



THE NORTH STAR

VOLUME 1



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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

On behalf of the English Undergraduate Students' Association (EUSA), we are proud to present the very first issue of *The North Star*, an EUSA Journal. We were blessed with a great number of submissions, delightful and unique and thought-provoking pieces of writing composed by students of York University. Each poem, story, academic essay, and even mere stream of consciousness was an absolutely pleasure to read. We would like to thank everyone who gave us a chance and trusted us with your wonderful work.

As we write this, with the world at the brink of collapse, we hope for the safety and health of everyone around us and try to hold on to the little moments of joy. We hope that this journal, though merely a few pages long, brings a smile to your face and a temporary escape.

Thank you and see you next year!

Daminee Salahuddin & Cedric Cruz
Editors



A HOME IN PHILADELPHIA

The angel prophesized:
"Brothers fight, as brothers do.
But I have come to peace now
And the same shall come to you".

Awakened by a knock,
The screaming grew and grew.
"Your brother's died!"
my mother cried.
Yet another dream come true.

A HOME IN MESOPOTAMIA

Interwoven with mascara, deceit trickles down.
Dry tears like those of a crocodile kiss the ground.
All it took was: "what are we eatin' this eve..."
But interrupted was she as he got up to leave.

She started watering her lashes by the eye-full,
But, much to her chagrin, he doesn't buy bull.
He may resemble one but, she, a blood sucking leach.
Thirsty like his two sons ... a horn from each.

Again, he arose, looking at her two lips,
Crossed as he was - he gripped the devil's smooth hips.
He, her King, and she, his Queen,
No better couple was ever seen,
Nor had ever been.

BY BRENNAN "ED LANPO" NEWMAN

THE DEMISE OF TESS DURBEYFIELD

BY MANDREET BHARJ

THOMAS HARDY'S novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is a work of realistic prose fiction that explores the downfall of the protagonist Tess Durbeyfield, who becomes a victim to a mixture of fate and impulsive personal choices. While fate serves to signify predestined decisions and coincidences that cannot always be justified, rash personal choices contribute to the fate of Tess. In the novel, although the uncontrollable aspects of Tess's fate illustrate her gradual downfall through both the unforeseeable situations and Tess's interactions with other characters that she is bound to meet, Tess's personal choices to engage in acts impulsively also result in dire consequences that impact her life throughout the novel. In the juxtaposition of the "unchangeable" and the "preventable," this novel shows the demise of a protagonist who is bound to fall victim to a tragic life.

To begin, the uncontrollable aspects of Tess Durbeyfield's fate make themselves known through her father's actions in the very beginning, Tess's physical appearance, and the baby that results from an unplanned pregnancy. First, the encounter that Tess's father, John Durbeyfield, experiences with Parson Tringham ultimately sets up the course of Tess's life. In meeting Parson Tringham, John becomes aware that he is the "lineal representative of the ancient and

knightly family of the D'Urbervilles" (Hardy 13). Without much skepticism, John accepts Tringham's words as true and relishes in knowing that he will no longer be a "commonest feller in the parish" (14). From the very beginning of the novel, Hardy introduces readers to the inevitable revelation that shapes Tess's family's entire life; their interaction only serves as a chain reaction and sets Tess's discourse in life towards a downfall. It eventually becomes no surprise to readers when John's celebratory night of excessive drinking immediately after being informed results in Tess having to run her father's errands the following day. Since the "poor man can't go" (35), Tess becomes responsible for her father's commitment, and the result is the next uncontrollable situation that Tess finds herself in. As the story progresses, Tess eventually is obligated to work to support the family and seek work outside of her home. In addition to the inconvenience that Tess's father creates in the first phase of the novel, Tess's physical appearance proves to attract the attention of those who encounter her, contributing to her gradual downfall. Readers become aware of Tess's first encounter with Angel Claire from a distance at the beginning of the novel. Angel's feeling of regret for "act[ing] stupidly" (24) and not choosing to dance with the "pretty maiden" (24) becomes vital

in understanding how quickly Tess's fate could have been redefined; readers are left wondering how Tess's tragic life could have been preventable if the two had interacted in the beginning, which would have resulted in a completely different discourse for Tess. Instead of Angel, Tess's beauty ends up capturing the attention of another man, further compromising her optimistic future. Her beauty additionally plays a negative role in her relationships with her friends since Tess's beauty undermines her friends', presenting fate with the opportunity to continue provoking her downfall through something unforeseeable. She is unaware of the 'consequences' of being beautiful and remains oblivious to the impact of her physical appearance. Only after her encounter with Alec d'Urberville does she become "aware of the spectacle she present[s]" (50) with all the flowers on her. This particularly appears odd since Tess's shyness comes from her being aware of the obvious attention she receives from the flowers alone; throughout the novel, Tess is surrounded by attention primarily on the basis of her appearance and yet, she remains somewhat oblivious.

Moreover, Tess's appearance then arguably correlates directly to the responsibility of giving birth to a child and this unforeseeable circumstance contributes to her downfall. Even though Tess's decision to engage in a sexual act is a choice, the consequence of carrying a child out of wedlock presents itself as an embodiment of her fate. Of course, the result of engaging in

this act is partly because of her beauty which seems to tempt Alec. However, becoming pregnant and giving birth to a boy who dies shortly after presents itself as an outcome of fate. Arguably, it can be imagined that Tess is 'punished' for having a child out of wedlock and, as punishment, her fate condemns her child to death. In the death of her son, who she called "Sorrow the Undesired," fate takes away Tess's son from her in the hopes that the "intrusive creature ... bastard gift of shameless" (108) is altogether removed. The narrator's reference to her son as "intrusive" furthermore indicates a disruption of the natural order that is imposed in this society: in killing Tristian, Tess becomes aware of the unforeseeable circumstance to which she has become subjected. This undesirable fate of her son only further proves that Tess is essentially doomed and her change from a "simple girl to a complex woman" (112) indicates how Tess's life is forever shaped as a result of her pregnancy.

Now that I have established the ways in which Tess's gradual downfall is illustrated through unforeseeable situations, this essay will now focus on how her interactions with the other major characters, Alec and Angel, illustrate her gradual downfall as well. First, Tess's interactions with Alec arguably plays the greatest role in determining her downfall. Ted Spivey indicates how the "glory of [Tess] is in [her] doomed defiance of [her] destiny" (181) and it "cannot be fully realized except at the sight of the fall of a great soul" (183). It is only until the end in

which Tess realizes and accepts her fate. However, the actions of Alec begin to propel this ‘doomed defiance.’ Readers come to know that Tess only seeks out Alec because of the accidental death of her horse, Prince. Since she feels responsible for the death of her horse, she feels as if she “ought to do something” (Hardy 42) and be the one in charge of getting help. Already, her fate is propelled by an incident that is arguably inevitable. What Tess is unaware of is that, by seeking help, she is destined to meet someone who will complicate her future in many ways. It becomes ironic to readers that in finding a means to release the burden on her family, she indirectly leads herself to another one. Tess expresses her distaste for Alec, proving to readers that unlike Angel, Alec serves as a disturbance in her life. By implying that Tess is unable to “understand” Alec’s intentions “till [it] is too late” (89), readers can also see the way in which her naivety in interacting with Alec also contributes to her downfall. He soon becomes the father of her child and the repercussions of meeting Alec are reflected throughout the story; Tess’s fate bounds the two to meet and engage in acts that she remembers throughout the novel. However, there is a sense of regret in her words and in engaging with a man whom she is bound to meet, she is bound to make mistakes through her error in judgement of people. She thinks that there are “better women than [herself]” (160), illustrating how the interactions with one man significantly negatively impacts her for the remainder of

her life.

In addition to Alec, Tess’s interactions with Angel also contribute to her fate and, by being bound to meet Angel, Tess’s life begins a gradual downfall. Readers become aware of Angel’s presence very early in the novel, foreshadowing that Angel will later impact Tess’s life. I previously mentioned how Tess’s fate could have been different if Angel had decided to interact with Tess from the start; his inability to do is arguably just a part of their fates and, though he is bound to meet Tess eventually, his presence later on only serves as a key moment of her downfall. After her relationship with Alec comes to an end, Tess constantly feels as if she has made a bad decision, directly impacting the future she has with Angel. She is constantly hesitant when she is around him and refuses to marry him, claiming that she will “not [be] [a] fine lady” (192) and therefore, is not compatible with Angel. Not only do we continue to see Tess’s hesitation with Angel as the direct consequence of her interactions with Alec, we are also exposed to Tess’s inability to commit to a new relationship. This serves as another reminder of the life that Tess could have experienced with Angel if Alec and she did not cross paths. To add on, when Angel learns about Tess’s sexual life and her dead infant, he momentarily leaves her over “such a grotesque—prestidigitation [act] as that” (248), setting Tess in discourse. Fate becomes responsible for bringing Tess and Angel together, but it is also responsible for separating the two from one another. In leaving Tess because of her past decisions

(which she is unaware would continue to impact her life and relationships), Tess's interaction with Angel plays a key moment in her downfall. To add on, during the time of their separation, Tess confesses to Alec that it is "through [him]" (338) that Angel leaves her, making Alec accountable for the problems in the marriage. Readers then become aware of Tess's murder of Alec because of the disruption he causes in her marriage, further spiraling Tess towards her demise. The acts of coincidences and circumstances that Tess experiences before she meets both Alec and Angel illustrate how her interactions with them are bound by fate and in engaging with these men, Tess experiences her gradual downfall.

Although the uncontrollable aspects of Tess's fate contribute to her downfall, whether it is the result of unforeseeable situations or her interactions with others, Tess does make personal choices that appear rather impulsive and results in dire consequences which negatively impacts her throughout the novel and results in her downfall. This essay will lastly indicate how Tess's choices to have sex with Alec and eventually murder Alec serve as impulsive decisions with great consequences towards her future. First, Tess's decision to engage in sexual intercourse is something she regrets throughout the entire novel, impacting her relationship with her future husband. Although it becomes clear that "Most of the misery" from others' opinions "ha[s] been generated by her conventional aspect," (104), Tess would not regret having

her baby if the circumstances of her society change. Tess is subjected to the "socially-conditioned views of life" (Herbert 91) which influences her decision of regret for conceiving a child out of wedlock. She additionally regrets engaging with Alec because of the fight that erupts as a result. Readers understand how her feelings of regret are shaped by those around her and how one impulsive decision results in circumstances that affect her future marriage directly. Though having a child is arguably a part of Tess's fate, choosing to engage with Alec is instead a rash personal decision which Tess regrets, making it no surprise that she "loathe[s] and hate[s] [her]self for" (Hardy 89) it. Her decision to withhold this information from Angel is another personal decision and, by informing him after they are married, readers can sympathize with Angel for being kept unaware of his wife's previous child. Tess's personal choices result in consequences that negatively impact herself, her marriage, and her relationships with others.

Furthermore, Tess's decision to murder Alec is another impulsive decision which not only results in her execution but is an action based solely on her feelings. Tess expresses her distaste for Alec throughout the novel, reminding him that she "ha[s] [not] sincerely loved" (88) him and that there is no possibility of them getting together in the future. Her cold attitude towards Alec confuses readers about her feelings; Tess claims to not like Alec, but she does engage in sexual acts with him and she does decide

to work near him, keeping Alec in close proximity to her while increasing the chances of their fates intertwining on several occasions. However, when she marries Angel, Tess is arguably “driven by forces within [her] that act[s] as [a] tragic flaw” (Spivey 184) and, at the cost of saving her marriage, she murders Alec. Tess’s “tormenting impulse” (185), due to her former decisions in life, results in an impulsive decision to hurt a man who re-enters her life. Arguably, Tess’s initial decision to strike Alec for telling her to “leave that mule [she] call[s] husband” (351) may seem like a justifiable decision, but the blood she draws also serves as a foreshadowing of Alec’s fate. Tess does eventually kill Alec; however, it is important to note that she attacks him because of his comments about her relationship both times. In ways, her impulsive acts seem to indicate the lack of control she has regarding her feelings, leaving a negative impact on her life. The extent to what Tess would do for Angel is seen towards the end when she confesses that she would rather die than “live for [Angel] to despise” (Hardy 418) her. In ways, Tess accepts her fate towards the ends, but readers understand how both the mixture of fate and impulsive decisions act as the demise of Tess. She is merely a “sport” for the “President of the Immortals” (420), implying that her predetermined fate is set to result in a tragic downfall. Her choices only slightly impact her future; the ending of the novel suggests that she is bound to be doomed and experience a gradual downfall.

In conclusion, the contribution of both fate and personal choices leads to the gradual downfall of Tess Durbeyfield in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. Although the unforeseeable situations and introduction of people that Tess is bound to meet acts on the basis of fate, Tess’s personal choices to engage in acts impulsively also results in dire consequences which continue to lead to her downfall. In contrasting the two throughout the novel, Thomas Hardy effectively illustrates the demise of someone he calls a “pure woman.”

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DEMONS

BY KELLY RAMNARINE

Every night I lie awake,
Unable to sleep
The silence of the night overtakes me
That's when it happens.
It hits like the wind on an Autumn afternoon
It surrounds me. overwhelms me
The thoughts. the memories cave in
The darkness grabs hold of me
I'm unable to escape it tonight
It's got me.
I lay there staring at the ceiling
A mixture of closing
And opening
Unaware I can't just shut them out.
They just linger there
Taunting me
Breaking down all I've built
In a matter of months
Just to be broken in one night
That's all it took
For it to come crashing
I feel myself disappearing bit by bit
Losing the battle
The woman I once was,
Just gone.
No more.
I lay there effortlessly watching myself
—become nothing
Feel like nothing.

ONE LEFT FOOT

BY ANDREW ORAM

I don't know if I like it, but my sister says I do.
I can never stop doing it. I've lost control and I don't think that's safe.

Maybe tomorrow I can groove to music made yesterday.
But who has enough time to be happy anymore?

I can jump. I can pirouette. I can limbo.
I'm unbeatable when I move to the funk.

I'm kamikaze when I hit the dance floor.
I wonder if I can be blown away.
Not with this dj in his mismatched socks.

I hate djs anyway. They take control of your mind.
But I won't tell, like a Parisian mime.

Disco balls don't make any sense, but I stare regardless.
I want it to be my friend. I need a friend, like dancing.

As I break in the dance floor, I've got so many moves.
I've stolen them all, but who can tell?

I spy a girl crying. Is the music that bad? Or is it my dancing?
Purple's my colour. Tell me otherwise. She seems to like it.

Permission to cut in? Or is she dancing alone?
Can I dance with you in dark corners?
Will you tell your secrets to my dancing shoes?

If dancing is my life, is life dancing?

It's that girl again. She's been watching me.
Did I stay too long?

Or is it my dancing?

ANGEL IN THE ATTIC: THE HARDSHIPS FACED BY FEMALE SLAVES

BY NATASHA HICKEY

INCIDENTS IN *the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) is an autobiography written by Harriet Jacobs, a fugitive slave from North Carolina, who was severely sexually harassed for most of her life by her degenerate master, James Norcom. Jacobs was not only tormented by Norcom, but also his wife, who became jealous and spiteful towards the then 15-year-old slave. Norcom even forbade Jacobs from marrying a free black man who she loved as a young woman. When Harriet realized that Norcom was intent on keeping her enslaved no matter the cost, she decided in desperation to have children out of wedlock with a man she didn't truly love. When that plan ultimately failed, she finally resorted to going into hiding.

For seven years, she was forced to watch her children grow up from a peephole in the attic of a shed. When she finally had the chance to escape that wretched condition to the free city of New York, she was still faced with the threat of her master's persistence, until his eventual death a decade later. Despite the momentous victory of escaping slavery and her tyrant, she still felt full of shame. To understand why, one must note that while Jacobs was living her life as a slave, the 19th century Victorian ideals of womanhood were very socially pervasive and influential.

To further understand the Victorian gender roles, one may look to Virginia Woolf's *Professions for Women* (1931) as a

source. Woolf described her inner struggle vividly; the fight to flourish in her career as a writer, while grappling with the famous Victorian "Angel of the House" ideal.

The idea of the Angel, the perfect Victorian woman, was that of submissiveness, utter devotion to one's husband, and above all, purity, as the highest forms of female achievement. This ideal persisted to make Woolf feel self-conscious as a female writer, because expressing her true opinion and having the confidence to make bold statements in her work was completely contradictory to the "Angel." This is despite the fact that many female writers of prior generations, such as Jane Austen, had already borne the brunt of blazing the trail for female writers themselves. Woolf could see that she was in a clearly advantageous position compared to other women by class and era, but yet, she was still haunted by oppressive gendered expectations.

Harriet Jacobs lived in a time and place where enslaved women were indoctrinated, because of their gender, to be and act a certain way. Their status as slaves, however, prevented them from ever having any opportunity to live up to these ideals. In Jacobs' case, for instance, she was forbidden to marry for love. Her opportunity to be the Angel of her own house was destroyed before it even began. On top of that, her master mocked and insulted her for her lack

of purity when she had children out of wedlock. Her very own grandmother was extremely disappointed and ashamed at Jacobs' decision as well. Thus, the immense pressure of slavery, doubled with the social pressure of being a woman in the 19th century, was a treacherous path leading absolutely nowhere. Not only were enslaved women faced with severely limited opportunities, they were also insulted and treated with contempt, from men and women alike, for not fulfilling the stereotype of what women were ought to be.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl is act of resistance against slavery and gendered oppression in countless ways. Throughout her work, Jacobs pleads to the free woman, to put herself in her less fortunate counterpart's shoes; to feel empathy, rather than contempt, for the less fortunate woman and her choices. Virginia Woolf, a free white woman in Britain, also felt stifled by her gender's expectations, despite the fact that she was much more privileged by her social class and also by the time period in which she lived. By analyzing gender expectations, especially in relation to the contemporary society that enforces them, it becomes clear how harmful, inconsistent, fleeting, and hypocritical society's ideals of womanhood can be, to enslaved and free women alike. Women aren't angels; expecting them to be is absurd. What is the use of wings anyways, if you can only live in a cage?

FLOWERS BLOOMED

BY A. K. B.

Rain poured down on the summer afternoons
waiting for us to finally meet.
Late to warm dinners we would never really eat.
First glances at unsure plans.
Even after we dined
you would walk me to my car which for sure would be fined
due to the
time over time
wasted
on life experiences
and life expectations.
We talked for hours waiting for the next sun to shine.
Even when the **flowers bloomed**
we hit decline
on anyone who was not you nor I.
Talking about waiting so long for something so unreal
to finally feel so real.

SENTENCES ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF CHANCE

BY JOSE GONZALEZ MARTINEZ

Squares cut as pieces of paper.
 What had Arp been thinking of when he let them drop?
 Was he expecting an outcome, or did he trust chance?
 Why are they blue and white?
 Did he blow on them, or was the room ventilated?
 Are the colors matching the sky?
 They must be, the whites are clouds and blues birds.
 They could also be dark clouds?
 Is the whole piece a square thrown by chance?
 It has to be.

Now, stop with the questions and provide the answers.

I could do the same. Look back to the Classics, recall Plato, and Aristotle. Poetry is a copy of a copy, an imitation. So, I'll take this concept and recreate it with my own imagination.

First, set the rules. Keep them simple, understand the meaning and provide context.

What's the basic sentence structure?

Easy, they are: subject, verb, object, and I'll follow this order. Also keep them in present tense.

Great, Now for the difficult part,

What is chance?

It must be the flip of a coin.

That is, and now for the complementary.

I'll take a dictionary; I'll toss a coin, high, reaching the ceiling, rapidly scroll the book, and stop when the coin hits the ground. Round two, toss the coin again, I'll rapidly move my finger all over the page and stop when the coin hits the ground. Now for the finale, read the word under my finger, if it is a subject, use it, if not repeat. Repeat the same steps for verb and object until I have a sentence. The number of repetitions would be recorded under the sentences with: x #.

Here are the sentences:

[1] Henry the Navigator criticizes civil war

x12 x1 x21

[2] La Fountain extricates baccarat

x15 x8 x2

[3] Brando Marlon issues hooks

x6 x4 x3

[4] Phalanger facilitates militarism

x9 x12 x5

[5] Anton Chekhov rinses a PhD

x4 x10 x5

[6] Alan Turing reflects taxes

x16 x1 x14

[7] Faisal II rephrases mould

x7 x5 x18

These are the results, chance played along and created my imitation of Arp, using words, and lots of coin tosses I made beautiful poetry.

DESERT

BY URSULA HEGGE

WHEN I was young, a little girl, I lived in a small town by the coast with my mother, my father, and my grandfather. The buildings looked like a sunny desert, bright orange and pale yellow, with the hint of brown in their midst. The old cobblestones slapped dustily beneath my feet whenever the other children and I ran by, and when the girl on the bike rode through. She was almost a desert herself, light brown and gently freckled, and a long wave of hair stretching out like the Sahara. The hills of her cheeks were dunes and her shining black eyes the sparkling desert night. I didn't know her name – none of us did – but she had a smile worth watching, as if there were some worldly secret hidden in its crinkles.

She rode through the town, down my street, every Sunday, which was market day. Vendors came to the main square to sell their fruits, their meats, their spices, their breads, and my mother and father went to buy our food for the week and talk with all their friends. My grandfather would go with them to meet his friends, too. They would sit on the old stone bench under the fig tree and talk amidst the bustle of the market – talk about their spouses (if they were still alive), their children (if they still came to visit), and their grandchildren (if they had seen them at all).

I never knew if the girl on the bike was going to work, or school, or home, or coming from it, and she never said. I never heard her speak. She simply rode through my small street, as if it were a shortcut to heaven, her long hair fanning out behind her

and her knowing smile bathing the walls in light.

On market days, I usually went with my parents to talk with the vendors or I joined the other children in games while the adults were all occupied. But I always made sure I was home for the time of day when the sun's fingertips had just barely touched the roof of my house. And like clockwork, she would ride by and her night eyes would sparkle when I waved to her. After I had seen her, I would run out of the desert town, away from the yellow sand paving stones and into the green just beyond – little trees along a dirt road – and run until my favourite tree. It hung over, as if weighed down by its small green leaves, and when the light shone from the East, the bark gleamed yellow in the sunlight. I would sit under that tree, and watch the desert of my town, thinking about the girl on the bike. I always wanted to ask her name, but by the time I'd gotten my courage up, she had stopped riding in my town. I waited for her four Sundays in a row, but she didn't come. I gave up hope that I'd ever see her sunbaked smile again. I stopped waiting. As I grew older, I started joining my grandfather and his friends on the bench in the square. My mother would buy our fish, my father our vegetables, and I would choose our bread and sausages and bring them to share with the old people on the bench. I listened to their stories. One of them, Josephine, had been a nurse in the war. She had travelled, living all over the continent. She had hiked through jungles and bogs and deserts larger than the sea. She had gentle

eyes and a fierce smile, and she hadn't seen her grandchildren in three years.

Another, Mattea, was a painter. And a philosopher. He said that if one can make nothing of something, then one can also make something of nothing. He told stories of the people he had met throughout his life, and colours he had seen: blue bluer than the sky and violet as bright as love itself. He had a wrinkled face, a mischievous grin, and when his wife had died, none of his children had come to the funeral.

They all shared stories of the older days in which they had lived, when the world was made of small desert towns like ours, when the sea was as bright as the sky, and flowers seemed to bloom in their eyes as they talked to their friends and I listened intently. They spoke of love, poetry, forests of dark trees, tragic memories, the happiness of a child in one's arms, and the sight of the sky lighting up at night, all green and blue and pink and bright.

They should have been lonely, with so little family left to love them. We were in a small desert town by the coast, after all. But there was sun in the air and wind off the water, laughter and chatter, and the pale, yellow rooftops to greet them each morning. And, as for myself, I couldn't have been happier.

One day on my way to the market square, I saw the girl on the bike again. I was on the street just before the square when I saw her ride by. She seemed to feel my eyes on her because she turned her head towards me and caught my eyes. She smiled that same mysterious smile, the freckles of sand on her nose and the dunes of her cheeks shining as if caught in the light of the desert sun. She rode past me and before she had turned the

corner I called out asking for her name.

But she was gone before she could answer. That was the last time I saw her.

My small desert town and my grandfather's friends are mere memories now. It's years later. I am in a grey tower of metal, on the 27th floor of maybe hundreds, in the grey downtown of this big city. My windows are never open, to keep out the dust from the cars and trams and motorbikes that seem to scorch the black tar roads. There is no wind off the water. There is no sun in the air. I am old and all my children have gone away, though I am promised a grandchild soon. Or so I am told.

Outside my plexiglass window is grey, and more grey. The water just beyond is grey too, reflecting the grey sky. But I have tried to fill my apartment with colour. Green in the kitchen. Blue in the bathroom. My red chair. And my husband's, violet, brighter than love itself. He died two years ago, and I sometimes still look to where he sat before the heart attack, as if thinking of him will bring him back. Flowers on the coffee table. Bright yellow and orange like my small desert town. I am promised a grandchild soon, I think. I hope to hold its little hands before too long. For now, I sit in my red chair by the closed glass window, and stare into the grey that surrounds me.

Until there's a knock on my door.

I gently lift myself from my chair and pad to the foyer in my wrinkled old feet. I peer through the eyehole in the door and I see a woman who looks just slightly older than me. Wrinkles line her lightly freckled face.

I open the door.

Those big desert night eyes stare at me, and her long white hair stretches out like my

old desert town. The dunes in her cheeks still grace me with light as she smiles. It's been so long since I saw that smile.

The girl on the bike has found me at last.

I can't help but ask the question that has burned on my tongue for the past sixty years.

"What's your name?" I ask.

"My name is Angela," she says. Her voice is soft. "Angela Velosa. I've been waiting to tell you since that last Sunday."

I don't know why I expected any different. But the girl on the bike is now Angela Velosa, just as old as me, and her eyes seem a bit dimmer than they used to. She has wants and needs just as I do. She has lived a life as long as me, and she probably lives in this same grey, grey desert city. I notice her bent knees and old hands; her smile holds no worldly secrets anymore.

"What is yours?" she asks.

"Tanya Mello."

Her smile fades. We're both just people now.

I don't bother to ask her how she found me, or why. I know I'll never see her again. We say goodbye. I gently close the door and pat back to my red chair. I've been promised a grandchild soon, I think, staring at the grey skyscrapers. Grey is grey, and nothing looks like grey. There are no mysteries left for me, and nothing to do but look into the grey.

I'm truly in a desert now.

TIME LAPSE

BY A.K.B.

9 pm: I'm currently working on a project later than usual because middle school is becoming increasingly harder. Art class assigns a project that forces me to work on the floor of my room on my hands and knees. The carpet is rough, and it hurts as I move across it on my bare knees. I am physically in pain, mentally tired, and these new paper cuts are bleeding into my soul.

10 pm: The glue is officially everywhere, and my anger is pecking, but the pop song is making a bearable effort in keeping me sane. It's hot, and I'm sweating. I turn on the fan. The fan is blowing the smaller piece away, but I cannot turn it off. The steady beat of the mellow music is keeping my mind organized and confined.

11 pm: I start to work quietly. Mom is asleep. Dad is asleep. But I hear you shuffling in the other room. You glance at me through the door. You look down at the mess I made and wait for me to stop, but I don't. The glue isn't holding at my pathetic attempt at a B+, and I need to start over. You see I am upset, and you walk away.

11:30 pm: Finally, everything is coming together. My anxiety is at ease. Sunday nights should never be meant for last-minute homework assignments, but they are. School will be a pain in my ass tomorrow, but that's life.

Midnight: Now, you're watching me again. You wonder why I am still working on this art project (being a perfectionist is time-consuming). Art doesn't matter. Anyone can draw and colour. It isn't a skill. You think this but don't say anything. You know I secretly enjoy this. I hear mom snoring and dad getting up to get a glass of water. I hear my brother attempting to talk quietly on the phone but failing miserably. You're still watching me.

12:10 am: You come into my room and finally ask, *are you almost done? When are you going to bed? You need to sleep! Come on, you need to rest! You're a growing girl. School can wait!*

I say *no*. I am annoyed and just don't want to deal with anything else right now. You slowly walk back to your room.

12:30 pm: You come and ask if I need help. I say no.

1 pm: You leave the lights on in your room and remind me to come to say good night to you before I sleep.

6 Years later: It's almost midnight, and I am writing another essay about three different epistolary novels. Fun Fact: University is hard (harder than middle school). It's midnight and you're not watching me anymore. I'm trying to focus on my work, but my eyes keep waiting for you. But, you're not here to ask when I am going to bed. You're not here wondering if I will get enough sleep and be ready for tomorrow (I won't be ready). Mom is still asleep. Dad is still getting that glass of water. My brother is still talking to his friends. I am still procrastinating but also waiting for you to come back and tell me to stop. Tell me to take a break, just relax. I am still waiting to hear the right words from someone real. Nobody feels right anymore, and it's just me on the floor with my laptop on my lap. But it's midnight, and this assignment isn't worth it right now. Your bedroom light is off, and I am not welcome anymore. You aren't here anymore, but my memories still keep you alive. But the pain is becoming harder to deal with. I miss you caring. I miss you staring. I miss seeing the lights on and I wish I said yes.

In September 2019, the English Undergraduate Students' Association (EUSA) resumed operations and club activities at York University, helmed by president Thomas Worthington. The EUSA has proudly hosted events such as the Literature Lounge, the Poetry Café, and a very successful Book Club, to the delight of York's resident bibliophiles.

The North Star, the EUSA journal and the first of its kind, offers a collection of short stories, poems, and academic papers, showcasing the literary talent of York's very own.

If you have any queries, please reach us at eusa@yorku.ca.

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