, until Mom noticed what we were doing and told us to stop.

By another pillar at the far end of the concourse, a group of people huddled on the floor with their bags. They wore bright fabrics and elephant pants. I stared at them because they had pale skin like I did, so I thought they must be American, too. Maybe we knew them.

“Mom, what are those people?”

My poor candid mother replied, “They’re hippies.”

“What’s a hippie?”

“I’ll tell you later.”

My weary childish body struggled with the weight of itself. I leaned on the pillar; I leaned on the cart; I leaned on the flimsy line divider, though it sagged nearly to the ground. Mom pulled me away from it, so I leaned on her legs, and then I hung on her arm, making her drag me. I thought it unfair of the world to demand uprightness of me when it took all my effort just to keep off the floor, which I treated like a poison only my shoes could safely touch. I knew about the thousands of other shoes that had trod their germs into it. I preferred having my parents puppeteer me, and when they released me I collapsed against the first support.

Passage

They keep planes dark, so people can sleep. Through the gap between the seats, I watched someone else’s Bollywood movie, following along, soundlessly, by means of the English subtitles. I was sleepless again and surrounded by sleepers. Eight hours might as well be forever, so fifteen hours was no longer than that. It was one eternal night in the belly of the plane.

My thoughts lurched maddeningly in circles, like a rusty train powered only by its momentum. Life outside the plane had become a vague notion, irrelevant to the present, convincing only

because I was in the habit of believing my memories connected to reality. They could just as easily have been something read in a book and vividly imagined. Neither did the promise of landing have any certain outline; it was meaningless for the business of existing in the box between the arms of my chair, the back of my chair and the back of the chair in front of me. Exhaustion had decayed my impatience.

On a whim, I pried open my window. Ordinarily, at high altitudes, blankets of clouds deflect the sunlight with blinding brilliance. I intended to dazzle myself for a moment, just to dispel the artificial night. Instead, the sky below was cloudless, and I could see the ocean clearly through miles of air, and even the waves wrinkling the surface.

White flecks appeared on the horizon. They speckled the sea, sporadically at first, but then more and more of them, floating in clumps. They bewildered me. I thought they must be flowers, lilies thick upon the waters at the end of the world—Narnia's Silver Sea, from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*—and impossible as that must be, I could think of nothing better to believe. Why should I argue with my eyes?

Willing, then, to believe I was witnessing the fringes of the world, I opened the flight map. It was not Narnia, but only Greenland. What I took for lilies were, of course, ice floes.

Minutes later, the sea receded upon a gravel shore, and we soared above a snow-covered wilderness with no roads, no roofs, not a sign of a person or animal. It was a country of black mountains, riddled with rivers, bleak and majestic. At last the clouds swallowed it.

When I finally closed the window, it was like waking from a dream.

Arrival

The air conditioning in the car was cool and pleasant after a day in the sun, but steady waves of warmth pulsed under my skin. I'd kicked off my shoes. I had sore feet from walking all day. It was a happy ache, a full ache. It was good to be weary at the end of a summer afternoon. We were riding home—though only home to our grandparents' house.

I cradled my head on the strap of my seatbelt. In my lap I held the stuffed owl I got at the zoo. I ran my fingers through her white plush feathers, all soaked in sunshine, thinking seriously of what name I should give her. Names were important; names had to fit.

The piles of clouds that ride high in American skies painted the highway with patches of shadow, flying along almost as swiftly as we. We glided apace with eighteen-wheelers, Jeeps, and cement-mixers. My little brother knew his vehicle vocabulary by heart. He was too drowsy to talk, but he watched them, rapt, his chin in his hands.

I tried out lots of names for my owl before I struck on the one: as soon as I thought of it, I felt a drowsy conviction that it belonged to her. I whispered the name aloud, kissed her head solemnly, to seal the appointment, and I tucked her under my arm, content.

Ivy grew on a wall by the highway, and the wall went on and on, rising and falling with the contours of the hills—mesmerizing. The pavement shimmered, and ahead of us stretched a road like gray ribbon. The two lines of traffic streamed smoothly by each other, oncoming, ongoing, but nevertheless engulfed in peace, their very restlessness at rest.

Given Moments

Musa

*We are called into the immediacy of the moment;
God heaves a voice out of transcendence,
Into a wordless sound, feeling, silence,
Calling us into the present.*

*The moment is shaped by the living God
Who is generous in revealings and revisings,
Emptying into a nothingness, fetus, infant, boy, man,
Turning evil into nothing, nothing into love,
Perpetually—even in the stillness, God is there
Perpetually leaving eternity and entering love.*

*There are times we are inside silence and God,
And God is glad when this is so, and so it is God's will,
That even when darkness covers the earth, gongs are noisy
and cymbals clang,*

*God makes the darkness shine, the noise into music;
At any given moment, we might not only think and believe,
But taste, touch, hear, see, experience,
In immediacy, time, the moment,
The Love of God.*

*At any given moment, we might see the shining darkness,
Sometimes inside of us, always in God;
We might have the peace of God from whom everything
Comes from or else becomes opposed to,
And it can be very simple, tangible, yes—*

*And so it is with things, nature, time.
And so it is with God.*

On Loneliness (A Backwards Poem)

Alayna Ackers

I felt abandoned.

*In all the ravaging stretches of this path, I could never honestly say
I found a faithful friend to grip my dusty hands and tug me
forward.*

I cannot doubt

*These wild trails are only a small region of a much grander land,
but*

I often wonder if

This wandering road I trek upon will carry me home.

Despite my strivings and futile searching,

All I grasp now is that

Shivering, trembling sense of loneliness.

Far behind lies the

*Promise of the light, given to me by God at the golden dawn of my
journey.*

I believe one mountain-sturdy truth and

Feel a foreign, wind-wavering truth:

It was never the point to

Brave this journey with another;

From the first step I took on this way, I was always destined to

Walk alone, stumbling against despair at every other turn.

I know God will never let me

Forget my Savior's love, but

Fear tempts me to

Forsake this uphill road.

I cannot say to myself

(Though I strain with every ounce of strength left within me)

"I will press on."

*I will press on!
Though I strain with every ounce of strength left within me,
I cannot say to myself,
“Forsake this uphill road.”
Fear tempts me to
Forget the Lord’s love, but
I know God will never let me
Walk alone, stumbling against despair at every other turn.
From the first footstep on this way, I was always destined to
Brave this journey with another.
It was never the point to
Feel a foreign, wind-wavering truth:
I believe the one mountain-sturdy truth and
Promise of the light, given to me by God. At the golden dawn of my
 journey,
Far behind lies the
Shivering, trembling sense of loneliness.
All I grasp now is that,
Despite my strivings and futile searching,
This wandering road I trek upon will carry me home.
I often wonder if
These wild trails are only a small region of a much grander land,
 but
I cannot doubt
I found a faithful friend to grip my dusty hands and tug me
forward.
In all the ravaging stretches of this path, I could never honestly say
I felt abandoned.*

The Road to God

Emma Dainty

*I walk along this weary way,
This weary road to God,
And think there is no more to say,
That loneliness will rule the day
Along this road to God.*

*Does this path in Eden's flow'rs end—
This dragging road to God—
Or will it into sheer void wend,
Where I, unmet by Foe or Friend,
Will rue this road to God?*

*Or if it be a joyous gate
Concludes this road to God,
Can I withstand the taxing wait,
Can I maintain my faith-faint state
And keep this road to God?*

*Yet while I trudge on, desolate,
Upon this road to God,
He still will not let me forget
I'm not alone or friendless set
To walk this road to God.*

*There walking down the dusty lane—
This very road to God—
Ahead All-Time, behind harsh pain,
Breaking bread to deal Despair's bane,
Love treads His road to God.*

The Road Beneath the Dead

Lykaion Theron

The Road Beneath the Dead
The gravel sings with one wrong step.

Each stone remembers a name

even the wind won't speak.
I've walked this road so long
I can tell the living by how they pretend.

Grief is a room—

you think you've left it,
until you try to breathe
and find the air still full of ash.
I once mistook love for mercy.
I thought faith meant waiting.

It doesn't.
Faith is the muscle that moves
after belief is gone.
Life breaks the quiet.

Not like thunder, but a snap
of something sacred—
bone, vow, breath.
And still, I walk.

Because someone must bear the hush
between what lived
and what refuses to stay

—dead.

~Lykaion Theron



Parting Thoughts

Musa

*Morning wet with dew,
Scent of freshness, new life's bloom:
Rest in the stillness.*

*Some final scribbles.
How to put in words—thanks? Goodbye?—
The road leads onward.*

Author, Artist, & Musician Bios



Alayna Ackers

Alayna Akers is a junior Childhood Education Major with a concentration in Writing. Stories, art, and long walks in the woods are a few of her favorite things (besides Jesus).

Wes Anderson

Junior, Environmental Science.

Emma Dainty

I am Emma Dainty, member of the 2023 London Cohort, editor on the Lantern staff, consultant at the Writing Center, amateur birder, expert on all things Tolkien and Star Wars, and proponent of the Oxford comma.

Sophia Golden

Sophomore.

Lykaion Theron

The name is not a name. It is a wound the world remembers. These poems were not written. They were unearthed—from ash and bone. Not born. Not named. Only summoned. These poems are what answered. Only the lingering certainty remains: something ancient has breathed here. If the pages feel cold, it is because they remember what the sun was never meant to see. ~Lykaion Theron, Freshman

Music QR Code

Follow this QR code to visit our YouTube channel with music that has been published in previous Lantern issues. Listen and enjoy!



Do YOU want to submit something to the Lantern?

Whether you are a skilled writer, artist, or musician with many years of experience, or a brand new writer, artist, or musician who wants to share their work for the first time, we are delighted to see your work!

Be on the lookout for the first submissions email of the Fall 2026 semester!

Additionally, if you are interested in following the Lantern's story throughout this year (and years to come), join our group on Campus Groups, visit our website hulantern.wordpress.com, or follow us on Instagram at [@h.u.lantern](https://www.instagram.com/h.u.lantern).

Also, please visit our Campfire bulletin board past Java 101 to read poetry and pin up your own. The submissions prompt will also be posted here.

Yours for lighting up the world,
The Lantern Editors



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