

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

2021

Every Writer



Horror Review from Every Writer

A GROWING COMMUNITY OF WRITERS

LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

It's nice to have you back. We haven't published a digital issue of Every Writer for a few years. I'm ecstatic that this issue has turned up. I wanted to take a moment and say hello to you. I'm Richard the editor and owner of Every Writer. For the last 20 years I have been working on this labor of love. I've had other editors come and go, but I've been here since the beginning.

Every Writer is my joy. I love writing. I love writers, and I'm happy and proud to say that over the years I've helped hundreds of writers find a market, find confidence, or just plain given them encouragement. Sometimes it's difficult to have full life and career outside of this online undertaking and find balance between them. It doesn't always work. Sometimes, I just drop the ball.

Every Writer has basically been on hiatus for the last almost 2 years. We are back publishing again, and I just want to say how much I appreciate all our readers. It's indescribable how joyful it makes me to see people on the site again.

I hope to publish a digital publication like this one at least a few times a year, so please look out for it.

A note on this issue, much of this issue is new, but some of it has been on our site awhile. I picked articles and stories and poetry I felt lend to Halloween and horror. Also I'm playing around with fonts and other formatting, so if you see some inconsistency please count them as a test. Next issue will be better, but for now, Happy Halloween and I hope you enjoy this digital magazine.

Sincerely,

Richard Edwards

Editor

Every Writer

Interview with Dr. Frankenstein's Monster

By Randolph Eden

-After a year of searching and many stories, I am able to meet with the man who inspired one of the greatest horror stories of all time. He is iconic. From the early 1800s until now, his story has terrified and thrilled 100s of millions of people. He has lived a long and amazing life. Much more of our time together will be published later this year. For now, these are the notes from our first interview. Please forgive the the annotations.

Last October I was able to meet in Dubuque, Idaho with the man who was once called Dr. Frankenstein's monster. He was born, in the late 1700s, and later followed some of the story told by Mary Shelley. He claims to have talked with her on the subject.

We meet in the Le Feve coffee shop. Halloween is a couple weeks away, and I am sitting at the table drinking a Cappuccino. This is the first time I will meet with him. I am apprehensive. It is a busy place. I will come to believe after a series of interviews that this man is who he claims to be. I believe others, credible people, who say that he is indeed Frankenstein's monster.

I sit facing the window, and a man so tall that I cannot see his head as he passes the window opens the door and comes in. He is well over 7 feet tall. He is wearing sunglasses and looks to be wearing a little light skin colored makeup and an expensive wig. I can see his neck and hands are scarred. He is a massive man. He has a large chest, hands, head, body. When we talk he does not remove his glasses. I will find later that he has 2 different colored eyes. He speaks in an



accent that is part Russian, part Swedish and part Inuit. If you really really listen to the tone you can hear some English in there, maybe from long ago.

Randolph: I want to clarify first that you no longer like to be referred to as Dr. Frankenstein's monster or as Frankenstein. What name do you go by? (At the time of this interview I was still skeptical of his identity).

DFM: My name now is Diderik Falkvard Mansson. I have never gone by Dr. Frankenstein's monster or the monster and certainly not Frankenstein. It is silly that the whole world would get hung up in such a way.

Randolph: It is a fact that you are the legendary person from Mary Shelley's well received and well read book, correct?

DFM: It is true that Ms. Shelley, that lovely young lady, did in fact base her book upon accounts of my origination, (pause) assembly.

Randolph: Her account, taken from the forward of her book states (I read this to him)

"Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin, (I speak not of what the Doctor really did, or said that he did, but, as more to my purpose, of what was then spoken of as having been done by him,) who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Not thus, after all, would life be given. Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth."

DFM: The only thing that is true about that introduction, and indeed the whole book is that Byron and the Shelleys were friends. Dr. Frankenstein was a good friend of Byron. She might have heard the story of Darwin's reanimation, but I certainly know that she heard more about my story before she was finished writing her book.

Randolph: What makes you know that?

DFM: I visited her. It was at the request of Byron himself. A young lady, fine lady, he told me was writing about the accounts of Dr. Frankenstein, and that I should call on her. I do have yellowish eyes. (He has a somewhat charming grin). She was not judgmental about my scars or about my disposition. She was in fact fascinated by the idea that I had been dead.

Randolph: Then it is true that people have been afraid of you?

DFM: Oh very much so. They were terrified of me in fact, for many years. You have to remember that anyone who looked like me in Europe at the time were put away so to speak. They were locked in some away place, moved into sanitariums or outright killed. I am very different. I am very large, of course, because Frankenstein had the issue of vascular connections and nerve fibers. I suppose. I was told this at least.

Randolph: How much of Shelley's accounts are true.

DFM: Not very much. I did hide in a family's barn for awhile. I did run away. I did want a bride, but none of it played out like it played out in the novel. As I was saying people were so terrified in the beginning I had to hide, and I indeed went North shortly after speaking to Mrs.

Shelley. I went North away from people in search of isolation, but I ended up, after almost 30 years, finding a family.

Randolph: A family? You found people who took you in?

DFM: Ja (he has a long pause). I spent sometime in the icy cold of the North. You must understand I have very poor circulation, so the cold is bitter to me, but it gave me at the time the only advantage, the ability to guise myself behind layers of thick clothing, hoods, scarves, even full face masks. These things made a life for me possible.

Eventually, I lived for a long while on what I perceived to be a peninsula of ice. I made a home of ice and snow, and was able to live alone, working out an existence by catching fish and seal. I found that I could even handle the occasional Polar Bear. The strength Dr. Frankenstein put in my arms is like iron. You wouldn't believe it. I can still pick up about 700 kilos up over my head. (He raises his arms gesturing like he is holding something up over his head. He grins). I'm not sure if I am immortal or not, but I can tell you that I have not aged a day since I first awoke from (pause)...was reborn let's say.

Randolph: Are you saying that you cannot die?

DFM: I was dead. To do it again would be very repetitive. I have been shot, beaten, hit by a train once, and even frozen just about solid one time. That is when I met my family, I was speaking of.

Randolph: You met them above the arctic circle?

DFM: I met them on Imaqliq.

Randolph: I don't think I'm familiar (he motions to me).

DFM: Diomed Island, is what the American's call it. It is in the Bering Strait. As I said I thought I lived on a peninsula. As it turns out one summer that peninsula of ice became an island. I didn't even know it at first. Then I could feel the movement of the waves under my feet. I went when I felt that great shifting, I very quickly knew that I was drifting away from shore. I looked for a way back, but by the time I reached the edge of what was a pretty large island at that point, I realized I was many miles away from the mainland. I drifted for weeks. At one point I tried to just go on with life I had all along, but large cracks formed in the ice. You could see them everywhere under foot. They would go like lightning.

As they formed soon they would widen, and my island would decrease in size. After, maybe (he pauses thinking) a month maybe even two I was down to an island the size of, I don't know, a city block, or something like that.

One night a large storm came, I thought finally I would end my simple and somewhat controversial second life. The storm capsized my small iceberg, and I went into the water. It was blackness. I had resigned myself to death. It was like those movies you see, "end scene." (He slaps his hands together. He laughs). Most men would have died of exposure to that water within minutes. I woke up on Imaqliq what I believe to be the next summer. I don't know, but I believe I went into the water for a about a year. It was the summer of 1890 when woke up.

Randolph: Did someone find you?

DFM: Ja, the Yupik found me. I would say that I found them. At the

time I ended up on the island. They were considered part of Russia, what would be the Chukotsky district. When I woke up I was in a wooden fenced area next to a cabin. The temperature must have risen above freezing for the first time in months. I was in such pain, agony in fact. It was awful. My fingers would not move, my hands, my toes, one elbow and one shoulder. I shivered and shivered. I was able to get to my feet and make it to the door of the cabin where I knocked. I remember the door opening, a young girl coming out, and then nothing again. (He makes quotations with his fingers) End scene. (Laughs very loud. Then quiets himself).

I woke up after that completely warm, maybe a couple days later, in a bed being taken care of by a girl named Ahnah and her father Aipaloovik. He was an old man, and she was a young girl, and after many years there they became my family (he pauses again).

Randolph: What happened to them?

DFM: After WWII they were moved off the island into Siberia by Russia. I did not go with them. (He is overcome by emotion for a minute. I will not describe this in any detail). I hid from them. I knew how the people were from the mainland. We had met many of them, and more than a few times their disgust by the sight of me put me Ahnah and Aipaloovik in danger. I stayed clear of any soldier from the Russia army and any military officer. I did not want to risk the safety of my family. Of course by the time they came to remove everyone from the island, it was just Ahnah. Aipaloovik had died years before that.

Randolph: I'm sorry for this. Do you still live there?

DFM: Only the Russian military lives there now. I moved away after that. After some doing I now live on a small island by Vaasa in Sweden. Replot, is the island's name. I moved there in 1960 or so.

Randolph: How did you get there?

DFM: By airplane of course, how else besides way of iceberg does someone make it from the Bering Strait to Sweden (he laughs).

Randolph: What did you think of the movie? (I say this because we have passed the time where the classic 1933 Frankenstein movie was made).

DFM: Which one? (Sarcastically, but stops me before I can answer). The original was so horrible and even full of fiction. People would never mix me up with a monster like that. It was a horrible mess, but for some reason people find a likeness between me and the movie. When I first made it to Sweden, Stockholm, people pointed and even ran from me. Once I heard a young man remark that I looked much like Frankenstein. Really, I never saw any resembles, and the only way I am anything like that movie is because I was once dead and I now live, and I suppose in size, and name sake. Also, I do have a grayish hue (he holds up his hand to me). My head is not flat, and I have no bolts. (He laughs).

Randolph: Do you have family there?

DFM: I have Ewa, my wife.

Randolph: You have a wife?

DFM: Ja, the times are much more progressive. People have understood scars for many years. It started getting better in the 60s and now people are afraid to look at you

for too long. They are even more polite. It's much better than before. My wife is very beautiful.

Randolph: Do you have children? (I interject this. He eyes me.)

DFM: No children. I do not think I am capable of having children. This might have been one of the side effects of Dr. Frankenstein's procedure, or it might have just been something that happened to me in a past life. (He smiles).

Randolph: How long have you been married?

DFM: Ewa and I have been together for 15 years. We have been married for 12, I think. Ewa is always upset when I forget. I do it often. I have always been forgetful, another side effect. (a pause)

Randolph: What do you do for a living?

DFM: I work in internet security. As it turns out I am much better with computers than I am with people. Ewa is always telling me this. I started working with computers as early as 1970. I was so intrigued by them. I felt almost like them, at first. The first computer I saw was nothing more than a big calculator, but I was very good with the coding. I think that whatever Dr. Frankenstein did to me, it kept my brain very young.

Randolph: What do you mean?

DFM: Like a child I am very good with learning languages. I can absorb them. I am told by Ewa that I see the world like a child, sometimes, and I have a failing memory. It's very strange. Computers came to me very easily. I helped found 4 internet companies from Sweden. I do not want to disclose the ones I still hold shares in.

Randolph: I've been told that you are very wealthy?

DFM: I do not have Bill Gates money, but I do ok. (He grins).

At this point he must go. He is telling me he is late for a meeting, and that it has been nice speaking with me. He says I can walk with him. Walking down the street we pass a Halloween shop. In the window there is a cut out of the Frankenstein movie monster.

Randolph: Do you feel Iconic? Every Halloween millions of people dress up like that, and it was inspired, partly by your story.

DFM: At one time, long ago, it's how I thought of myself. Now it doesn't even occur to me anymore. I have a great life right now. I'm going to a meeting with IBM, and my wife is shopping and will meet me later at the hotel. Besides (he points to the face in the window) that's out dated, it's 2019, no one cares if you look like a monster, it's on the inside that counts. (He walks over to a limo sitting idle in the street. As he opens his door he yells back to me). It never hurts anyone to have a few 100 million in the bank. (laughs)-



Bedtime

by DanaSan

I could hear it moving around beneath me, breathing heavily. Wrapping a sock around my hand, I looked under the bed, right into its icy blue eyes.

“Please,” it moaned. “I want to go home.”

“Hush,” I said, shoving the sock into its mouth. “You’ll wake the others.”

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Congratulations to our Winner DanaSan. She has won our **2020** 50 word horror contest! Please congratulate her in the comments below.



3 REASONS WHY HORROR HAS CULTURAL VALUE

by Heather Terry

3 Reasons Why Horror has Cultural Value

by Heather Terry

Though they capture the imaginations of many, tales of the weird, the fantastical, and the horrifying tend to be regarded as lesser works of literature—assuming they're considered literature at all.

The outright rejection of horror as a work of cultural value is misguided. Here are three reasons why horror's value as a cultural art should be reconsidered:

1. Catharsis release

Reaching all the way back to the tragedies of ancient Greece, art and literature have helped societies to first confront and then purify themselves of powerful emotions through a process called cathartic release. While it is a process easily utilized cross-genres, horror in

particular helps people confront their worst fears and then, through the course of the film or story, guides them through that purification. Regardless of the ending's happiness, the audience leaves the experience in a sort of high, shaking off the trauma of the events and riding the thrill of adrenaline.

2. Societal tells

How we create and define horror shifts from culture to culture. By studying the monsters—be they

supernatural creatures or mundane humans— and other elements, we can learn a great deal about that society. In American society, we get stories like Stephen King's *It* and *The Exorcist*-inspired tales while in Japanese society we see tales of vengeful spirits like Ringu and war-torn horrors like *Onibaba*. The unique experiences of each culture results in a rich selection of fears to explore and display.

3. Exploration of darkness within the human spirit

Late in the 1800's, American literature turned toward romanticism and the exploration of love, euphoria, and the generally positive side of imagination. As authors like Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson completed the romantic exploration of the human spirit by delving fearlessly in its darker aspects: death, madness, and melancholy. This study of our spirit's duality continues to be explored today through the horror tales that evolved from the Dark Romantics, and modern writers illuminate those dark and unsightly parts of ourselves, thus forcing us to confront them.

Perhaps it's because horror forces us to confront those things that elicit fear, dread, and revulsion that it has come to be disregarded as literature. However, the cultural value of well-crafted works persists, headless of its acceptance as a work of artistic and cultural merit.

Heather Terry is a writer and teacher in Northeast Ohio. You can read her work at [Curious Words](#).

Every Poem is a Catastrophe

by George Moore

We write these on the invisible
and they nest between us like a mask

or a voice speaking through a screen
They are always silent screams

every one of them feathered
by the lightest hand

but somehow bold as a tagger's spray
Some are like the church choirs

or an object we find in a museum
and the moths play havoc with them

for they are filled with dichotomies
Everything in them is

of the nature of a religion
but the size of a message found in a bottle

or written inside a bottle cap
They are the saints on gum wrappers

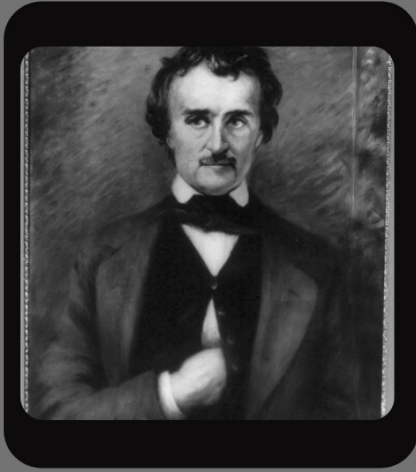
the scriptures written on a thread
every one of them a catastrophe

of human care
a line drawn through a word

like a spear through its prey
a smudge of someone's blood

the tongue of a page
the chain to an anchor

we have dragged through a life
that we sail day to day



WALT
WHITMAN
ON THE
SIGNIFICANCE
OF
EDGAR ALLAN
POE



Walt Whitman on the Significance of Edgar Allan Poe

-Jan. 1, '80.—Walt Whitman on the Significance of Edgar Allan Poe: In diagnosing this disease called humanity—to assume for the nonce what seems a chief mood of the personality and writings of my subject—I have thought that poets, somewhere or other on the list, present the most mark'd indications. Comprehending artists in a mass, musicians, painters, actors, and so on, and considering each and all of them as radiations or flanges of that furious whirling wheel, poetry, the centre and axis of the whole, where else indeed may we so well investigate the causes, growths, tally-marks of the time—the age's matter and malady?

By common consent there is nothing better for man or woman than a perfect and noble life, morally without flaw, happily balanced in activity, physically sound and pure, giving its due proportion, and no more, to the sympathetic, the human emotional element—a life, in all these, unhasting, unresting, untiring to the end. And yet there is another shape of personality dearer far to the artist-sense, (which likes the play of strongest lights and shades,) where the perfect character, the good, the heroic, although never attain'd, is never lost sight of, but through failures, sorrows, temporary downfalls, is return'd to again and again, and while often violated, is passionately adhered to

as long as mind, muscles, voice, obey the power we call volition. This sort of personality we see more or less in Burns, Byron, Schiller, and George Sand. But we do not see it in Edgar Poe. (All this is the result of reading at intervals the last three days a new volume of his poems—I took it on my rambles down by the pond, and by degrees read it all through there.) While to the character first outlined the service Poe renders is certainly that entire contrast and contradiction which is next best to fully exemplifying it.

Almost without the first sign of moral principle, or of the concrete or its heroisms, or the simpler affections of the heart, Poe's verses

illustrate an intense faculty for technical and abstract beauty, with the rhyming art to excess, an incorrigible propensity toward nocturnal themes, a demoniac undertone behind every page—and, by final judgment, probably belong among the electric lights of imaginative literature, brilliant and dazzling, but with no heat. There is an indescribable magnetism about the poet's life and reminiscences, as well as the poems. To one who could work out their subtle retracing and retrospect, the latter would make a close tally no doubt between the author's birth and antecedents, his childhood and youth, his physique, his so-call'd education, his studies and associates, the literary and social Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia and New York, of those times—not only the places and circumstances in themselves, but often, very often, in a strange spurning of, and reaction from them all.

The following from a report in the Washington "Star" of November 16, 1875, may afford those who care for it something further of my point of view toward this interesting figure and influence of our era. There occur'd about that date in Baltimore a public reburial of Poe's remains, and dedication of a monument over the grave:

"Being in Washington on a visit at the time, 'the old gray' went over to Baltimore, and though ill from paralysis, consented to hobble up and silently take a seat on the platform, but refused to make any speech, saying, 'I have felt a strong impulse to come over and be here to-day myself in memory of Poe, which I have obey'd, but not the slightest impulse to make a speech, which, my dear friends, must also be obeyed.' In an informal circle, however, in conversation after the ceremonies, Whitman said: 'For a long while, and until lately, I had a

distaste for Poe's writings. I wanted, and still want for poetry, the clear sun shining, and fresh air blowing—the strength and power of health, not of delirium, even amid the stormiest passions—with always the background of the eternal moralities. Non-complying with these requirements, Poe's genius has yet conquer'd a special recognition for itself, and I too have come to fully admit it, and appreciate it and him.

1849 "In a dream I once had, I saw a vessel on the sea, at midnight, in a storm. It was no great full-rigg'd ship, nor majestic steamer, steering firmly through the gale, but seem'd one of those superb little schooner yachts I had often seen lying anchor'd, rocking so jauntily, in the waters around New York, or up Long Island sound—now flying uncontroll'd with torn sails and broken spars through the wild sleet and winds and waves of the night. On the deck was a slender, slight, beautiful figure, a dim man, apparently enjoying all the terror, the murk, and the dislocation of which he was the centre and the victim. That figure of my lurid dream might stand for Edgar Poe, his spirit, his fortunes, and his poems—themselves all lurid dreams."

Much more may be said, but I most desired to exploit the idea put at the beginning. By its popular poets the calibres of an age, the weak spots of its embankments, its sub-currents, (often more significant than the biggest surface ones,) are unerringly indicated. The lush and the weird that have taken such extraordinary possession of Nineteenth century verse-lovers—what mean they? The inevitable tendency of poetic culture to morbidity, abnormal beauty—the sickness of all technical thought or refinement in itself—the abnegation of the perennial and democratic

concretes at first hand, the body, the earth and sea, sex and the like—and the substitution of something for them at second or third hand—what bearings have they on current pathological study?





A SHORT STORY

DOUBLE SHIFT

by P.D. Williams

I'm very passionate about the exciting work I get to be a part of each day here at the cloning lab. Everything about it always seems new to me. Mans' seemingly god-like ability to create life from little more than a strand of DNA and a few tiny cells has intrigued me for a very long time. This job gives me a front-row seat to the whole miraculous process.

I'm fortunate to be working with a small group of brilliant, visionary experts in the field of human duplication. The only drawback is that I'm considered the bottom face on the totem pole as the newest and youngest addition to the team. That means I'm assigned most of the mundane tasks, such as writing up reports, analyzing data, and so on.

The only time I'm allowed to visit the part of the lab where the fully formed specimens are stored is near the end of my shift. My job is to check vitals and to make sure that all of the equipment is working correctly.

The scientists keep the clones in tall, Plexiglas tubes attached to individual control panels. The cylinders contain a thick, transparent liquid that keeps the bodies suspended. Seeing them up close creeps me out a bit. Sometimes, one of them will twitch, and I half expect it to become conscious and start clawing its way out.

Still, I can't help but marvel at these incredible new beings. For example, there are two things that I find particularly remarkable about them. The first is how rapidly they grow.

The second is the exact likeness each one bears to its donor.

It's time for me to begin my nightly tasks. I'm gradually working my way down the rows of encasements, noting any changes, and making necessary adjustments.

Ah, finally, the last one. Oh, no, this can't be real. Is that me floating in there? I have to get out of here! Hey, who's holding me? Ow! Is that a needle going into my neck? Oh God, I think I'm going to faint. I . . . feel like I'm . . . fading . . . awaaay . . .

I'm very passionate about the exciting work I get to be a part of each day here at the cloning lab. Everything about it always seems new to me.

THE END



A P O E M

NOCTURNE

Doug Tanoury

In the early hours of the morning,
At 2:30 and sometimes after,
I would hear my father,
Unable to sleep, couching,
His footsteps moving about,
As he transformed the kitchen
Into a concert hall,
With refrigerator doors closing loudly.
Jars could be heard opening.
Their vacuum seals hissing,
Lids rolling, spiraling and strumming
Across table or countertop,
The sound of him rummaging
Through the silver for knife, fork
Or spoon, and the glupp-glupp of him
Pouring a soda, the fizzle of it
In the glass.
Some nights now I wake up
At 2:30 or sometime after,
Unable to sleep.
In the summer, I sit out
In the quiet on the front porch step,
In winter, in the darkened living room
At the rolltop desk, but always
Avoiding the kitchen.
Indeed, I tiptoe through it, for the
Silence there has grown
Into a monument to him,
And I fear that if I click the
Glass of the pimento olive
And the sweet pickle jars
It will disturb his peace,
And any slight rattle of silverware
Will conjure his spirit.



For convenience, the masculine offender is in demonology classed under the female designation. According to Michelet and other authorities there were ten thousand alleged witches for each alleged wizard! and anyhow there is little etiquette as to the precedence of ladies in criminal matters.

The first English Statute dealing directly with witches appears to be the thirty-third of Henry VIII (1541) which brought into the list of felonies persons “devising or practising conjurations, witchcraftes, sorcerie or inchantments or the digging up of corpses,” and depriving such of the benefit of clergy. It was however repealed by I Edward VI Cap. 12, and again by I Mary (in its first section.). Queen Elizabeth, however, passed

another Act (5 Elizabeth Cap. 16) practically repeating that of her father, which had been in abeyance for more than thirty years. The Statute of Elizabeth is exceedingly interesting in that it states the condition of the law at that time. The opening words leave no misunderstanding:

“Whereas at this day there is no ordinary nor condigne punishment provided against the wicked offences of conjurations or invocations of evil spirits, or of sorceries, inchantments, charmes or witchcraftes, which be practised to the obstruction of the persons and goods of the Queene’s subjects, or for other lewd purposes. Be it enacted that if any person or persons after the first day of June next coming, shall use practice, or exercise

any invocations, or conjurations, of evill or wicked spirits, to or for any intent or purpose, or else if any person or persons after the said first day of June shall use, practice or exercise any witchcraft, enchantment, charme or sorcerie, whereby any person shall happen to be killed or destroyed, that then as well every such offendour or offendours in invocations, or conjurations, as is aforesayde, their aydours and counsellors, as also everie such offendour or offendours in that Witchcrafte, enchantment, charme or sorcerie whereby the death of any person doth ensue, their ayders and counsellors, being of eyther of the sayde offences lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer paines of death, as a felon or felons, and shall lose the privilege and benefit of Clergy and sanctuary,” &c.

In this act lesser penalties are imposed for using any form of witchcraft or sorcery, for inducing to any persons harm, or to “provoke any person to unlawfull love or to hurt or destroy any person in his or her bodye, member or goods,” or for the discovery or recovery of treasure. From that time down to the first quarter of the eighteenth century, when the law practically died out, witchcraft had its place in the category of legal offences. The law was finally repealed by an Act in the tenth year of George II. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the time of witch-fever, and in that period, especially in its earlier days when the belief had become epidemic, it was ruthless and destructive. It is said that in Genoa five hundred persons were burned within three months in the year 1515, and a thousand in the diocese of Como in a year. Round numbers in such matters are to be distrusted, as we find they seldom bear investigation; but there is little doubt that in France and Germany vast numbers suffered and perished. Even in more prosaic and less emotional England there were many thousands of judicial murders in this wise. It is asserted that within two centuries they totalled thirty thousand.

It is startling to find such a weird and impossible credulity actually rooted in the Statute

book of one’s own country, and that there are records of judges charging juries to convict. Sir Matthew Hale, a great lawyer, a judge of the Common Pleas in 1654, and Lord Chief Justice in 1671, was a firm believer in witchcraft. He was a grave and pious man, and all his life was an ardent student of theology as well as of law. And yet in 1664 he sentenced women to be burned as witches. In 1716 a mother and daughter—the latter only nine years of age—were hanged in Huntingdon. In Scotland the last case of a woman being condemned as a witch occurred at Dornoch in 1722.

It is no easy task in these days, which are rationalistic, iconoclastic and enquiring, to understand how the commonalty not only believed in witchcraft but acted on that belief. Probably the most tolerant view we can take, is that both reason and enquiry are essential and rudimentary principles of human nature. Every person of normal faculties likes to know and understand the reasons of things; and inquisitiveness is not posterior to the period of maternal alimentation. If we seek for a cause we are bound to find one—even if it be wrong. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* has a wide if not always a generous meaning; and when fear is founded on, if not inspired by ignorance, that unthinking ferocity which is one of our birthrights from Adam is apt to carry us further than we ever meant to go. In an age more clear-seeing than our own and less selfish we shall not think so

poorly of primitive emotions as we are at present apt to. On the contrary we shall begin to understand that in times when primitivity holds sway, we are most in touch with the loftiest things we are capable of understanding, and our judgment, being complex, is most exact. Indeed in this branch of the subject persons used to call to aid a special exercise of our natural forces—the æsthetic. When witchcraft was a belief, the common idea was that that noxious power was almost entirely held by the old and ugly. The young, fresh, and beautiful, were seldom accepted as witches save by the novelty-loving few or those of sensual nature. This was perhaps fortunate—if the keeping down of the population in this wise was necessary; it is easier as well as safer to murder the uncomely than those of greater charm. In any case there was no compunction about obliterating the former class. The general feeling was much the same as that in our own time which in sporting circles calls for the destruction of vermin.

It will thus be seen that the profession of witchcraft, if occasionally lucrative, was nevertheless always accompanied with danger and execration. This was natural enough since the belief which made witchcraft dangerous was based on fear. It is not too much to say that in every case, professed witchcraft was an expression of fraudulent intent. Such pity, therefore, as the

subject allows of must be confined to the guiltless victims who, despite blameless life, were tried by passion, judged by frenzy, and executed by remorseless desperation. There could be no such thing as quantitative analysis of guilt with regard to the practice of witchcraft: any kind of playing with the subject was a proof of some kind of wrongful intent, and was to be judged with Draconian severity. Doubtless it was a very simple way of dealing with evils, much resembling the medical philosophy of the Chinese. The whole logic of it can be reduced to a sorites. Any change from the normal is the work of the devil—or a devil as the case may be. Find out the normal residence of that especial devil—which is in some human being. Destroy the devil's dwelling. You get rid of the devil. It is pure savagery of the most primitive kind. And it is capable of expansion, for logic is a fertile plant, and when its premises are wrong it has the fecundity of a weed. Before even a savage can have time to breathe, his logic is piling so fast on him that he is smothered. If a human being is a devil then the club which destroys him or her is an incarnation of good, and so a god to be worshipped in some form—or at any rate to be regarded with esteem, like a sword, or a legal wig, or a stethoscope, or a paint-brush, or a shovel, or a compass, or a drinking-vessel, or a pen. If all the necessary conditions of life and sanity and comfort were on so primitive a base, what an easy world it would be to live in!

One benefit there was in witchcraft, though it was not recognised officially as such at the time. It created a new industry—a whole crop of industries. It is of the nature of belief that it encourages belief—not always of exactly the same kind—but of some form which intelligence can turn into profit. We cannot find any good in the new industry—grapes do not grow on thorns nor figs on thistles. The sum of human happiness was in no sense augmented; but at least a good deal of money or money's worth changed hands; which, after all, is as much as most of the great financiers can point to as the result of long and strenuous success. In the organisation of this form of crime there were many classes, of varying risks and of benefits in inverse ratio to them. For the ordinary rule of finance holds even here: large interest means bad security. First there were the adventurers themselves who took the great risks of life and its collaterals—esteem, happiness, &c. The money obtained by this class was usually secured by fraudulent sales of worthless goods or by the simple old financial device of blackmail. Then there were those who were in reality merely parasites on the pleasing calling—those timorous souls who let “I dare not” wait upon ‘I would’ like the poor cat i’ the adage.” These were altogether in a poorer way of trade than their bolder brothers and sisters. They lacked courage, and sometimes even sufficient malice for the proper doing of

their work; with the result that success seldom attended them at all, and never heartily. But at any rate they could not complain of inadequate punishment; whenever religious zeal flamed up they were generally prominent victims. They can in reality only be regarded as specimens of parasitic growth. Then there came the class known in French criminal circles as agents provocateurs, whose business was not only to further ostensible crime but to work up the opposition against it. Either branch of their art would probably be inadequate; but by linking their services they managed to eke out a livelihood. Lastly there was the lowest grade of all, the Witch-finder—a loathly calling, comparable only to the class or guild of “paraskistae” or “rippers” in the ritual of the Mummy industry of ancient Egypt.

Of these classes we may I think consider some choice specimens—so far as we may fittingly investigate the personnel of a by-gone industry. Of the main body, that of Wizards and Witches or those pretending to the cult, let us take Doctor Dee and Madame Voisin, and Sir Edward Kelley and Mother Damnable—thus representing the method of the procession of the unclean animals from the Ark. Of the class of Witchfinders one example will probably be as much as we can stand, and we will naturally take the one who obtained fame in his calling—namely Matthew Hopkins, who stands forth like Satan, “by merit raised to that bad eminence.”



Beneath These Boards

by Michael Thomas Ellis

I've laid by her for ten years now
beneath these creaking boards
an axe between my long-gone eyes
a spectacle of gore.

She rests beside me so composed
in mournful pallid sleep
the knife between her once proud breasts
buried in her deep.

We once were lovers long ago
a tumultuous embrace
that stirred the heart and seared the soul
yet led to this disgrace.

Oh how we loved! – but hid it so
for our love was not our own
our fingers wore another's band
in that our fate was sown.

And so it was that ill-spent night
while in her husband's bed
this tempest that we so adored
met its eternal end.

He came upon that half-split door
and heard us at our labors
rather than just turn his back
too long he stayed and savored.

In passion's heat that man did boil!
until his sanity was rent
Hell-bound he turned to go and find
the tools to his intent.

Then while she rode me wild and high
he crept up from behind
and swung that axe and buried it
where flesh becomes the mind.

Now splattered with my life's remains
my love did disengage
terror-struck she scrambled up
and stared into Hell's rage.

"Your turn comes now" he said to her
"but I'm sure we'll meet again
soon we'll all taste demon spoor
for tonight three souls have sinned!"

With that he drew his dagger out
ten times as long as wide
and by her hair did pull her close
still naked to his side.

Then slowly gently pressed it home
until its hilt did rest
above her still now lifeless heart
between those lovely breasts.

He closed her eyes and laid her back
to rest upon his bed
then on the floor took bar and claw
to these boards above my head.

He put us down here side by side
sealed tight from life's fair light
'til rot and mice and death's decay
made our bones commingle tight.

I've laid by her for ten years now
beneath these creaking boards
no better death could Death decree
may it last – forevermore.



Red Riding Hood Finished by Emma Weakley

My darkest fear!

by Wendy Montoya

I sat up gasping for air; my throat felt tight again. I glanced at the clock; although I already knew It was 3:30 am. The same time I have been waking up for the past week!

I slowly sat up searching the darkness, it always felt like someone was in the room with me. I quickly moved to flick the

lamp on my bed table when a thump came from behind me.

I stopped breathing frozen in place just as something grabbed me by the shoulder and flung me across the room. I flew into the dresser smacking my head on the corner. The warmth of fresh blood flowed down my face as I landed on my back, the footsteps, No, the sound of hooves came charging at me.

My heart was hammering as I staggered to my feet when I realized I was already face to face with a Demon, but before I could release a scream he shoved his claws into my belly, blood sprayed up through my nose, and out of my mouth. The demon growled with desire as he licked the blood from my lips whispering “you’re mine now!” ... Everything went black!

The Moon

by Natalie Crick

Schools of moths descend,
Pulled in by waves of light when

The fields begin to steam like horses
In the cool

Like the hush of rainfall
After the sun's marriage to the skies.

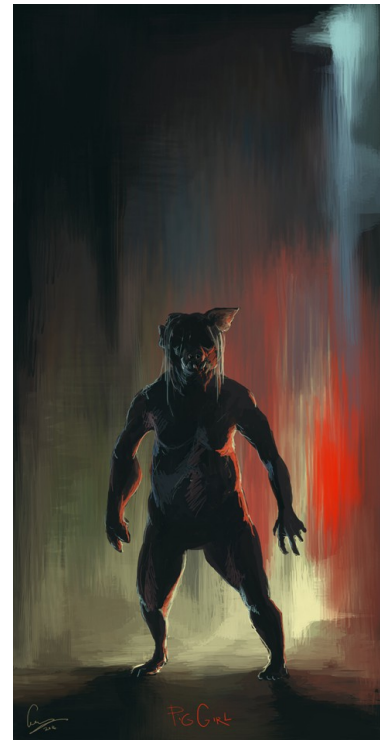
From his window, the child can see;
The young moon sulking behind the sun,

Disappearing beneath the moors
With a final sweep of chill.

An actress on stage
Applauded by the throng

One last time,
Only to return again next night

From where it grows to fullness,
A round milky globe
Asking the question:
Who will admire me next?



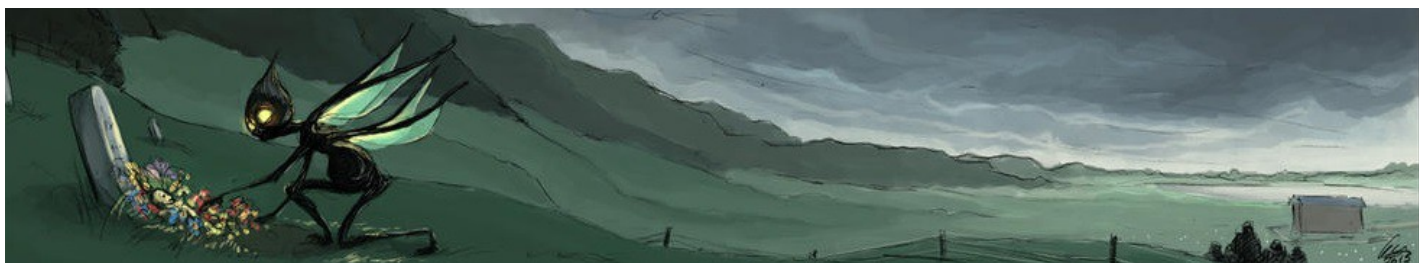
Pig Girl Emma Weakley

About Emma Weakley

We get 100s of art submissions per year, but those submissions do not always meet our standards, and many times they are simply incomplete.

Emma is a young artist, but her work is wide ranging and it address fantasy and horror. I felt the color, the characters, the relationships that are obvious in the work. I felt it fit our issue perfectly.

Please check Emma Weakley out on the web, she is a wonderful young artist, and enjoy her work here.



Panel 4 by Emma Weakley



How to Become a Werewolf

by Elliott O'Donnell

*Note: This excerpt is taken from
Werewolves by Elliott O'Donnell
published in 1912.*

AS I have already stated, in some people lycanthropy is hereditary; and when it is not hereditary it may be acquired through the performance of certain of the rites ordained by Black Magic. For the present I can only deal with the more general features of these rites (which vary according to locality) and the conditions of mind essential to those who would successfully practise these rites. In the first place, it is necessary that the person desirous of acquiring the property of lycanthropy should be in earnest and a believer in those superphysical powers whose favour he is about to ask.

Assuming we have such an individual he must, first of all,

betake himself to a spot remote from the haunts of men. The powers to be petitioned are not to be found promiscuously—anywhere. They favour only such waste and solitary places as the deserts, woods, and mountain-tops.

The locality chosen, our candidate must next select a night when the moon is new and strong. He must then choose a perfectly level piece of ground, and on it, at midnight, he must mark, either with chalk or string—it really does not matter which—a circle of not less than seven feet in radius, and within this, and from the same centre, another circle of three feet in radius. Then, in the centre of this inner circle he must kindle a fire, and over the fire place an iron tripod containing an iron vessel of water. As soon as the water begins to boil the would-

be lycanthropist must throw into it handfuls of any three of the following substances: Asafoetida, parsley, opium, hemlock, henbane, saffron, aloe, poppy-seed and solanum; repeating as he does so these words:—

“Spirits from the deep
Who never sleep,
Be kind to me.

“Spirits from the grave
Without a soul to save,
Be kind to me.

“Spirits of the trees
That grow upon the leas,
Be kind to me.

“Spirits of the air,
Foul and black, not fair,
Be kind to me.

“Water spirits hateful,
To ships and bathers fateful,
Be kind to me.

“Spirits of earthbound dead
That glide with noiseless tread,
Be kind to me.

“Spirits of heat and fire,
Destructive in your ire,
Be kind to me.

“Spirits of cold and ice,
Patrons of crime and vice,
Be kind to me.

“Wolves, vampires, satyrs,
ghosts!
Elect of all the devilish hosts!
I pray you send hither,
Send hither, send hither,
The great grey shape that makes
men shiver!
Shiver, shiver, shiver!
Come! Come! Come!”

The supplicant then takes off his vest and shirt and smears his body with the fat of some newly killed animal (preferably a cat), mixed with aniseed, camphor, and opium. Then he binds round his loins a girdle made of wolf's-skin, and kneeling down within the circumference of the first circle, waits for the advent of the Unknown. When the fire burns blue and quickly dies out, the Unknown is about to manifest itself; if it does not then actually appear it will make its presence felt.

There is little consistency in the various methods of the spirit's advent: sometimes a deep unnatural silence immediately precedes it; sometimes crashes and bangs, groanings and shriekings, herald its approach. When it remains invisible its presence is indicated and accompanied by a sensation of

abnormal cold and the most acute terror. It is sometimes visible in the guise of a huntsman—which is, perhaps, its most popular shape—sometimes in the form of a monstrosity, partly man and partly beast—and sometimes it is seen ill defined and only partially materialized. To what order of spirits it belongs is, of course, purely a matter of conjecture. I believe it to be some malevolent, superphysical, creative power, such as, in my opinion, participated largely in the creation of this and other planets. I do not believe it to be the Devil, because I do not believe in the existence of only one devil, but in countless devils. It is difficult to say to what extent the Unknown is believed to be powerful by those who approach it for the purpose of acquiring the gift of lycanthropy; but I am inclined to think that the majority of these, at all events, do not ascribe to it any supreme power, but regard it merely as a local spirit—the spirit of some particular wilderness or forest.

Of course, it is quite possible that the property of werwolfery might be acquired by other than a direct personal communication with the Unknown, as, for example, by eating a wolf's brains, by drinking water out of a wolf's footprints, or by drinking out of a stream from which three or more wolves have been seen to drink; but as most of the stories I have heard of werwolfery acquired in this way are of a wild and improbable nature, I think there is little to be learned from the modus

operandi they advocate. The following story, which I believe to be true in the main, was told me by a Dr. Broniervski, whom I met in Boulogne.

“Ten years ago,” my informant began, “I was engaged in a geological expedition in Montenegro. I left Cetinge in company with my escort, Dugald Dalghetty, a Dalmatian who had served me on many former occasions; but owing to an accident I was compelled to leave him behind at a village about thirty miles east of the capital. As it was absolutely necessary for me to have a guide, I chose a Montenegrin called Kniaz. Dalghetty warned me against him. ‘Kniaz has the evil eye,’ he said; ‘he will bring misfortune on you. Choose some one else.’

“Kniaz was certainly not particularly prepossessing. He was tall and angular, and pock-marked and sandy-haired; and his eyes had a peculiar cast—only a cast, of course, nothing more. To balance these detractions he was civil in his manners and extremely moderate in his terms. Dalghetty, faithful fellow, almost wept as he watched us depart. ‘I shall never see you again,’ he said. ‘Never!’

“Just outside the last cottage in the village we passed a gigantic, broad-shouldered man, clad in the usual clothes of frieze, a black skullcap, wide trousers, and tights from the knee to the ankle. Over his shoulders was a new white strookah, of which he seemed very proud; whilst he

had a perfect armament of weapons—rifles, pistols, yatagan—polished up to the knocker—and cartouche-box. He was conversing with a girl at one of the windows, but turned as we came up to him and leered impudently at Kniaz. The sallow in Kniaz's cheeks turned to white, and the cast in his eyes became ten times more pronounced. But he said nothing—only drooped his head and shuffled a little closer to me.

“For the rest of the day he spoke little; and I could tell from his expression and general air of dejection that he was still brooding over the incident. The following morning—we stayed the night in a wayside inn—Kniaz informed me that the route we had intended taking to Skaravoski—the town I meant to make the head quarters for my daily excursions—was blocked (a blood feud had suddenly been declared between two tribes), and that consequently we should have to go by some other way. I inquired who had told him and whether he was sure the information was correct. He replied that our host had given him the warning, and that the possibility of such an occurrence had been suggested to him before leaving Cetinge. ‘But,’ he added, ‘there is no need to worry, for the other road, though somewhat wild and rough, is, in reality, quite as safe, and certainly a good league and a half shorter.’ As it made no very great difference to me which way I went, I acquiesced. There was no reason to suspect Kniaz of any sinister motive—cases of treachery on the part of escorts

Recasting

By Tricia McCallum

Disney Princesses don't want to get married nowadays.
They know their way around a bow and arrow,
Eat out a lot.
They're skeptical about stepsisters,

They prefer
Princes that consult
Rather than control.
Ones that climb the stairs
And not their hair.

They choose
Uber over horse-drawn,
Waking to a smartphone
Rather than a strangers' kiss.
Hedge funds over credit unions,
Loose comfortable clothing.

They don't
Always feel like singing in public,
Wait well,
Take no for an answer,
Play dumb.

They won't
Whistle while they work,
Put up, sweep up, or and shut up,
Swoon and expect to be caught,
Falter and expect to be saved.

They want equal billing,
Signing authority,
A credible back story.
They want last names.

are practically unknown in Montenegro—and if it were true that some of the tribes were engaged in a vendetta, then I certainly agreed that we could not give them too wide a berth. At the same time I could not help observing a strange innovation in Kniaz's character. Besides the sullenness that had laid hold of him since his encounter with the man and girl, he now exhibited a restless eagerness—his eyes were never still, his lips constantly moved, and I could frequently hear him muttering to himself as we trudged along. He asked me several times if I believed in the supernatural, and when I laughingly replied 'No, I am far too practical and level-headed,' he said 'Wait. We are now in the land of spirits. You will soon change your opinion.'

“The country we were traversing was certainly forbidding— forbidding enough to be the hunting ground of legions of ferocious animals. But the supernatural! Bah! I flouted such an idea. All day we journeyed along a lofty ridge, from which, shortly before dusk, it became necessary to descend by a narrow and precipitous declivity, full of danger and difficulty. At the bottom we halted three or four hours, to wait for the moon, in a position sufficiently romantic and uncomfortable. A north-east wind, cold and biting, came whistling over the hills, and seemed to be sucked down into the hollow where we sat on the chilly stones. The moment we sighted the slightly depressed orb of the moon over the vast



Werewolf by Paul Mudie

hill of rocks, and the Milky Way spanning the heavens with a brilliancy seen only in the East, we pushed on again. On, along a painfully rough and uneven track, flanked on either side by

perpendicular masses of rock that reared themselves, black and frowning, like some huge ruined wall. On, till we eventually came to the end of the

defile. Then an extraordinary scene burst upon us.

“Whilst the irregular line of rocks continued close on our left, beyond it—glittering in the miraculously magnifying moonlight with more gigantic proportions than nature had afforded—was a huge pile of white rocks, looking like the fortifications of some vast fabulous city. There were yawning gateways flanked by bastions of great altitude; towers and pyramids; crescents and domes; and dizzy pinnacles; and castellated heights; all invested with the unearthly grandeur of the moon, yet showing in their wide breaches and indescribable ruin sure proofs that during a long course of ages they had been battered and undermined by rain, hurricane, and lightning, and all the mighty artillery of time. Piled on one another, and repeated over and over again, these strangely contorted rocks stretched as far as the eye could reach, sinking, however, as they receded, and leading the mind, though not the eye, down to the plain below, through which a turbid stream wound its way rebelliously, like some great twisting, twirling, silvery-scaled serpent.

“It was into this gorge that Kniaz in a voice thrilling with excitement informed me we must plunge.

“‘It is called,’ he explained to me, ‘the haunted valley, and it is said to have been from time immemorial under the spell of the grey spirits—a species of phantasm, half man and half

animal, that have the power of metamorphosing men into wild beasts.’”Horses, he went on to inform me, showed the greatest reluctance to enter the valley, which was a sure proof that the place was in very truth phantom-ridden. I must say its appearance favoured that theory. The path by which we descended was almost perpendicular, and filled with shadows. Precipices hemmed us in on every side; and here and there a huge fragment of rock, standing like a petrified giant, its summit gleaming white in the moonbeams, barred our way.

“On reaching the bottom we found ourselves exactly opposite the pile of white rocks, at the base of which roared the stream. Kniaz now declared that our best plan was to halt and bivouac here for the night. I expostulated, saying that I did not feel in the least degree tired, that the spot was far from comfortable, and that I preferred to push on. Kniaz then pleaded that he was too exhausted to proceed, and, in fact, whined to such an extent that in the end I gave way, and lying down under cover of a boulder, tried to imagine myself in bed. I did actually fall asleep, and awoke with the sensation of something crawling over my face. Sitting up, I looked around for Kniaz—he was nowhere to be seen. The oddness of his behaviour, his alternate talkativeness and sullenness, and the anxiety he had manifested to come by this route, made me at last suspicious. Had he any ulterior motive in leading me hither? What had become of him?

Where was he? I got up and approached the margin of the stream, and then for the first time I felt frightened. The illimitable possibilities of that enormous mass of castellated rocks towering above me both quelled and fascinated me. Were these flickering shadows shadows, or—had Kniaz, after all, spoken the truth when he said this valley was haunted? The moonlight rendered every object I looked upon so startlingly vivid, that not even the most trivial detail escaped my notice, and the more I scrutinized the more firmly the conviction grew on me that I was in a neighbourhood differing essentially from any spot I had hitherto visited. I saw nothing with which I had been formerly conversant. The few trees at hand resembled no growth of either the torrid, temperate, or northern frigid zones, and were altogether unlike those of the southern latitudes with which I was most familiar. The very rocks were novel in their mass, their colour, and their stratification; and the stream itself, utterly incredible as it may appear, had so little in common with the streams of other countries that I shrank away from it in alarm. I am at a loss to give any distinct idea of the nature of the water. I can only say it was not like ordinary water, either in appearance or behaviour. Even in the moonlight it was not colourless, nor was it of any one colour, presenting to the eye every variety of green and blue. Although it fell over stones and rocks with the same rapid descent as ordinary water, it

made no sound, neither splash nor gurgle. Summoning up courage, I dipped my fingers in the stream; it was quite cold and limpid. The difference did not lie there. I was still puzzling over this phenomenon, still debating in my mind the possibility of the valley being haunted, when I heard a cry—a peculiarly ominous cry—human and yet animal. For a few seconds I was too overcome with fear to move. At last, however, having in some measure pulled myself together, I ventured cautiously in the direction of the noise, and after treading as lightly as I could over the rough and rocky soil for some couple of hundred yards, suddenly came to an abrupt standstill.

“Kneeling beside the stream with its back turned to me was an extraordinary figure—a thing with a man’s body and an animal’s head—a dark, shaggy head with unmistakable prick ears. I gazed at it aghast. What was it? What was it doing? As I stared it bent down, lapped the water, and raising its head, uttered the same harrowing sound that had brought me thither. I then saw, with a fresh start of wonder, that its hands, which shone very white in the moonlight, were undergoing a gradual metamorphosis. I watched carefully, and first one finger, and then another, became amalgamated in a long, furry paw, armed with sharp, formidable talons.

“I suppose that in my fear and astonishment I made some sound of sufficient magnitude to attract attention; anyhow, the

creature at once swung round, and, with a snarl of rage, rushed savagely at me. Being unarmed, and also, I confess, unnerved, I completely lost my presence of mind, and not attempting to escape—though flight would have been futile, for I was nothing of a runner—shrieked aloud for help. The thing sprang at me, its jaws wide open, its eyes red with rage. I struck at it wildly, and have dim recollections of my puny blows landing on its face. It closed in on me, and gripping me tightly round the body with its sinewy arms, hurled me to the ground. My head came in violent contact with a stone, and I lost consciousness. On recovering my senses, I was immeasurably surprised to find Dalghetty sitting on a rock watching me, whilst close beside him was Kniaz, bloodstained and motionless.

“Dalghetty explained the situation. ‘Convinced that evil would befall you in the company of such a man,’ he said, pointing to the figure at his feet, ‘I determined to set out in pursuit of you. By a miracle, which I attribute to Our Lady, the effects of my accident suddenly wore off, and I felt absolutely well. I borrowed a horse, and, starting from Cetinge at nine this morning, reached the inn where you passed last night at eleven. There I learned the route you had taken, and leaving the horse behind—on such a road I was safer on my legs—I pressed on. The ground, being moist in places, revealed your footprints, and I had no difficulty at all in tracing you to the bottom of the

declivity. There I was at sea for some moments, since the rocky soil was too hard to receive any impressions. But hearing the howl of some wild animal, I concluded you were attacked, and, guided by the sound, I arrived here to find a werwolf actually preparing to devour you. A bullet from my rifle speedily rendered the creature harmless, and a close inspection of it proved that my surmises were only too correct. It was none other than our friend here with the evil eye—Kniaz!’

“‘Kniaz a werwolf!’ I ejaculated.

“‘Yes! he inveigled you here because he had made up his mind to drink the water of the enchanted stream, and so become metamorphosed from a man to a wild beast. His object in doing so was to destroy a young farmer who had stolen his sweetheart, and for whom he, as a man, was no match. However, he is harmless now, but it is a warning to you in future to trust no one who has the evil eye.’”

Belief in the evil eye is everywhere prevalent in the East, and it is undoubtedly true that people who have certain peculiarities in their eyes, both with regard to expression, colour, and formation, are people to be avoided. If malevolently inclined, they invariably bring ill-luck on all who become acquainted with them. I have followed the careers of several people in whom I have noticed this baneful feature, and their histories have been one long tale of sin or sorrow—often both.

But though the evil eye denotes an evil superphysical influence, the werewolf is not necessarily possessed of it. Sometimes a werewolf may be told by the long, straight, slanting eyebrows, which meet in an angle over the nose; sometimes by the hands, the third finger of which is a trifle the longest; or by the finger-nails, which are red, almond-shaped, and curved; sometimes by the ears, which are set rather low, and far back on their heads; and sometimes by a noticeably long, swinging stride, which is strongly suggestive of some animal. Either one or other of these features is always present in hereditary werewolves, and is also frequently developed in those people who become werewolves, either at the same time as or soon after they acquire the property.



This is a little look back at some of our 50 word horror stories submitted to our contests from 2015 to 2020. Every year we run multiple contests. These stories are some of our favorites.

The Embalmer by Susan Oldham

The embalmer wore an expression of respectful acknowledgment.

“They are beyond pain now,” he spoke softly, regretfully.

My hands secured as they were to a swivel hook in the ceiling, he spun me round to look upon his painted dead.

“You, however,” he intoned, knife glistening, “are quite another matter.” (2017)

Opioid Constipation by Emily Gammel

My stomach is distended, and I’m immobilized and lying on the floor.

You only come in when it’s time to force feed me narcotics, and chocolate cake.

My mouth is bruised, from your fingers, squeezing my cheeks, and forcing the decadent dessert, down my throat.

My intestines burst.

More Horrifying 50 Word Stories.....

BBQ

by Carrie Ann Golden

The patties sizzled in the flames as the crowd eagerly waits; he wonders if they'll notice his missing wife.

THE MIDNIGHT INCUBATOR

by Kit Steward

She heard mushy sounds for days and suffered from unbearable itchiness.

A doctor's visit revealed earwig pupae nesting in her ear canal, it was flushed out.

Later, weary from stress, she crawled into bed.

That night while she slept, the creature returned.

And finding the eggs missing, it laid more.

Secondhand Doll

by Elizabeth Lee

She didn't want a secondhand doll so she flung it across the room. Porcelain cracked against the wall. Her mom made her glue the pieces back together. A thin shard sliced her hand, baptizing the doll in her hateful blood. The secondhand doll decided she didn't want an ungrateful child.



A Catch Up by Emma Weakley

Our Featured Artist

I am Emma Weakley. I am a freelance illustrator based in Kapiti, New Zealand. I have been working on a semi professional basis since 2007.

My first book, Jack and the Beanstalk was published in 2010. That Kind of Planet, a collection of my short comics, was published in 2016 and won the Sir Julius Vogel Award for best production/publication in 2017. I have also won the Sir Julius Vogel award in 2008, 2014, and 2017 for best professional artwork. I use a mixture of traditional drawing and digital painting. My experience is largely with book illustration, short comics, and individual commissioned artwork and illustrations.

Twitter - @TheNinjaZebra
Instagram - @theninjazebra

Bedtime

by Julia Merritt

My son appeared expressionless
as I tucked him in bed. He pupils
were dilated, skin clammy, head
cocked unnaturally to the left.

“What is it?” I whispered,
tucking a curl behind his ear.

Something jagged protruded
from his scalp.

He seized my arm.

“They told me not to touch it.”

Chinatown

by Rebecca T. Kaplan

I found a store in Chinatown,
full of exquisite pens. On one
shelf I noticed a severed human
finger. It was swollen, distended,
obviously dead a while. I bought
it, curious, and began writing.
From it flowed another’s stories,
confessions. It tells of
murderous longings. Can’t put it
down. My fingers ache. Help,
please. Anyone?

We don't want people like you...

by Kelsey Beach!

“We don’t want people like you!”
The adoption agency slammed its
doors. Margaret and Anne left,
hugging tight.

“We’d love the child as our own,”
Margaret sobbed.

“We’ll try the old-fashioned way,”
Anne said.

A boy stayed out after dark. Fangs
caught the moonlight.

“Come to mama,” Anne hissed.

The Code

by Ann Bracken

In this circle of men
their code demands one rule—
Find my value in my words.

Each session a blank check
you discover that everyone has
an attic filled with hope,
loss, and dreams.

How do you hold the experience
of terse words
shaped by
poverty and despair?

Slowly you will discover the unexpected bridges
connecting your life to theirs—the falls,
the disappointing parents,
the harsh walls of privilege.

Press deeper.
Mind only the present—
the books discussed,
the ideas on the page.



Face Eater by Crow Dance Jack

Evidence of Witches

For Halloween: The accounts and evidence against witches (those killed for being witches) are far more terrifying than the prospects of them being true witches. The idea that they can be tried, found guilty and put to death with little or no evidence (just testimonies

from neighbors) scares me a lot more than a witch showing up at my house at night.

Here is the testimony of James Deuce. It's taken from the book *Discovery of Witches*, by Thomas Potts, Edited by James Crossley

(1613). We've included the original excerpt and then translated it as well as we could.

Original text:

HE sayd Examine Iames Deuce sayth, that about a month agoe, as this Examine was coming towards his Mothers house, and at day-gate of the same night, this Examine mette a browne Dogge coming from his Graund-mothers house, about tenne Roodes distant from the same house: and about two or three nights after, that this Examine heard a voyce of a great number of Children shrieking and crying pittifully, about day-light gate; and likewise, about ten Roodes distant of this Examines sayd Graund-mothers house. And about fiue nights then next following, presently after daylight, within 20. Roodes of the sayd Elizabeth Sowtherns house, he heard a foule yelling like vnto a great number of Cattes: but what they were, this Examine cannot tell. And he further sayth, that about three nights after that, about midnight of the same, there came a thing, and lay vpon him very heauily about an houre, and went then from him out of his Chamber window, coloured blacke, and about the bignesse of a Hare or Catte. And he further sayth, that about S. Peter's day last, one Henry Bullocke came to the sayd Elizabeth Sowtherns house, and sayd, that her Graund-child Alizon Deuce, had bewitched a Child of his, and desired her that she would goe with him to his house; which accordingly she did: And therevpon she the said Alizon fell downe on her knees, & asked the said Bullocke forgiuenes, and confessed to him, that she had bewitched the said child, as this Examine heard his said sister confesse vnto him this Examine.

Our Translation

The subject, James Deuce, said that about a month ago, as he was walking toward his Mother's house, and later that night at his gate, James saw a brown dog coming from his Grandmother's home. The strange animal was about 50 yards away. Two or 3 nights later he heard voices of children shrieking. There was a loud group of voice. James said he could not tell how many. They crying and screaming and it was in the same directions also about 50 yards away toward his Grand-mothers home. He heard the voices around sunrise. He also it 4 nights after that, for another approximate 20 days. He heard many cats yelling and those noises were coming from Elizabeth Sowtherns house. He was pretty sure. They sounded like cats, but he wasn't positive.

Three nights after he heard these noises he had a spirit come over him and hold him down. It was constricting his chest. It was on him for about an hour. After that time he saw it go out the window of his home. It was black and the size of a rabbit or cat.

He says after this that last St. Peter's Day Henry Bullocke said that his child had been bewitched by Sowtherns' granddaughter Alizon Deuce. She took him to her house and he followed her.

When they got to the house, Alizon got down on her knees and prayed for forgiveness. She ask Bullocke to forgive her for bewitching his child. Alizon's sister has also confessed to James.



Halloween Witch by Stacy Drum

Halloween Haiku

We often run a Halloween Haiku contest, but even when we don't, we still love reading them. Here are some that have been posted on our site over the last few years.

Fireworks

by Dustin Shattuck

We kids run and scream
from our neighbor, the Crab Man,
all straps and pincers.

Dark Autumnal Magic

by Jennifer Ruth Jackson

Falling leaves dance, spry
The sorcerer gifts them eyes
To spy, through windows

Haiku Continued....

“Imprinted”

by Jennifer Rollings

Steam from rose tea cup,
a subtle embrace, heart sting—
beyond moment, dream

Straws

by Abigail Rathbone

We draw straws to see
Who eats whom in the contest—
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Hungry

by Nicoli Carr

Bitten, I can't run
life escapes. I lie and die
But, waken ... hungry

Horrific Discovery

by Wendy Lee Klenetsky

Blood curdling loud screams
Slicing the evening's silence
Only parts were found

Unveils

by David Ellis

Something under bed
Bulbous head, too many legs
Moonlight unveils nest

Sleep Now

by Misty Ezzell

“Go to sleep now, child”
Scold parents who have
succumbed,
Blind to the monster.



from the Book of Hallowe'en 1919

If we could ask one of the old-world pagans whom he revered as his greatest gods, he would be sure to name among them the sun-god; calling him Apollo if he were a Greek; if an Egyptian, Horus or Osiris; if of Norway, Sol; if of Peru, Bochica. As the sun is the center of the physical universe, so all primitive peoples made it the hub about which their religion revolved, nearly always believing it a living person to whom they could say prayers and offer sacrifices, who directed their lives and destinies, and could even snatch men from earthly existence to dwell for a time with him, as it draws the water from lakes and seas. In believing this they followed an instinct of all early peoples, a desire to make persons of the great powers of nature, such as the world of growing things, mountains and water, the sun, moon, and stars; and a wish for these gods they had made to take an interest in and be part of their daily life. The next step was making stories about them to account for what was seen; so arose myths and legends.

The sun has always marked out work-time and rest, divided the year into winter idleness, seed-

time, growth, and harvest; it has always been responsible for all the beauty and goodness of the earth; it is itself splendid to look upon. It goes away and stays longer and longer, leaving the land in cold and gloom; it returns bringing the long fair days and resurrection of spring. A Japanese legend tells how the hidden sun was lured out by an image made of a copper plate with saplings radiating from it like sunbeams, and a fire kindled, dancing, and prayers; and round the earth in North America the Cherokees believed they brought the sun back upon its northward path by the same means of rousing its curiosity, so that it would come out to see its counterpart and find out what was going on.

All the more important church festivals are survivals of old rites to the sun. “How many times the Church has decanted the new wine of Christianity into the old bottles of heathendom.” Yule-tide, the pagan Christmas, celebrated the sun's turning north, and the old midsummer holiday is still kept in Ireland and on the Continent as St. John's Day by the lighting of bonfires and a dance about them from east to west as the sun appears to move. The pagan Hallowe'en at the end of summer

was a time of grief for the decline of the sun's glory, as well as a harvest festival of thanksgiving to him for having ripened the grain and fruit, as we formerly had husking-bees when the ears had been garnered, and now keep our own Thanksgiving by eating of our winter store in praise of God who gives us our increase.

Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit, lends us the harvest element of Hallowe'en; the Celtic day of "summer's end" was a time when spirits, mostly evil, were abroad; the gods whom Christ dethroned joined the ill-omened throng; the Church festivals of All Saints' and All Souls' coming at the same time of year—the first of November—contributed the idea of the return of the dead; and the Teutonic May Eve assemblage of witches brought its hags and their attendant beasts to help celebrate the night of October 31st.



Arachnid by Michael Savas

Under My Skin

by Pavel Soham

Ever looked in the mirror and realized that what's looking back isn't you?

It happened to me when I was twelve. There I was, brushing my teeth in front of the bathroom mirror, when I saw him. Looking back at me through my own eyes. And he knew that I knew. He smiled; a ghastly, skeletal smile from ear to ear. It was the most sinister smile I had ever seen. I screamed until I couldn't scream any more.

There's a monster living under my skin.

I tried to put on a brave face. I didn't want to hurt anybody.

But the more of myself I drew in, the more of him got out. I saw him in the red underneath my eyelids, in the gum that showed every time I

smiled, and on the scratchmarks on my skin everywhere I itched.

When I was twelve, my mom caught me cutting myself. She blamed herself.

But I wasn't really me. He was cutting himself out.

When I was sixteen, I developed a rash. I scratched myself until my forearms were just pink flesh. Boy, he was happy.

When I was eighteen, I tried to drown him. I climbed up on top floor of the diving pool, and jumped. I couldn't swim. I recall every second as I dropped closer and closer to the water, frame by frame, almost. As my face was inches from the water, I saw the terror in his reflection. It was beautiful.

Someone saved me. A lifeguard.

I had a couple of wonderful years.
Got married.

He was only hiding.
The memory lapses began a few
months before Ruth declared she
was pregnant. It started small.
Sometimes, I would forget where I
kept my keys, or where I hid the
remote. I did not think too much of
it. I was under a lot of stress, after
all. Because of the baby.

Sally was a bright, wonderful baby.
I was playing with her in the
afternoon one day. She was a
smiling a happy, toothless smile
when I looked at our reflection in a
puddle. I saw him again. Smiling
with his eyes open wide, face
stretched beyond my laugh lines,
baring my teeth and gum. But that
wasn't the bit scaring me. The baby
was smiling back at him, with the
same wide eyes that showed the red
and the grin – that same ghastly,
toothy, gummy, skeletal smile.

It was his baby!
I remember fighting against every
fiber of my body as I clamped my
hands around her throat.

I don't mind being in this cell. My
only regret is that Ruth is never
going to forgive me.

Any last words, you say?

No, no last words for you.

I would ask you to tell Ruth to
forgive me.

But I won't. Not because you don't
believe that there's a monster under
my skin.

But because there's a monster
under your skin, too.

Watching.
Listening.
Waiting.



Mary, he doesn't love you
Trust me, I know his type —
The Greek gods-blessed jawline, the truth-or-dare smirk, the passion-mad eyes you
think see you
The lightning bolt of lust to your old oak tree
If he loves you at all,
It's as fire loves fuel

Mary, he doesn't need you
Did you know, that when his first wife drowns herself
(Two years after you run away with him),
She'll be pregnant with his child?
He says you're his Elizabeth
But he'll call you Justine if it suits him
And tie the hangman's noose himself

Mary, you've married a monster
Made of unequal parts freshly-dead arrogance and rotting pride
Stitched together with an ego only a man playing God could possess
And you, his faithful Igor (never his equal),
Will name him Victor Frankenstein

Mary, your Love is a robber
He's digging around in your grave
Did you know, when he writes a preface to your masterpiece
(In your voice),
He'll refer to his own work as "far more acceptable to the public than anything I
(meaning you) could hope to produce"?
As if he's threatened by the secrets
That Nature told you and not him

Mary, you don't need him
He'd curse the stars to steal your fame
Did you know that long, long after he's gone,
It is your voice the literary masses will toil over
Like mad scientists desperately searching for the secret of life?
Your name synonymous with "The discovery of fire"
With "The fall of Icarus"
With "The only monsters in the world are those we create ourselves"

And Mary, you've created a monster
Racing across the Arctic of time
Over and over, beating Victor Frankenstein
Over and over, strangling the life from his inferior throat
Over and over, revelling in its damnation
And in you who brought it to life



A Short Story

DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

BY TIM SACKS

EVERY WRITER

“Who’s that over there?” Alex inquired, surreptitiously pointing to an arguing pair in the back. They were an odd twosome to be sure. The girl, while decked out in the usual scant attire, also bore a pair of spectacles on her nose which gave her a kind of scholarly look. In fact, as far as she could recall, she was the only stripper Alex had ever seen who wore glasses on the job. The man with whom she was arguing was no less puzzling. He appeared to be extremely sunburned despite the fact that it was the dead of winter and he wore a long, grey habit, the likes of which, Alex supposed, had not been seen since the fourteenth century.

“Oh, that’s Fallon,” replied Tiffany nonchalantly. “She’s going out with a demon.”

Alex’s brow furrowed. “Excuse me? ... A demon?”

“You know, from Hell. Mephistopheles.”

“Mephistopheles?”

Tiffany shook her head. “It’ll never work,” she whispered, patting Alex on the shoulder as she walked towards the bar. Alex, meanwhile, curious as ever, made her way slowly towards the couple and

stood about five feet away from them, facing the stage and pretending to be engaged with the routine currently being performed. She could just overhear the conversation at hand.

“Don’t get angry at me, babe!” cried the girl apparently called Fallon. “I was just curious about God’s creation, that’s all. You don’t have to yell at me.”

“You were having second thoughts about our contract, weren’t you?!” demanded Mephistopheles. “All of a sudden, the idea of salvation through the Lord is becoming attractive to you, is it not?!”

“No, baby!” pleaded Fallon. “I’d never think about God that way. I swear to no master but you! I would never think of even looking at another spirit!”

“You better not!” growled Mephistopheles. “The contract clearly stipulates that you must banish all thoughts of piety and heaven from your mind, otherwise I will tear you to pieces!”

“You’re so jealous!”

“We made a deal! My services are available to you only insofar as you abide by the rules laid out in our

agreement! Otherwise, you can forget about being a weatherwoman!” And with that, Mephistopheles seemed to vanish in a burst of smoke and flame, although Alex assumed it must have just been the light. Nevertheless, there was a distinctly sulfuric odor emanating from the spot.

Meanwhile, Fallon fell to her knees and cried out, “Don’t go like that, baby! I swear to Lucifer that I serve only the infernal kingdom! Why are you mad at me? Why do we have to fight?” She gasped. “Was this our first fight?” She finally burst into tears and rushed into the dressing room. Alex, equally perplexed and horrified, watched her go. Tiffany approached her from behind and patted her on the shoulder again.

“Don’t worry about her. She’s a spaz.”

Alex turned around with a worried expression. “I think she sold her soul to him!”

Tiffany rolled her eyes. “Yeah, tell me about it.”



This is a piece taken from the book A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718. The book was authored in 1909 by Wallace Notestein. Wallace was an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Minnesota. We thought it was an interesting read for Halloween.

In the narrative of English witchcraft the story of the exorcists is a side-issue. Yet their performances were so closely connected with the operations of the Devil and of his agents that they cannot be left out of account in any adequate statement of the subject. And it is impossible to understand the strength and weakness of the superstition without a comprehension of the rôle that the would-be agents for expelling evil spirits played. That the reign which had seen pass in procession the bands of conjurers and witches should close with the exorcists was to be expected. It was their part to

complete the cycle of superstition. If miracles of magic were possible, if conjurers could use a supernatural power of some sort to assist them in performing wonders, there was nothing very remarkable about creatures who wrought harm to their fellows through the agency of evil spirits. And if witches could send evil spirits to do harm, it followed that those spirits could be expelled or exorcised by divine assistance. If by prayer to the Devil demons could be commanded to enter human beings, they could be driven out by prayer to God. The processes of reasoning were perfectly clear; and they were easily accepted because they found adequate confirmation in the New Testament. The gospels were full of narratives of men possessed with evil spirits who had been freed by the invocation of God. Of these stories no doubt the most quoted and the one most effective in moulding opinion was the account of the dispossessed devils who had entered into a herd of swine and

plunged over a steep place into the sea.

It must not be supposed that exorcism was a result of belief in witchcraft. It was as old as the Christian church. It was still made use of by the Roman church and, indeed, by certain Protestant groups. And just at this time the Roman church found it a most important instrument in the struggle against the reformed religions. In England Romanism was waging a losing war, and had need of all the miracles that it could claim in order to reestablish its waning credit. The hunted priests who were being driven out by Whitgift were not unwilling to resort to a practice which they hoped would regain for them the allegiance of the common people. During the years 1585-1586 they had conducted what they considered marvellous works of exorcism in Catholic households of Buckinghamshire and Middlesex. Great efforts had been made to

keep news of these séances from reaching the ears of the government, but accounts of them had gained wide circulation and came to the privy council. That body was of course stimulated to greater activity against the Catholics.

As a phase of a suppressed form of religion the matter might never have assumed any significance. Had not a third-rate Puritan clergyman, John Darrel, almost by accident hit upon the use of exorcism, the story of its use would be hardly worth telling. When this young minister was not more than twenty, but already, as he says, reckoned "a man of hope," he was asked to cure a seventeen-year-old girl at Mansfield in Nottingham, Katherine Wright. Her disease called for simple medical treatment. That was not Darrel's plan of operation. She had an evil spirit, he declared. From four o'clock in the morning until noon he prayed over her spirit. He either set going of his own initiative the opinion that possessed persons could point out witches, or he quickly availed himself of such a belief already existing. The evil spirit, he declared, could recognize and even name the witch that had sent it as well as the witch's confederates. All of this was no doubt suggested to the possessed girl and she was soon induced to name the witch that troubled her. This was Margaret Roper, a woman with whom she was upon bad terms. Margaret Roper was at once taken into custody by the constable. She happened to be brought before a justice of the peace possessing more than usual discrimination. He not only discharged her, but threatened John Darrel with arrest.

This was in 1586. Darrel disappeared from view for ten years or so, when he turned up at Burton-upon-Trent, not very far from the scene of his first operations. Here

he volunteered to cure Thomas Darling. The story is a curious one and too long for repetition. Some facts must, however, be presented in order to bring the story up to the point at which Darrel intervened. Thomas Darling, a young Derbyshire boy, had become ill after returning from a hunt. He was afflicted with innumerable fits, in which he saw green angels and a green cat. His aunt very properly consulted a physician, who at the second consultation thought it possible that the child was bewitched. The aunt failed to credit the diagnosis. The boy's fits continued and soon took on a religious character. Between seizures he conversed with godly people. They soon discovered that the reading of the Scriptures brought on attacks. This looked very like the Devil's work. The suggestion of the physician was more seriously regarded. Meanwhile the boy had overheard the discussion of witchcraft and proceeded to relate a story. He had met, he said, a "little old woman" in a "gray gown with a black fringe about the cape, a broad thrimmed hat, and three warts on her face." Very accidentally, as he claimed, he offended her. She angrily said a rhyming charm that ended with the words, "I wil goe to heaven, and thou shalt goe to hell," and stooped to the ground.

The story produced a sensation. Those who heard it declared at once that the woman must have been Elizabeth Wright, or her daughter Else Gooderidge, women long suspected of witchcraft. Else was fetched to the boy. She said she had never seen him, but her presence increased the violence of his fits. Mother and daughter were carried before two justices of the peace, who examined them together with Else's husband and daughter. The women were searched for special marks in the usual revolting

manner with the usual outcome, but only Else herself was sent to gaol.

The boy grew no better. It was discovered that the reading of certain verses in the first chapter of John invariably set him off. The justices of the peace put Else through several examinations, but with little result. Two good witches were consulted, but refused to help unless the family of the bewitched came to see them.

Meantime a cunning man appeared who promised to prove Else a witch. In the presence of "manie worshipfull personages" "he put a paire of new shooes on her feete, setting her close to the fire till the shooes being extream hot might constrayne her through increase of the paine to confesse." "This," says the writer, "was his ridiculous practice." The woman "being throgly heated desired a release" and offered to confess, but, as soon as her feet were cooled, refused. No doubt the justices of the peace would have repudiated the statement that the illegal process of torture was used. The methods of the cunning man were really nothing else.

The woman was harried day and night by neighbors to bring her to confess. At length she gave way and, in a series of reluctant confessions, told a crude story of her wrong-doings that bore some slight resemblance to the boy's tale, and involved the use of a spirit in the form of a dog.

Now it was that John Darrel came upon the ground eager to make a name for himself. Darling had been ill for three months and was not improving. Even yet some of the boy's relatives and friends doubted if he were possessed. Not so Darrel. He at once undertook to pray and fast for the boy. According to his

own account his efforts were singularly blessed. At all events the boy gradually improved and Darrel claimed the credit. As for Alse Gooderidge, she was tried at the assizes, convicted by the jury, and sentenced by Lord Chief-Justice Anderson to imprisonment. She died soon after. This affair undoubtedly widened Darrel's reputation.

Not long after, a notable case of possession in Lancashire afforded him a new opportunity to attract notice. The case of Nicholas Starchie's children provoked so much comment at the time that it is perhaps worth while to go back and bring the narrative up to the point where Darrel entered. Two of Starchie's children had one day been taken ill most mysteriously, the girl "with a dumpish and heavie countenance, and with a certaine fearefull starting and pulling together of her body." The boy was "compelled to shout" on the way to school. Both grew steadily worse and the father consulted Edmund Hartley, a noted conjurer of his time. Hartley quieted the children by the use of charms. When he realized that his services would be indispensable to the father he made a pretence of leaving and so forced a promise from Starchie to pay him 40 shillings a year. This ruse was so successful that he raised his demands. He asked for a house and lot, but was refused. The children fell ill again. The perplexed parent now went to a physician of Manchester. But the physician "sawe no signe of sicknes." Dr. Dee, the famous astrologer and friend of Elizabeth, was summoned. He advised the help of "godlie preachers."

Meantime the situation in the afflicted family took a more serious turn. Besides Mr. Starchie's children, three young wards of his, a servant, and a visitor, were all



Skull by Cesar Valtierra

taken with the mysterious illness. The modern reader might suspect that some contagious disease had gripped the family, but the irregular and intermittent character of the disease precludes that hypothesis.

Darrel in his own pamphlet on the matter declares that when the parents on one occasion went to a play the children were quiet, but that when they were engaged in godly exercise they were tormented,

a statement that raises a suspicion that the disease, like that of the Throckmorton children, was largely imaginary.

But the divines were at work. They had questioned the conjurer, and had found that he fumbled “verie ill favouredlie” in the repetition of the Lord’s Prayer. He was haled before a justice of the peace, who began gathering evidence against him and turned him over to the assizes. There it came out that he had been wont to kiss the Starchie children,

parts and that he had bidden the witness step into the quarters one after another. Making such circles was definitely mentioned in the law as felony. Hartley denied the charge, but to no purpose. He was convicted of felony—so far as we can judge, on this unsupported afterthought of a single witness—and was hanged. Sympathy, however, would be inappropriate. In the whole history of witchcraft there were few victims who came so near to deserving their fate.

But the exorcists were not by any means disheartened. On the following day, in company with another minister, they renewed the services and were able to expel six of the seven spirits. On the third day they stormed and took the last citadel of Satan. Unhappily the capture was not permanent. Darrel tells us himself that the woman later became a Papist and the evil spirit returned.

The exorcist now turned his skill upon a young apprenticed musician



Pillars by Stacy Drum

and had even attempted, although without success, to kiss a maid servant. In this way he had presumably communicated the evil spirit—a new notion. The court could find no law, however, upon which to hang him. He had bewitched the children, but he had bewitched none of them to death, and therefore had not incurred the death penalty. But the father leaped into the gap. He remembered that he had seen the conjurer draw a magic circle and divide it into four

This was the story up to the time of Darrel’s arrival. With Darrel came his assistant, George More, pastor of a church in Derbyshire. The two at once recognized the supernatural character of the case they were to treat and began religious services for the stricken family. It was to no effect. “All or most of them joined together in a strange and supernatural loud whupping that the house and grounde did sounde therwith again.”

of Nottingham. According to Darrel’s story of the affair, William Somers had nine years before met an old woman who had threatened him. Again, more than a year before Darrel came to Nottingham, Somers had had two encounters with a strange woman “at a deep cole-pit, hard by the way-side.” Soon afterwards he “did use such strang and idle kinde of gestures in laughing, dancing and such like lighte behaviour, that he was suspected to be madd.” He began to

suffer from bodily distortions and to evince other signs of possession which created no little excitement in Nottingham.

Darrel had been sent for by this time. He came at once and with his usual precipitancy pronounced the case one of possession. Somers, he said, was suffering for the sins of Nottingham. It was time that something should be done. Prayer and fasting were instituted. For three days the youth was preached to and prayed over, while the people of Nottingham, or some of them at least, joined in the fast. On the third day came what was deemed a most remarkable exhibition. The preacher named slowly, one after another, fourteen signs of possession. As he named them Somers illustrated in turn each form of possession. Here was confirmatory evidence of a high

order. The exorcist had outdone himself. He now held out promises of deliverance for the subject. For a quarter of an hour the boy lay as if dead, and then rose up quite well.

Darrel now took up again the witchfinder's rôle he had once before assumed. Somers was encouraged to name the contrivers of his bewitchment. Through him, Darrel is said to have boasted, they would expose all the witches in England. They made a most excellent start at it. Thirteen women were accused by the boy, who would fall into fits at the sight of a witch, and a general invitation was extended to prefer charges. But the community was becoming a bit incredulous and failed to respond. All but two of the accused women were released.

The witch-discoverer, who in the meantime had been chosen preacher at St. Mary's in Nottingham, made two serious mistakes. He allowed accusations to be preferred against Alice Freeman, sister of an alderman, and he let Somers be taken out of his hands. By the contrivance of some citizens who doubted the possession, Somers was placed in the house of correction, on a trumped-up charge that he had bewitched a Mr. Sterland to death. Removed from the clergyman's influence, he made confession that his possessions were pretended. Darrel, he declared, had taught him how to pretend. The matter had now gained wide notoriety and was taken up by the Anglican church. The archdeacon of Derby reported the affair to his superiors, and the Archbishop of York appointed a commission to examine into the



Catcher in the Rye by Dana Loberg

case. Whether from alarm or because he had anew come under Darrel's influence, Somers refused to confess before the commission and again acted out his fits with such success that the commission seems to have been convinced of the reality of his possession. This was a notable victory for the exorcist. But Chief-Justice Anderson of the court of common pleas was now commencing the assizes at Nottingham and was sitting in judgment on the case of Alice Freeman. Anderson was a man of intense convictions. He believed in the reality of witchcraft and had earlier sent at least one witch to the gallows and one to prison. But he was a man who hated Puritanism with all his heart, and would at once have suspected Puritan exorcism. Whether because the arch-instigator against Alice Freeman was a Puritan, or because the evidence adduced against her was flimsy, or because Somers, again summoned to court, acknowledged his fraud, or for all these reasons, Anderson not only dismissed the case, but he wrote a letter about it to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Whitgift called Darrel and More before the court of high commission, where the Bishop of London, two of the Lord Chief-Justices, the master of requests, and other eminent officials heard the case. It seems fairly certain that Bancroft, the Bishop of London, really took control of this examination and that he acted quite as much the part of a prosecutor as that of a judge. One of Darrel's friends complained bitterly that the exorcist was not allowed to make "his particular defences" but "was still from time to time cut off by the Lord Bishop of London." No doubt the bishop may have been somewhat arbitrary. It was his privilege under the procedure of the high commission court, and he was dealing with one

whom he deemed a very evident impostor. In fine, a verdict was rendered against the two clergymen. They were deposed from the ministry and put in close prison. So great was the stir they had caused that in 1599 Samuel Harsnett, chaplain to the Bishop of London, published *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel*, a careful résumé of the entire case, with a complete exposure of Darrel's trickery. In this account the testimony of Somers was given as to the origin of his possession. He testified before the ecclesiastical court that he had known Darrel several years before they had met at Nottingham. At their first meeting he promised, declared Somers, "to tell me some thinges, wherein if I would be ruled by him, I should not be driven to goe so barely as I did." Darrel related to Somers the story of Katherine Wright and her possession, and remarked, "If thou wilt sweare unto me to keepe my counsell, I will teache thee to doe all those trickes which Katherine Wright did, and many others that are more straunge." He then illustrated some of the tricks for the benefit of his pupil and gave him a written paper of directions. From that time on there were meetings between the two at various places. The pupil, however, was not altogether successful with his fits and was once turned out of service as a pretender. He was then apprenticed to the musician already mentioned, and again met Darrel, who urged him to go and see Thomas Darling of Burton, "because," says Somers, "that seeing him in his fittes, I might the better learn to do them myselfe." Somers met Darrel again and went through with a series of tricks of possession. It was after all these meetings and practice that Somers began his career as a possessed person in Nottingham and was prayed over by Mr. Darrel. Such at

least was his story as told to the ecclesiastical commission. It would be hazardous to say that the narrative was all true. Certainly it was accepted by Harsnett, who may be called the official reporter of the proceedings at Darrel's trial, as substantially true.

The publication of the *Discovery* by Harsnett proved indeed to be only the beginning of a pamphlet controversy which Darrel and his supporters were but too willing to take up. Harsnett himself after his first onslaught did not re-enter the contest. The semi-official character of his writing rendered it unnecessary to refute the statements of a convicted man. At any rate, he was soon occupied with another production of similar aim. In 1602 Bishop Bancroft was busily collecting the materials, in the form of sworn statements, for the exposure of Catholic pretenders. He turned the material over to his chaplain. Whether the several examinations of Roman exorcists and their subjects were the result of a new interest in exposing exorcism on the part of the powers which had sent Darrel to prison, or whether they were merely a phase of increased vigilance against the activity of the Roman priests, we cannot be sure. The first conclusion does not seem improbable. Be that as it may, the court of high commission got hold of evidence enough to justify the privy council in authorizing a full publication of the testimony. Harsnett was deputed to write the account of the Catholic exorcists which was brought out in 1603 under the title of *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*. We have not the historical materials with which to verify the claims made in the book. On the face of it the case against the Roman priests looks bad. A mass of examinations was printed which seem to show that the Jesuit Weston and his confreres

in England had been guilty of a great deal of jugglery and pretence. The Jesuits, however, were wiser in their generation than the Puritans and had not made charges of witchcraft. For that reason their performances may be passed over.

the staggers, or a knavish boy of the schoole, or an idle girle of the wheele, or a young drab of the sullens, and hath not fat enough for her porredge, nor her father and mother butter enough for their bread; and she have a little helpe of

the Mother, Epilepsie, or Cramp, ... and then with-all old mother Nobs hath called her by chaunce 'idle young huswife,' or bid the devil scratch her, then no doubt but mother Nobs is the witch.... Horace the Heathen spied long agoe, that a

Neither the pretences of the Catholics nor the refutation of them are very important for our purposes. The exposure of John Darrel was of significance, because it involved the guilt or innocence of the women he accused as witches, as well as because the ecclesiastical authorities took action against him and thereby levelled a blow directly at exorcism and possession and indirectly at loose charges of witchcraft. Harsnett's books were the outcome of this affair and the ensuing exposures of the Catholics, and they were more significant than anything that had gone before. The Church of England had not committed itself very definitely on witchcraft, but its spokesman in the attack upon the Catholic pretenders took no uncertain ground. He was skeptical not only about exorcism but about witchcraft as well. It is refreshing and inspiriting to read his hard-flung and pungent words. "Out of these," he wrote, "is shaped us the true Idea of a Witch, an old weather-beaten Croane, having her chinne and her knees meeting for age, walking like a bow leaning on a shaft, hollow-eyed, untoothed, furrowed on her face, having her lips trembling with the palsie, going mumbling in the streetes, one that hath forgotten her pater noster, and hath yet a shrewd tongue in her head, to call a drab, a drab. If shee have learned of an olde wife in a chimnies end: Pax, max, fax, for a spel: or can say Sir John of Grantams curse, for the Millers Eeles, that were stolne: ... Why then ho, beware, looke about you my neighbours; if any of you have a sheepe sicke of the giddies, or an hogge of the mumps, or an horse of



Classic Crutch by James Sholes

Witch, a Wizard, and a Conjurer were but bul-beggars to scare fooles.... And Geoffrey Chaucer, who had his two eyes, wit, and learning in his head, spying that all these brainlesse imaginations of witchings, possessings, house-hanting, and the rest, were the forgeries, cosenages, Imposturs, and legerdemaine of craftie priests, ... writes in good plaine terms.”

It meant a good deal that Harsnett took such a stand. Scot had been a voice crying in the wilderness. Harsnett was supported by the powers in church and state. He was, as has been seen, the chaplain of Bishop Bancroft, now—from 1604—to become Archbishop of Canterbury. He was himself to become eminent in English history as master of Pembroke Hall (Cambridge), vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, Bishop of Chichester, Bishop of Norwich, and Archbishop of York. Whatever support he had at the time—and it is very clear that he had the backing of the English church on the question of exorcism—his later position and influence must have given great weight not only to his views on exorcism but to his skepticism about witchcraft.

His opinions on the subject, so far as can be judged by his few direct statements and by implications, were quite as radical as those of his predecessor. As a matter of fact he was a man who read widely and had pondered deeply on the superstition, but his thought had been colored by Scot. His assault, however, was less direct and studied than that of his master. Scot was a man of uncommonly serious temperament, a plain, blunt-spoken, church-going Englishman who covered the whole ground of superstition without turning one phrase less serious than another. His pupil, if so Harsnett may be called, wrote

earnestly, even aggressively, but with a sarcastic and bitter humor that entertained the reader and was much less likely to convince. The curl never left his lips. If at times a smile appeared, it was but an accented sneer. A writer with a feeling indeed for the delicate effects of word combination, if his humor had been less chilled by hate, if his wit had been of a lighter and more playful vein, he might have laughed superstition out of England. When he described the dreadful power of holy water and frankincense and the book of exorcisms “to scald, broyle and sizzle the devil,” or “the dreadful power of the crosse and sacrament of the altar to torment the devill and to make him roare,” or “the astonishable power of nicknames, reliques and asses ears,” he revealed a faculty of fun-making just short of effective humor.

It would not be fair to leave Harsnett without a word on his place as a writer. In point of literary distinction his prose style maintains a high level. In the use of forceful epithet and vivid phrase he is excelled by no Elizabethan prose writer. Because his writings deal so largely with dry-as-dust reports of examinations, they have never attained to that position in English literature which parts of them merit.

Harsnett’s book was the last chapter in the story of Elizabethan witchcraft and exorcism. It is hardly too much to say that it was the first chapter in the literary exploitation of witchcraft. Out of the Declaration Shakespeare and Ben Jonson mined those ores which when fused and refined by imagination and fancy were shaped into the shining forms of art. Shakespearean scholars have pointed out the connection between the dramatist and the exposé of exorcism. It has indeed been

suggested by one student of Shakespeare that the great playwright was lending his aid by certain allusions in Twelfth Night to Harsnett’s attempts to pour ridicule on Puritan exorcism. It would be hard to say how much there is in this suggestion. About Ben Jonson we can speak more certainly. It is clearly evident that he sneered at Darrel’s pretended possessions. In the third scene of the fifth act of *The Devil is an Ass* he makes Merecraft say:

It is the easiest thing, Sir, to be done.
As plaine as fizzling: roule but wi’ your eyes,
And foame at th’ mouth. A little castle-soape
Will do ‘t, to rub your lips: And then a nutshell,
With toe and touchwood in it to spit fire,
Did you ner’e read, Sir, little Darrel’s tricks,
With the boy o’ Burton, and the 7 in Lancashire,
Sommers at Nottingham? All these do teach it.
And wee’l give out, Sir, that your wife ha’s bewitch’d you.
This is proof enough, not only that Jonson was in sympathy with the Anglican assailants of Puritan exorcism, but that he expected to find others of like opinion among those who listened to his play. And it was not unreasonable that he should expect this. It is clear enough that the powers of the Anglican church were behind Harsnett and that their influence gave his views weight. We have already observed that there were some evidences in the last part of Elizabeth’s reign of a reaction against witch superstition. Harsnett’s book, while directed primarily against exorcism, is nevertheless another proof of that reaction.

A Story

MY DAUGHTER'S BEST FRIEND

by Michelle Reynolds

“Here you go Missy.” Elizabeth hears her daughter say as she enters the kitchen. Brooklyn is sitting at the table, pouring milk into the empty glass in the seat beside her.

“Who are you talking too Brook?” Elizabeth asks as she approaches. She feels a shiver run up her arms, the room much colder than she remembers. She’ll have to turn up the heat when she has the chance.

“Missy. She’s my new friend.” Brooklyn gives a smile too big for her face, revealing her missing tooth.

“Your imaginary friend?” Elizabeth asks.

“No silly, she’s sitting right there.” Brooklyn points to the seat next to her, “Can’t you see her?”

“Brooklyn baby, there’s nobody there,” Elizabeth says lightly, though her patience is wearing thin. They’ve had this talk before. Brooklyn is six, she is too old to be having imaginary friends, especially when this neighborhood is filled with other, real, kids.

“She’s got four arms mamma, you can’t miss her,” Brooklyn giggles before leaning over in her seat. Her eyes downcast and it’s as if she’s listening to someone tell her a secret. Brooklyn nods, “Missy says you can shake her hand if you’d like,” Brooklyn says but when Elizabeth doesn’t move, Brooklyn sticks her bottom lip out in a pout, “Don’t be rude mamma.”

Elizabeth looks at Brooklyn, she doesn’t know if she should entertain this idea or scold her. This has gone on too long. But

looking at her daughter, those big eyes now turning glossy, she can play along just for a little while longer.

Elizabeth sticks out her hand and grasps air. She pretends she’s grabbing someone else’s hand when she feels the softest of pressure grab back and beep, beep! Elizabeth jumps at the sound, a gasp flying out of her mouth until she realizes it’s her watch.

Brooklyn stares at her with a worried expression and Elizabeth has too looks away from her gaze. From here she can see herself in the mirror that hung against the wall. She looks like she always does except the slight reddish flush creeping up her cheeks.

Looking down at her watch, she sees what time it is. She clears her throat, “Brook, it’s about time you head to the bus stop,”

Brooklyn nods and gracefully slips off her chair. She grabs her stickered covered bag and slips it over her shoulders, “Come on Missy we’re gonna be late,”

Elizabeth looks at the table, seeing two plates covered in crumbs and two glasses of milk, both now empty. Elizabeth’s head snaps up as Brooklyn jogs past the mirror, her unruly curls bouncing with every step, her backpack too big for her small frame. Brooklyn’s reflection disappears and following after her daughter in the mirror Elizabeth sees a hunched figure, with four limbs and a fur covered body and suddenly the air is sucked out of Elizabeth’s lungs. Her legs are wobbling, her hands are shaking, and she is freezing with terror.

Missy.



Plaid

by Victoria Walters

He had a thing for plaid skirts.
It’s what I tell them when they call.
An apology, the best I have.

He had a thing for rulers,
and chalk and knee-high socks
with shiny black buckled shoes.

He had a thing for red marks,
for pigtails, for commands.
It was harmless. I believed
it was harmless.
But he had a thing for plaid skirts,
A little thing for little plaid skirts.





Three elderly women stood huddled in a corner of the funeral home, whispering and glaring at the deceased's wife.

"Just look at her," whispered one. "It's her husband's wake and she's traipsing around in a bright muumuu and thongs. What a disgrace."

"Well, truth be known, she supposedly never loved him and it shows," said the second lady.

"Rumor has it she's going to get over a million dollars from his life insurance," said the third lady.

As Betsy Green drove home from her husband's viewing she sang an upbeat song. She had never been so happy. Her husband's death was ruled an accident and it happened just two days after he signed his

new life insurance papers. It was all so perfect.

Of course, she would have to use some of the insurance money to have the defective valve in her heart replaced, but her cardiologist said it would be a piece of cake. There would be plenty of money left over to go to Europe, go on cruises, and live a life of luxury — things she had secretly dreamed about for a long time.

Once home she pampered herself with a relaxing bubble bath and a glass of wine, followed by another glass before crawling into bed. She looked forward to a good night's sleep, maybe the best sleep in a long time.

About 1:00 a.m. she was awakened by what she thought was someone humming. She recognized it immediately as a Hank Williams

song — "You're Cheatin' Heart." Her husband was always singing Hang Williams songs. But he was dead and soon to be buried. So who could it be? Finally, after some nervous fretting, she told herself it was all a bad dream and tried to go back to sleep.

But the humming didn't stop. It got louder. "Your cheatin' heart will make you weep, you'll cry and cry and try to sleep." It sounded exactly like her husband, but.....it simply couldn't be. The humming continue. "But sleep won't come the whole night through, your cheatin' heart will tell on you."

She was convinced that someone was standing at the end of her bed humming that song. Someone was trying to play a trick on her. And it wasn't funny. She peered into the darkness and was certain the figure

was a man. If it wasn't her husband, who was it? Who could it be? She started to panic. She wanted to jump out of bed and run but she was too frightened to do so. She could feel herself trembling as she sat up in bed. Her throat tightened but she managed to say, "Who's there? What do you want?"

As the humming got even louder, her trembling got worse. She could feel the whole bed shaking. She started gasping for breath.

What.....what if he wasn't dead? But he had to be. He was in the casket. But what if his death was a prank? It was Halloween. He always played pranks on Halloween, practically scaring her to death. But this was more than she could handle. This was too much. She could feel her heart pounding in her chest and pain shooting down her arm.

What....what if his death was a hoax and he actually wanted to scare her to death? He knew she had a bad heart. And, after all, she signed life insurance papers the same time he did. Coughing and gasping, she reached for the light by the bed but her heart gave out before she could turn it



Night Music

by Anne Mikusinski

Tonight's soundtrack
Includes
The soft whirring
Of rotating blades
Above my head
As they lull my thoughts to
Sleep
And usher in
Tonight's cast
Of worries and dead author's quotes,
And other things unspoken
Before midnight.
Their presence brings an uneasy
Familiarity
To the room
And a longing for better
Company
At this hour
A wish for companionship
And soft words
Before sleep.



A Short Story

WITCH AND THE TILL

by Lee Talbot

I looked for the “Ten items or less” checkout. This one read ‘Four items only,’ so I joined the queue.

“I will knock on your door,” said the young checkout operator, looking at me—past three other customers. She was wearing a witch costume.

She swiped the food item over the scanner.

Beep.

She put her head down, face hidden under her hat.

“On Halloween night.” Beep. “I will come for your soul.” Beep. “When the time is right.” Beep.

The customer said his thanks and walked off.

The operator grabbed the first item belonging to the next customer.

“I will knock on your door.” Beep.

She looked at me again. “On Halloween night.”

I swear she looked about ten years older, this time.

Beep.

She looked back down and continued scanning.

That was twice she looked at me; I turned and saw nobody behind.

“I will come for your soul.” Beep. “When the time is right.” Beep.

The customer paid, smiled, and left. There was just one customer in front of me.

“I will knock on your door.” Beep. “On Halloween night.” Beep.

Again, she looked at me. “I will come for your soul.”

She looked middle-aged. Her hair was mostly grey.

Beep.

“When the time is right.” Beep.

The customer said his thanks and left.

I walked alongside the conveyer belt. Her hair was now white, face hidden. She was perfectly still. I stood at the end of the counter and waited.

She grabbed my pumpkin. “I will knock on your door.” Beep.

She placed it in front of me with old hands.

There was a maggot on top of the fruit. I brushed it away and put the pumpkin into my basket.

“On Halloween night.” Beep.

This next food item was in transparent packaging, and I could see that it was writhing with maggots. I opened my mouth to complain, but nothing came out.

“I will come for your soul.” Beep. Rotten fruit slid towards me.

I looked at her. From under the brim of her hat, a worm dangled, and maggots fell.

“When the time...” She raised her head.

“...is...”

I tried to scream and raise my hands but could do neither. Her face belonged to a corpse, riddled with creatures under the earth.

She started to move towards me—through the counter. I was sinking into the ground.

She towered over me. Maggots, worms, and chunks of rotting flesh fell onto my face.

“...RIGHT.”

This echoed into the black chasm below, and I knew it was waking the dead.

The customers stared, as the young checkout operator stood over me with a look of concern. I had been screaming and howling for at least a minute.

This happened many years ago, and I know the day will come when I hear that dreaded knock on the door. It will not be a trick, this time. And it will most definitely not be a treat.





A SHORT STORY

SUSANNA'S LITTLE GHOST

by Jenny Allan

It started with a clock that was facing just slightly the wrong way. Of course, I didn't think of it like that until much later. At the time I was sleepy and confused because the streetlight outside glinted off the clock's shiny plastic surface and I couldn't see what time it was.

I swivelled it to face me. 6.30am. Dylan was asleep beside me and the alarm would ring in half an hour anyway, so I slid quietly out of bed and shuffled downstairs to make the tea.

I wouldn't have thought any more about the clock if it hadn't been for a few other strange little things; the salt cellar that had disappeared reappeared inexplicably beside its

replacement like a reflection; a new picture frame smashed before I could add the photo from Becky's wedding; the grill, alight when we came back from a late lunch, Dylan swearing he'd turned it off after making the toast.

Dylan called it 'Susanna's little ghost', wrapping my forgetfulness in a sheet and casting it in the role of a mischievous spirit.

But I was beginning to lose my cool with him too. Could he not remember to shut the attic when he'd been up for his camping gear? Or put the empty milk bottle out when he'd finished?

Our usually happy marriage was beginning to sour. We started snapping at each other, silently building up a little cache of resentment that seeped into even the happy spells.

It all clicked into place when Dylan was away camping. I was happily starfishing in our double bed when I noticed that he had, once again, left the attic hatch in our bedroom open - not all the way, just a few inches, but how hard was it to pull it all the way and fasten it shut? I felt the now familiar surge of irritation bubble up in my gut.

Honestly, he knew I worried about rats up there and the last thing we wanted was for them to get into the

main house. But the bed was warm and I found myself drifting off to sleep before I could see to it.

I woke to slow, deliberate footsteps making their way across my bedroom floorboards.

“Don’t worry about creeping, Dyl,” I slurred, sleepily “I’m awake, just get into bed.”

The footsteps stopped and I felt a weight beside me on the mattress. The weather must have been awful if they’d left the campsite in the middle of the night to come home, I thought, smugly pleased that I had never been a camping person. And I fell quickly back to sleep.

When I woke the bed beside me was rumped, but empty. My phone flashed with three new messages. I slid upright, rubbing my eyes and unlocked it to find three beautiful sunrise photographs from Dyl and a message ‘Morning beautiful. Bet

you wish you’d come with us after all!’.

Sent at 6.22am today.

Downstairs the hob top kettle began to scream.





A SHORT STORY

GhostWriter

by Jennifer Vanderheyden

Steven was placing ant traps around the house when his wife Sylvia returned.

“Why kill the ants?”

“It’s unsanitary,” he replied; “especially in the kitchen.”

“I thought I would pick up some props for our Halloween costumes.” She handed him a small bag: “Open it carefully!”

Steven ripped open the bag and pulled out a small book.

“I’m dressing up as myself? A writer?”

“Not exactly. You’re the West Side Strangler and I’m one of his prostitute victims. I bought this

today at an estate sale by his family. You’re lucky you didn’t rip it.”

A prostitute...how fitting, Steven thought, *on so many levels*. He opened the book and saw that it was a journal.

“Don’t you want to see my costume?” asked Sylvia.

“Surprise me.... I need to work before the party.”

Steven couldn’t concentrate. He was curious to read the journal entries, and he wondered how they could be authentic. Even though the strangler had apparently committed suicide before being found, Steven thought the investigators would have kept the journal as evidence. The vivid descriptions jumped off the page: *As she begged for mercy I put the pillowcase over her head so I didn’t have to see her startled full moon eyes*

as she struggled for each breath. Suddenly, Steven saw a mass of ants scurrying on the floor with their prey in tow. He bent down to look at what appeared to be part of a bloody fingernail. *Maybe just another hallucination*, Steven thought, and he turned to the last entry, which was blank except for the date: October 31, 2021.

Steven and Sylvia were captivating at the party, especially when everyone found out the journal was authentic. Sylvia wore a red miniskirt, black bustier, spiked boots, and a long blond wig. A loose necklace barely hid the finger marks on her neck. Steven wore a tweed jacket and bowtie, the killer’s trademark. By the time they arrived home, Steven was feeling the effects of the several shots of vodka, and even Sylvia was surprisingly tipsy. She undid his bowtie and tried to pry the journal from his icy hands. *Where is this attention coming from? Must be the effects of the booze. Normally she*

would have been almost asleep by now. Strangely, Sylvia pulled the bowtie tightly around Steven's neck, pushed him down on the bed and straddled him, journal in hand.

brutal deaths of my friends and to finally break the bonds of my own

the rest, the cloth of a pillowcase blocked his view.

“Read the last entry!” Sylvia’s unnatural voice was deep and raspy and when Steven looked up he saw something markedly alien in her fiery eyes. He thought it must be the vodka, along with his writer’s imagination. Sentences formed on the paper as he stared incredulously: *I had to take matters*



The





2021 HALLOWEEN

50 WORD

"ONLY FOR THE GLORY"

HORROR STORY CONTEST

EVERY WRITER

Missing Kids by Shar

One evening I was walking my dog and then it started to get dark so I turned around and went back home as I get closer I saw that the door was slightly opened and I saw chains I knew one of the 98 kids I escaped from the basement.

NEWBORN by JB

"I'm sorry sir, we weren't able to save your wife." The doctor told me, "But we were able to save the baby."

I thanked the doctor and returned to my crocodile tears, cursing myself.

The whole reason I poisoned my wife was to rid myself of the child inside her.

J B

October 24, 2021 at 5:37 pm

SCARECROW

I squinted out my window, watching as the scarecrow in the distance swayed lightly in the breeze.

"I told that kid to put it by the wheat fields." I mumbled to myself.

As I approached it, I saw that it wasn't a scarecrow, but my farmhand hung by his neck.

J B

October 24, 2021 at 5:36 pm

REPLACEMENT

The doctors had said I needed a

kidney replacement, and I was surprised to find they'd found a donor so quickly. When I awoke from the surgery, I found myself in a bathtub filled with ice.

The stitches on my side told me my kidney wasn't replaced, it was stolen.

J B

October 24, 2021 at 5:35 pm

A TASTE FOR FLESH

As a serial killer, my first mistake was keeping my hounds hungry enough to devour my victims. They had developed a taste for human flesh, and my dogs were always hungry for more meat.

My second mistake was getting trapping in this cabin during a snow

storm alone with them.

“Cancer...” She repeated,
“Terminal.”

leaning out the window – talking to
a homeless drifter. The drifter grab
him and took off.
I never saw my son again.

MAN’S BEST FRIEND by JB

J B

Man’s best friend stood over the
two children cowering in the corner,
the blood of their parents dripping
from its teeth. She growled angrily
as they screamed for help. It was
unclear when Fifi had developed a
taste for human flesh, but one thing
was clear – she was still hungry.

October 24, 2021 at 5:28 pm

WORMS

I woke up to find a worm writhing
around on my pillow. I quickly
killed it. The rest of the day I
continued to find worms
everywhere. I wondered where they
were coming from... until I
coughed and pulled back my hand
to find a worm wriggling around on
it.

J B

October 24, 2021 at 5:07 pm

MUNCHAUSEN BY PROXY

As her young son laid in the
hospital bed with symptoms that
perplexed the doctors, she scrolled
through her Facebook notifications:

THE SEER by JB

I see what people will look like
before they die.
I’ll see a man with a broken neck,
days later he’ll hang himself.
A woman covered in blood – later
she’s run over by a bus.
Everywhere I look, I see the
decaying corpses of the soon to be
dead.

J B

October 24, 2021 at 5:27 pm

A FRIGHTENING FACE

I sat there on the couch, blanket
pulled up to my face and curled in
the fetal position. I’d been sitting
like that hours, just staring at my
window. There was a face in it, and
that face was staring back at me.
But the face – it was my own.

“Praying for you!”
“God bless!”
“Love you Emily!”
“Thinking of you!”

Grateful for all the attention she
was receiving, she crushed another
pill to place in her son’s food.

THE GIFT by JB

There’s a knock on my door and I
open the door to find a small box
wrapped in paper and a red bow. I
sigh. For the last seven years I’ve
been receiving gift boxes like this.
I pick up the box that contains
another piece of my missing wife.

J B

J B

October 24, 2021 at 5:06 pm

THE MESSENGER

The crow was perched outside my
window, clawing at the glass with
its sharp claws.

TERMINUS by JB

She was staring off into the
distance, a blank expression on her
sickly pale face. He was still talking
to her, but his voice had faded as
the world around her crumbled. She
was so angry... so sad that she
couldn’t even bring herself to cry.

October 24, 2021 at 5:26 pm

THERE ARE NO IMAGINARY FRIENDS

My son talked about his imaginary
friend, Kevin. I thought nothing of
it until I heard two voices in his
room late one night. I found my son

I tapped the window, trying to make
it go away, but it didn’t.

The next day the sunlight reflected
off the scratched glass, revealing
letters carved by the crows talons,
reading:

“Tomorrow you will die”

THE VOODOO DOLL by JB

Mother held the doll above the fire, mumbling something about how her twenty-year old daughter was “too old to be playing with dolls”. She didn’t realize how the doll resembled herself – all she could do was scream when she cast the doll into the fire, and burst into flames herself.

TWENTY-YEARS by JB

I spent twenty-years off my life in prison for killing my husband. I had done so to protect my son who told me that his step-father had been sneaking into his room at night and abusing him.

Twenty years later, my son finally confessed to me that he had lied.

CRIES OF THE AFFLICTED by JB

I can’t take it anymore – the screams of horror and torment were just too much. The wailing of men, women and children begging for me to help them. Their cries of anguish echoing in my ears, haunting me and keeping me up at night.

I’ll never visit the cemetery again.

LEFT HANGING by JB

He dangled above the ground, mere inches from safety. The stool was only about another foot away, taunting him. It was his fault – He’d been the one that wanted to die. It wasn’t until he felt the rope suffocating him that he realized

how badly he wanted to live.

THE TRUNK by JB

My two year old son was missing. He was playing hide and seek with his old brother and had been gone for several hours now.

I rushed to my car to drive down to the park on that hot day, and as I passed the trunk, the smell was horrifying.

TRAIL ANGEL by JB

Walking the Appalachian trail had worn down my legs, and so I graciously accepted the offer from one of the local trail angels to rest a bit at their home.

The next morning I groggily awoke to find my body strapped to a table, and those tired legs now gone.

“Flatline” by W.C. Wolfe

The sound was deafening. Kayla could feel the pain shooting through her body, she could feel the beat of her heart pounding. First in her chest, looking down and seeing red she could feel the heartbeat move to her lungs and throat. Then she felt it no more.

“Pressure” by W.C. Wolfe

I felt the pressure of her holding my hand as we took our seats. We were in love. The safety bar clicked, we started to move. More pressure from her hand as we turned upside down, the bar clicked again, one

more turn, and I felt nothing...she was gone.

“Who?” by W.C. Wolfe

Hey mom, why do you have this pic?
What...who?
My friend Delina, here in this pic? That can’t be your friend, she is my friend Delina.
No that’s her, the same person...
Honey Delina had an accident in 1998 and she passed, it can’t be the same person, can it?

“What Guy?” by W.C. Wolfe

Do you remember that guy last night?
Who?
The one setting beside me. You were on the love seat, I was on the couch drunk, but I saw him out of the corner of my eye. Did you see him?
What are you talking about, we were alone... what guy?

“Black and a Cherry Finish” by W.C. Wolfe

The cold of this place gets to me, I hate it here. All I see is darkness and woodgrain. Nevertheless, two things were always true about me, I look good in black and I love a cherry finish. Now, if I could only find a way out of this coffin.

IT IS DONE!!! by David Saunders

My blade snug now in the jugular

of the motionless killer. The steel reflecting the crimson blood splatter as the pool underneath welcomes the last few drops. A fitting end to a depraved love child of young lovers who two decades ago had pledged themselves to Satan.

Untitled by Jen

It was cold Friday night in the middle of October. The cold wind breezes against my skin in the dead woods. Everything is dead and so am i. I feel surrounded by spirits ready to attack me.

“Sleep paralysis” by Vannie

I opened my eyes. There he is. At the corner of the room. He stares. His head tilts slowly. He’s moving towards me! I can’t move! I can’t speak! Somebody help me! Someone, please walk in! I’m parallelized. Stuck with my own thoughts. Frozen in place.

Untitled by Joey

It was a foggy morning and I was walking to the bus stop for school but something didn’t feel right. When I got to the bus stop no one was there so I thought that I had missed the bus so I went back home but no one was there

Delivery by JoKay Kulig

Hunger gnawed at the creature, its

watery home barren.

A shadow moved above, on the shore.

Tommy smiled, clicking selfies next to the painted “Dead Pool” sign.

Splash!

The phone dropped to the wet sand and dinged with a message from Mom.

“Dinner is served.”

Indeed, it was.

Creepy Crawlies by JoKay Kulig

“You’re sure Ken wanted to meet here, a cave?” Holly asked.

“Yeah,” Jamie said.

Holly leaned over the edge of the deep chasm. “Gross,” she smashed a bug.

“Cave beetle. They bite hard. Eat meat. Ask Ken.”

Jamie shoved Holly.

“I saw and the texts. I forgive you. Now.”

Stray by JoKay Kulig

Claire cared for strays. That evening, she followed an enormous hound into the cemetery.

A man in a tattered suit stood next to a freshly dug grave, stroking the dog.

“Yours?” Claire asked.

“Yes. Charlie is a good boy, bringing din-din. Kill.”

Claire screamed as she became kibble.

Hallwalker by JoKay Kulig

Susie liked to tease little Becca.

“Don’t look behind you in the hallway when it’s dark, or the Hallwalker will suck out your eyes.” Of course, Becca believed her big sister.

Thirteen years and one month later, Becca turned around.

Becca manages to get around fine with her guide dog.

“not just a haunted house” by Aniela

One cold Halloween night some friends wanted to have a spooky night and they did. They found a cheap haunted house in the woods, and they had no worries about it because “it’s just a haunted house” but little did they know that it was not just a haunted house.....

Halloween Night by Lucas Serra

It was Halloween night. I went back home with a bag full of candy excited to eat it all. I had it all planned out for the night candy, movie, and chill. But the worst thing that could ever happen happened. NO INTERNET NOOOO.

Untitled by Sharmante

One dark cold windy day, I had gone with my friends to the woods but they accidentally left me there. I could hear some strange and scary noises coming from behind me, I started running as I saw a tall shadow and BOW that was the last day for me.

The man in all black by Jay

He just stares at me, the man in all black. HE is tall and wears a suit of black. He hides in the trees waiting for little children. He has no face and he creeps around my house looking for me. I have been found it's my turn to seek.

"Totem" by Bill W. Morgan

He stands back and admires the piece.

"Marvelous." She and touches the glass enclosure.

He nods and steps forward.

Measuring tape ready. One of the heads tracks him with its milky eyes, another gnaws silently.

"Going to be hell getting it through the gallery door."

"Worth it." She answers.

"Clog" by Bill W. Morgan

"Is that an eye?" Mary says and staggers back from the bathtub.

"Oh god, I think so." Tom replies.

We gotta call the police!"

"It might be glass or something."

"Did you lose a glass eye down the shower drain?"

Tom shrugs and looks down again. The eye blinks.

"Crawl Space" Bill W. Morgan

My neighbor tells me tight spaces scare him. I nod and look down at my book. He says it feels like someone's sitting on his chest and he can't breathe. I flip the page. Outside, the police continue their search. I'll move the body when they're done.

"What Happened" by W.C. Wolfe

The doctor entered, looked her over and dressed her wound. It had been open for weeks without healing. His hands were heavy, and the air was hot, but she felt cold. What could be the problem? He checked again, no pulse, no pressure and then she remembered the accident.

"Ticklish Embrace" by W.C. Wolfe

Her skin tickled, indescribable brushing fell across her like the soft touch of a lover. Priming her, playing with her, as many groups of eight legs covered her body, encroaching on her every part. For as playful an encounter as this was, she could do nothing once the feeding started.

"A Dark Place" W.C. Wolfe

I have never been afraid of the dark. It never seemed all that bad to me. As an adult, if anxiety comes, I like to sit alone in a dark place. Something is different this time. The room feels bigger, I don't feel alone. Why are you holding my hand?

Untitled by Liyona

Dark and crooning. I am starving. Ripping my feathers to satisfy my hunger. I perch only for the glory of a wandering soul's gaze. Waiting. Slowly my hunger grows as does the darkness. Shrieks. Caws. My talons sink; deep. The screams are devoured by my hunger; I feast.

Untitled by Lauri Meyers

Mom always said, "Don't pop pimples," but this beast hurts. My fingers squeeze until a black ball protrudes. I pull it, feeling pressure until two cysts emerge. The extraction is weirdly bug-shaped. The pore still throbs. I press again. A termite crawls out. And another. The mirror reflects my swarm.

Untitled by Gregg Sapp

I see myself murdered in a dream. Guilt, shame and regret from repressed depths emerged as an incubus with fiery eyes and rapier claws; it slashes my breast and extricates my still-beating heart. I've heard that when you die in a dream, you die in reality. Why can't I awaken?

Untitled by Gregg Sapp

The anesthesiologist bade me "count backwards from ten." I did, twice, yet I remain alert and sensate... although paralyzed. A cold blade severs my flesh. The jagged saw splits my breast. Explosive pain permeates my soul. Powerless to scream, entombed in agony, I can but suffer and pray for death.

Untitled by Gregg Sapp

Why? The Goth Queen chose me. Medusa braids and blackened eyes,

she lured me into solitude, where we devoured each other. Satan's dominatrix demanded submission but held nothing back. She lifted me toward eager bliss, then at climax delivered rapturous pain, like teeth tearing me asunder. She chose me. Why?

Untitled by Gregg Sapp

Tread carefully in the mud of composted souls. Walking past cemetery stones, you feel the weight of mortality. Boots leave cratered prints in the soggy humus. The soil absorbs your steps, pulling you into deeper strata of death. Your foot sinks to the knee, and you belong to the earth.

"Rotten Apples and Old Lighters"
by Gabriel Miller

The wind zips past me, rustling ears. I breathe heavily. He is coming. With the truck that smelled like rotten apples and old lighters. I saw pictures of kids he had found. And I was next. I raced but I didn't see his van. He hit me. He found me.

"Crow Eyes" by Gabriel Miller

Another crow on the park tree. You wait, it flies away. How many more. How many more times must you remember the skin peeling from skulls. The birds ripping out eyeballs. The kids you left there. You remember what it felt like to be alive. But you were all killed.

"The Deed" by Gabriel Miller

Blood was sweet in your hands. Blood was rich and deep. Bones were heavy in the earth. Bones were crushed and churned into dirt. The hole was dug.

You had begun. The blood had drenched the earth and the marrow had dug deep in soil. The deed was done. Son.

Untitled by Marissa Preston

Who would've thought It would choose me?

I sit in the cold, dark room, my bare back touching the stony wall, it's chill biting at me like a savage animal with ice for teeth, as I await It.

The shadows grow larger, until it's one massive form.

Hello, It. Good-bye, world.

Untitled by Danielle A.

"It's going to rain."
Mrs. Malcom looked up, her glossy eyes peering through her horned spectacles.

"Pardon?"
"It's going to rain, Mrs. Malcom."
And the girl lifted her black umbrella in the bookstore as thunder roared and the tremendous downpour of blood fell from the ceiling.

Untitled by Michelle Vongkaysone

My end is near. I feel myself weakening with each day.

Normally, joy sustains me. But these are troubled times.

There's not enough to go around. It's always squashed.

I fear for myself and those who need me when I leave.

What good's any world without hope to encourage it?

Untitled by Sarah Stock

Mother and Father sit silently together, a book of mementos in Mother's hands. A year had passed yet their sorrow clings soundly. They hear it once more: the echoing giggle of a girl not yet three. Mother shudders; from the book falls an old classified:

"Tricycle for sale, never used."

Wet by Yana Drust

Wet footsteps moved towards me. Terrified, I recoiled when the ghost materialized. Dripping water, he tried to speak, but only frogs came out of his mouth.

What do you want?
Painfully, he moved to the window and pointed to a well in the backyard.
"Help me". He mouthed and disappeared.

Torture, by Wendy Montoya

she rips my flesh with her claws, I gurgle choking on the warm rustic taste... She slit my throat this time. An enlightening thought flashed through my mind ... "I'll die!" she smiled; the flesh of my throat slowly healed,... "No, you won't slave!" she reached up to slash my throat once more.

The Virus by Wendy Montoya

There was screaming coming from outside. I ran to the living room flipping on the emergency shutters we installed when the virus first broke out. A creature broke through the glass of the last window blood shot everywhere, I caught a glance; Oh No; its Eve my neighbor! The variant is here.

Untitled by Corinne Markle

My body ached from the scratching and punching endured. My mouth swollen and dripping with blood. It was ecstasy. I caressed my lips with my tongue, cherishing every drop. I moved my gaze from the one below to those still standing and oblivious. I rose to the banquet with a smile.

Untitled by Glen Donaldson

"Death by fire will seem like a month in the country by the time I finish with you. Bye!"
Click.
When hot anger turned Kenny's face eggplant-purple, the cords in his neck stood out like buttresses.

Anonymous vile phone calls had been his release valve since his youth.

Untitled by Robbie Mori

The CCTV plays last night's recording:
3:15am Alexa's light comes on
'Sorry I don't understand...'
A figure opens its mouth 'Tell her I ...miss her...'
Alexa: '...Ok Jean...'
Chloe stops the tape, looks at Ben
'Jean was my nana; she died a year ago... that thing is not my nana...'

Untitled by Robbie Mori

I wear two pairs of socks every night and tuck my feet under the duvet to stop me feeling the clammy, cold touch of its skin, but it's no use. It starts with the wheezing breath, louder and louder until the claw reaches for my feet from under the bed.

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3RD GREGG SAPP

UNTITLED

The anesthesiologist bade me "count backwards from ten." I did, twice, yet I remain alert and sensate... although paralyzed. A cold blade severs my flesh. The jagged saw splits my breast. Explosive pain permeates my soul. Powerless to scream, entombed in agony, I can but suffer and pray for death.

2ND PLACE

BY ROBBIE MORI



The CCTV plays last night's recording:

3:15am Alexa's light comes on 'Sorry I don't understand..'

A figure opens its mouth 'Tell her I ...miss her...'

Alexa: '...Ok Jean...'

Chloe stops the tape, looks at Ben 'Jean was my nana; she died a year ago... that thing is not my nana...'



THE WINNER CLOG

BY BILL W. MORGAN

“Is that an eye?” Mary says and staggers back from the bathtub.

“Oh god, I think so,” Tom replies.
“We gotta call the police!”

“It might be glass or something.”

“Did you lose a glass eye down the shower drain?”

Tom shrugs and looks down again. The eye blinks.



Every Writer

2021 HALLOWEEN HORROR HAIKU CONTEST

October 1- October 30, 2021

Aleem

Bones all over the ground
Ravens flying all around
Kids don't go there now

The Possession by Mandy Dokie

Who is inside me?
I can feel it in my soul.
Claw my way back out.

The Transformation by Mandy Dokie

The flesh rips away
Here it comes. I'm not ready.
The moonlight is here.

The First Bite by Mandy Dokie

Blood dripped from her fangs
The smell of his sweet, raw flesh

Hung in the cold air

A VAMPIRE SCREAMS by
browning mank
moonlight. shadows writhe.
so much biting pain. sunlight.
bites the undead back.

DAILY ROUTINE by Dee Mendez

I eat death at night
and smile at new souls in the
morning. Then repeat.

Sleeping Beauty by Kevin Osborne

Disfigured vampire
Smeared scars. Carnage over.
Sleeps.
Your Twitch makes me jump

Hitchcock by Browning Mank

Bloody eye sockets
No longer see a murder.
Of crows stealing souls.

Liyona by Browning Mank

I felt the red eyes
Where breath and nails serve to
haunt
Am I alone here?

PUMPKIN SLASHER by
Browning Mank

Butcher wields his knife
Gouging eyes out just for fun
His wicked grin shines

THE MOUNTAINEER by J B

He fell, broke both legs
All alone, he screamed for help-
Only wolves answer

THE RITUAL by J B

The infant screaming
The priest walked it to the cliff-
Sacrificial lamb

ANTICHRIST by J B

It ate through her gut
The pregnant mother screaming-
The child, a monster

I, THE VICTIM by J B

Fangs dripping with blood
It takes another bite of flesh-
Pray for a quick death

THE BEAST by J B

Deep down in the depths
The ocean, dark and alone-
Leviathan wakes

INSIDIOUS by J B

World at a crawl,
Head spinning as he explains
That I have cancer

URDERER IN THE WOODS
by J B

A roaring chainsaw
Feet bleeding, they keep running
But there's no escape

THE GIRL I KILLED by J B

Every single night
The girl I killed visits me
Covered in maggots

THE NEIGHBOR by J B

Their daughter missing
Sirens and her parent's screams-
Music to my ears

SALLY by J B

The old man brought flowers
And laid them down on his wife's
lap-
They slid off her corpse

HUNGER PANGS J B

Ninety days at sea
Stranded without any food-
Devouring my leg

THE AGE OF ATOM by J B

The siren sounded
A flash of blinding light
Wiped out the city

SWAYING by J B

The leafless branch moaned
Beneath the weight of the rope
The dead man hung from

The Eater by J B

Red lips caked with blood
Bits of flesh hanging from teeth-
His latest victim

Untitled by John F.

The lonely vampire
Tracing his blood relatives
In the old graveyard

Untitled by Browning Mank

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Thwack. Vocal chords slashed.
Silence. I can't scream, you can't.
Scream to save our lives.

HANNIBAL GOURMET by
Browning Mank

Hell's Kitchen serving
Gray matter fava tartare
Mixed with thoughts of you

Untitled by milagros

Spooky, scary nights
candies, parties and laughing
horror is alive.

HALLOWEEN 2021 by Browning
Mank

I'll Be Watching You
On Sunday, Bloody, Sunday.
Breaking Hearts and Bones

JaSon. By Browning Mank

Drowned by Mom Mom Mom
But when I do die. I don't.
Masked chants, "Kill Kill Kill "

CHILD'S PLAY by Browning
Mank

He bit me! Blood streams.
Cursed. Not a Good Guy, Andy.
A f**king Chucky.

STRAWMAN ARISEN by
Browning Mank

Dorothy? Brains. Brains.
If I only had a brain...
Crack. Munch. My pretty.

SLASHER by Browning Mank
Cocky kids cower
Something wicked this way comes
Freddy? No, Jason.

Untitled by TAHIRU JONAH
NASARA
chuckling snores
a broken teddy drowse
in stain clot

Untitled by Ambar Perez

Wind is blowing far
Kids are after the candy
And some for much more

Untitled by Maid

graveyard alive
body tremble on first see
making burnout world

Untitled by David L Painter

Basement stairs descend
fright takes hold from within
down you go anyway.

Untitled by David L Painter

Sound of a chainsaw
hungry man laughs at it all
liver for dinner.

2021 Horror Haiku by Chad
Parenteau

Terror in city.
A killer takes to the streets
with no mask on.

Untitled by Judith

Ghosts witches goblins
But the scariest of all
Mallow Cups in bag

Untitled by Judith

Drunk parents two kids
One twists the head off a cat
One twists brain in knots

Untitled by Debra Toyber

Evil dressed as good.
Angels dressed up as devils.
Nothing is ever good.

Untitled by J.D. Lewis

From beneath the bed,
the monster trembled in fear
of the child above.

Untitled by Kiera Baron

woodpeckers tap tap
on skeletons and souls lost
wandering the trees

Untitled by Kiera Baron

hidden in vineyards
grapes turn into bottled wine
and bones blend with vines

Untitled by Cailey Johanna

dark clouds an omen,
wild wind like coyote howls —
the storm has begun.

change by Cailey Johanna

the monarchs are cold,
frozen in shadows, in frost,
halted migration

Untitled Lorna Wood

Bike wheels left spinning
for candy more trick than treat.
Kids don't play there now.



3RD

**BROWNING
MANK**

HITCHCOCK

Bloody eye sockets
No longer see a murder.
Of crows stealing souls.

2ND PLACE

THE POSSESSION

BY MANDY DOKIE

WHO IS INSIDE ME?
I CAN FEEL IT IN MY SOUL.
CLAW MY WAY BACK OUT.

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, showing her eyes and nose. Her face is smeared with blood, particularly around her eyes and forehead. A large, bright red tear is running down her cheek, partially obscuring her features. The background is dark and out of focus.

WINNER!

THE GIRL I KILLED

**Every single night
The girl I killed visits me
Covered in maggots**

BY JB

Authors

THANK YOU FOR BEING IN THIS ISSUE!

DanaSan is a freelance writer from New England. Her work has appeared in *Funny Times*, *Runt of the Web*, *Third Flatiron Publishing*, *On the Premises* and various other websites. When she is not crafting prose she is enjoying craft beer and tabletop gaming. You can learn more about her at her website www.danasansbrainstew.com and read more of her short stories at <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/author/dana-schellings/>

George Moore has published poetry in *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *Colorado Review*, *North American Review*, *Valparaiso*, and *Orion*. A finalist for *The National Poetry Series* and nominated for seven *Pushcart Prizes*, his collections include *Children's Drawings of the Universe* (*Salmon Poetry* 2015) and *Saint Agnes Outside the Walls* (*FutureCycle* 2016). He presently lives on the south shore of Nova Scotia.

Heather Terry: I am an English teacher, writer, photographer, gardener and devoted dog owner! I also enjoy sewing, archery and kayaking. It is my goal to build a writing career while continuing my work as an educator. I am also pursuing my Master of Arts in English at Kent State University and will graduate December 2015.

Doug Tanoury: I have been writing poetry all of my life and have been published online and in print. I have also published over twenty chapbooks of poetry, including: *Detroit Poems*, *Chicago Poems* and *Art History*. I live in Detroit, MI and if you were ever to visit Detroit you could see *Scott Fountain*.

Natalie Crick, from Newcastle in the UK, has found delight in writing all of her life and first began writing when she was a very young girl. She graduated from Newcastle University with a degree in English Literature and plan to pursue an MA at Newcastle this year. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming in

a range of journals and magazines including *The Lake*, *Ink Sweat and Tears*, *Poetry Pacific*, *Interpreters House* and *Jet Fuel Review*. Her work also features or is forthcoming in a number of anthologies, including *Lehigh Valley Vanguard Collections 13*. This year her poem, 'Sunday School' was nominated for the *Pushcart Prize*.

Tricia McCallum, a Glasgow-born Canadian, is a *Huffington Post* Blogger, a 2016 *Pushcart Prize* nominee, and the author of two poetry books, *The Music of Leaving* (*Demeter Press* 2014) and *Nothing Gold Can Stay: A Mother and Father Remembered* (2011).

She has won the poetry competition at *goodreads.com* a total of three times through the past three years, along with an honorable mention.

McCallum says she publishes both online and off, wherever she can find good homes. "My approach is simple. I tell stories in my poems and write the poems I want to read," she says.

Her latest poetry manuscript entitled *Icarus Also Flew* was a

finalist in the Marsh Hawk Press Book Contest in 2017.

She can be found online here, and often:

www.triciamccallum.com

Ann Bracken is the author of two collections of poetry, *No Barking in the Hallways: Poems from the Classroom* (2017) and *The Altar of Innocence* (2015). She also serves as a contributing editor for *Little Patuxent Review* and coordinator for the *Wilde Readings Poetry Series* in Columbia, MD. Her poetry, essays, and interviews have appeared in anthologies and journals, including *Bared: Contemporary Poetry and Art on Bras and Breasts*, *New Verse News*, *Fledgling Rag*, *ArLiJo*, *Reckless Writing Anthology: Emerging Poets of the 21st Century*, and *Women Write Resistance: Poets Resist Gender Violence* among others. Ann's poetry has garnered two nominations for the Pushcart Prize. She offers poetry and writing workshops in community centers and at conferences.

Kaitlyn Bancroft is a faith and culture reporter with *The Salt Lake Tribune*. Previously, she's written for *The Spectrum & Daily News* (part of the USA TODAY NETWORK), *The Denver Post*, *Deseret News*, and *The Davis Clipper*. She's a Utah native and a 2019 graduate of Brigham Young University's journalism program. Follow her work on Twitter @katbancroft.

Victoria Walters is an accomplished poet who has studied at Lafayette College in Easton Pennsylvania. Recent adventures include a study term in London

which inspired a whole new style of writing. She prefers to spend her life behind the lens and aims to capture the world through images and ink.'

Anne Mikusinski has been writing poetry and short stories since she was seven years old and most probably making them up long before she could hold a pen or pencil in her hand.

ARTISTS

THANK YOU!

Emma Weakley

We get 100s of art submissions per year, but those submissions do not always meet our standards, and many times they are simply incomplete.

Emma is a young artist, but her work is wide ranging and it address fantasy and horror. I felt the color, the characters, the relationships that are obvious in the work. I felt it fit our issue perfectly.

Please check Emma Weakley out on the web, she is a wonderful young artist, and enjoy her work here.

Paul Mudie is a horror illustrator from Edinburgh , Scotland . Qualified in Scientific and Technical Graphics from Edinburgh's Telford Collage, Paul is best known as a cover artist for various horror anthologies and collections, including *The Black Book of Horror* series for Mortbury Press, *No Man and Other Stories* and *Passport to Purgatory* by Tony Richards, and *To Usher, the Dead* by Gary McMahan, amongst others. He was shortlisted for the British Fantasy Society's 'Best Artist' award in 2011.

See more of his art:
www.paulmudie.com

"CROW DANCE JACK is Jack Martin, trained and self taught artist who currently resides in sunny London, UK.

During his free time Jack enjoys oil painting and is also collaborating with his brother on a graphic novel passion project.

When not painting and drawing, Jack enjoys watching 80s science fiction movies whilst eating peanut M&Ms.

Stacy Drum, Ohio born & raised, where I spend the summer months working at a state run park. Rest of my time is spent painting, trying to create that ever elusive masterpiece. All paintings are done in oils and relatively small in nature. Enjoys painting all things dark & macabre(with hopefully a dash of humor). But have done several children's books/jigsaw puzzle for the youth market. But mostly work for gaming companies and specialty book/magazine publishers. Web galleries of my art are up on:

Michael Savas

Michael's professional career spans both traditional and technology-based methods. He began his professional career as a technical illustrator in the early 1980's,

creating illustrations for the aerospace industry. As a freelance advertising illustrator his clients included Mitsubishi, Seiko Instruments, Mars Candy, Beckman Instruments, and Kodak. His personal work has been recognized by the Society of Illustrators, New York, the Society of Illustrators Los Angeles and Spectrum, Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art.

Michael was born in Cincinnati Ohio in 1956 and received his BFA Summa Cum Laude from Laguna College of Art & Design, California. While in the process of completing his MFA at California State University Long Beach, Michael was initiated into the National Honor Society April 30, 2005. He began teaching at Laguna College of Art & Design in 1996 and became the Chair of Illustration in 2005 where he continues to teach.

Cesar Valtierra hails from the sun soaked desert of the wild, wild western city of El Paso, Texas. He wields a pencil like an outlaw gunslinger, drawing up a storm since the tender age of two. He is infamous throughout the land for his provocative ink drawings, his meticulous vector illustrations, and his eye catching graphic design

work. Like a thief in the night, Mr. Valtierra is a man of few words but one who with his work makes quite an impression. He follows the beat of his own drum and answers to no one; except of course, his fiancée Victoria, the love of his life, his inspiration and muse. And their two cats, Chubs and Pretty Boy

Dana Loberg was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She attended Yale University, lived in New York City and currently resides in San Francisco, California. Painting is meant to educate and express the human feelings we all have. She includes torn pages from books and newspaper to reference a time period or memory, as well as bringing greater depth, texture and design to each image. She hopes that people are reminded of the fragility of life and their luck in just existing; regardless of race or religion, we are all the same. You can view more of Dana's work at <http://www.danaloberg.com/>.

James Sholes is an artist and teacher from Ohio. James has worked in education for 10 years teaching almost all levels of students including university students at Firelands College. James has been an artist all his life. You can contact the artist at jamessholes (at) yahoo (dot) com.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

FROM EVERY WRITER

*from all of us to all of you we
wish you the best for your
Halloween and Holiday season.
Thank you for reading us!*