the Aquila

a literary and art journal

Spring 2015
the Aquila
a literary and art journal

Niagara University
Niagara University, NY

the Aquila was first published in 1937 by students of Niagara University. This volume was a collaborative project in ENG 260, Methods of Literary Study. Judgments of submissions were based on literary and artistic merit with the intent of showcasing an array of talent in the NU community. The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and artists. All efforts were made to ensure accuracy of submitted material. We apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions. Permission to republish must be obtained from the writers and artists who appear.

Printed by Niagara University Document Center, Spring 2015.

Cover: Niños de Cusco Alison Zimmerman photograph, b&w
managing editor
Andrea Scibetta

literature judges
Angela DiGregorio
Cara Mergner
Bobby Metzler
Becca Saggiomo

literary staff
Madison Boehler
Matthew Brause
Amber Breyer
Kate Dickie
Elizabeth Lepertine
Maeve Losito
Nadeen Moustafa
Kristin Rivers
Seenah Salleh
Florencia Yuvero
Maegan Zeller

art judges
Hailey Glover
Jake Pandolfi

publicity
Chelsy Karcher
Jamie Sherburne
Russell Wilson

faculty advisor
Jamie Carr
poetry

Wallflower Cara Mergner . . . 11
Restlessness of the Heart James Mackey . . . 12
Silent Prayer Will Rogers . . . 17
Forgotten Jacob D. Strozyk . . . 18
I Can Only See Grey Christina Scott . . . 20
from Her: A collection of poetry Jake Pandolfi . . . 22
Ode to Virginia Christina Scott . . . 31
Selected Poems Angela Digregorio . . . 37
Bridges translated by Florencia Silvia Yuvero . . . 38

fiction

He Awoke Brian Debottis . . . 26
Ostpreussen, 1945 Kristin Rivers . . . 32

non-fiction

Why I Write Angela Digregorio . . . 6
The JFK Assassination: 50 Years On Daniel Schwartz . . . 8

photography

Niños de Cusco Alison Zimmerman . . . cover
Phone Booth Philip Collington . . . 10
Trekking to a Timeless Empire - Inca Trail Peru
Alison Zimmerman . . . 20
Winter Mystery Jessica Tobin . . . 22
Dream Catcher in The Falls Jacqueline DellaNeve . . . 25
A California Morning Giorgio Cole . . . 32

art

Pope John Paul II Giorgio Cole . . . 16
Wilde Alexis Lecceadone . . . 19
Little Lion Men Patrick Harden . . . 23
Reach Taylor Wilkesmore . . . 24
I write because I feel that words on a page are an easier map to follow compared to dripping blood that was set free from the imperfections I have tried to rid. Instead of destroying the barriers of my skin, I break down the walls of my mind. Instead of letting the crimson flow, I unleash the ink from my pen.

I write when I am angry. Because instead of letting all of my passion boil away in the lava of my blood, I capture it all in words and spew it out, to remember the moment that was powerful enough to get me to that point of infuriated rage.

I write when I am joyful. Because, whoever said “a picture is worth a thousand words” got it totally backwards. Giving you even one entry from my daily journal would capture a thousand vivid images that would flash before your eyes systematically, all without an actual photo.

I write because I am diagnosed. Because I believe that letting out words is a more effective treatment than taking in pills.

I write because I am passionate about you. I want you to see that every emotion you feel is a treasure and you have to treat it like one. I write to tell you that you aren’t stuck, you’re still going, so make something of it. I write to explain to you that you’re worth more than that one thing that made you cry for two weeks because of how terrible it made you feel. I write because I really care about you. Take these words as my arms wrapped tightly around you. I am telling you that you are okay.

This is why I write. Because I just have to tell people the things that I so desperately needed to be told, but never was. Like, your panic attack is not a close encounter with death, it’s just a little rapid heart beat and some shaky limbs for a short time. It will end, so hold tight and find something beautiful to acknowledge amidst your chaos.

I write to get to the end of a sentence. How will this conclude? You would think that as the writer, I would know.
But I’m just as surprised as you.

I write because I am a romantic. And this relationship is of intimate affairs. I have a blind date with a person I’ll never meet. I’m opening up to you, like I have known you for years. I trust you with the treasure that lies in my chest cavity, where my beating heart pulsates.

I write to find parallels. Because sometimes the relationship between you and the world around you is so disturbingly intertwined, almost even identical, that you have to be convinced of Whitman’s proposal; we are all a part of this greater Whole. I write for pathetic fallacy. Because it is not just a fictional element. Because when you’re alone in your room with tears running down your cheeks, the pavement on your street is forming puddles.

I write because I cannot speak. I cannot bring myself to add more air pollution to a world that is dying of lung cancer.

I write for these reasons. I write for so many more. Sometimes, answering questions like ‘why do I write?’ seems like they can be answered so easily. Which is another reason. I write about how things may seem. I write about how things might appear. I write about how things turn out to actually be.
I.

I was seven years old, attending Charles A. Lindbergh Elementary School in Kenmore. On a sunny afternoon in late November we were suddenly dismissed from school. No one told us why. Many of us walked to and from school in those days, myself included, and so I began the trek home.

Bob, our Kaufman’s Bakery delivery truck driver, was just sitting there in his truck parked in front of the Weller’s house two doors down from the school.

I asked if he knew why we were dismissed early. He told me President Kennedy had been assassinated. I asked what that meant. The news sank in hard. Although my Dad was a Republican, as were most of our neighbors in Kenmore in those days, I liked President Kennedy. I liked the space program. I favored civil rights.

Bob could probably tell I was shaken by the news. Bakery truck employees weren’t supposed to take on passengers. There was only one seat in the truck, but Bob, a friend of my Uncle Jack’s, who also drove for Kaufman’s, said his next stop was our house, and as this was “a unique circumstance,” he offered me a ride home. I sat down on the first step of the truck, head bowed, while the news continued to sink in. We drove on in silence until about halfway home when I demonstrated my vast knowledge of history and political science by asking, “Does this mean Nixon will be president now?”

Bob took a deep breath and said, “Lyndon. Baines. Johnson.” I could tell by the way he said it he wasn’t pleased.

As we pulled up to our house, I thanked Bob for the ride, and then ran up the driveway to tell Mom the news before Bob could unload whatever baked goods he’d sell us. As I entered the living room, I saw Mom, Grandma, and Cousin Lynn seated on the couch watching television. All three were crying. It was one of the very few times I saw my Mom cry.
II.

The film critic Stanley Kaufman used to tell the story of how when he was a kid growing up in New Jersey, he looked up and saw the Hindenburg and the swastikas on its gondola. He said, “I wish it would blow up,” and a few minutes later it did.

As suspect Lee Harvey Oswald was lead through the police garage, I was seated on the carpet between the television and the furniture. I turned away from the TV and back toward the grownups and said, “Somebody’s gonna’ shoot him.”

“No,” answered the grown-ups. “It couldn’t happen with all those policemen...”

BANG.

III.

The day of the funeral we’d finally gotten tired of watching TV. My brother Bob and I went to the backyard and sat on the hood of our Mom’s 1956 Oldsmobile. It was sunny but cold, and there had been a light covering of snow or frost on the car. We drew in it with our fingers for a while, and then sat in silence for a long time.

IV.

In 1985, I flew down to Dallas to visit my cousin, Dr. Howard Meyers. Now deceased, he was a guidance counselor who taught counseling and semiotics at the University of Texas – Arlington.

The Texas Schoolbook Depository was Dallas’ biggest tourist attraction. In Buffalo, the spot where McKinley was shot is not a tourist attraction.

We stood close to the window where Oswald allegedly shot JFK. We looked down the street to the spot where Kennedy was shot. We looked at each other and simultaneously said, “No (expletive) way.”
Phone Booth Philip Collington photograph, b&w
Wallflower

by Cara Mergner

Spring chases Winter away
And we flowers begin to sprout,
but I don't grow as fast as the tulips stretching out

their soft beautiful petals.
Growing, living, breathing, side by side.
They push me,
push me
far away
until I hit the outskirts
of the garden
and my vines climb up the wall.
I stand and watch them
day by day.

Just a lonely wallflower.
Set before my youthful eyes in the worldly desert were three gifts of temporary pleasures. I drank the finest wines of Gaul and tasted select foods. Yet my heart was not yet satisfied. I was decorated in the treasures of the East and flirted with the promises of monetary pleasure. I longed to see the cities of the world and got my fill. Yet my heart was not yet satisfied and grew weak. My weakness pursued me to abandon the straight and narrow path of the One who knitted fragile me in my mother’s womb, the One who knew the very depths of my soul, Yet my heart was not yet satisfied and became restless. For these pleasures were not gifts but mirages, promising nothing but hedonism of the Golden Calf. Like Job I wrestled with the One who diligently scattered the stars. Yet unlike him perseverance failed me, and while traversing on the broad path I was bitten by a snake. A snake with seven heads and ten horns bit me not with venom but with vice. I cried the prayer of Ambrosian student for healing and pleaded for an end to the maddening restlessness, “Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.” My eyes then beheld Stella Maris, She who is clothed with the sun and has the moon as her footstool illuminated the darkness of my broad path. She calmed the roaring tempest of my sinking heart with maternal urgings to board upon the barque of the rock. She clemently exhorted, "Ite ad Petrus! Ite ad Petrus! Will you not listen to the woman whose presence made the sun dance in Portugal?"
Or whose very word commanded a spring of healing to arise from the earth?
Go then!
Turn thy eyes to the city along the Tiber
and venture to the seven hills for lasting health!
Go to the appointed prince's territory.
And turn not thy head back to gaze upon the Babylon
you wish not to return to.
Or else you too will have your heart transform into flavorless salt.”
With filial gratitude and great jubilation,
I obediently walked along the Appian Way for the Pax Romana.
My heart's eyes turned only to the city where the conquered obelisk of Sixtus triumphantly roars and stands.
Just as the ailing followers of the liberating patriarch who split the seas looked upon the bronze serpent for healing,
so too my heart looked upon that city for healing.
Not upon a bronze serpent did I gaze but upon the bronze prince whose foot is now worn out.
For only in this prince's territory would my restless heart find solace
and my pleas silenced.
The same prince who scorned the rooster's song
and was turned on his head.
The same prince whose bones now requiescat in pace in this valley because of his filial reply to "Quo vadis?"
The same prince who made the thrice denial,
yet now wears a three-tiered tiara.
The valley where his bones rest,
so too will my heart rest.
The valley where the Angelic Salutation is thrice proclaimed weekly to the gracious Rosa mystica.
I heard the salutation
and was strengthened by her.
For it is she who guided me to my paternal homeland where Latin is the native tongue and the elevated cathedra sits,
forever replacing the throne of Caesar.
It is this precious Rosa with seven thorns,
who replaced Juno in this predestined city,
because of her contemplation of Simeon in the temple. So I too was presented in the sacred temple of this sacred city by her.
This sacred city whose founder suckled off wolf's milk now suckles off the nipple of sacrifice and drinks the oozing milk of martyrs' blood from the ring. So too was I nursed by her.
Her maternal milk of grace divine gave me strength to journey to this city.
This city so strong and mighty, neither Atilla, Napoleon, Nero, nor Henry, could destroy in their wicked wrath.
This fortified city praised by the Dominican woman from Sienna.
This everlasting city which does not lack like Avignon, Westminster, and Canterbury.
Where the prophecies of Irish Malachy ring true through the fisherman's successors.
Where the *Te Deum* is sung after each completed election. Where S.P.Q.R. was converted to A.M.D.G. and the *aquila* to the cross.
Though my life may be as the epitaph of him who lauded the nightingale at least my soul was cleansed by the dove in the calming waters of the Jordan through its gentle flow from the *caput mundi*.
For it is in this city where my heart has found solace and restlessness vanquished.
For only here in this city can I drink from the seven ever flowing streams of this benevolent valley.
For only here can I eternally maintain peace in the bounty of this eternal city.
For only here in this valley, is my thirst quenched by the wine which issues forth from the pierced side.
I drink from that side just as a deer drinks from running streams.
For only here is my hunger satisfied by the bread which the seraphic father gazes upon.
The bread which opens the mouth of the angelic doctor.
It is the bread of Him who is both Shepherd and Lamb,
Whose limbs were not crushed,
nor tunic ripped.
Like the rose of Liseux,
like the African son of Monica,
like them I have found my joy here.
Here am I anointed with the oil of peace.
Here is where my chalice overflows with tranquility.
On the path where the gate is wide I cried,
“Miserére mei, Deus, secúndum magnum misericórdiam tuam.”
You have been overly generous to him whom You knew before the stars
though he abandoned Your path.
Mirages You set not before me,
but fulfilling love.
You sought me out leaving behind the rest.
Now my heart is stilled and rests in you.
And only this do I wish for all the days of my life.
Pope John Paul II  Giorgio Cole 18"x20" watercolor, b&w
Learned SILENT and LISTEN have the same letters. And the minute I did a light went off in my head. It went off. The opposite of on.

There was a time when words only had one meaning, before folks got so technical and everyone criticized you because you weren't using it correctly or it wasn't in the right spot.

Can't blame them we all have evolved. Together for the sake of...let's say echoes. Aren't they amazing.

It's the voice or sound of something that originates and then duplicates instantly. But an echo needs something in order to even echo. It needs space. Not keen on what kind I just know screaming in the car won't create an echo.

People screamed centuries ago that suffered, still listening to the echo, or have you become silent.

Maybe your HEART is no good on this EARTH.

HELP
Forgotten
by Jacob D. Strozyk

I've forgotten what it feels like
To hold you in tender embrace.
To cradle your chin in my hands
And adore your smiling face.

I've forgotten what it looks like
To gaze into your eyes.
To know that my world is safe
And free of all hurtful lies.

I've forgotten what it sounds like
To hear you speak my name.
To hear your soft voice sound
The words, but never sound the same.

I've forgotten what it sounds like
To hear you call me yours.
To have me as your true love.
This and nothing more.

I've forgotten what it feels like
To have your body against mine.
To have our arms around each other,
Locked together like unbreakable vines.

I've forgotten what it tastes like
To kiss your softened lips.
To kiss the lips that gave me hope
And stole my heart that ripped.

I've forgotten what it feels like
To have my true love's heart.
To give myself to a beauty
That I once called sweetheart.

I've been forgotten by my love,
This I know for sure.
But I'll never forget
My Dearest Little Sweetheart.
For my love forever endures.

"I'll never forget you My Sweet."
I Can Only See Grey
by Christina Scott

I can only see grey,
Cold stones, bare trees,
Bland skies, hard ground
All around me is grey, even me,
I walk on, knowing of nothing else,
I do not realize I am grey,
      Until I see color,
Beyond the archway is color,
    Green grass, full trees,
  Vibrant flowers, yellow sun,
Beyond me is a world of color,
      I walk faster, wanting more,
My grey prison doesn’t stop me,
    They watch silently, no words,
I realize my grey world is dead,
I wasn’t dead, I refused to be dead,
Climbing, racing on and on,
I feel color, I taste color,
I feel the sun’s warmth, the gentle breeze,
I feel the grass below, I feel serene,
I feel the colors, I feel alive,
The grey is gone, no longer there,
It will happen to all, even the best of us,
But we must know that beyond the grey,
We will remember how to be colorful,
How to feel the colors, to be alive,
It is not terrible to see grey,
We all have those days and nights,
But we all go through the archway,
We all will find a day when,
We can only see color.
from Her: A collection of poetry
by Jake Pandolfi

#2
My dreams do haunt me so
Utopian ideas painted in gold
The images scorched into my bow
My heart, my ship never growing old
You dance upon the sodden deck
Soaked with my tears, so cold
Your lips, so red, can save this wreck
Ever so luscious and bold
Leagues away
The thought of you
Yet calls my name
Like a bird song through the night
Piercing the silence of the heavy dark
Warming this cold soul.

Winter
Mystery
Jessica Tobin
photograph
Little Lion Men  Patrick Harden
30"x23" colored pencil and mineral spirits over watercolor wash
The black to white color represents the change of sadness and darkness to happiness and light. The stairs that wrap around the arm is the path in life that will lead to the end goal. As the arm becomes a hand, the hand forms into the sign of "O.K." This is to show that everything will be "O.K." in the end. Obstacles must be overcome to reach the end goal.
Dream Catcher in The Falls

Jacqueline DellaNeve photograph
Everyone has had that sort of dream where they fall - you’re never quite sure why you’re falling, or how you happened upon such an unfortunate misadventure - but everyone has experienced it. The falling dream. Almost as common as the naked-in-public dream.

As the movie *Inception* so accurately pointed out, you’re never quite sure how you get to a dream. The beginning is always hazy, but the middle- the “conscious” part- seems to make so much sense. Why would you question why you’re on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic with Lady Gaga and Great Aunt Vera in the year 1856, being pursued by President Obama? All you know is that you have to reach Dublin before the Russians find you. Logical.

This evening’s surreality was a bit more straightforward - initially. Driving the trusty 2007 Saturn Vue down the road to school on a perfectly gloomy day in September, gym bag in the back seat for practice later. But as Adam followed his daily route over the gorge, he had the urge to stop on the side of the bridge and take in the sights - first period is just homeroom anyway. He pulled Ol’ Reliable over, and walked over to the railing and observed - and what a sight it was. Shrouded in clouds and a light morning rain, it was the most beautiful, melancholy thing he had ever seen. Even though he took this route every day, he was positively mesmerized by the sight. He looked down into the ravine at the river below. Something glinted in the water, like a coin. A really big coin. The strangest sensation washed over Adam, almost like he knew that that coin was everything he had ever wanted in his life, but never knew it - the coin was an answer to all of life’s questions. There was a momentary, yet firm certainty in that realization.

Next thing he knew, he was falling toward his coin. Usually, people wake up as soon as that sinking feeling hits. Not this time.

Adam felt the panic and immediate regret of someone who just jumped off of a damn bridge.

But then, he awoke. He looked around. His room was
normal. Laundry on the floor, half a cup of water on the nightstand, and it was 6:30am. Time to get up for breakfast. He knew the normal thing to do would be to walk downstairs and express to his mother (she was always up first, without fail) that he “had the weirdest dream.” Today though, that wasn’t true, strictly speaking. It was actually a rather bland ol’ falling dream - chances are she had one too. He threw on his sweatpants and lumbered down the stairs to claim his portion of the morning coffee.

Except today there was something different about the house - it was quiet. Completely quiet at 6:30am on a Tuesday? Unheard of. Time to investigate.

Everything seemed right, the coffee was made, and there was even a half eaten bowl of steaming oatmeal sitting on the counter, except there was not a soul to be found. The TV was on, the dog’s food bowl was full, and the house looked like everyone had dashed out right before he made it to the kitchen.

At this point, Adam considered that he may still be dreaming, so he ran through the typical diagnostic test - slapped himself on the cheek and pinched his forearm, but nothing. Definite and irrefutable consciousness.

He dialed his mother’s number and waited. The phone buzzed from her purse. He emptied the coffee pot into his travel mug and slipped on a folded hoodie from the table (Monday is laundry day), and grabbed his car keys and book bag and resolved that his mother must have been called into work early. But first, he turned off the coffee maker because at eighteen years old, he knows that an unattended heating element is a fire hazard - a point that his mother frequently articulated.

He walked into the garage, and noticed immediately that his mother’s car was still there. She must be in the house, why hadn’t he checked the basement?

As he stepped back into the kitchen, he nearly had a heart attack- someone was there. She had black hair, and wore a dark green dress. She was sitting at the kitchen table facing away from him smoking a cigarette that didn’t smell at all.

“Who are you? Where the hell is my mom?”

“There’s such disorientating familiarity in death, isn’t
there?” She responded.

“What? Look lady, I don’t know who you are but -”

“You’re dead, Adam.”

A long silence followed. The coffee hadn’t quite kicked in yet, and he stood absolutely floored by the peculiarity of his morning so far. He was one for routines, and you never screw with a man’s routine.

“Did you just say that I’m -”

“Dead, yes.” She turned around to look at him. In her face, he saw everyone that he had ever known and everyone that he had never met looking back at him with eyes of every color. She spoke every language that he had never heard, yet he understood.

“You jumped off of a bridge on the way to school.”

He pinched his forearm again, but something in her omniscient gaze let him know that this was no dream. He walked over and sat next to her at the table. He knew that he should feel a panic, a sadness, grief for himself. But nothing. On the table, there was a newspaper dated September 27th, 2010. The front page showed the headline: “Local Boy Takes Own Life - Community Mourns.”

Sure enough, there was a picture of Ol’ Reliable parked in the same spot from his falling dream- except there were police officers, a coroner, and his mother’s car parked behind his. Still, he felt nothing.

He looked over at the TV and watched the recount of his death on the local news.

“Local soccer prodigy, Adam Weiss, tragically took his own life yesterday morning here at the Princeton Bridge. Police arrived on the scene to investigate an abandoned car-”

The reporter’s voice trailed off as Adam searched every fiber of his being for the reaction that you’d expect from someone watching their own death be retold before them. The news cut to an interview.

“Hey, that’s -” He cut himself off and watched his girlfriend sobbing into the shoulder of his best friend.

“Adam was always so happy, literally the…” His voice staggered. “Literally the nicest, most genuine guy I had ever known. None of this makes sense, I just can’t understand
why he’d do this to himself, to his loved ones.”

The report cut to the quintessential camera shot of a candle-lit vigil. He turned off the TV and turned back to his guest.

“So where am I now then? What is this place?”

She ignored him, and took a drag of her cigarette. “Death is curious; we speculate about its meaning and inevitability all our lives. It is the definition of final, of ultimate - but all that happens is that you close Pandora’s Box on yourself. Emotion, senses, all gone. I bet you don’t feel a single thing- not a pang of remorse. Not tired, sad, or even hungry. Welcome to the other side, my old friend. Welcome to your shiny coin at the bottom of the river.”

Suddenly very aware and accepting of his situation, Adam reflected. He was flooded with sudden and potent memory of the bridge that morning.

On the surface, he always portrayed the facade of a happy suburban white kid who slacked in high school. His grades were bad. He had no idea what he wanted to do for a career, what college to waste his money at. He felt as though people didn’t actually like him, and had little faith in humanity at all. He had a bleak outlook on the cruel world and always considered himself a realist, a different sort of cynic. Instead of smiling for another Facebook picture, instead of feigning happiness for those that he loved, he pulled over to the side of that bridge, took in one last glimpse of our lonely little planet, and did everyone the favor of ending the charade. It seemed to make so much sense at the time, but now he was here- in this familiar, lonely, empty purgatory- wondering why he did it at all.

Smoke billowed off of the end of her never ending cigarette, and she continued with her morbid philosophy. “All that happens in death is that we are cut off. All throughout life, you learn through interaction, cooperation- but here! Here is the opposite of that. Life is community, death is singularity.”

Adam nodded, he understood perfectly well. He looked down at the front page and asked: “So this is it then? This is the answer to man’s oldest question - ” But he looked up and she was gone. He looked around, nothing had changed- steam was rising off of the oatmeal, and the clock read
6:30am. Suddenly very aware of the permanence of his situation (and very indifferent about it), Adam went back upstairs to his room and laid down to contemplate the oblivion that he was now confronted with. Before long, he drifted off to what the living call sleep.

And he awoke. He looked around. His room was normal. Laundry on the floor, half a cup of water on the nightstand, and it was 6:30am. Time to get up for breakfast. He knew the normal thing to do would be to walk downstairs and express to his mother (she was always up first, without fail) that he “had the weirdest dream.” Today though, that wasn’t true, strictly speaking. It was actually a rather bland ol’ falling dream - chances are she had one too. He threw on his sweatpants and lumbered down the stairs to claim his portion of the morning coffee.
Ode to Virginia
by Christina Scott

To the most beloved Virginia,
Darling little Sissy,
So young and fresh, Beloved by him,
He was the shadow that we feared in our nightmares,
She was the light that we hoped to see at our end,
This light goes by so many names than her own,
This muse that the Heavens have named Lenore,
A muse that loved with a love that was more than love,
She was all he had, she was his cure, his salvation,
She lived with no other thought than to love and be loved by he,
She played leapfrog, she danced in the air, she sang for him,
Until the Red Death came to bore her away from him,
The pain came in a form of a Raven crying, “Nevermore!”
Nevermore will the joyous days live on, Eleonora shall die,
Happiness shall come again, love will arise, Nevermore,
Even lay dying she was his muse, his one and only,
Upon her epitaph, we must ask dear sister what is inscribed,
And she shall reply, “Ulalaume, Ulalaume.”
With one last breath, with one last hurrah,
He created a last devoted ode for her,
Telling of how he found inspiration in the bright eyes,
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee,
The Raven turned to a dove, and soon
he was able to rest with her,
In the tomb by the sounding sea.
East Prussia, Germany. February, 1945:

A loud knock on the door woke me up from my dream. In my half asleep state I heard my mother get up from the bed next to mine and walk through our small two room house to answer the door. I tried to make out the time on the small clock next to my bed, but it was too dark to make out the hands. All I knew was that it was late.

I strained my ears so I could hear who was at the door, but it wasn’t necessary. I heard my aunt’s voice practically shouting to my mother.

“They’re coming. Get Evelyn, it’s time to leave!”
“How close are they?” My mother asked, her voice breathless and scared.

“The edge of town. We have to leave. Now.”

I jumped out of bed at my aunt’s words and grabbed my doll. She was a Christmas gift from my daddy and was
really special because people didn’t get Christmas gifts during the war. She went everywhere with me. My mother burst into the room and grabbed my small bag that I could carry on my back. Why is she packing a bag? I wondered. I watched as she threw in my warmest sweater and the pair of thick wool socks she had made for me.

“Come on Evelyn, we have to go.” My mother hurried me into my jacket and grabbed some of her jewelry and clothes. The last thing she grabbed was the small picture of my dad she always kept on top of the dresser and then we were rushing out of the house.

I automatically turned for the backyard and headed toward the bomb shelter, still clutching my doll. My mother grabbed my hand and pulled me back.

“We’re not going in the bomb shelter tonight. Come on, get in the car.”

I saw my aunt’s car sitting in the driveway. I was surprised: she never drove the car. I climbed into the back seat with my three cousins as my mom climbed into the front with my aunt. As we drove away, I looked back at the house I had grown up in. I had no idea I would never see it again.

Once we got to the main road, I looked ahead. There was a long line of people going north, just like us. Farmers had their horses and wagons, holding blankets close against the cold German winter. The lucky ones, like us, were piled into cars, all moving towards the bay. Where is everyone going? I wondered. The road ended not too far ahead at the Baltic Sea. It was too cold for us to be going on a ship, my mother had told me that it was one of the coldest February’s in history. The sea had completely frozen over all the way to the peninsula; no boats were able to go anywhere.

“Where are we going?” I asked my mother.

“We’re leaving town, the armies got too close.” My mother answered.

The armies. I kept hearing about them. I knew there was a war going on, that’s why my daddy had to leave. He
was a soldier and was fighting the Russians for us.

The line of people in front of us stopped and so did we. Some of them were helping the wagons and cars get onto the ice. *Onto the ice? We were driving on the sea?* I was amazed.

I kept silent as my mother and aunt talked in the front. All my cousins were older than me and sitting quietly too. I wanted to know what was going on and where we were going and was tempted to ask them. But they both looked nervous so for once I kept my mouth shut.

Soon enough it was our turn to get onto the ice. I looked out the window at the ground. The sea really did freeze!

It was dark. Really dark. No one had any lights that I could see. I could barely make out the wagon in front of us. I stared straight ahead for what seemed like forever; we were moving so slowly. Then in the distance ahead, I saw a big red and gold light. It came out of nowhere, and then I heard the sound, a loud crashing.

“The bombers are here.” My aunt said, her voice low and scared. *Bombs? Why didn’t we go into the bomb shelter then?* I wondered.

“Thankfully they can’t see us. Let’s just hope they don’t get lucky,” my mother said.

“Why are we going towards the bombs?” I asked, my six year old mind not able to understand.

“We have to get to the other side. There is a ship there waiting for us,” she said to me, trying to make it sound like an adventure out of my storybooks.

On summer days I had always loved playing by the shores. I would collect pieces of amber and bring them home to my mother. I loved splashing in the water and swimming with my cousins. On clear days, you could look out over the blue sea and see land in the distance. It was a few kilometers away and I always imagined that it was a fairy tale land. Somewhere you could sometimes see, but never reach.

That was where we were heading now. I still did not understand why we did not just go into the bomb shelter, why we were driving across this ice in the first place.

“Mother, why are we going there?” I asked, trying to understand.
“The soldiers got too close Evelyn, the bad ones your
daddy is fighting,” my mother tried to explain in her
soothing voice.

The bombs continued to go off. Some off to the sides, a
distance away, some hitting not too far in front of us. The
train in front of us stopped suddenly. Some of the men took
long pieces of wood and laid them down on the ice. As I
watched in front of me a bus drove onto the planks.
Underneath the wood was open water, a crack in the ice.

“The ice breakers were out today. They wanted to make
sure we couldn’t escape,” my aunt said quietly. Mother
looked frightened like I had never seen her before.

I looked ahead at the caravan that seemed to go on
forever in front of us. A few wagons in front of our car was a
huge double level bus. I had always wanted to ride on one of
them but I never did. I never went any farther than I could
walk.

“Is the bus going to try and cross the gap?” I asked.

“We all have to Evelyn, we have to get across,” my aunt
said, probably getting impatient with my questions. She
probably wished I was quiet like my cousins next to me. But
I wanted to know what was going on.

I watched as the bus carefully crawled onto the boards.
The bus seemed too big for the wood below it and too late I
saw that the driver did not line the wheels up right. Half of
the wheel on the right side was hanging off the board. My
mother realized what was going to happen before I did. She
tried to tell me to close my eyes but instead I stared horrified
as I saw it tipping. It couldn’t stay on the tracks.

I watched in slow motion as the bus turned on its side
and splashed into the dark water. I screamed, as did my
mother, echoing the screams of the people who were
suddenly slipping under the frozen ice. I couldn’t look away
as I saw the bus floating and then slowly start to sink. Some
people stopped to grab anyone they saw in the water, but
even I knew it was too cold for anyone to survive.

“Evelyn, close your eyes!” my mother shouted at me.
The men holding the boards moved a few meters to the left
of where the bus fell, and the next wagon crawled across
them. We were still going to cross? This was crazy. So many
people just fell in the water. I wanted to go back. The armies
couldn’t be worse than this. I closed my eyes as we got close, not wanting to see the bus or the bodies, and clung to my doll, praying we wouldn’t hit the water too.

Too soon it was our turn. I ducked my head under the blanket and prayed. I could feel the car move differently as it rolled onto the wooden boards. So slowly we moved across, my aunt doing everything she could to keep straight. I tried not to think about the dark, cold water beneath me right now. My cousin grabbed my hand and I squeezed it back. Slowly I felt the car grab hold when it got onto the wooden planks. I couldn’t look but even with my eyes closed, I just saw all those people falling into the water again. I heard the screams.

The wonderful sound of my mother’s nervous laugh broke into my mind and I looked up. We had made it across. We didn’t end up in the water. I thanked God. My mother reached behind her to hold my hand and tell me that everything was going to be alright.

We were protected as we crossed the rest of the ice. The bombing stopped as we got closer to the other side and there ahead of us were people helping everyone back onto the land. Some people were crying but more were laughing. Everyone was hugging everyone and I smiled. We made it past the bombs and the ice and now we could get on the boat. Where we were going to go next, I had no idea. All I understood was that there was no way we were going back.

There in the water before me was one of the biggest ships I had ever seen. It was going to take us away, maybe to my daddy! I could just make out the letters on the side of the boat that said its name. It was a word I knew well: Deutschland.
When I turn to leave, do not wish me well. Wish me here. Do not send me off, draw me nearer. Do not wait to miss me, love me now.

Don’t you dare forget me, though you wouldn’t know how. Do not wave goodbye, pull me closer. Do not think to cry, I’ll go nowhere.

You have a handful of daisies, but your eyes don’t leave the weeds. You have an ocean full of beauty, but your heart is at the bottom of the sea. You have a love so pure and bright, but your hope cannot be found. You have the mighty legs of a warrior, but you’re weeping on the ground. You have the melody of peace, but screams echo through your ears. You have the strongest arms around you, but all you feel is fear. You have the whole world at your feet, but you’re going nowhere fast. You have a picture of your future in hand, but you can’t put down the book of your past.
Bridges
translated by Florencia Silvia Yuvero

from the original,
PUENTES, by Elsa Isabel Bornemann

I draw bridges
For you to find me:
A fabric bridge
With my watercolors...

A suspension bridge
With shiny chalk
Wooden bridges
With a wax pencil...

Silver, copper,
Bascule bridges
Stone-built, invisible
Unbreakable bridges

And you? ... No one would believe it!
Not even see it!
I do one, ten, a hundred
You cross neither!
contributors

**Giorgio Cole** was born and raised in Niagara Falls, Canada. He is completing his B.A. degree in Liberal Arts, with a focus on Applied Fine Arts and minors in Art History, Fine Arts and Theater Studies. Being raised in the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario which borders the United States, Giorgio has exhibited his artwork, poetry and photography in both countries and finds this duality to be exceedingly motivational, instructive, and most opportune.

**Philip Collington** is an associate professor in the English Department, where he teaches Shakespeare and British Literature. In his spare time, he enjoys movies, music, and photography.

**Brian DeBottis** is a class of 2016 TESOL Education Major. DeBottis comes from a very English-oriented family: his mother is an English teacher in central New York and his father taught English courses at Syracuse University for a time. His own interest in English piqued during his exchange year in Germany (2011-2012): "I kept a blog during my time there. I actually used one of the posts from that blog for my college essay - what started off as a hobby helped me get into the schools I applied to." "The inspiration for 'He Awoke' came to me one night as I was lying awake in bed. The pressures of college plus the recent death of our family dog had me tossing and turning in a maddening combination of restless anxiety and grief…. Unable to sleep because my mind was swimming with thoughts of tests, research papers and (most of all) missing Harper, I began to speculate about death and mortality - the typical 'what happens when we die' line of thought. So at about 4am on a cold February morning this semester, I got up, made some coffee and wrote this to put my mind at ease."

**Jacqueline DellaNeve** is a sophomore at Niagara University. She is studying Communications and is an active member of To Write Love On Her Arms. She has a passion for macro and landscape photography. She also has skills in using Photoshop and Lightroom to edit photos.

**Angela Digregorio** is an English major at Niagara University with a minor in Psychology. She recently published a poetry e-book called *Yellow Paint*. 
Patrick Harden is a Lewiston-born father of three studying Developmental Disabilities at NU. He has had a number of gallery shows in Colorado and Virginia, taught art for years and has had success as a freelance artist. “I hope to open an art school for the intellectually disabled community after graduation.”

Alexis Lecceadone is currently a freshman majoring in Hospitality and Tourism - Luxury Hospitality Operations: Club Management. She has been actively involved with art since a very young age, including participation in Art Guild throughout high school, serving as president her senior year. She has a strong passion for art and loves to draw, paint, sculpt, and more. “My artwork is very personal to me and is a representation of my thoughts, feelings, and emotions during that time. It is a way for me to express myself in a different and creative way.”

James MacKey is a Hospitality major with a minor in English. He graduates in 2016.

Cara Mergner is a freshman major in English. She wrote “Wallflower” for a Creative Writing class she took at Niagara University. “I wrote the poem after reading Perks of Being a Wallflower.”

Jake Pandolfi is from Buffalo, NY and is currently completing his B.A. in Liberal Arts.

Kristin Rivers is an English major with minors in Writing and Religious Studies. Her short story is based on her grandmother’s experiences in Germany during World War II when she and her mother fled the Russian armies when she was 6 years old.

Will Rogers hails from Niagara Falls, NY and has three sisters who are dear to him. He is studying the legal system at Niagara University and hopes to make a career out of it. This is his second poem to be featured in a scholarly publication. This one and others are available online. "I enjoy writing poetry because it comes from my soul." Go Purple Eagles!

Dan Schwartz, J.D., Ph.D. is a former teacher, professor, department chair, and associate dean. He is the recipient of the Horatio Alger Fellowship, a Wisconsin Teaching Fellowship, the Faculty Excellence
Award from Saint Louis University, and a Teacher of the Year award from the Greater St. Louis English Teachers Association. He has taught in a junior high school, a high school, a community college, and multiple colleges, universities, and graduate schools. He has taught education, English, English education, business and law. His is a frequent contributor to The Buffalo News, and his work has also appeared in The English Record, the Oregon, English Journal, the Green Bay Press Gazette, the Green Bay News Chronicle, and the Juneau Empire. He currently teaches at Niagara University and Buffalo State College.

Christina Scott is a transfer sophomore in the Theatre Department. Along with acting, she is very interested in writing and hopes to write many stories in the future.

Jacob D. Strozyk is a sophomore English and Communications Studies double major. “My background as a writer started with my works of short fiction (primarily with horror and romantic themes) and eventually I took to poetry to find a release for my mind. Poetry itself allows what needs to be said to come out in the purest and most beautiful form. My poetry comes with a bit of a musical style, and is my personal message to a specific person or group of people that may be directly addressed. The imagery used is key, and my focus is always on the details of the subject in the poem. " Forgotten" in particular focuses on the senses lost when the memory of the love once had fades slowly into the past.”

Jessica Tobin is a junior English Education major graduating in the fall, but her true passion is photography. “I began to be more serious photography my junior year in high school in an introductory photography class. I loved it so much that I took two advanced photography classes the next year. Now I look at everything through a photographer's eye, trying to find the beauty in the world around me. The picture of the light post was taken on campus here at Niagara University as I was walking up the back stairs of my dorm building. The rings of light called for a quick stop to capture the moment.”

Taylor Wilkesmore is currently a junior at Niagara University studying Secondary History Education.
Florencia Yuvero spent the spring semester of 2015 at Niagara University as a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant. Growing up in a small Argentinian town, Florencia began studying English at the age of 12, and continued her studies in public translation at the National University of Córdoba, where she also served as a student assistant in the university’s School of Languages. After earning her degree as a public translator of English, she moved to Buenos Aires, where she obtained a job as a translator for the courts. On Jan. 12, 2015, she arrived at Niagara University. For the next four months, she assisted Dr. James McCutcheon, associate professor of Spanish and chair of Modern and Classical languages, and Dr. Esteban Mayorga, assistant professor of Spanish and coordinator of the Latin American studies program.

Alison Zimmerman grew up in Hudson Valley, NY and will graduate with a degree in Tourism & Event Management in 2015. "I am passionate about adventure tourism and luxury travel, and I have a vision to create my own business. My ultimate dream is to plan destination weddings. I started taking photos during my very little spare time while working on a cruise ship in Alaska three years ago. I am eager to travel and embrace different cultures. I have a natural eye for beauty, and am especially drawn to capture landscapes, human expression, industrial architecture, and abandoned spaces. I live by the mantra, 'Discover, connect, create.'"