

THE BARD

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THE **BARD** EST
2023

Editor's note		6
.....		
Original Poetry		
.....		
Exile	Jovana Krstičević	8
The Internet	Marija Đorđević	9
A Northern Journey	Gordan Perišić	10
The Blood Star	Gordan Perišić	14
Moonlight	Nikola Sretović	15
The Wayward Drummer	Nikola Mikić	16
The Wayward Voyager	Nikola Mikić	18
Bones	Marija Đorđević	20
Silence	Marija Đorđević	21
Stolen Glances in Passing (Prologue)	Irina Torde	23
Stolen Glances in Passing (4)	Irina Torde	24
Paradise	Milica Kovačević	25
The Flower	Nemanja Mitrović	26
The Clouds	Nemanja Mitrović	27
In Another Universe	Milica Rakić	28
Bottle	Milica Rakić	29
Only this and nothing more	Anja Zečević	30
As above, so below	Nataša Listeš	31
The wine of our childhood	Iskra Dejanović	32

The existence of truth	Nebojša Damnjanović	33
Exam season	Nebojša Damnjanović	35
Love is inside You	Nebojša Damnjanović	36
Rememberance	Teodora Šiklošić	37
Home?	Katarina Jurčević	39
Untitled	Dušica Vasović	40
Untitled	Sofija Lalić	41
Poetry in Translation		
.....		
Sonnet 73	Elena Milosavljević	43
Sonnet 94	Elena Milosavljević	45
My name is Hamlet	Ana Milojković	47
Love of Poetry	Nebojša Damnjanović	49
Preaching Love	Nebojša Damnjanović	51
Serenata	Aleksa Milenković	53
Prose		
.....		
A Night on the Razzle	Natalija Jedoksić	56
Untitled	Ana Milojković	59
Remnants of Her	Jasmin Bandov	60
Destruction	Irena Popović	62
Franz and Vincent	Nikola Stanković	64
Retreat	Aleksej Đokić	67

A Word from the Editors

The Bard is a student-run magazine with the primary objective to foster student self-expression and encourage a thorough approach to language, literature, and culture. The magazine comes out biannually and is published by the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia.

The Bard publishes original works of poetry, prose, flash fiction, and literary translation, along with impressions and studies of intertextuality in contemporary literature, music, and cinematography. By virtue of being the student magazine of the English Department of the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, the scope of *The Bard* is Anglophone and thus, the editorial board accepts original works written in the English language.

The second issue includes works of students and alumni of the University of Belgrade, the University of Kragujevac, the University of Novi Sad, and the University of Niš.

The editorial board extend their gratitude to the Faculty members for their invaluable guidance throughout the process of creating and ultimately publishing the magazine. With their help, *The Bard* aims to create space for creativity and discourse, thereby nurturing the love of the written word amongst its student body and beyond.

Happy reading,

The Bard Editorial Board



poetry

exile

The weather resembles
an old man
in a blue sweater
with a soul
grim and frazzled
that storms and winds
have fully shattered.

A sea man always
looks for comfort
in the vast horizons
pleads in silence
to answer the question
he unable is to twine
but yet traces
with his tired mind
full of memories
and loomings divine.

Jovana Krstičević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fourth-year student

The Internet

Order! Order!
I command you: Sit!
Colder! Colder!
Calm them down a bit

An infinite pool
Of infernal pain
Seeps through the screen

A group of young
Women and men
Beg and plead to be seen

They are you
You are them
We will never get "there"

The peace, the convenience
Is not fit for them yet
We must sit and suffer, be silent
Before we finally get violent

[All heads turn to the other side of the room.]

[Enter He who calls himself Justice.]

"My name has been called upon
Once again in vain
Once you learn respect
You might have a chance"

[Enter Death.]

Marija Đorđević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

A Northern Journey

In the long-lost days, the primal age of yore,
When all was true and pure,
The human tribes of old, striding sky and earth,
Amalgamated all the insight of the world.
But our cosmic kin above,
In their tyranny and pride,
Locked behind the eyes of our mind,
Sealing our perception and our inner archive.
We were left condemned, ignorant and weak,
Bound to repeat the failed cycles of our peak,
Until in ruins we lay,
Decadence and decay.
And then for aeons, it all was dust.

~

Now you, knowing well the emptiness and haze,
Shall strive for that which is caged inwards,
The unknown and forgotten of name,
Return to the lands of yore, bearing the name of our kin
And retrieve our legacy stolen long ago.
As you journey onwards, something ancient beckons you,
A strange sensation,
It comes not from our plane, but from the inside,
And far in thought you go,
Into the abyss of the mind,
Down a deep chasm,
Enveloped by a coil of warm shadow,
A rugged spire of comforting darkness,
Ever descending, unaware of the passage of time.
Until at last, a sight.
A gate, blurring, a shifting mass of thick white fog,
The air around it cold.
Standing before it, shivering, you see
The vicissitudinous entrance into the tainted world.

Knowing you must cross, you step into the void,
For what awaits ahead, be it wicked or insane,
Shall yield the answer to that call.

~

Hailed you are, by the many-faced abominations,
Aberrations cluster, awoken by your light,
And the howling begins,
They sing the first language, of horror and sin.
Behind its lure lie messages and keys, hidden in the screams.
Their sounds harrowing, yet still you must listen,
For theirs is the knowledge of madness,
The primeval secrets of the universe,
To acquire it you must witness.
Be not ensorcelled by their ancient tongues,
Lest you be swayed by their calls and remain here,
A wandering hollow, your sanity torn asunder.
Envelop yourself within a cherished memory,
Keep your form on the outskirts of lucidity,
But stay in a state of cognition and absorb.
For when their chanting stops,
They will only gaze,
And you will possess in your grasp
The ancestral seal of men, chronicles of youth.
Unleash it and see -
A prism.

~

Stolen or not, you have obtained it,
A prism of glass, containing the unknown.
Gazing into it your visage reflects, stoic of face,
To look away is impossible now, your sight on it chained.
From within you hear a voice, faint but resonant,
It speaks names, none recognizable, yet all deeply familiar.

They are yours, for you are now many,
A cell within cells within a cell,
By a single sentience interlinked.
Your vision scrying through a thousand sensors.
And now you see all and everything.
Driving yourself further into nothingness,
You reach a state of undefinable comprehension,
Understanding everything by instinct,
And now you know all and everything.
Your form cracks, and from the fissures
The shackles shed, wasting away,
Never to chain us again.
As the seal fades, its opening echoes a loud pulse,
Warning them of our defiance,
They will return, and we will be here, dauntless.

~

With your knowledge of shaping, you mouth the words,
Primordial incantations of creation,
And from the aberration forge it spawns,
A throne, shining and chrome.
Here you'll sit, adorned with the crown of upheaval,
Beginning the cosmic retrieval,
Awaiting the return of our celestial kin.
Pondering until then upon the solitude inducing vast openness of space,
Enjoying the silence, enjoying this canvas.

Gordan Perišić
University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Philology and Arts,
Alumnus

The Blood Star

I find myself wandering through a tenebrous valley of death,
I stride by shadows paying no heed to their ilk,
I am surrounded yet alone,
I pass by colossal pillars etched with forgotten sigils,
I behold the Blood Star awaken,
I cry out, scream, and rage against its slumber,
I wonder why it did not awake when they took my children,
I wonder why it did not awake when they took my siblings,
I wonder why it did not awake when they took my people,
I am hatred and despair howling in futility,
I witness it offer me its pact of blood,
I do not allow a moment to pass,
I accept and a hunger overcomes me,
I turn and transform into something that is not myself,
I am fueled and soulless,
I wander back into the valley towards gateways to the living realm,
I am overcome with ire as I enter a pillar of vermilion fire,
I am surrounded by sweet smoke and sounds of pleasure,
I hear moans of delicious pain and belches of stomachs full,
I am in the stronghold of my enemies and they are feasting in victory,
I hear their veins pulsing and their hearts throbbing,
I wonder are there no thoughts but pleasure in their minds,
I wonder is there no melancholy or regret after their bloodshed,
I wonder will any loved one mourn them if they were to disappear this night,
I wonder if they are completely and utterly unloved,
I see that there are many in this haven,
I wonder do they care for each other in the midst of killing,
I approach the one they call Khan,
I see him look up at my form disgusted and terrified for some reason,
I raise my hand and we look toward it together,
I behold an arm that once belonged to a loving mother of three,
I see a limb wrecked in crystal veins of red,

I see a monstrous claw outstretched and eager,
I wonder if this is vengeance or justice I feel,
I hunger,
I wonder whether I am like them in this moment,
I am not wise enough to find an answer,
I see my limb fall and so does a spring of crimson gush from his throat,
I feel it sustain me but not satiate,
I see the smoke thicken,
I begin to smell iron,
I taste the sweet aroma as it transforms into sulfur,
I hear the moans turn to screams,
I behold forms of flesh turn to coal,
I see them run at me all skin, fury, and armament,
I feel them pierce, slash, and strike at my body,
I wonder why they are so slow,
I maim, mutilate, and butcher,
I am engulfed in fire as are they,
I attempt to drink from their forms,

I see their bodies unravel mangled,
I taste what I thought was satisfaction turn to ash in my mouth,
I am accompanied by plumes of smoke,
I witness their city slowly dissipate into the sands of time,
I am alone again,
I am not myself,
I am greeted by my final companion as the cold wind blows,
I behold the Blood Star rise in the night sky,
I see it eclipse the moon,
I see it devour the stars,
I am claimed,
I am empty,
I am shadow.

Gordan Perišić
University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Philology and Arts,
Alumnus

Moonlight

When the moonlight illuminates
the darkest corners of the night,
every shadow,
in every crevice,
guards its solitary candle,
protecting it from the stains of time
looming above.

With nothing to guide them,
but stars,
their lone footsteps cry out for mercy,
the wailing choir slowly filling the streets with broken melodies,
giving trouble to the restless.

And every night we sell our bones
to the King Moon
in the hopes of escaping the song of the night,
yet the choir always prevails.

Nikola Sretović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

The Wayward Drummer

Where do I drum my drum,
When no one halts to harken?
Where do I drum my drum,
When all ears ignore it?

The beating bears as noise
In ears that echo voices:
Phrases of foreign foes,
Hosts of hostile hearts.

The rhythm of relics past
Receives its rebirth at last.
The beating of bygone drums
Bursts from bosom undone!

Wreathed as whispering wood,
Stirrer of sounds and souls subdued,
The sweller of songs seeks to sing
Of forefathers' foretold forth-springing,

The heathen hammer held at heart,
A smith's strong strike at soul-steel.
Shall I hang as the wise wanderer?
What runes my remuneration?

Down the river I will sail,
Noble thoughts to assail.
Over the seas to set sail,
And build a better hall.

No song of sorrow will I sing
When bold beginnings bear spring!
And lands over the distant shore
Will claim my soul forevermore.

Nikola Mikić
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fourth-year student

The Wayward Voyager

Njord, ordain my oars this day,
Over waves, through night and day.
I will drum my drum so free,
Swaddled by the restless sea.

Where grounds are evergreen,
A haven and a home unseen,
Far from my fathers' halls,
My fate and fortune falls.

The sea of stars shine my path,
The silver sun keep me company;
With the weft and weave of the waves
To steady the Norns' shaken hand.

The merciless seas unceasing
Witness my wit which in
Silent solitude of the wind
Is as selfish soul-seizing,

What worth is the drumming of a drum,
When there is no one left to harken?
What worth is the drumming of a drum,
When there is no ear but its own?

Fettered Fenrir froths at home,
And whose shoe to silence him?
If no soul should listen to my drum,
Why sacrifice bootshavings?

No song of sorrow will be sung,
Should the seas swallow me;
When the water before the shore
Does claim my soul forevermore.

Nikola Mikić
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fourth-year student

Bones

Bring me a box of chocolates
Blink a billion times in a second

Crouch in front of a crooked frame
Cut up the mind and find the insane

Dear dreadful daring innocence
How dare you drain my success

Even if I knew the way
I would feed you anyway

Alas! we are one and the same
Away from the crowds, in lane

Filmed my forgotten face
Lost in the hall of fame

How wonderful it is to blame
Everyone but your own self
Granted, a body we share
But our minds clash every day

Marija Đorđević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

Silence

An unspeakable ache awakens within
Lethargic lateral lullabies lead into an abyss
When did my warmth cease to exist?

Oh, great poet, painter, pantomime
You lost yourself and got lost in the mime
How did I mistake your hands for mine?

A puppeteer walks into a bar
Entangled in affairs and knots
Asks the barmen "Who knocks?"

I lost my sense of self
Sensed when it slipped away
She slithered into the dark
Without a sound, no bark

I am a dog left out in the rain
I am pitying myself in the grey
A pathetic shell of a person, hooray!

Do my contrasting thoughts make sense?
Is it the silence that made me go mad?
Or those damn neighbors next to my bed?

I am not done, you mere mortal
The reader is stuck in an infinite loop
I am the creator, the master, the brute
Do not shy away from the truth
Hah! You laugh in the face of desperation?
No wonder you are a lost nation

This degeneration of a generation
Seeped deep into the roots
Do not confuse my madness with martyrs
I am but a product of the youth

Marija Đorđević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

Stolen Glances in Passing

Prologue

Heavens predestined us to be as one,
Ere in our immortal bodies we saw the Sun.
Thus, well before we came to be
You were always meant to me.
Our souls kept our love eternal
Guarding it from forces infernal,
Finding way from one life to another
Making our love story as no other.
Each rebirth together we would spend,
And so we lived centuries on end.
We never thought we'd see the final act,
As we gave credence to our soul contract.

Then, against us Destiny conspired,
And of my love She made you tired!
Intoxicated with Her bane
Our love you'd mercilessly slain.
From remembering me you were deterred,
With memories of our previous lives blurred.
Before me I still see your hazel gaze,
I'll hold to it 'till the end of my days.
'Eternity' was the word you once told; and
I responded 'this love we shall uphold'.
So, I vow to hope and wait,
For you to find me afore it's too late.

Irina Torde
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

Stolen Glances in Passing

4

It's spring anew and all awakes,
Yet again my bosom aches.
As prohibited emotions ascend
The affliction never seems to end.
And no matter what I do,
I still yearn to see you.

There were many a sleepless night
When I awaited the daylight,
Mourning all the words untold
Sensing I was alone and cold.
The sorrow consuming me slowly but surely;
Knowing that only your touch can cure me.

My dear merciless glance-stealer;
Have you ever felt anguished,
Knowing that we were vanquished?
We never stood a chance,
Still, we waltzed the fatal dance.
Us two, the star-crossed lovers,
Hiding so that no one discovers.
To our memory, I shall forever hold,
Shielding our love, a fragile marigold.

Irina Torde
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

Paradise

I know I'm not for your world,

And you're not for mine

So let's leave them both behind

And go into exile.

Where we can pay no mind

To what is happening outside.

And frolic in the fields

Not caring what the new dawn yields,

Where you and me

And all the people who want to be free

Can make a place where there is no bigotry.

Milica Kovačević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

The Flower

Went out, came closer, bent down,
Picked a flower so lovely and bright.
Didn't take long for the flower to frown —
Wilted so soon. Such is my plight

Nemanja Mitrović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fourth-year student

The Clouds

"where are they going?" he mused
on the clouds racing westwards
"they're in a hurry," she thought
as they moved across the woods

Nemanja Mitrović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fourth-year student

In Another Universe

Where we are flowers
And the Sun shines everyday
And we have superpowers
That is my fantasy anyway

Petals we eat
And the Moon we see
Grass is blue
And the sky is green

You stayed when I asked
And we talked for hours
And shared what was ours
In the world we unmasked

Milica Rakić
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Second-year student

Bottle

He heard screams
He heard cries
That fatal night

The women in green
And the men in blue
Came running around

But no one could have stopped
Those horrible cries

He still hears them
Late at night
Now a little smaller
From the source they come

From a tiny source
Whose cries can just be shut
With a milk bottle he carries around

Milica Rakić
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Second-year student

Only this and nothing more

'Tis not the same time as before
How much time has passed? A year or a half more?
Since we were seated in a room and letter came,
Sealed and closed, that said "This shall be *nevermore*".

Seasons passed, and nothing seemed to last
But my isolation — words written in stone,
Bound to remain there, for *evermore*.

Since we went our separate ways and time began to count the days
Thrown out speeches I never said and things I left untold
Began to trouble my mind as they sat quietly in the soul
While I waited out in the cold, then merely a spectator at the show,
- Not a friend, *not anymore*.

The possibility of happenings turned into a war
When they saw me out, carved my heart out
And for the sake of their kingdom they watched it as it tore
Left me in forsaken land, knowing without a doubt
It shall never be like it was afore - all it was came to this
- Only this and *nothing more*.

Anja Zečević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

As above, so below

As above, so below.

The clouds beneath my feet
Seem more like snow deserts
Heaps and heaps of them
Layered like cotton candy.

I can almost picture white foxes running,
Their fur glistening,
And the bear that chases them:
Footsteps heavy, yet silent.

The landscape fills my eyes
With salty waters of the sea
And the stark white of the mist
Reaches its arms to wrap around me.

All the comfort of this world, I think,
Lies in the yellow light that frames
The brushstrokes that paint this sky
And the laugh of life it draws from one.

If there is a god,
I believe He is to be found here
In the soft touch of golden plating
And the light shaking of an airplane.

As above, so below -
I promise to live.

Nataša Listeš
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Biology,
Third-year student

The wine of our childhood

If we could have again remembered
From our childhood
 The drunk wine red

We would have never seen the gray void
We would have never seen the wounds
 From crimson red blood ours

We would have never with our bare eye
Seen blindness
 And the white scars unhealable

They would not have lifted hands to us
The eyes of misery
 The hands of the eyes starving

I the wine crimson red still today onto wounds
Pour painfully
 The crimson red wine drunk

Iskra Dejanović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
First-year student

The existence of truth

We know only fragments of the truth.
The breadth of our perception influences and limits
our inferences and our choices.

We live in an imperfect universe, being imperfect beings,
devising imperfect theories, using imperfect methodologies
and measuring with imperfect instruments and apparatuses of various kinds.

We will never know the whole truth in an absolute sense of the word,
hence we will always and forever be chasing the rainbow,
but while we are chasing it, on that journey,
we would still find out myriad interesting bits and pieces
some of which could turn out to be quite useful, beneficial, practical and even correct.

The truth, objective and ideal even, does indeed exist,
and us within it, it is just that the nature of things
is such that it limits our reach and the scope of possibilities for grasping it.

All material things sooner or later fall prey to Chronos,
which leads them to collapse into themselves, implode in a way.
The only thing that can sustain them is an ethereal quality,
which although may seem beyond one's reach,
is in fact, just at the grasp of everyone's fingertips.
This ingredient which makes all the difference is the awareness of ourselves,
others, our surroundings, world and the universe we live in.

Only after we accept and integrate all of them,
we will acquire the one thing that has been eluding us all along,
the same one that would enable us to discern
between fiction and reality, lies and facts,
isolation and intimacy, childhood from maturity,
naivete from experience, delusions from the truth...
And that truth is love.

Nebojša Damnjanović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
MA student

Exam season

A lamp and a textbook on the table,
the shadow of a glass on the wall,
a pencil held in hand;
Another thirty pages on the hourglass.

Nebojša Damnjanović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
MA student

Love is Inside You

If it would ever cross Your mind that You might want,
to see me again as if it were by chance,
and to speak all the things that You could never,
while not being ashamed;
Hoping that all these sleepless nights shall pass,
secretly wanting that the dream will soothe Your pain,
and that I will come to visit You again,
it's always the hardest to the ones that sincerely love with their entire being.
Some truths simply never fade away,
it is futile to hide in the shadows from the people You hold dear,
in the same way as You can't get some people from Your mind,
it's not in our cards to be free agents forever...
 Decisively dial my well known number,
 and know that I will anew, as before, again be Yours.

Nebojša Damnjanović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
MA student

Rememberance

I am not drowning,
Nor am I breathing,
My soul is levitating
Somewhere in between
The empty cracks
That have been permanently bleeding
Since you left.

I've been trying to reach you,
Yet, you don't seem to recognize me
In this inconsistent phase.
For I am not an apparition,
An imaginary construct inside your head,
But a lively creature,
A tender feeling
I've been trying to express.

But somehow,
My existence means nothing more to you
Than a broken glass,
Though you have to pick up the shattered pieces,
Yet you step over mine.
I am never enough,
Never more than less,

Even so I still choose to care,
For I am alive as long as I can feel,
And even if I was once dead,
You will know
That I've kept you dearly as a remembrance,
Not just a memory locked inside my head.

Teodora Šiklošić
University of Novi Sad,
Faculty of Philosophy, Fourth-year student

Home?

I do not speak in the name of myself,
I speak on behalf of all those who have no voice, because no one hears them.
Do you know how hard it is when you go back to the place you came from,
and instead of a home, a house welcomes you?
There is no more children's laughter in it, only the coldness and rust on the walls,
your drawings were eaten by moisture,
the coldness of the house eats away at your heart, slowly,
dust spreads through your lungs:
This is not your home anymore!
This is a monument to humanity
made to fight.
Come back!
But you, child, have nothing to return to.
The eternal child in you is lost in a world where it will forever not belong.
And the world is (not) sorry.

Katarina Jurčević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fourth-year student

Dancing puppets, Cut-off strings,
Laughing lovers, Paper rings,
Joyful sorrow, painted hearts,
Our life, it ends before it starts.

Dearest creature shining bright,
Know I love thee late at night,
Limping beasts, All inside,
Howled your name a dozen times.

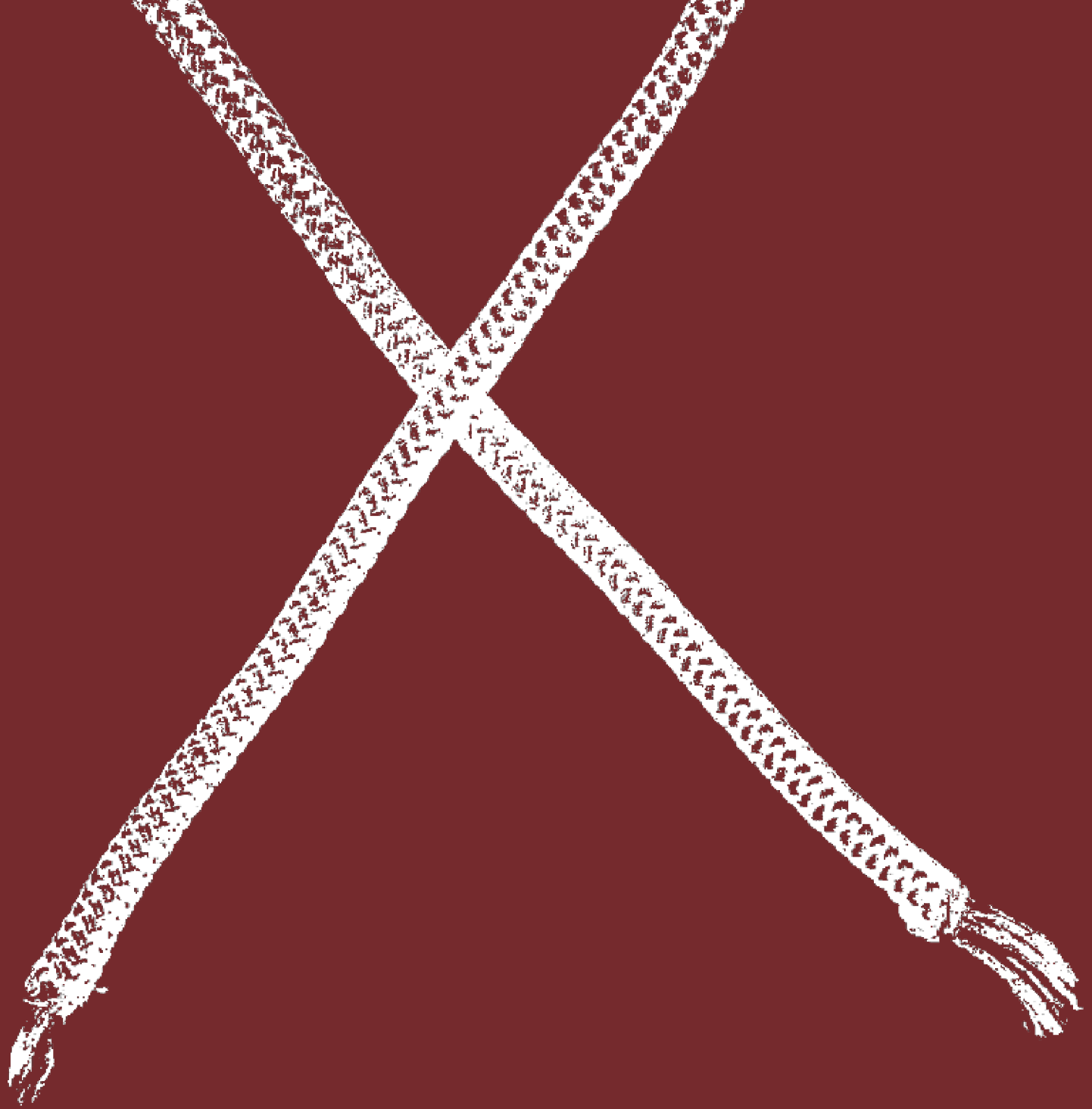
Severed heads, they sang aloud,
A song of legends, withered, proud,
We were in them, this I know,
our pain has never been our own.

Dušica Vasović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

Znamo.
 Samo osjećamo.
 I lutamo tminom
 Pustih snova.
 Nemirom uma
 Potiskujemo,
 I gradimo
 Ruševine emocija.
 U pomami čezneš.
 U nadi žudiš.
 Shvataš, da ćutiš.
 Riječ je odvažna,
 Sramežljiva.
 U špilji –
 Tamo želim biti.
 Kao ona se skriti.
 Ne prelazi prag –
 Neću ni ja...
 Slutim strah,
 Koračam unatrag.
 Misao vrišti,
 Na pomolu bol.
 Odbijaš krah
 Jer znaš
 Da gorimo istim plamom.
 Znamo...
 Samo osjećamo,
 Ono što nas tišti
 I raduje
 U isto vrijeme...
 U neko drugo vrijeme.
 U nekom drugom svijetu.

Cognizant,
 Yet emotional.
 Roaming in the shadows
 Of hopeless dreams.
 Mind's unrest
 Scatters,
 Yet collects
 The emotional debris.
 Longing for ebullience,
 Yearning for hope.
 Still silent within.
 The word is bold,
 But timid in essence.
 A shelter —
 My sole desire.
 Where to find?
 Out of step,
 Out of mind...
 While retreating,
 Sensing fear.
 Screaming thoughts,
 As pain looms near.
 Calamity's left behind,
 For our flames are
 Two of a kind.
 Being cognizant...
 Yet emotional.
 Both jolly
 And fretful
 At the same time...
 Till our paths
 Again intertwine.

Sofija Lalić
 University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
 Third-year student



trans | ЛАТИОН

Sonnet 73

William Shakespeare

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Sonet 73

Vilijam Šekspir

translated by Elena Milosavljević

У мени препознајеш оно доба
Када гране огољене, или жутих листова,
Дрхте над рушевинама залеђене капеле
Где су до скоро птице умилно певале.
У мени видиш смирај,
Након што је сунце западно потиснуто
Мраком ноћи, што облачи скуте попут смрти,
И свему нуди спокој.
У мени видиш ватрени сјај
Који још увек почива на пепелу младости,
На одру на којем она мора, од свога хранитеља,
Живота – издахнути.
Препознајеш и твоја љубав јача,
Уливаш јој снагу да неизмерно воли
Оног, ког ће ускоро за собом оставити.

Elena Milosavljević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Second-year student

Sonnet 94
William Shakespeare

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow:
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

Sonet 94

Vilijam Šekspir

translated by Elena Milosavljević

Они, што могу да повреде, а безазлени су,
Они, који доказују да нису каквим се чине,
Који, надахњујући друге сами остају окамењени,
Замрзнути, хладни, искушењу далеки:
Они праведно наслеђују Небесне милости,
Њима бране природне благодети,
Они су владари и истински носиоци својих лица,
А други – путокази њихове доброте.
Летњи цвет је лету мио,
Док је себи неважан – живео и био;
Да се зараза усуди на цвет,
И сам би га коров надјачао:
Најмилије себи је најгорче,
Љиљани замиришу горе но све зарасло.

Elena Milosavljević
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Second-year student

My Name is Hamlet
Alexander Blok

My name is Hamlet. My blood runs cold
When cunning knits its sinful strings
And in my heart — love deep and old
For you, my one and only, lives.

You, Ophelia, my desire
From cruel and cold existence fade
And I, a prince, at home, expire
Stabbed by a poisoned blade.

Я — Гамлет

Alexander Blok

translated by Ana Milojković

Я — Гамлет. Холодеет кровь,
Когда плетет коварство сети,
И в сердце — первая любовь
Жива — к единственной на свете.

Тебя, Офелию мою,
Увел далёко жизни холод,
И гибну, принц, в родном краю
Клинком отравленным заколот.

Ana Milojković
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Third-year student

Ljubav Poezije
Branko Miljković

Ja volim sreću koja nije srećna,
pesmu koja miri zavađene reči,
slobodu koja ima svoje robove
i usnu koja se kupuje za poljubac.
Ja volim reč o koju se otimaju dve slike
i sliku nacrtanu na očnom kapku iznutra,
cvetove koji se prepiru sa vremenom
u ime budućih plodova i prolećne časti.
Ja volim sve što se kreće

jer sve što se kreće -
kreće se po zakonima mirovanja i smrti.
Volim sve istine koje nisu obavezne.
Ja volim jučerašnje nežnosti,
da kažem svome telu "dosta",
i da sanjam bilje,
prste, oči, sluh
drugačije raspoređene u šumi
negoli u telu.

Love of Poetry

Branko Miljković

translated by Nebojša Damnjanović

I love bliss that is not content,
a poem reconciling words in dispute,
freedom that has its serfs
and a lip bought for a kiss.
I love a word two pictures snatch for
and a painting drawn on an eyelid's interior,
flowers quarreling with time
in the name of future fruits and spring honor.

I love everything that moves
because every thing that advances -
does so adhering the laws of stillness and death.
I love all of the inessential truths.
I love tenderness of yesterday,
to voice to my body "Enough!" ,
to vision plants in a reverie,
fingers, eyes, music
placed throughout the forest differently
than within the body.

Nebojša Damnjanović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
MA student

Propovedanje ljubavi

Branko Miljković

Nema mene al ima ljubavi moje;
Vidim je u suncu i zemlji gde nam trunu kosti.
Dovršava se dan u njenoj zahvalnosti
slično muzici, slično praznini, spokojem.

Ona će sačuvati namere moje i tvoje,
i vaskrsnuće mrtve rođendane po milosti.
U podnožju vetra nemerljiva sen oholosti
nestaće u pepelu onih što više ne postoje.

U pusto srce u mrtvo vreme me zovi,
minula čežnjo, da se svet ponovi.
Ako ne saznah ljubav i uspavah svoj um,
pa mi je prazan dan koji još došao nije,
ko granu koja se izdužuje u uzaludan šum
neka me nedostojnog vetar obavije.

Preaching Love

Branko Miljković

translated by Nebojša Damnjanović

I am gone but my love is not;
I can see it in the Sun and the ground where our bones rot.
In its oblivion this day comes to an end
in a similar vein to music, void and serenity.

She will preserve intentions mine and yours,
and resurrect dead birthdays by their grace.
In the wind's foot, an immeasurable shade of arrogance
shall disappear in the ashes of the ones long gone.

Call me in desolate hour in the dead of night,
past yearning, life to reprise itself.
If I haven't found out what love is and put my mind at ease,
so that the day which haven't yet payed a visit is empty,
as if it were a branch stretching into a faint noise
let the wind envelop me unworthy.

Nebojša Damnjanović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
MA student

Серената

Милош Црњански

Чуј, плаче месец млад и жут.
Слушај ме, драга, последњи пут.

Умрећу, па кад се зажелиш мене,
не вичи име моје у смирај дана.
Слушај ветар са лишћа свелог, жутог.

Певаће ти: да сам ја љубио јесен,
а не твоје страсти, ни чланке голе,
но стисак грања руменог увенулог.

А кад те за мном срце заболи:
загри и љуби грану што вене.
Ах, нико нема части ни страсти,
Ни пламена доста да мене воли:

Но само јабланови вिति
и борови пусти поносити.
Но само јабланови вिति
и борови пусти поносити.

Serenata

Miloš Crnjanski

translated by Aleksa Milenković

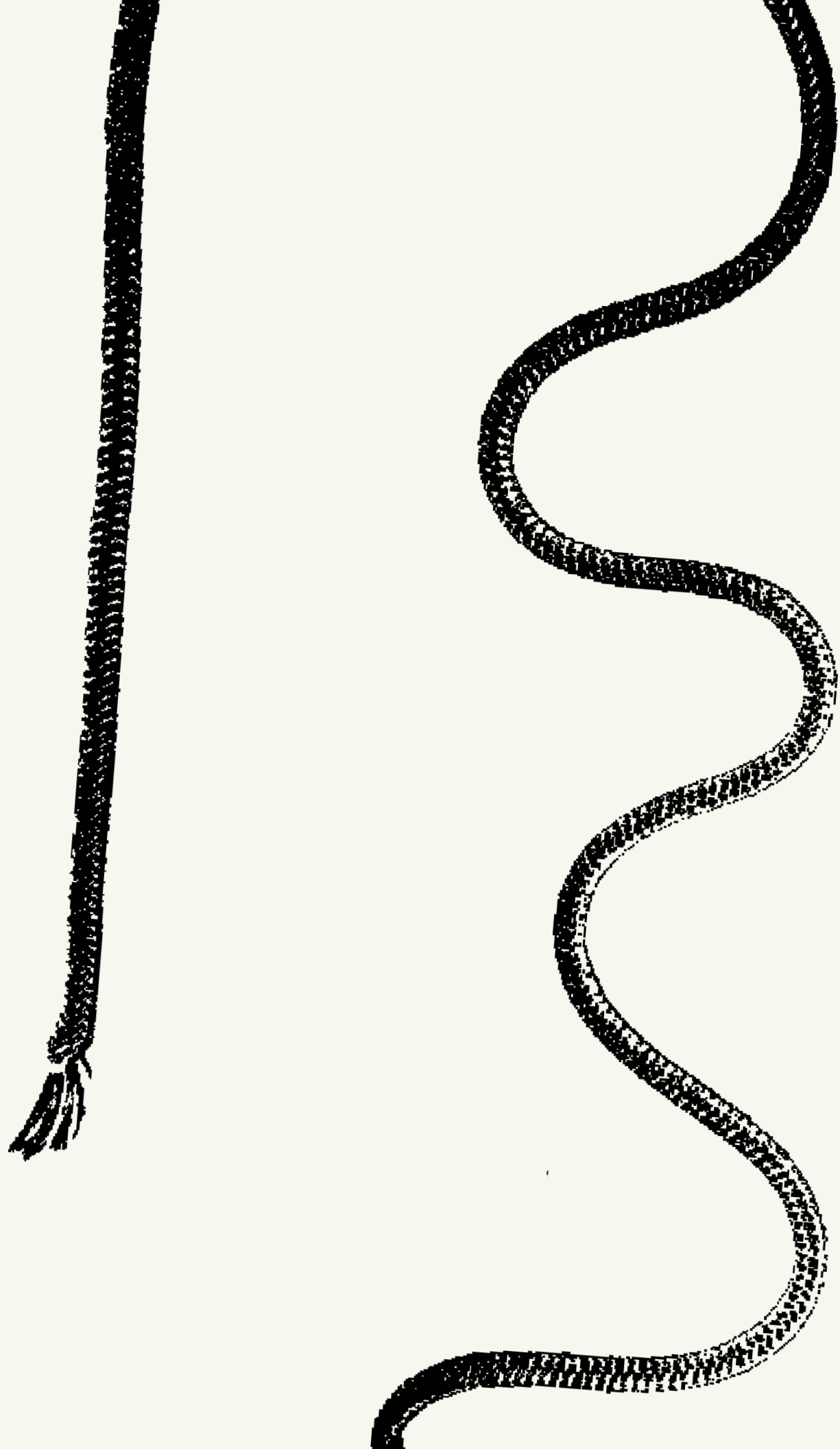
Hear: young and yellow moon is crying,
Listen to me darling, one last time.

I will die, and when you crave me
do not scream my name into the sunset of the day.
Listen to the wind from the dead and yellow leaves.
It'll sing to you: that I kissed an autumn,
and not your passions, nor your naked ankles
but a grip of branches red and dead.

And when your heart aches for me:
Hug and kiss a branch that's dying.
Oh, no one has the honor, nor passion,
nor enough flames for this love of mine:

But thin poplars and lonely, prideful pines.
But thin poplars and lonely, prideful pines.

Aleksa Milenković
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Fifth-year student



prose

A Night on the Razzle

```
_location_ unknown_  
_time_ 8.37_p_m_  
_weather_ pleasant_and_warm_with_an_occasional_breeze_
```

jane_33 is getting ready for a night out. She puts on a sparkling black dress, but – alas, it's too short. Casting a glance in the mirror, she notices the yellow lights glowing in the corner: *the skin coverage parameter: below allowed*. Infuriated, she takes a silk, jade shawl and lets it settle around her shoulders gently. *The skin coverage parameter satisfied. You may leave your apartment. Ding*. She turns to her phone. bright_star is unable to attend due to thumbosis. She googles it: *a brand new disease caused by spending too much time typing on a device such as a laptop, resulting in finger pain. Ding*. nature_lover has canceled the meeting due to smogopathy. Oh, well, she'll go on her own then. It's her birthday, for God's sake. Not going to miss *that*. Though, to be frank, she can't get rid of the feeling that it's not going to be a usual night out, especially with this quota of 10 acquaintances she desperately has to fulfill this month, let alone the fact that she is still in dire need of three more. The tricky part is that it has to be tonight, otherwise, she risks being sent to a psychologist who specializes in treating “socially unattractive people”, yet another burden of the modern times. She laughs at the idea light-heartedly; still, her fingers reach nervously for the phone and she checks her quota again. 9 p.m. Her eyes wander restlessly around the bedroom one more time until they settle on the bookshelf half-hidden by a velvety curtain and half-nestled in English ivy. The last thing from her previous life. A book. It gives her pleasure to think how she succeeded in camouflaging it so well. Though she has never found great pleasure in material trinkets – a blatant lie – she must admit she does miss certain things a bit, such as her glittery jewelry. She pauses for a moment with her hand mid-air, having forgotten what she has been searching for.

Ding. Warning. Not hydrated enough. Her hand mechanically fetches a glass of water and she drinks it reluctantly. The watch on her wrist signals bright green and she leaves her apartment, taking a final glimpse before exiting. At the entrance to a bar, she gets scanned, and after being declared “socially fit”, she strides into the room packed with people laughing merrily, muffled by the clinking of champagne glasses. On entering, her phone immediately buzzes. *You've got two new acquaintances, jane_33. Would you like to approach them?* She sighs, sits on a bar stool and orders a sunset-colored cocktail. Her all-time favorite part of the day. She tried to guess. The busy, the tired, the frustrated, the overjoyed, the underpaid, the troubled...The list was long and she was drained. While waiting for her drink, she takes two *HappyPills* from her purse. The watch signals a low hunger level. Again. She takes two more pills, a pizza flavored one and decides to use her monthly bonus and to take the chocolate flavored one as well. Suddenly, a frightful thought creeps into her mind. She might not have turned off the iron. Hurriedly, she clicks on the *MonitorHouseApp*, finds the right camera, zooms in and with relief puts her phone aside. Both the watch and the phone go silent. She sips on her cocktail, closes her eyes and bathes in the bright red lights drowned in darkness. It's high time she changed her *Description* in the *AcquaintanceApp*. She searches *Description* then *History* then *Recently Closed* then *Job Section*.

Ding. Your social fitness level: 48% due to an emotion, possibly grief.

“Fucking detector”, she whispers, only to get another notification: *your social fitness level: 47% due to unlawful language.* The flood of flashbacks overwhelms her, spiraling out of control. As if let out of Pandora's box, her thoughts swirl incessantly caught in a whirlwind of memories. She knows she is on the verge of losing her job. What's more, she is sure they are going to announce it to her tomorrow. That must be why they have sent an email asking for “an urgent appointment”. Or maybe it's something else. What is she going to do about money? And her charming cottage in *The Affluent Neighborhood*. As if that was not enough, she is going to be transferred to *The Poor Women's Neighborhood* any day now. F***ing experiment. How couldn't she have seen through the sheer stupidity of it all?

She shouldn't have accepted to be part of it in the first place. What use is it to her anyway? What if she does not fulfill the acquaintance quota? Or if she does not meet the potential partner before her 30th birthday, that is, before midnight? She will be declared “socially unfit” and that will be the end of it all. *Ding*. The letters on her screen start blinking and she puts an enormous effort into deciphering the blurry letters: *Grief. Resentment. Despair.* 10 p.m.

Your subscription for LifeAppPremium has expired. You no longer fulfill the necessary requirements. 11:05 p.m. Reminder: One more acquaintance left.

The painful lighting made her squint. Down the corridor, she notices the dimly-lit room with lights coming from phones, reminding her for a moment of lanterns in the dark. But she quickly dismisses the memory, hoping that *the* app has not registered anything yet. She stands up, pays, and leaves. 11:20 p.m.

She'll take a walk. Calming rush of the city. The busy midnight wind sweeping the streets. Her hands feel the coldness of the banister. She breathes in deeply.

12:00.

New status acquired: you are going to be transported to WPMA center (Women Past Marital Age) tomorrow at 9 a.m. Warning: Your current level of happiness is below allowed.

*Please consult your psychologist.
Warning: Too much grief registered.
Please consult your psychologist.*

No sign of grief registered.

Natalija Jedoksić,
The University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Alumna

Untitled

He slashed the air, his triangular nose swiftly breaking the water surface and shyly inspecting this new environment. Gills open. Nostrils agape. So far, so good.

He propped himself against the ground and let his body relax on the surface. Wet ground. Different wet. Coarse ground. Millions of sand crystals, millions of pebbles, some small shells. A few other organisms, too simple to understand or notice. He felt the surface of his body – smooth. Sharp. Hm. Interesting.

Strong.

New colours engulfed him, but he did not register any threats. Green colour brown colour. New smells, fresh, brought by a gentle, friendly breeze. A pleasant feeling, like a light undercurrent of water. Not dangerous. Noted.

The clear waters still splashed his lower body. He felt safe. He tried to understand and to remember. He carefully stored each new sensation as it travelled through his nervous system and reached the brain. Wet, coarse. Smooth, sharp. Green, brown. Wet, coarse smooth coarse smooth sharp. Strong. Different. Different. Safe. He was safe.

New sounds covered him and passed around and through him like a shoal of tiny sparkling fish. For a few moments he felt overwhelmed, before his mind separated the sounds and registered their frequencies. Low, vibrating, far away. High, short, small. Still safe, still strong.

Wet, coarse, sharp. Green, green, green brown. Low, low, faraway. Safe and strong and brave.

He would have to inform the others. This was all so fascinating, so new, so different. He had to remember. He had to keep repeating to himself.

Had he been able to look up, he would have been met by an array of colours, a glimpse of which was occasionally available to him when the waters were clear. Had he been able to look up, he would have observed one of the most magnificent sunsets since the Great Creation. And for a moment, as his body relaxed in a surge of other-worldly tranquillity, he could hear the Universe whisper: Welcome, my Son.

All this lasted a few seconds. Vowing he would remember everything, everything, everything, Tiktaalik returned to his waters.

Ana Milojković,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student

Remnants of her

Everything seems odd, eerie, maybe just different. I've been living in this place for over six years now, yet only five of them I recognize and remember fondly. This past year has been different, to say the least. Every second I've spent here is akin to exile, my memories belong there, however, my being needs to venture further, to return to nothingness or remain amongst these virulent vermin.

The floorboards beneath me creak softly, it's a small apartment, old and dingy, but it was perfect once. Even at this very moment, whilst I'm jotting down my memories I shudder to think I might move something, scratch away her last remnants. What peculiar creatures humans are, we cling to hope even when it's extinguished. I've noticed a pattern in my comings and goings; a little introspection revealed that I'd often take off my shoes and march to the wall where our bed is as if I was sleepwalking, and stare at the sticky notes above the pillows. By now their number has overtaken the whole length of our bed. I still say 'our', for it is our bed. Here in my apartment, nothing is truly mine, but ours, and ours it shall stay.

Her drawings were spectacular, and her sense of humor surpassed my expectations for sure. Now that I look back on it, she could have been a painter, or perhaps a comic book artist. You might not believe it, but she would spend all day drawing on sticky notes, plastering them around our home with special messages just for me. That was her commitment to making my everyday special. It was not the mere presents, nor the unique and ingenious way of organizing things around the house that got me to think about her, nothing that complex. Instead, I find myself searching for a trail of breadcrumbs around the house, the little eating habit she picked up God knows where. I couldn't find them anymore, I got down on my knees and searched the whole place again, and still there were none. I opened the door and the wind must have done the rest. How could I be so inconsiderate? I might forget something.

The closet is off-limits. My parents will pack the boxes, with clear instructions to store everything in the attic of my childhood home, so that I might visit them from time to time. My father said I was always melancholic, too weak, as though I didn't see him shed the same tears for his daughter-in-law. On the other hand, my mother couldn't accept the truth; then again neither could I. The truth I hold dear to my heart is that it's not over, nothing is ever truly over. Once our apartment is picked apart,

every fragment stored in a nicely lit attic, with a large window on the ceiling and a splendid view of the night sky, I will decorate it to commemorate my wife. I don't think I need rest, I've never felt more lively, for I have a greater purpose. They've told me that I'll find someone else, and although I chuckle at their silly thoughts, I remind them of the simple and obvious truth. I'm married, I don't need to find anyone special, I've already found them. True—we've drifted apart for the time being, but I'll find her.

I almost forgot, my last memory of her was the determination and tenderness in her words.

“I'll just wait for you here. If I return to our apartment without you, I'll cry all night.” While I was finishing my shift, she spent the day walking in the park where I proposed to her. If I could only walk through it again with her, a moment as fleeting as the cherry blossom petals.

Jasmin Bandov
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student

Destruction

An unusually gloomy and above all depressing landscape appeared before their eyes. Every night consciousness broke free from the grips of reality and transcended into higher, still unexplored forms of existence. In that moment, everything that made them human disappeared and adopted a different form, undefined and with indistinct outlines.

Still, everything would be alright if they just closed their eyes and let their imagination run rampant, while the muscles relaxed. Their bodies were exhausted, worn out by life and massacred by the fight to survive.

Once upon a time their spirits were full of potential and intelligent thought, their bodies abundant and beaming with life. They coexisted with the Sun without extinguishing it, walked on Earth without polluting it; their spirits were able to change the flow of events and perception of reality. And they did so by heroically nudging the flow through the smallest window of hope, almost the size of a keyhole, to reach by then unimaginable stretches.

The desert was glowing in its mountainous magnificence, fascinating in its vastness and cruel in its beauty. From time to time, a rancid cactus would aspire towards the glittering sun and gaze into its copper eyes. Its dangling, relaxed thorns expanded with the possibility of tasting the blood and decay of people who lost their lives with each passing second. The cacti were thirsty for every droplet that had left the bodies, so thirsty it felt perverse. Their trunks strained and twisted under the stinging sun, bending down as if they were protecting the people. The weight of the dead and dull thorns pulled them down as they were howling for mercy.

Every one of the cells had its place in the heat, be it human or plant. The heat annihilated and dried out every single water drop in both organisms and jeopardized their composition. The steep ground formed by millions of sand grains in various sizes touched the bodies and cacti alike. The People's parched eyeballs stared into the Sun as if to beg it for mercy. Some of the grains were round, soft and pleasant to touch, caressing the skin as they were slipping through fingers on their way to the ground. The heat pressed their delicate edges against the skin in which blood was no longer flowing, making them almost glimmer.

The other grains had a rather rough surface, and they incessantly scratched the skin in a never-ending haste. The warm and sultry wind flew them around like feathers, pouring them into open mouths and filling the lungs with swirling dust. After a while, even the round and soft grains lost their featheriness, and slowly they were turned into battered and coarse grains, corrupting them from the inside.

Once upon a time, the desert was shiny and glistening in all its might. Its power reflected the beauty of cohesion, man and nature as one. The oasis was overflowing with wild streams that flowed as fast as a poet's imagination. The water flowed away relentlessly then, digging tunnels and making connections between the grains, enabling contact and universal thrill. The sun's reflection penetrated through the human dried-out pupils, creating images in the afterlife. Yet even the beauty and inestimable value of the desert could not stop the air from ominously wafting through the grains. It touched the lifeless bodies as a perverse punishment for the crimes of humanity, inviting us to look closer and gain insight into our original sin, because what we destroyed were minds, hearts, courage and spark. The air ushers us into our downfall.

In the morning, in the desert, there were only cacti.

Irena Popović,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Alumna

Franz and Vincent

“What is this wretched place?” asked a man with a questioning countenance and fiery red hair while surveilling the shadowy, minute room which confined him.

“I don't know. I merely sat down myself before you arrived,” whispered a sickly-looking man seated on what appeared to be a narrow bed topped with red linen in the far corner of the room.

The man with the fiery hair found himself in the center of the room, walking in half-steps toward the voice until he could make out the shape of his collocutor's face.

“Who are you?” asked the man with red hair, almost concerned that he was sharing this claustrophobic space with someone else.

“My name is Franz,” replied the man at the foot of the bed, with his hands firmly placed in his lap, and his eyes fixated on the small wooden table next to the bed which seemed to hold an array of glassware and assorted bottles. “What happened to your ear, sir?” was his response.

The red-haired man sat down opposite his partner in one of the two available chairs and glanced at the artwork which decorated the baby-blue tapestry of the walls. “Nothing, nothing,” he said, brushing off the question. “They say that I'm crazy, but I'm anything but, you see...” added the red-haired man. “I simply know what it all comes down to, this life, as it were. It's sad, actually.”

“Yes,” agreed the other. “I would say that I also know what you mean when you make that claim. I used to think highly of the joys of living. But once you lose the right to the illusion that these joys have no end, that light becomes dimmer and dimmer. You can't really enjoy it. It... It becomes meaningless.”

The stout man with red hair lit a cigarette, quizzically waiting for his fellow to finish his unfocused testament, and politely exclaimed that he didn't understand a single word of it.

“I don't know about all that, my dear fellow. I mean, it has all gone to hell, but what really gets me going is that menacing Gauguin always disagreeing with me and all. He's a decent artist and all, but he makes me feel like I don't know what I'm talking about, it makes me feel as small as a grain sometimes. You just can't get through to him, there isn't a chance in hell...”

“So you're an artist?” interjected the man on the bed.

The red man bowed his head as if defeated by this question which seemed personal and carried insurmountable pain attached to its meaning. He remained quiet for a great deal of time and only after considering the question very delicately answered in the negative. The fragile man nodded in agreement as if understanding this answer as axiomatic and redirected his glance at the half-opened green window in between the two gentlemen.

“You can't call yourself an artist if you don't have the respect of the people. What I do is I live an artist's life. I paint as much as I can. I came to the countryside to get away from the darkness and the artists and their society and their landscape. Here I have the bright colors, the blues of the sky, the fields. It's pretty.”

“It is,” agreed Franz once again. “I like it here, too. The city reminds me of my father. We're not on the best of terms. I was just finishing a letter which I intend to send him tomorrow.”

“It's for the best, then. Besides, I only ever sold three paintings. You can't make a living off that. That's why I hate that term, “artist”. You're an artist if people buy your paintings. Well, I'm not one! I'm just a man who paints. Say, friend, with your letter and all, does that make you an artist, too?” asked the red man drawing in the last smoke from the burnt-out cigarette.

“No,” said Franz.

“Not an artist, my fellow, a-a writer, if you will.”

Franz exhaled, gathered a lungful of air, and explained his work in a few sentences to his partner, concluding with a manuscript he had left his friend about a man who was arrested under mysterious circumstances and tried in court for unknown reasons.

The two then commenced a conversation which lasted well into the early hours of the following day, which, as both would attest, was undoubtedly the best conversation they had ever had, where artistry met open-mindedness and two creative souls found their respective match. It wasn't until a fast-moving cockroach interrupted them by sprinting in a straight line in between the two artists, then up the wall and straight out of the window. The two men stood up and saw the cockroach enter a huge mass of people cheering outside of their little room.

The two artists remained stunned at the sight, and discussed what it could mean, why the crowd appeared.

“Should we go out?” asked the red-haired man. “Do you think they'll ever thank us?”

“No,” said Franz, “let's just stay in here. It's peaceful.”

And so the two sat back down and continued right where they had stopped and the red-haired man carried on explaining how important it was for Doctor Gachet to remain still until the portrait was finished.

Nikola Stanković,
University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, MA student

Retreat

Dear Jan,

Is your health improving? I am doing well. I wanted to let you know that the divorce has been finalized, but I will be seeing my girls on the weekends. It isn't ideal, but there was nothing more I could have done.

That is how the letter starts. Marian wrote pages of the news from his life, including an invitation to an exhibition of his paintings in Prague.

The ending reads as follows:

P.S. If you have the strength for it, write back. Anything.

Forever yours,

Marian

Jan's teardrops soak the paper. He hurriedly puts the letter away, trying to prevent the ink from bleeding.

Jan often feels like no one would care if he disappeared. At his loneliest, it takes several of Marian's words to reassure him that those thoughts are untrue. He has never said it in those exact words, but everything Marian does, everything he says, easily translates to: "I could not stand a world without you in it."

Yet, despite the fact that he has kept every single one of Marian's letters – not only the ones he has received since coming to Cheladna, but those from their university days as well – Jan has not written back.

Why?

Perhaps a part of him relishes the loneliness. The artist's agony, the sweet melancholy. During their university days, they corresponded constantly. For a long time, there was not a day that Jan didn't know what Marian was doing, and vice versa. However, things have changed. Marian got engaged, and then married, and then he got his two little girls. Jan was happy for him, but around that time, he gradually stopped writing back, even though Marian's letters never ceased.

When Jan started coughing up blood and was sent to the Cheladna resort to recover, he stopped writing entirely.

There is a part of Jan that enjoys suffering, a part of him that believes there is no sweeter agony than that of unrequited love.

This also makes good inspiration for writing. However, there is another, truer part of him, that misses the way things used to be. Just him and Marian in university, in their shared room, chasing their dreams and staying up late to read poetry. Jan wrote the most when he was well. To say that an artist is at their most productive when they are suffering is a lie.

Nowadays, all he does is lie around and walk around the resort. The doctors say that his deep melancholy is bad for his health.

Part of the reason why it is so difficult to write to Marian is the possibility that, at any moment, one of Jan's letters might be a goodbye. The doctors say his health is improving, but at times his cough still stains the white handkerchief crimson.

Marian continues to write, ending each letter with “forever yours” and Jan continues to weep.

By late August, Jan stopped reading Marian's letters. He still keeps them, but he does not have the heart to open them. His doctors have told him to let go of that which torments him, and that is precisely what he is trying to do, but the heaviness in his chest he seems to carry at all times has not ceased.

That day, he receives another envelope, this one much thinner than the previous ones. This piques Jan's curiosity, as despite Marian being a visual artist, not a man of words, he always finds a way to fill multiple pages when writing to Jan.

Disregarding better judgment, he opens it. It is a single photograph of a painting, one of Marian's – Jan immediately recognizes his style. It depicts two men sitting at a corner booth in a bustling tavern. The lights are dim, the atmosphere is dark, it is visible even in the black and white format.

Jan flips the photograph and sees the name of the painting: it carries the same name as one of Jan's old short stories. However, there is nothing else in the envelope.

That same day, Jan asks to be discharged from the hospital, and takes a train to Prague.

Aleksej Đokić,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Fourth-year student

Doubt

All I can hear is a gallop. Neither a cheer nor a sigh. A familiar feeling in the chest. Excitement and passion, trepidation and love – all intertwined. Blinded by the lights, the only thing I can see is a black line. A line we must cross together – the hurdle.

There are three strides left. She has faith in me. And my faith in her is unwavering. After all these years, it is beyond question. When I give her the signal, she will jump for I am her head, and she is my wings. Together, we will fly.

Just two more strides left. Dear Lord, help her have faith in her wings – her hooves, and help me not to betray her. Not again. Trust me, girl, at least your wings will not betray you. Yet, we all deserve a second chance...

The last stride. I have to give a command! If she doesn't jump now, it will be too late. The second mistake... This would be my second mistake, not hers. I cannot hurt her... not again. Just say it! Give her a command! Now! Wait... now! Come on, you will ruin everything...

The shadow of the wings looms over the hurdle. Darkness engulfs a whirlwind of thoughts. The rider takes a spill, bringing the mare down with him. The fragile wings break in the moment of uncertainty and apprehensiveness. Because our determination timidly trembles when to-ing and fro-ing...

For better or worse, they say. In sickness and in health. In all the love and hate... Doubt is also an obstacle, isn't it? Why can't we overcome it together then?

Uroš Lalić,
University of Belgrade, School of Electrical Engineering, First-year student

Cat-distribution System

Just a harmless, but rare natural phenomenon or a serious government conspiracy? An increase in sightings of cats all throughout the city has shocked and puzzled the local inhabitants. Referred to online by young people as a “*Cat-distribution system*”, the youth have humorously shared their stories of playing and adopting cats into their homes, given the recent outbreak of feline activity in the area.

The experts are bewildered, for it is completely unknown where these cats came from, as there does not really seem to be a reason for such a huge number of cats to move to an area on their own. This has left some people anxious. A few residents have voiced their concerns for the animals, such as Mrs. Doubtfire, the local cat lady, stating: “In all my 73 years I have never seen such a huge migration of cats! This cannot be natural! Someone has made these poor dearies leave their territories!”

While Mrs. Doubtfire has happily welcomed a dozen or so cats into their new home, others have come forth with their own theories about this “cat-demic”, like Mr. Jekyll, the local butcher. He was quoted as saying: “These ain't no ordinary street cats! These cats have had microchips placed in them to spy on us! Privacy is dead in the 21st century! I am for the extermination of these four-pawed cameras as soon as possible!” Mr. Jekyll has brought together a modest group of his like-minded peers who call themselves “Man over feline”, but the group made no significant action, preferring to drink beer and talk about their trucks instead of accomplishing much.

Nonetheless, aside from these citizens in the minority, most people welcome their furry friends to their neighborhoods and homes. We interviewed a self-proclaimed cat mom, about her newly adopted companion, as she continuously asked us to call her: “Cats are wonderful! They're so full of love and joy! I just don't understand people who dislike them!” When asked about the numerous scratch marks that the woman appeared to have had on her hands and wrists, she refused to answer and nervously walked away. No doubt the “Cat-distribution system” is a huge success as it seems that the majority of the people are enjoying this unusual event.

Milutin Šterjoski,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Fifth-year student

The Death of a Socially Awkward Youth

One fine morning, a certain Edwin Murphy was spending time in between classes with a couple of fellows at Columbia University. The youngest and least distinguished of the professors, for weeks now he had wanted to mingle with his colleagues and establish a good rapport that would make him feel at home in his new workplace. Besides the obvious potential benefits in the forms of career advancement and mentorship, Edwin was a lonely man and, he'd freely admit, quite desperate for friendship. He was finally ready to pluck up the courage and turn the page in his life; he was going to approach people and, step-by-step, build connections that would last a lifetime.

He was off to a surprisingly good start. From the get-go, he swept Prof. Gallagher off her feet with his sermons about Mozart and the enigmatic character of his *Leck mich im Arsch* composition. And to speak of how Prof. Johnson was *enthralled* by his monologue on Marx's labor theory of value applied to pleasuring your partner! But one could hardly expect the success of such a maladjusted man to last forever – a man who, like Michael Scott, had always dreamed of having a hundred kids so he could have a hundred friends, and never had a single one.

Edwin was having a lovely conversation with a couple of professors, including the distinguished Prof. Maclean, who was halfway cloaked by his reddish mahogany desk. Young, reclusive and highly self-conscious, he was clearly a lot like Edwin, with a particular affinity for humor. The discussion was going well and, rather than finish on a high note having told a string of good jokes, Edwin, the king of comedy, made one unfortunate error.

“Oh, how ‘bout this one! I saw this one online! It went – I once dated a girl in a wheelchair... She broke up with me *‘cause I kept pushing her around!*”

The usually anxious but now much too easygoing man was convulsed with laughter, but the room, very clearly, was not. As the new hire fell back in his seat and flung his legs in the air, unable to contain his laughter, scornful eyes were directed at him, ready to burn him to crisps.

“You bloody arsehole!” one of the professors, a Briton, shouted.

“How dare you, you chickenshit!” another jumped in.

“No, it's alright,” Maclean tried to say, but was drowned out by a cacophony of rage aimed at an already regretful Edwin.

“Don't you know Prof. Maclean is in a wheelchair, you stupid, feckless, inconsiderate loudmouth! Shame on you!” yelled Prof. Gallagher.

Edwin was mortified! He did not consider for one moment why, for all this time, he had never seen Maclean up on his feet! Being the unobservant person he was, he didn't even notice the glaring photo of Maclean in a wheelchair at Lake Erie hanging on the wall!

“I am so sorry, I did not mean to say that!” Edwin tried to defend himself, “I don't know what I was thinking, I just blurted it out unthinkingly! I am so...”

“Don't worry, I understand,” Maclean tried to reassure him. “We all sometimes say things we didn't really mean.”

“I truly beg your forgiveness, I *never* tell jokes like that! I can't believe I did...”

“Please, I am not offended in the least,” Maclean, now rather uncomfortable, raised his hands, pleading with him to stop. And though the flurry of insults from his colleagues continued, drop the matter, Edwin did.

For weeks after this terrible incident, Edwin was racked with guilt. How could he make such a horrible joke in such a *polite society*, near a disabled person nonetheless! Edwin spent an awfully long period thereafter repeatedly begging Prof. Maclean to forgive him, doubtful that his apology sufficed. “I am so sorry, I really didn't mean it...” he said again and again, with slight variations, and, as the instances kept piling on, Prof. Maclean was more and more distressed.

One day, Edwin Murphy had a throbbing stomach ache and took the day off from work. The next morning, he returned to find out that Prof. Maclean was dead.

Making Edwin feel guilty was too much for *his* stomach to bear.

Nemanja Mitrović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Fourth-year student

A Journey to Forget

Redemption or death is man's only real choice in life. If one loses their life through outside means, and no intention of their own, then that decision was made for them. One can choose death for themselves or for another, yet to redeem, that is one's own decision and can affect nobody but themselves, not even those we redeem ourselves for. However, when chances of redemption seem to be out of one's reach, forgetfulness is the blessing one would cling to, as if it was a messianic prophet.

But forgetfulness is a false prophet. Forgetfulness is but a beverage or a drug that can numb the senses for a time, until you are woken up by the sun rays of the following day that can only bring death closer to your doorstep. I sought this drug, looked for it in public houses, brothels, various travels, even monasteries. However, nothing brought even the slightest relief.

I came to look for it elsewhere, hence the current voyage, which took me from the tempestuous Rhone, to the now serene lake of Geneva. The small ship I was boarding rocked gently like a cradle, yet I did not feel the comfort of a sleeping newborn. There would be no comfort for me until I reached my destination. I lost hope of redemption a long time ago. There can now only be forgetfulness, or death.

The only respite I gained during this journey came from brief interactions with my fellow travelers. There weren't many of them, and I was not in the state of mind to remember every detail about them. I only saw them happily communing with each other by day, and at night, dancing on the dock, laughing, having left all their worries to rot wherever they had come from. Envy filled every inch of my being. How could I have what they had? What must I do to gain the same prize and stand with those weightless sprites?

There was but one companion who sought to converse with me often. A short and stout thing he was, and his talkativeness meant I needed not utter any words. Once, when we were gazing at the mountain ranges around us, he started another conversation. He asked for the purpose of my travels, and I told him of my wish to lie down somewhere.

“Where would you wish to lie down?”

“Any field where the grass can bury me. I welcome no other embrace.”

And that was all. He did not ask me why I wished to be buried, nor did I want to reveal the reason to him. Forgiveness would never be granted to me.

A day later, I strolled through the green plains alone. There I found Jungfrau, the cliff from which Manfred himself only dared to embrace death. I walked through the hills, wondering whether a witch who could grant me a chance of redemption or death could exist. When I approached the waterfalls in the lower valleys of the Alps, the colours of the sun came to greet me through the watery prism. As the journey continued, I began to question myself. Was the solution really there? Would running away solve my woe?

As I stood there, the realisation came. I was no Manfred. The decision of death wasn't mine to make that day, nor would it be made for me. I stepped back from the cliff. Defiance gave way and allowed acceptance to sojourn in my soul. I lay down on a bed of grass, with a rock as my pillow, closing my eyes.

Nikola Savkov
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, MA student

Exiled

The only thing he truly hated about his side of the world was the noise. Ever louder; the sun in his eyes, also. Oh, how it blinded him. As if some living force incinerated parts of him. A spontaneous deletion by the means of nature.

Endlessly walking one way or the other. He smiled at the fresh air of the cobblestone street. His shoes were already polished. Breathes in (the fresh air), breathes deeply as is the hate of his forehead vein. It pulsates.

Breathes...Then, holds his breath. Gasps. Eyes a wide bloodshot, please more air, hate.

At least the noise did not interfere with living – it simply irritated.

The smell he did not hate – it was a part of life. Hating it meant hating the Exiles, and hating the Exiles meant hating... He looked around himself hurriedly. Someone could see. But no one could read minds? Someone might see the faint resemblance of terror in his red velvet eyes and read the truth, if not the mind.

Holding his breath, he reached the first line of sties, a gutter beside the street where lines of uniform bare-chested men swung pickaxes at rocks and hardened excrement. Destined to clean. Predestined, a baby stained in dirt is thrown down. But the noise is worse.

An elderly couple held their noses in passing. They spat at the drone workers. No point in fighting. He's to do the papers, be orderly. Not help. Not relate. Does a poodle relate to mongrels? No, it pisses in the corner where they sleep.

Around the second corner women in the gutters fed stone loaves to the diggers. Was it a dream job to share compassion? The melting words made strains of muscles adamant, and awoke rebellion in their eyes. If only they knew that they weren't alone.

The lawful noise pierced his ears as cars almost collided near the pub. If only the pleasant smell of work could replace the bursts of leniency. The others pretended the pangs came from the pickaxes, but it was all a lie. And the cars smelled too. The exhaust pipes and all (hate), a pulsating vein, eyes shut to blood tears.

In the square where in the central hovel those particularly aggressive labored under careful watch of the guards, he saw sparks of opposition arise. It had been another easy lie, because many still fight. This time, the lashes sliced the air and the crackle of ripping skin tore his ears alike.

They would fight back. Soon they would fight back. Every morning he noticed the stars of eyes of tears of the bloodthirsty for revenge. "Stop! Stop, you bastards!" he roared.

"Calm down, sir, I know this isn't a pleasant sight, but this is necessary. How else would we live in peace? The instrument of..."

He pushed aside the instrument of war. The guard stared at him blankly, and handed over the whip. Others watched. The mass of bodies watched in revolt. They awaited the final reaction.

He looked at the sun. "You fucker." He threw the suitcase at the guard. He took off his coat, shirt, watch (and the constant clicking) and jumped in. For a moment, he expected to be torn to pieces, but the Exiled were equally bemused. "You dumb brutes. Let me show you!" he said, then moved past the man lashed across his face. He grabbed the tool. "Look! Like this. Did they not teach you anything?"

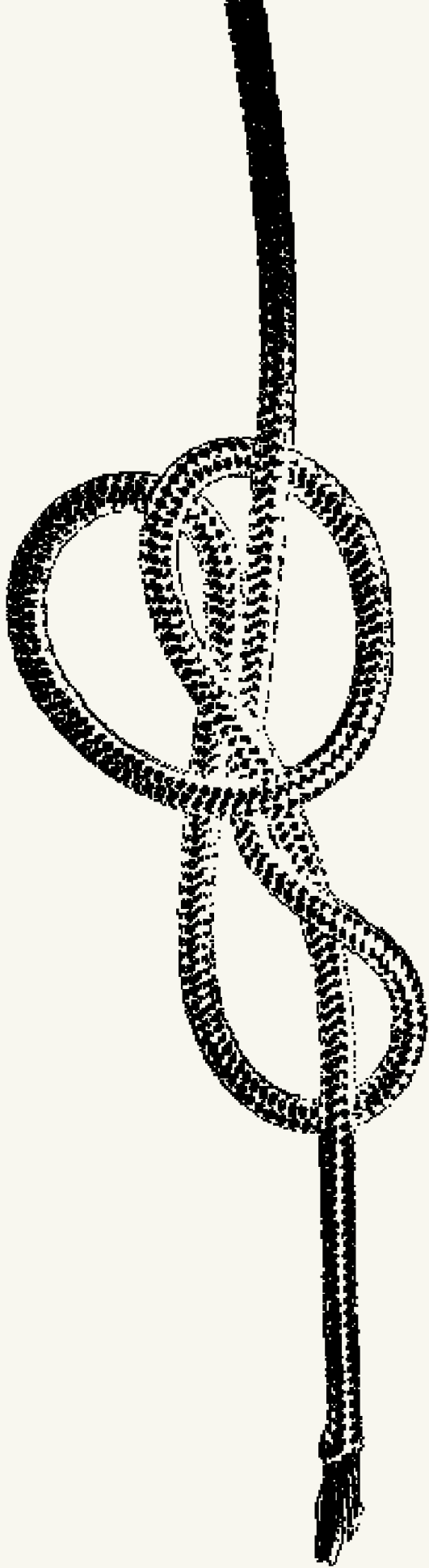
He hit the rocks, uncovering more rocks. No echoes of hypocrisy dared stop him. No side claimed him yet.

Work was hard (muscles ached), he pulsated. The noise retreated behind the cling of the metal. The sun burned his back. But work...was work. The air was fresher.

The passers-by observed him with puzzlement, and the guards considered lashing him. But the Exiled joined him. For a moment, there were smiles on their faces. But no, he did not sever their rebellion. Could a man be two sides? He would unite them, from the gutters. That was a start.

And at least he enjoyed it.

Luka Jekić,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student



Film Column

Alphaville (1965)

"I...you...love. I love you."

Sometimes, really, "reality is too complex for oral communication." What does it even consist of? I do not think that even *Alphaville's* Bible – a dictionary – would answer this question, or rather an issue.

What we can only say for sure is this: "in life, one can only know the present. No one's lived in the past, or will live in the future. "Thus, "The present is the form of all life. This quality cannot be changed by any means."

The reason why I decided to focus on the concept of love and put it at the beginning of my pondering is the fact that when we love someone truly, time stops. Yes, it is said that "time is like a circle which turns endlessly." But, look at this:

"So what is love, then? Your voice, your eyes, your hands, your lips. Our silences, our words. Light that goes, light that returns. (...) "Away, away, says hate; closer, closer, says love." (...) The heart has but one mouth. Everything by chance, all words without thought. Sentiments adrift. (...) If you smile, it enfolds me all the better. The rays of your arms, pierce the mist."

The narrator says that "time is a river which carries me along," but I would not agree with that, almost at the end of the movie we hear: "Think of the word "love", and suddenly, nothing actually falls apart."

Just because in this place crying and feeling like that are forbidden, everything that the characters feel is highlighted in a way (in a positive way, though).

To conclude, I will leave you with one line that I really loved:

"Occupied. Occupied. Occupied... Free."

Is it really so?

Tijana Majstorović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student

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1. Godard, J. (Director). (1965). Alphaville [Film]. Filmstudio; Athos Films; Chaumiane; André Michelin Productions.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1988)

Kaufman's moral universe resembles the one that Woody Allen represents quite well in all of his movies, especially in *Bullets over Broadway*. Neurotic, raw, pretty erotic. Everything that needs to be here is here. However, this movie is very long for no particular reason. At least its soundtrack is on point from the beginning till the end.

Tomas and Tereza, although very different human beings, both have something in common — they yearn for love. The only problem (not a very small one, though) is that they do not share the same point of view on life and its meaning. Tomas is able to see only the lighter side of it, he is completely controlled by the brevity of life and the fact that everything is going to fade away and disappear eventually. Tereza, on the other hand, cannot bear the lightness, the thing that Tomas cannot live without. Tereza is a woman full of wounds, scared of freedom. Scared of loneliness.

That is how they complement each other: he wants love — she gives him what he wants, she does not want to be alone — he puts his hands around her body and makes her feel safe, at least temporarily... At such moments, nothing else really matters — his love affairs, unfaithfulness, her longing for being the only one to him. The moment of happiness, even the only one, is really worth putting everything aside. They cannot be with each other, but they cannot do without one another either. What can they do? They can pretend that everything is fine, like everybody else does, because "life isn't a walk on a sunny meadow, and life isn't a walk on a rose garden."

Tijana Majstorović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student

References:

1. Kaufman, P. (Director). (1988). *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* [Film]. The Saul Zaentz Company.

Bed and Board (1970)

"I want absolute red..."

Imagine an artist whose views on life are completely extreme-oriented. An artist who is not satisfied with partiality in any aspect of his life. The artist who wants it all. The artist, a young man who wants to be old just to be able to function. The artists who gets only five hours of sleep in order to seize every moment and achieve perfection in a selfish manner.

"The truth is that life is disgusting."

Now, imagine another type of artist, whose views on life are based on giving. An artist who is tender, a bit inexperienced for this filthy world; the artist who gets hurt just by being alive. The artist, a woman who is not like the aforementioned person, who hates everything that is vague, elusive, ambiguous...

And finally, imagine them together. However, if you decide to see this movie you do not have to imagine that much because you are given the full picture of their relationship, from the particular to the general. A couple that seems to be in a platonic relationship rather than in a marriage, but that illusion gets dispelled by jealousy and parenthood. Only after literally breaking the wall with bare hands and separating would they be able to function. "Now, they are really in love!"

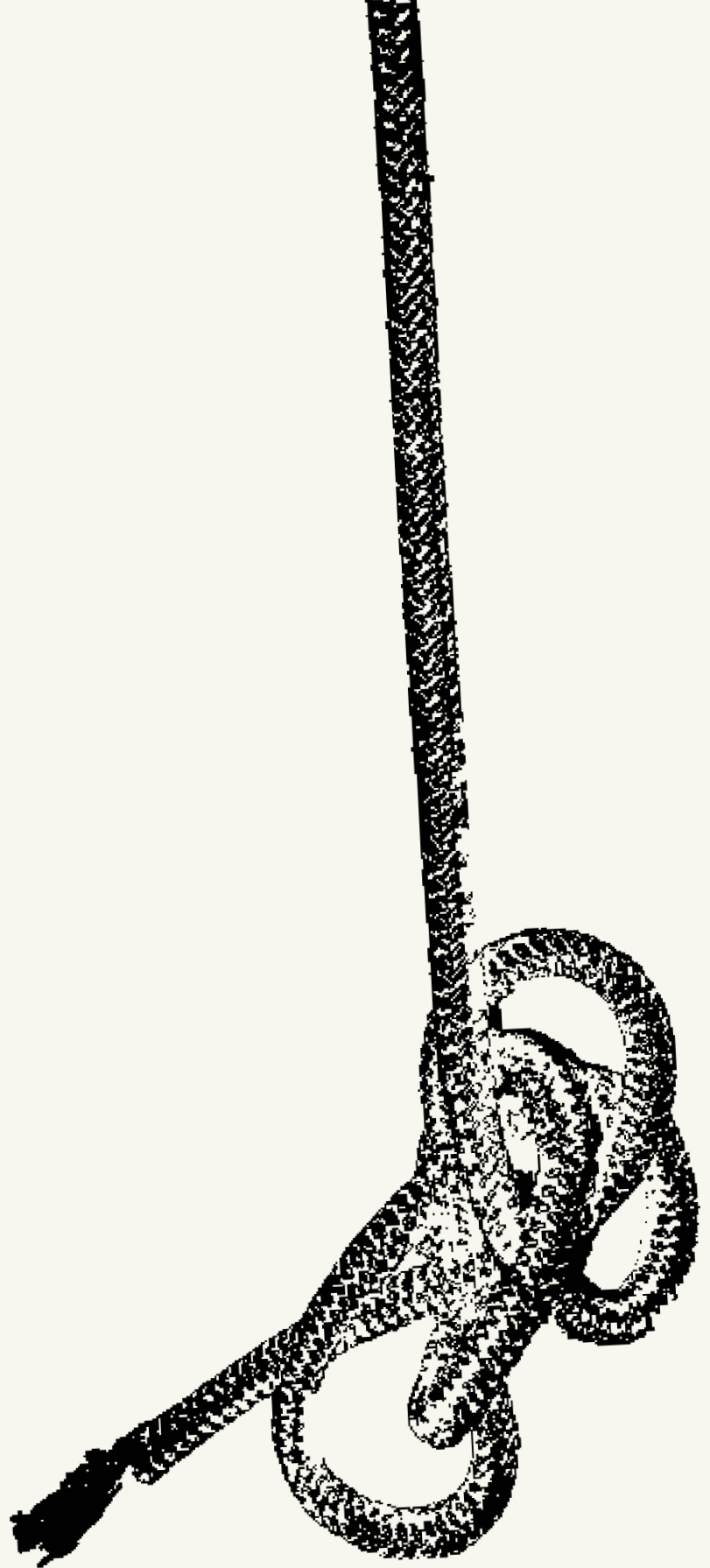
Another thing that I would like to mention is the directing style presented by Truffaut in this movie. Here and there, scenes are replaced with new ones by taking the light away completely, which really adds to the atmosphere and the story itself if you come to think about it.

Because of all these things, I can completely agree with Antoine when he says, "the ends of a film... I hate all endings!"

Tijana Majstorović
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student

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1. Truffaut, F. (Director). (1970). Bed and Board [Film]. Les Films du Carrosse; Valoria Films; Fida Cinematografica



ESSAYS

Loan Words and Lone Words

My sixteen-year-old sister Barbara is a Gen Zer through and through. Hearing her speak is what I imagine immigrants in anglophone countries go through as they navigate the linguistic schism between their mother tongue and the foreign language of their new surroundings. Much like them, Barbara uses a hybrid form of her native tongue, i.e. Serbian punctured with nativized English phrases.

What is strange, though, is that unlike immigrant minorities, my sister's generation has developed this lingo in the comfort of their own country. They were not pressurized into adopting a foreign language for the sake of social acceptance. Nobody mocked them for speaking Serbian in Serbia. And yet they readily resort to an English word whenever it is easier than racking their brains in search of an appropriate Serbian equivalent.

Over the past fifty years, English has grown into an international linguistic giant. Its effect is being felt across the entire globe, and in certain places on an even larger scale than in Serbia. Many people justify the all-out adoption of English as a sensible move towards political and economic prosperity. Lee Kuan Yew, the first prime minister of Singapore, is among them – when he substituted English for Chinese as Singapore's official language, he reasoned that English, being the dominant language of diplomacy, trade and science, would give his country the edge in terms of business development and technological literacy. And he was right: since gaining independence from Britain in 1965, Singapore has transformed into an economic leviathan.

Others argue that sacrificing culture on the altar of economy is unpardonable. They see language as the sturdiest pillar of culture, and rightfully so – people have associated their identity with the language they speak since the beginning of time. Some of the most famous multilingual writers are (or were) known to pride themselves on their mother tongues regardless of all the fame and success they have achieved writing in English. Novelist Joseph Conrad, for instance, was perhaps slightly harsh in this respect, but journalist Jacob Mikanowski sympathizes with his views. Mikanowski, a Polish native who faced discrimination in America on account of his thick Slavic accent, admits to being “a lifelong English sceptic.”

When Conrad was asked why he did not write in his native Polish, he replied that he cherished his Polish culture too much to let his “worthless twaddle” infiltrate it; English, however, would suffice.

To think of Conrad’s protectiveness of his mother tongue is to be reminded of how quick we are to dismiss ours. Another incident involving my sister springs to mind: we were watching Jimmy O. Yang, a Chinese-American standup comedian, and she thought his impersonation of his immigrant father’s broken English was downright hilarious. I said nothing at the time – granted, it was a marvelous sketch – but later the irony dawned on me. If that man’s English is broken, what is her Serbian? Surely not intact.

I soon realized there are other people who do not particularly favor this expression. Novelist Amy Tan has always had a distaste for describing her Chinese mother’s English as broken, as if it were something fractured that should be fixed. “Limited” does not sound any better either, as it implies a person with both limited speaking skills and a limited worldview.

Does that mean that by voluntarily resorting to English, my sister’s generation is limiting their own worldview? Whenever I use a slightly “literary” term and Barbara asks me what it means, I cannot help thinking of this mass lexical import of English as a devastating loss. What is going to happen as younger and younger people steer away from their mother tongue? Will it come to a point where the greatest classics of Serbian literature are practically indecipherable to them?

Barbara does not see it that way. She has a new favorite phrase: loan word.

“Why does it matter? It’s just a loan word,” she says.

We might need to coin another term for all the forsaken domestic expressions we are leaving behind. I think lone words will do.

Ana Efendić,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Third-year student

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Tan, A. (2010). Mother Tongue. In M. Ford & J. Ford (Eds.), *Dreams and inward journeys: A rhetoric and reader for writers* (7th ed., pp. 34-44). Pearson.

The Guardian. (2018, July 27). English language's global dominance. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/27/english-language-global-dominance>

The drawbacks of AI outweigh the advantages. Discuss.

For:

- Will cause unemployment
- Makes people lazier

Against:

- It can help speed up the process of getting something done
- Has more vocabulary than our brains do

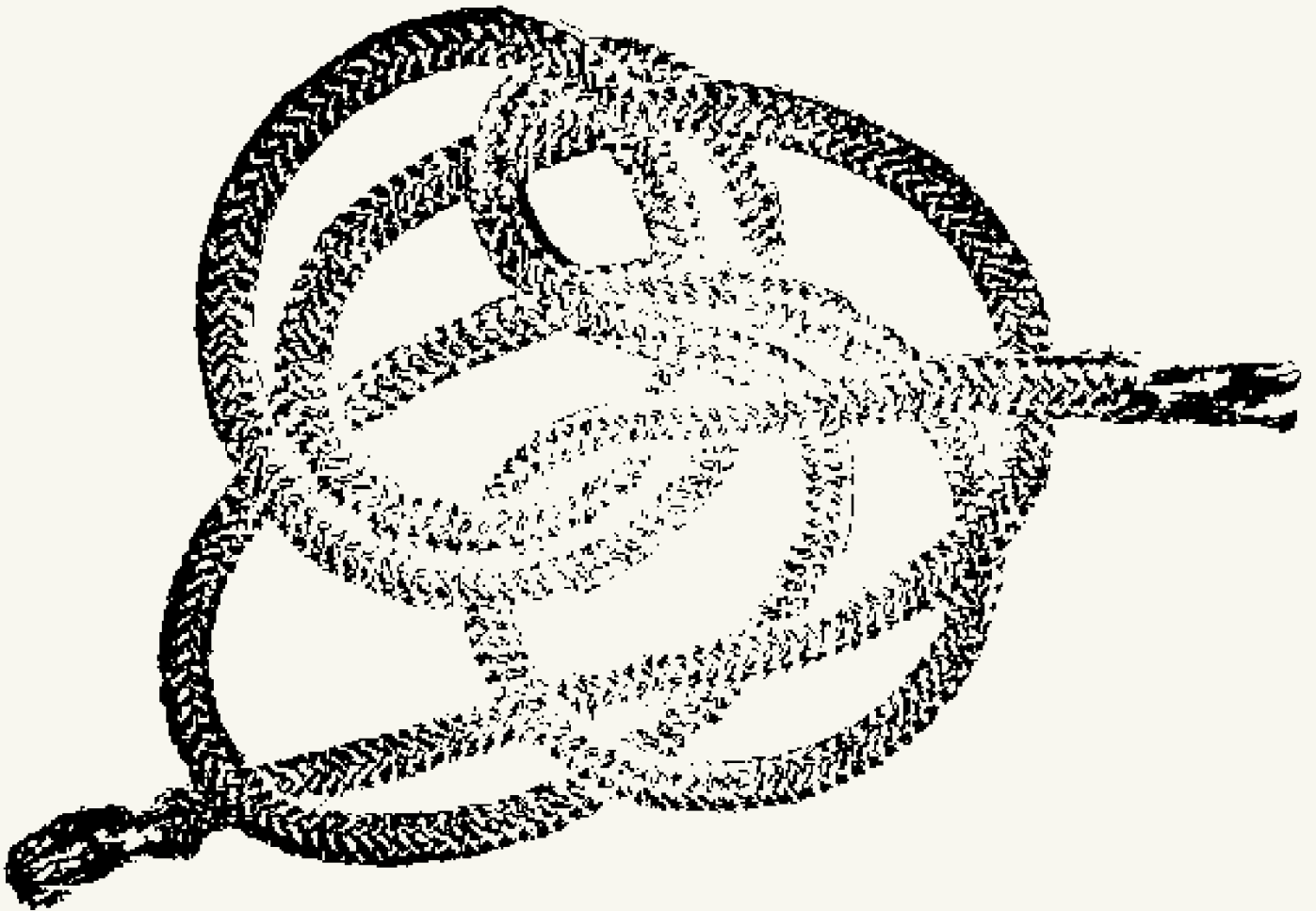
Usually, when people are introduced to something new and unfamiliar, they are oftentimes opposed to the idea of it becoming a standard practice. The newfound popularity of Artificial Intelligence is no exception to this. In my opinion, people should really open their minds, and give AI a try.

Some would be inclined to think that the disadvantages of using chatbots prevail over the advantages. For example, AI is believed to be inevitably leading to unemployment and the extinction of numerous carriers. In addition to that, one of the most important drawbacks of AI is that it can lead to laziness, as many could rely solely on chatbots to do all the work, instead of putting in the work themselves.

Many people worldwide use AI every day, and would without a second thought say that it does only good for us. Firstly, sites such as ChatGPT can help us speed up our work progress, allowing us to get much more done in our spare time. Furthermore, as it has been proven time and time again, chatbots use a far larger variety of vocabulary and complex structures.

In conclusion, there is much evidence which showcases that AI is far more useful to us, than it is harmful. It makes us more efficient in doing our work, as well as helps us find more appropriate forms to use in our assignments. Although many are still reluctant to put chatbots to use, I think that it can greatly improve the quality of the projects we are assigned to do.

Ema Miletić,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, First-year student



FLASH FICTION

Betrayal From Within

My soliloquy is an obloquy. Had they come to send me away, perhaps, we all would've brought light on the radix of my infinite seclusion.

I drift through life like a ghost with something that ought to resemble a human body, but with all abnormalities included; like an ill-fated soldier doomed to meet the most abysmal demise on a battlefield. I heed all the thoughtless looks from others, they take no notice of my definite woes.

I have always been a woman of faith. Could it be that my treacherous mind had committed an act of treason behind my back?

Jovana Cvetković,
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, First-year student



So, when I walk at night, I always notice them staring at me. The dull faces of those who can see, but stay silent – claiming that they were sculpted and their mouths made of stone which cannot be opened. Shouldn't then their gray eyes be blind as well.

But we exchange glances. They stare at me as if I was their only amusement.

When I was little, I believed that the marble lady above my window was guarding me from the ravagers in the dark. Now I'm sure she wouldn't lift a finger to save me.

But such are the statues. If only I knew who that skilled sculptor was, that had covered every corner of the city with his creations, and to this day continues to do so.

Luka Jekić
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Cover painting:

Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, Caspar David Friedrich (1818)