

Boundary Street Volume V

Carnegie Mellon University
Creative Writing
&
The Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts
Literary Arts

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Volume V

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Contents

- Katie Doyle, CAPA
My Cat Has Died
- Jackie Brook, CMU
Static Time
- Dani Zions, CAPA
A Waste of Time
- Rachael Brown, CMU
Salting the Earth
- Kaneisha Lloyd, CAPA
The Newspaper: History's Scrapbook
- Alexander Chen, CMU
Particular About Courting
- Isaac Munro, CAPA
Mt. Jackson, Virginia
- Mark Cullen, CMU
Social Commentary
- Hannah Tuchin, CAPA
Thoughts From Under the Staircase
- Katie Thomson, CAPA
Cinderella
- Alayna Frankenberry, CMU
What the psychic might have told my grandmother when she was still a child
- Megan Huerbin, CAPA
Palm Reading and Tarot Cards For Deborah
- Renata Nelson, CAPA
Going Home
- Michael J. Hartwell, CMU
Nocturne
- Amanda Nichols, CAPA
Bolero
- Alexis M. Papalia, CAPA
A Year In Two Lines
- Will Kim, CMU
Uniforms

Lauren Johnson, CAPA

Good and Bad Hair Days

Christina Lim, CMU

Lessons

Ashleigh Early, CAPA

Dear Auntie

Stephanie Reynolds, CMU

Our Vacation into the (Honey)Moon

Randi Campbell, CAPA

Essence

Leah Selekman, CAPA

Outer Glow

Lotise Marie Silano

girls will be girls

Alexis Milhee, CAPA

Cautioners

Sarah Wilson, CMU

At Lowe's Hardware Store

Sarah Geisler, CAPA

Vegetable

Lindsay Buckley, CAPA

Stripped

Leah Wolkovich, CMU

China Patterns

Laura Crelli, CAPA

Family Pasta

Boundary Street Volume V

Katie Doyle, CAPA

My Cat Has Died

Don't let go.
My small
demented
cat has died.
The world is flat
and I have fallen off.
Don't let go.
At a party
where I only know
the person who brought me
I think about my cat.
And I want to cry.
Because I want
the cat.
Not
the party.
Don't let go.
I want to go
back to Australia.
My girlfriend is there.
She has a cat.
A cat just like mine.
I could go
and I could steal it
and maybe
I wouldn't miss *my* cat as much.
Don't let go.
My girlfriend
gave me a necklace
for my birthday.
A locket.
With a picture.
A picture of my cat
and I keep it
in a box
next to my bed
when I don't wear it.
Don't let go.
I won't let go.

Jackie Brook, CMU

Static Time

Tick.
My tired eyes
roll and close,
your electric red
blinks and whispers
"Eight-forty-three."

I crack each knuckle
in synch with your
second hand, third hand.

I heave and breathe,
counting
one one thousand,
two one thousand.
but still,
"Eight-forty-three."
Tock.

Dani Zions, CAPA

A Waste of Time

You sit in the chair, clutching
the chair, palms greasing the legs
of the chair as, face contorted,
you try to remember something
you never learned, because
who paid attention in the digital age?
Life can be hard sometimes.

You stare down the clock.
Big hand
on little hand
on second hand
that keeps ticking
like the engine
that could, in the end.
Forever. It doesn't stop as you do,
so you catch your breath, trying
to stick ticks on fingers until
the sticks form a mound of time
as they collide.
You've lost it.

The minute and hour hands sit
opposite. What does that mean?
Suddenly, they're a peace sign
the second at 12. You stare
because it's pretty, forgetting
you needed to be at your daughter's
dance class twenty minutes ago
or in three hours, maybe fifteen
on a clock that thinks in terms
of half-days, thinks with its hands.
This moment, you contemplate
over counting. Hands slip
off chairs, seconds off faces,
Hickory Dickory Dock.

Rachael Brown, CMU

Salting the Earth

White isomers, imported on the flaming heads
of comets, make their way to the summit of your morning

eggs, and to the stick of dynamite originally thought
so devastating that no one would risk using it for warfare.

It is the guts of all those novelty shakers you brought as gag gifts
to the office Christmas party. They say we want it inherently.

Traitors, in the vein of swine, were once met with salt.
The Duke of Aviero and the Soviet Army both suffered

an affliction as embarrassing as it was Assyrian.
In this infamous land nothing may be built for all time.

Dad whispered to me that these are the shoulders
civilization has always rested upon, the archetypal crystal

that can immortalize the dead. On the highway, we passed
a pyramid pregnant with hypertension, tranquil as a snow drift.

Kaneisha Lloyd, CAPA

The Newspaper: History's Scrapbook

Genies in a bottle
leaping off the page.
The bold letters jump out at you
like students out of their seats,
saying *read me, read me*.
An old-fashioned book cover
made from the comic section
passes history's time
as the class writes an essay
about what they did
over summer vacation.

Your stiff figure
takes over the faces of passengers.
Appealing to the men
in business suits sitting on the subway
with the newspapers folded delicately on their
creased pants.
Their excuse
to sit in a coffee shop
checking the stocks
looking up at the time every five minutes.
Grabbing a black hole in a mug
of cream and sugar keeps your attention
only until Wall Street writes something interesting.

Grandma shaking
the paper for better reading,
like an eight ball,
asking a question,
desiring an answer.
Looking for the obituary
of John-Campbell
as her granddaughter dances
to the sound of Madonna
in the entertainment section.

Alexander Chen, CMU

Particular About Courting

A geisha's face is deceit in a pink box.
So pretty and welcoming, it doesn't matter
if the red lips leak subtle venom.

Talking becomes weak; knowing
is the chain that holds back the next inquisition.
Those questioned will wear organza veils.

Sentences act as leftover change in denim
back pockets. Skipping the verbal exchange makes
the game moot, but honesty in a locket will still be there.

Male X and Male Y walk down a stone path,
words unspoken between them. The softness
settles in the air, waiting for a moment to glow.

His dark eyes don't pierce but rather warm me,
then African jaguars line up next to one
after another in my stomach. I reach
for his hands, they are inviting. He kisses me
as the lights darken; midnight is upon us.
Is the lie really black and filled with debris?
I conquer allure and the game of playing coy.
However unlike Kayoko, I am not that skilled
in the clever art of conversations.

Isaac Munro, CAPA

Mt. Jackson, Virginia

Each farm flashed by the window
fast enough that they all became same.
Every barn was a clone,
with identical tall silos and big wood doors.
Overrun castles of the not-quite frontier.
Every cow was a twin to the next.
Every horse was the same dirt-brown.
These farms had no white mares.
These farms had no black stallions.
Every cornfield danced
to the one acoustic tune I couldn't hear.
Every sign was just green with a flash
of white letters that were all the same, just rearranged.
It wouldn't have mattered if I was asleep.

After the Mason-Dixon line
we plummeted South but I didn't feel different.
We slowed down when we entered the town
so now I could see people.
Gray-haired farmers leaning on rakes
staring at us, the minivan circus parade.
Sandy-haired youths gnawing on that long gold grass
like I thought they only did in movies.

We drove past the blindingly white church
but somehow I had time, this time,
to take in everything.
A small graveyard stood proudly behind it,
showing off the proud dead in a Bluegrass trophy case.
The steeple was unremarkably high.
The Confederate flag dangled above the door
and I didn't know to act like I'd seen a ghost.
I looked at the Star-Spangled Banner's
twisted cousin, and I didn't know why I should be appalled.
This church was built by slaves in 1907,
forty-two years after slavery was abolished.
That flag was put up by black slaves,
forty-two years into free life.
You don't need a rocket
to go to another planet.

Mark Cullen, CMU

Social Commentary

The righteous Sea-Moose came ashore
Tomorrow or a day before
That is to say he came today
Round Twelve to Noon I think I'll say

Round Twelve to Noon he made a leap
A most extraordinary feat
It lifted him out of the sea
Onto the shores of Tripoli

In Tripoli the moose did trot
Much further than you would've thought
But not far from the woody dock
That is to say, around the block

Around the block his path was made
And that is how the road got paved.

Hannah Tuchin, CAPA

Thoughts From Under the Staircase

And you're coming through in stereo
in a garden state,

where the woods of our fathers burned
down years ago. And the boy next door
is hunched over his sink, while the maple
watches, but nothing but tears are leaving his
body. While the paper turns to ash before we
can even begin to read.

And you're a busted guitar on Bourbon after the
rains came flooding in. And all your former lovers
have their make-up stains on your lips and bed.
Each new moon lies over a fading star. And each kiss brings
you closer to truth, that the marks on your wrist weren't
your biggest mistake.

You smile and hold him like you'll never let
him fade. But his broken eyes are glued to that
piece of canvas that you forgot to paint.
Behind your hair and eyeliner is the soul I never
touched. And each word on this page is smearing
under my hand, becoming a smudge on my palm
where your name used to be.

The records in my corner are gathering dust,
fading into the wall, and no one but the
starving artist can find them. Is it all just a dream
or am I losing my mind? Because the only things real are
the laces on my shoes and the wasted ink dripping
from my mouth.

An off-white dish has fallen,
shattered on my floor, and I swear I can see your
face on the smallest piece if I just close my eyes.
And I know I can touch you if I can last just 10 more
minutes in this town. And the boys
with the tight pants are pressing against each other,
and you begin to sweat because you want so bad to be
them, for your speed racer to come and save you.

And you're passing out in a symphony of sounds,
in a dark and lonely place, filled with memories, mirrors, and dreams.
And it fades to gray. So you open your arms and fall back,
as you hit the ground, numb. And I smile because
you finally got what you needed.

Katie Thomson, CAPA

Cinderella

In every girl's dream
she wants to be
Cinderella,
glass slippers,
and a fairy godmother.
A carriage to
drive her to the ball.

But when you get
older, all the dreams
you had when you
were little turn
into something
sketchy and
provocative.

Lucy In the Sky with Diamonds
becomes a Beatles
drug trip.
Telytubbies
are gay
and Cookie Monster
is bulimic.
Cinderella
talks to mice
about going to
a dance, and
her evil
step-sisters
look like drag queens.

The worst part
of Cinderella
is that she lost her shoe.
I've never been that
disgraceful, that
outrageous,
shocking,
shameful,
dishonorable,

