

The Mirror



Ninth Edition
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Foreword from the Editor-in-Chief

On Halloween, my third-grade classmates were more than happy to dunk their hands through slots cut in shoeboxes to feel “eyeballs,” “brains,” and other misplaced organs. I, on the other hand, peered through the openings in an effort to see the contents. When my eyes were greeted with darkness, my hands stayed firmly in the pockets of my costume. No way were my hands touching something I couldn’t see.

When I was young, there was something scary about the unknown. I saw darkness as foreboding due to its ability to render things invisible. At night, I felt unbalanced and blind in the darkness. I loathed that feeling of being off-balance.

Over the past few years, I’ve learned that if I operate solely in my little ring of comfortable light, I’ll remain static. Plants may need a healthy dose of sunlight to grow, but I need the darkness to test me if I’m to become more than I am.

I invite you to put down your fear and step into the darkness. Explore the corners it hides. You will not always find what you want or want what you find, but given time, you'll realize that it doesn't scare you so much anymore. Once you've grown beyond the fear of uncertainty, nothing can pull you down.

~Eliana Kontokanis and Kate Fernandez

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she is the night sky, Eliana Kontokanis

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The Room at the End of the Hall

Morgan Bresolin

Guards walked back and forth every minute, never any hesitation, always a continued routine. The area was dimly light, the few lights flickering every couple of seconds. All that could be seen was metal -- cold, hard, silver metal; metal walls, metal door, really just a metal cage. A small boy was slumped on the cold floor, knees pressed against his chest, hands wrapped around his legs, back pressed against the wall. He looked frightened, even in his sleep, but nothing could be done; there was no escaping this place. A faint clicking of heels resonated throughout the hall as a woman, more like a young girl, came down the hall. The noise increased as she approached the cowering boy, then stopping with an abrupt silence.

The door creaked as the woman pulled the lock from the door and slowly opened it, stepping inside to better look at the sleeping boy. A loud scratching came from the cell as a metal chair appeared in front of the doorway of the cell. The sound woke the boy as he jumped, then letting a loud wince as his back hit the wall.

“Well, well, well, you’re finally up. Took you long enough.” A raspy voice said.

“Where am I?” the high-pitched voice of the boy asked, before coughing for a few seconds.

“Somewhere safe. You’re not well. I’m here to help you,” said the woman, sitting down on the chair.

“I don’t understand. I was with my parents. I was fine.”

“You thought you were fine, but then you got sick. Your parents wanted you to come here. This is the best place for you. They asked

that I take good care of you.”

“Who are you?” the boy asked, leaning forward to see the slender figure of the woman.

“Your sister.”

“But you died.” The boy stuttered out, shaking his head and curling more into himself.

“That’s what Mom and Dad wanted you to believe. I was sick, just like you, but then I came here and I got better.” The woman stopped talking for a moment as the next round of guards walked by: the usual routine. She stayed silent as a loud scream was heard, then the rushing sound of footsteps as more guards ran to the other end of the corridor; and then it was silent. She began to speak again, but the loud thud of marching footsteps came closer to the cell. She turned to look and saw two guards dragging an old and ailing man down the hall.

“Just ignore that. He’s sick; he’ll be okay though. Nothing to worry about. Now let me explain what happened: After coming here, I got better and have helped other families; then I heard that you were sick. I knew that the best thing to do would be to take you from Mom and Dad -- they shouldn’t have to lose both their children.”

“Why didn’t Mom and Dad bring me here themselves?”

“It was too painful; bringing another child to this place. They went away after I got you, but they’re expecting you to join them, wanted me to make sure you know that you’ll be seeing them soon. That’s my job, to make sure you see them; I have to make sure you get better.”

She reached out her hand and gently helped the boy up. She wrapped her arm around him and slowly led him out of the room. He shook with every step, the cold affecting him more and more as

he walked barefoot along the metal floor. He frowned, looking at the white door at the end of the hall, light shining underneath.

“What’s with the light at the end of the hall?” the boy asked his sister.

“It’s the room where you’ll get better. Come along, Mom and Dad are waiting for you.”



“Radiance From the Deep”
Daniella King

the dark as my guide

Bailey Yates

what is darkness be a way to find the light?
knowing what is wrong leads us to what is right.

if i walk down a lonely, untrodden path,
newly fallen leaves crushed beneath
my wayward traveling
the only sound i hear
and i cannot fathom what
sight and direction mean anymore,
i will seek out to understand.

if there are endless days devoid of sun,
i will equally endlessly search
for a silver lining.

if you cannot see what obstacles lay
in front of you,
but you can reach out and feel them there,
turn on a light.
perhaps those obstacles are
opportunities in disguise.

darkness is a way to find the light.
knowing that something is wrong
leads us to find what is right



“Thoughts in Solitude”
Emily Bartylla

dedicated soldier of the spiritual deep

Michael Fluetsch & Nora Fluetsch

she staggered downstairs
bedraggled, unkempt
still in a daze
from something she dreamt

she'd been a dedicated soldier
in search of a truth
a memory lost
long ago in her youth

her travels had led her
to a great precipice
but when she peered over
she found an abyss

and then she awoke
the moment had passed
she longed for the knowledge
she nearly had grasped

although but a dream
it was spiritually true
she'd come close to reaching
enlightenment too

to the place of beginning
whence we all come
and where we return
when our time here is done

dreams are elusive
double meaning and fraud
but she'd be been close to seeing
true consciousness, god

and now in her bathrobe
conspiring her fate
the clock and the calendar
she was going to be late

she staggered once more
befuddle, confused
then in a moment of clarity
she knew what to do

answer this calling
finish her quest
return to that place
and continue the rest

sleep is the portal
her dream is the gate
everything else
will just have to wait

to recapture the dream
she had to act quick
so dispensed with the nuisance
of calling in sick

her only concern
was this metaphysical plan
schedule, obligation
all could be damned

earthly duties forsaken
celestial journey ahead
she bravely marched off
to go back to bed

dedicated soldier
of the spiritual deep —
she fluffed up her pillow
and went back to sleep

Preparation

Paloma Freitas

I press my pen against the paper
Letting the ink puddle
Waiting to plunge myself
Into a pool of darkness



“Pathway”
Jahnvi Mehta

For Now, I am Home

Julia Lathrop

I have absolutely no idea where I am or where I'm going, so for now I look at the sea of darkness and grip the wheel, following the red polka dots in the night as the white ones rush by. brisk air chills my skin but I'm so focused on staying between the lines and I barely feel it. I stare at the dark pastel pink clouds against the navy sky as I near the city. a wave of relief comes over me. home. or so it is for now. to be honest, the longer I stay here, the less it feels like home. the city itself hasn't changed; the people have or maybe they haven't. maybe I'm just finally seeing them all for who they really are. I used to be like them but I'm not anymore. I'm not the same person I was three years ago. I'm older, wiser, more honest, stronger and less needy. I don't require the same amount of luxury. I don't need the comfort of wealth. I've learned that home isn't a building made of shingles, long wrap-around porches and bumpy driveways. it's the people inside them that make you feel like you belong. I know that now, right now, as I drive back into my hometown. this town will always have a special place in my heart. it's where I grew up. but it will never take priority over those select few, because it's those special, genuine and wonderful people that I've learned to call home.

The Plummet of the Ruby

Anneke Zegers

The narrow alley was a nightmare within another. The edges were fringed with danger and laced with shadows. Curtains of darkness fell across its expanse. The ground hummed in its restless slumber. Tenement buildings, like the ones from those Industrialization pictures the teachers like to show in history, lined the alley walls. They were worn and abandoned, just as the ones I had seen in the New York Tenderloin. Faded and broken bricks formed the walls. The street where I stood was woven with holes. I had never been here before.

Standing on the threshold of darkness seemed to drag me in like a vacuum. No, not a vacuum. A black hole. My feet dug into the ground to hold me in place. Every primordial instinct I retained screamed at my body to run from the overpowering darkness. But how? Gravity chained my feet to the ground. Every muscle in my body was already fighting the suction of the shadows. The darkness was the all-consuming hunger. If I surrendered to its pull, there would be no escape.

That much left me to wonder why there was a nervous tension in the darkness. Why did it try to pull from its borders rather than extend toward its prey? A snake strikes, not waits for the mouse to scurry into its open mouth.

It was the light, surely. The air around me was peaceful grey, not vehement black, just enough to protect me from the tendrils of stifling darkness. The shadows despised it, but bowed to it in fear. Until now, when an energy was forming on the brink of spilling forth. Something was happening. The darkness whirled and circled

the cornered territory where light still had its way. It spit and hissed and waited, waited, waited. I sensed that whatever it waited for, whatever moment it hoped was the right one to spring forth in, was drawing near.

So where was the light that protected me? Where was the lone warrior that kept its enemy at bay?

I looked to the sky out of habit. No moon, but a suffocating darkness to replace it. Like a funeral shroud, or a new moon on a stormy night. No comets. No planets. No constellations. Not even my namesake constellation.

Just a single, lonely star, so tiny and small compared to the overwhelming darkness. But there it was. It wasn't even that bright. It was a simple, dull, white star glistening in a sea of night. But even such a little thing gave me some consolation and hope. I relaxed. Darkness could not win while the star gleamed passionately on. My heart leaped in my chest when I saw it flicker. No! In the short time I had been there, I had felt the evil essence in the shadows.

The darkness was no longer still. I was certain that the suspense was escalating now. It was once simply a threat, but now it was preparing for battle. It was going to pounce the moment its adversary was gone, and I was likely the target. And by me, the light was the target, along with its legacy.

It took a stuttering breath, and ever so slightly dimmed. My fears waxed and waned with the rise and fall of the light. Stay lit! Stay lit!

Its glow changed colors, becoming a cream colored white. Stay lit! Stay lit! A yellow now, soft and vulnerable. Stay lit! Stay lit! A fiery orange, amid a struggle for its life and losing. Stay lit! Stay lit! A hot red, like a cherry at the peak of its season. Stay lit! And to my horror, it almost faded to black, before giving one last

powerful heave and turning to a bright red, apple colored glow.

And then it did something I did not predict.

It fell.

The star was barely longer than my thumbnail as it plummeted in a thin streak of light. It accelerated the closer it came to the alleyway I stood at. The darkness swayed and swooned around me in an overwrought frenzy. It sensed its victory. I was sure now that if the star hit the ground, the darkness would have its way.

I had to stop it. That had to be why I was here. I had to prevent it from falling, or I would be consumed by the power of the shadows. I fought against the gravity, the suction of the darkness, moving just an inch toward the spot the star would hit. I had to go faster. The star was getting closer. I willed myself to move, but I was fighting invisible chains.

I. Had. To. Save. The. Star. I took another tiny step, and then another. It got harder to move my feet. The darkness was strong and relentless. But so was my star.

The scarlet star had just broken through a final layer of clouds and was coming down hard. This was it. I managed a step closer. I just needed one more step...

Too late, it passed the roof of the building and was coming down right where I needed to be. I had to do something...anything!

I threw my hands in front of me and cupped them to catch the star. Not once did I think of my hands getting burned by it. My only strayed and desperate thoughts were: Please don't miss! Stay lit!

And it did. The star settled in my hand with the force of a spring breeze. I gasped when I got a good look at it. A tiny ball of light, weak as it was, but still there. Still alive. Still beautiful and glorious. It made a dull and steady humming noise, a cross between

electric energy and a kitten's purr. The little star was warm to the touch and soothing to hold. I turned it in my hand with reverence. It had saved my life, and I had saved its.

Slowly, the glow settled down, and I saw its form. A crystal? Some sort of jewel? No! A ruby! Beautiful and pure red, it shimmered with an elegant light. It no longer glowed, but I could tell this form would be even more powerful than before. My perspective had nothing to do with physical power. It had nothing to do with the brightness. Perhaps the shimmering was warmer and less ferocious than blasts of light. The light was a caressing touch. Its power lay in love. How? It still lit the way and sent the darkness fleeing, but it approached it by offering a comfort in the most humble fashion that the darkness would not stand to be near in its grandiose supremacy.

When I glanced up from my companion, I was no longer standing before an unfamiliar alley. I was sitting up in my bed back at home. The same sky blue walls and plain-Jane white bed sheets. It was all a dream. I relaxed just a little, and I was about to close my eyes to go back to sleep when they shot wide open. If it was all just a dream, and I was still a normal teenager and not a hero who prevented evil from destroying good, then why was I still clutching a familiar red ruby?

Disturbed

Nathalie Silva

Convulsing, taunting, and haunting
a splurge of abstract vitality disrupts
my menacing trains of thought are
caught...

in the wrecks of devouring
the horrors of my thoughts



“Frances”
Julia Narvaez

That Mind of Mine

Shalyn Sevey

Whirls and swirls
Drooling out a chime
Playing along the tined walls of my mind
Eyes in a twist brain in a knot
What I memorize is not what they recall
Think one can know me?
Look once more into my mind
Lock and Docks
Stones and untamed bridges
Knocking doors and screaming windows
All shatter once they are able
Everything goes without a second thought
In this darkened blue mass of an object lost
Clouding storms circle like waiting sharks
My mind, my thoughts, my heart all go with no beat and no flow to
follow

Darkness

Simran Soman

Upon the earth it dances,
Within our hearts it feeds.
You can try to escape it,
But it in your eyes I see.

Yes, frightening it may be,
And how heavy the burden you carry.
But still it is the key,
To free you from the “mortuary”.

Now you may stumble,
And you just might fall,
But listen closely for the quiet rumble,
As it will soon call.

Now listen here closely,
However absorbed you may be,
These things are quite ghostly,
For I know more than you can see.

Now you know how it dances,
And where it does feed.
You’ve tried to escape it,
But still in your eyes I see.

victim

Nora Fluetsch

they told me to sing
so sang i did
they told me to stop
so away i hid

they told me to dance
so danced i did
they told me to stop
so away i hid

they told me to laugh
so laughed i did
they told me to stop
so away i hid

they told me to speak
so spoke i did
they told me to stop
so away i hid

they told me to die
but i lived on
i told them to go
so now they are gone



“Pause”
Emily Bartylla

Don't Leave Me

Nicole Hopkins

Sometimes I get so tangled in life
I forget what it is to breathe
Between convincing myself to stick around
And begging you not to leave

I quiet my struggles to take over yours
My fears I bury to say
You're not leaving here without me by your side
You're not going to give up today



“Rose”
Emily Bartylla

Far Gone

Sarah Larson

And yes my dear,
She is wilting,
Under blankets of net and quilting,
Buried deep under a
Singeing pile of prickly pines.
The forest heaves as her breath whines.
Dead weight in a bushel,
Of enigmas and troubles,
She tastes the cherrywine
Of ageing
And it is so very bitter
With little
Euphoric Sensations...



“Hear Me Caw”
Emily Bartylla

Song of the Tortured

Paloma Freitas

Emily, Mary, come join me in song
“To do of the right is to tell of the wrong”
And what if the wrong should so happen to be
The ones who spit verses of melancholy?

Then, rejoice for us all
for our kin we have found
Let darkness embrace us
and Death be our groom
depression: our ladies
and madness: the court

Only then will our minds be finally free
‘Till this day of conviction
the demons are trapped
They harbor inside our very own souls
as we try to disguise them
with trite, humane lives

dear brother
Eliana Kontokanis

Dear brother:

How am I supposed to start a conversation after it's too late?
I spend all my time wishing echoes
worked in reverse,
and that my regrets would stop being wrapped in retrospect.

I'm sorry
for making this about me.
I never was good at putting down the mirror
until I broke it.
(Now I can't see either of us.)

My brother
I am scared.
The glass has kissed my hands when I meant to reach for you--
My wrists are breaking under these chains
Of living again, undeservedly--
Watching waste writhe within who I have become.

Words cannot explain any of this (any of you).
My speech is constructed of scribbles and apologies
Because I keep making mistakes...
This was a mistake!
You were the only thing in my life free of the taint of mistake!
I am a mistake!

My brother,

Do you miss the feeling of sunshine on your skin?
I haven't felt it since that last day
we watched the ducks floating
and agreed happiness looked like that,
like childhood storybooks and pointless adventures.
Holding hands and chasing monsters
because we always created ourselves as the heroes,
and now I know how deadly these fantasies really were.
I never meant to lie to you, but my brother
I am not a hero.

Books always have endings,
Endings that I don't want to see.
I can't look anyone in the eyes
because I see yours staring back at mine
and they aren't empty,
Yet I am.

My brother,
the record broke,
but I can still hear
shattering eardrums.
(Is it silent where you are?)
You are gone and gone and gone;
I am the lost son.

My dear brother,
I am begging you to take my place
because I don't think I can fill this space much longer.



“Nyctophilia”
Sarah Larson

Beautiful Temptation

Nora Fluetsch

one day i met the devil
how clever was he
one day i met the devil
he gave me his word you see
because the day i met the devil
the devil met me

one day i met the devil
what could i say
one day i met the devil
why did it end this way
because the day i met the devil
the devil met me

one day i met the devil
he said "wouldn't you like things to be better?"
one day i met the devil
i said "only to hear the laughter"
because the day i met the devil
the devil met me

one day i met the devil
such a liar was he
one day i met the devil
i saw what truth could be
because the day i met the devil
the devil met me

on the day i met the devil
he said "so beautiful is she"
on the day i met the devil
i said "so beautiful is he"
because the day i met the devil
the devil met me



“Guidance”
Isabelle Hesse