

The Mirror



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Foreword from the Editor-in-Chief

These days, I am trying to be more upfront when recognizing gratitude. I realize how easy it is to overlook the things that make my life beautiful when I am so worried about the things that muddle it. Even if I forget, life has so many ways to remind me that I have every reason and more express gratitude.

I am grateful for the teachers who talk me down from stress-induced breakdowns. I am grateful for the pieces of advice I don't necessarily ask for, but benefit from hearing anyway. I am grateful for the friends who know exactly when to hug me without saying a word. I am grateful for the people who laugh, cry, and shout with me. I am grateful for the love that surrounds me, in every form. I am grateful for knowledge, education, and the ability to grow. I am grateful for expression, that which I give and that which I receive, which reminds me how complexly beautiful being human really is. In fact, I am grateful for learning how to be grateful, because it is what gives me everything when I think I have nothing. Most of all, I am grateful for you, because you are here with me.

Reading the pieces in this issue may remind you of what you should be grateful for, but I hope they become more than just a memory. I encourage you to express gratitude in

your signature way as much as you can. Before you know it, the warmth of gratitude will come naturally, and the cold that fills the world won't make you feel so frozen in place anymore.

~Eliana Kontokanis and
Kate Fernandez

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Romeo's Gratitude

Anneke Zegers

Dear Juliet,

I never had a chance to say thank you to you after the feast. And the wedding. And the other night. Everything just happened so fast, and now that you are dead, I don't know what to do with myself.

When I first saw you at the feast, I was awestruck by your loveliness. You are so much fairer than your cousin, Rosaline, and your gentle spirit is much more lovable. When I think back on what I felt for her, it was mere fascination, and trivial desire. But you, my dearest Juliet, have taught me the true meaning of love. I am forever in your debt, my saint. Though I was unworthy to touch your hand, you let me. You gave me the freedom to worship your beauty with my mouth, my hands, and my heart. My saint and angel, I am grateful that you were so willing to accept my ardent praise.

That night at the balcony, I also must thank you for speaking your mind frankly. I know that you probably would have had it differently, where I was not given such insight into your thoughts and affection for me. However, what you said needed to be said, and I was glad to hear you speak of your love then so I would not have to go through the torture that most men do of being held at arm's length.

Ah, my darling Juliet, what can I say to praise your beauty that I have not already spoken in my poetry? Let me be your little bird, Juliet. Let me follow you across the river of Hades and join you on the Isle of the Blessed. Death is too unworthy to hold your beauty in its icy grip. Please, Juliet, your little bird, like Orpheus of the myths, sings for you to come back to the land of the living. For the light within you would shine once more, blocking out nature's wonder and pulchritude. Please, Juliet, come back to me.

I am going to the apothecary soon. I will join you shortly at the Capulet tomb, where we will forever remain together. Even death will not separate us, lovely Juliet.

One final message, though, before I join you, for these words must be said while I am still in the living world. Dear Juliet, I praise thee and thank thee for the short time we had together in matrimony. I thank thee for staying loyal to me and loving me despite the hatred between our families. If I had only been born by some other name than the cursed Montague! I will think of your good heart and perfect face with fondness until the moment I depart from this world to re-enter your gracious light. For Juliet, you are my light, and I cannot live without you by my side. Thou art my heart, for you healed it, loved it, empowered it, and now broken it. Thank you for loving me, and I will see you shortly.

Your little bird,
Your passionate lover,
And the pilgrim forever in debt to his saint,
Romeo.

A Short Time

Anonymous

Around the corner and in the garden, a lovely lily stood
So quiet, yet so loud,
So vibrant, yet so simple.
It reminded me of a time,
Where there was color,
Now there is black and white.
I went back and it was gone
Not forever,
Because it is never truly gone.



“A Rainbow”
Jahnvi Mehta

Merry Go-Round

Nathalie Silva

Round and round there you go,
maybe sometime I will try to go
Sometimes you need to reach the goal,
sometimes you need to find your soul
Round and round life goes
sometimes it dips and sometimes it flows

Oh, Precursors!

Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

Naughty Dog ©

By Lauren Souza

Adri stood at the edge of Sandover Village, staring off at the surrounding areas that were just around the cliff. She wished she were old enough to start exploring on her own, but Samos, her guardian and mentor, had forbidden her to go.

~Flashback~

“You are too young to be doing such things, young lady!” The Eco Sage snapped. “A lady’s place is in the house studying; not out in the wilderness fighting Lurkers!”

“But I am coming of age, Samos!” The thirteen year-old teen snapped. “I can survive out there! I’ll prove it to you! I’ll go to Geyser Rock! I just want to help a worthy cause!”

“It’s Daxter’s own fault that he’s a furball!” The Sage roared, at which Adri flinched slightly. “You will continue your studies until you are fourteen, and then you will be able to prove yourself; until then, you will not try to do anything otherwise! Is that understood?”

Adri gritted her teeth in frustration, feeling her throat tighten and the tears pool at the edges of her vision. “Yes, sir,”

The Sage sighed in frustration, pinching the space on the bridge of his nose. “Go to the beaches to meditate, Adrianna. Then you are free to do as you wish.”

But the girl had already left.

~The Present~

She sighed and stared at her reflection in the ocean water. Her long lavender hair cascaded down her back to her waist, even in a high ponytail. The dark indigo eyes stared back at her with a glare that no one else could replicate. The small necklace, made by her father with a small amount of Precursor metal, glowed in the evening light. Her light purple tunic shuffled slightly in the wind, and her cream-colored pants followed suit. She preferred to walk around in leather sandals supported by bandage-like wrappings, despite Keira, her adopted sister, telling her otherwise.

Adri's throat tightened. She clenched and unclenched her fists in frustration, feeling the hot tears run down her cheeks. She reached down and picked up a stone and, with a battle-like cry, threw it into the waves that seemingly went on forever.

"You okay, there, Adri?" A boyish voice questioned from behind. The upset girl quickly wiped her tears away and turned around to see Dexter, her best friend, standing there. The boy, unfortunately, had just been turned into an ottsel about a week ago. The ottsel stood about knee-height, and was covered in orange and yellow fur. His goggles, surprisingly, remained on his forehead despite the transformation.

The girl nodded silently, averting her gaze. The small ottsel sat down at her feet and patted the ground next to him. Adri silently complied and buried her face between her knees.

"Y'know, Jak's been worried about ya," Dexter commented. "He understands that you want to help... But, eh, he can't convince the old man, either."

"You guys don't have to help me," Adri said. She lifted her head slightly to look at him. "I'll probably just sneak out anyways..."

She felt a small tap on her left shoulder, and she looked up to see her other best friend, Jak, looking down at her from his stand-

ing position. His freakishly blond hair flowed in the light breeze, and his sky blue eyes stared into her own. He smiled knowingly and sat down next to her, staring off into the sunset for a minute.

The three sat in silence, just listening to the waves and hearing the seagulls squawking at each other. The occasional splash could be heard from the few small fish that swam in the distance. It would have been a truly peaceful experience had Jak not poked Adri in the shoulder again, requesting her attention.

“Yes?” She inquired as she turned her head at him whilst raising a purple brow.

“I heard about what Samos said,” Jak signed. “Literally; I heard you from Sentinel Beach.”

Adri smiled sadly. Since no one could understand him except for herself, she decided to return the favor. “You did?” She signed in response. “So you know that I can’t help you?”

Jak rolled his eyes. “Since when have you ever listened to Big Green? We used to go off to Sentinel Beach and not return until dusk all the time!”

Adri smirked at the many memories that flew into her mind. “I guess I’ll just have to help Keira, then, huh?”

Jak rolled his eyes and socked her shoulder playfully. “C’mon... You want to prove yourself, right?” The girl nodded silently, whilst Dexter was fighting a sea gull for territory behind them. “Then, show him that you can help!”

Adri thought for a moment. She wondered what she could do. She might have been smart, but she wasn’t the toughest person around; that title belonged to Jak. She certainly was one of the most clever around, however, which might be useful in the future for... Something.

Adri sighed in defeat. “I guess I’ll apologize to the old man,

later, then.”

Jak smiled in mischief. “That’s the spirit! Let’s get going, then, shall we?”

Adri widened her eyes in surprise. “You haven’t even started doing anything, yet?!”

Jak shook his head with a smirk and leaned back into the sloped beach, closing his eyes and folding his arms behind his back. Adri turned as she heard Daxter shriek at the seagull, whom had gotten hold of the poor ottsel’s tail, and laughed. She leaned back and closed her eyes as well, folding her hands on her stomach.

Unbeknownst to the two teens, Samos, the old Eco Sage, had watched, and understood, the whole conversation from his watchtower and shook his head knowingly, a small smile forming at the edges of his wrinkled green skin.

“Well, I guess we’ll have two Chosen Ones, instead, Precursors,” He muttered to himself. The old Sage climbed down from his ladder and back into his hut. “Oh, Precursors.”

starving dogs dance with dead flowers

Eliana Kontokanis

feed me to starving dogs!
watch them take my (too wide of) frame
and dwindle it down into nothing more
than a fragile fingerprint (of what i never wanted to be).
look amazed as they rip me apart,
desperate for the warmth and nutrition
i so longed to give myself.
the sounds of crunching bones and slopping jaws
will ring a chorus in your ear louder
than fourth of july fireworks,
and i promise you will be speechless!
when the alpha lunges for my stomach,
do not stop it;
do not avert your gaze;
pay close attention as i am unfolded
and water rushes out of my gut,
followed by wilting flowers—
the ruined gardens i wanted to grow within me,
panicking and drenching them when it was too late.
(i forgot i cannot save mangled things.)
my face will look peaceful above this chaos.
do not feel guilty, my friend, i was waiting for this all along!
i'm sorry you had to see this
(to see me like this)
but i promise this massacre will have brought me silence.

for you let the dogs end it
before i had to die a martyr;
you let me die as a carcass, and that is all i deserved.
wipe your tears, and when the dogs have abandoned my skeleton,
reach out your hands!
the dancing petals will scurry to you,
desperate for the sunlight only you can so freely give.
nurture them!
bring them what i could not,
and collect as many as you feel you can hold.
before you leave what is left of me
(to rot)
paint a smile on my face in blood—
for i know there will be plenty of it—
and pray that i have happy dreams for once,
and that you can walk away with nothing more
than the dead flowers
i once loved.

A Thank You

Clare Brennan

Thank you
For showing me Love,
Faith, Hope.
Humility, Perspective,
And
Acceptance.

Thank you
For listening to me
And hearing what I had to say.

Thank you
For being there for me
When nobody else was
And for making time for me.

Thank you
For looking at me with compassion
And seeing who I am,
Not what I've done.
For seeing me with love through eyes of mercy,
Not with judgment through eyes of hate

Thank you
For making it so easy to open up

And for being somebody I could trust.

Thank you
For being you,
For being the friend I needed,
For being the sister I never had and always wanted.