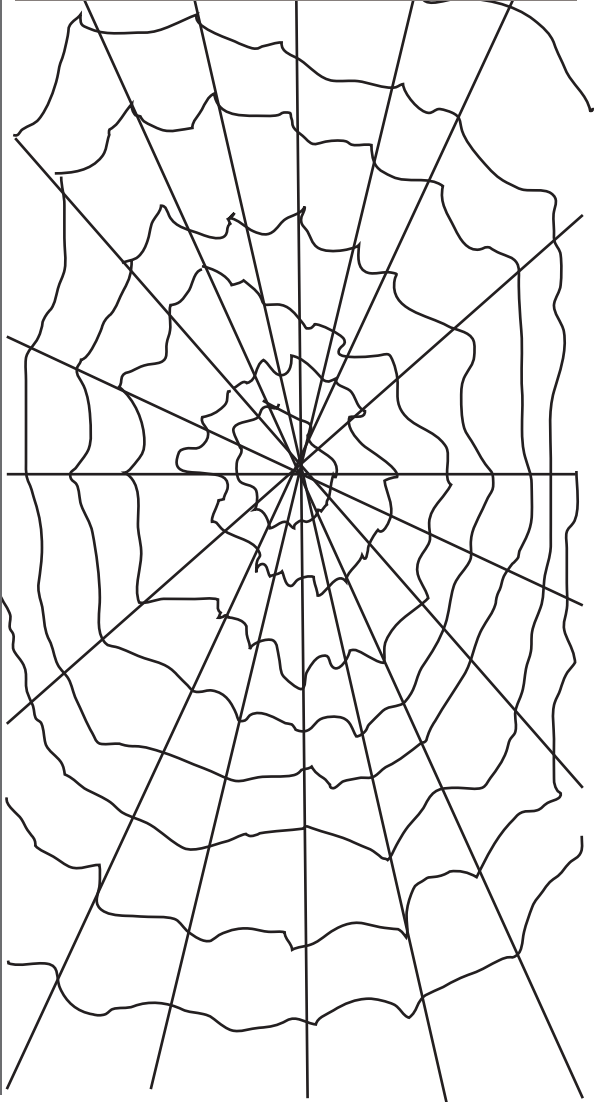


*the* Legacy

*Weird  
Stories  
&  
Dark  
Tales*



October 2019



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# *Sounds*

Aaron C. Akins

The phone in 1224 doesn't ring. It used to every now and again when Mike Ryland would call, his mouth still full from chewing his microwave T.V. dinner. You wouldn't believe, he would say, before clearing his throat and repeating himself. You wouldn't believe who I saw today. Then he would go on about someone he saw, but didn't talk to, or might have seen, but wasn't sure. Everything was worthy of a quick phone call for Mike Ryland.

It was four days after the funeral when I noticed it. I switched off the T.V. and labored out of my chair, sipped up the remaining drops of cheap whiskey. Then the silence filled my ears. The remnant of the bright blue screen still glowed dimly. The only other light came from the green digital numbers on the microwave above the stove. Nothing was moving. I could hear the walls standing still.

Even at seventy-eight I still got nervous in the dark. As a kid, I'd worried about monsters sneaking in the crack in my door, or tapping furiously at my window trying to get a chance at my flesh. The fear waned as I grew into my frame—a six-six, two-hundred-and-fifty pound linebacker. At seventy-eight years old, though, the muscles had sort of slipped away. My daughter used to tease me about my old high-school athletics pictures. That was you? she'd snicker, holding my yearbook just beyond my reach.

By senior year there wasn't a person in town I couldn't take in a fight. It was a small town, mind you. All there was to do was watch football or hang out at the pizza place. The kids were sometimes working summer jobs at Bob Ryland's car lot, washing the display cars and making sure nothing ever got stolen. Bob gave me job as a favor. After that thug Jerry Keener pulled a knife on Mike, I busted his ribs up pretty good and sent him on his way. I would have done more to him, but I wanted to make sure no one got cut up too bad.

I wished Mike would call now. Monsters weren't so scary, but I was always worried someone would see how frail I was and jump at the chance. I never knew when I might see another Jerry Keener waiting around the corner from my living room, knife in hand ready to take whatever I had left. You're being silly, Mike would tell me. I could hear his laugh, almost like he was standing next to me. Remember when you messed up that guy? But he wasn't calling tonight. The loud rattle of the air conditioner kicking on filled the room, followed by a low, sustained hum as cool air began pouring into the living room. I just stood there with the empty whiskey glass in my hand, staring at the dark mass of my bedroom door several feet away. I didn't want to go to sleep tonight. Not without hearing Mike's voice again. I found myself pleading to a higher power to hear the phone ring. And it did.

I froze. The sound alternated between the sharp cries of the phone ringing and the soft whirring of air slipping through the vents. It had been a quiet four days. No one but Mike had called in years. Who could it be—his wife? Not at this hour. The IRS? I let it ring without moving, I just glared at the receiver until the quiet resumed. It started again just as I started shuffling toward my bedroom door. This time, I cleared my throat as I haphazardly lifted the phone from the receiver.

"Hello?" I said. My voice sounded like old sandpaper

"Hi Dad," a woman said from the other line.

# *Danse Macabre*

*A. M. Godinez*

Heart-broken and alone within a darkened room  
I sat with hopes that sleep might overtake me  
Instead each passing hour I sank deeper yet  
Towards despair and madness

And in my dour disposition I could no longer stand  
The stifling breathlessness of my chamber  
Cold and oppressive the walls were closing in  
T'was the beating of my heart or cracking of the wood

A coffin! A coffin! The four walls of an early grave  
No longer could I draw breath nor keep my mind  
From fraying further whilst lost in darkest thoughts  
I sought reprieve for sins I'd yet commit and all  
those past

With haste I flew, I ran out of doors  
The chill Autumnal air stung my lungs  
Dark and drizzly, drearier yet still  
Was the dread silence of the night

The moon hung gibbous, alone and bright  
Yet melancholy I could not flee  
I walked alone but for my shadow  
For over my shoulder I did not spare a glance

In my walk I came upon a wood  
Beneath the trees duskly shadows formed  
What in my twisted state did seem  
Like ghastly arms reaching out at me

Unable to avert my eyes, frozen to the path  
I wandered deeper, deeper still  
Until I heard a ghostly thrum  
Echo through the trees

Compelled, I went forth  
The ghostly antiphon ringing in my bones  
No sooner did I find myself  
Besides a clearing in the trees  
Whereupon I witnessed a sight  
Aghast and grim  
For in the clearing stood  
A great unholy altar

Unable to move or to draw breath  
Or even look away  
Figures most ominous and dark  
Chanting unholy hymns

In wicked tongues they prayed  
Bowling to the altar  
Hellish flames licking at the night  
In ghoulish contrast between light and shadow

Upon the altar foul stood a shape most grotesque  
With grim countenance no fair resemblance held  
To any of God's creatures great or small  
But rather spawned from darkest pit

Dagger aloft, a wicked priest  
Chanted from the dais  
A sacrifice was to be made  
To their lord Baphomet

What nightmare had I happened on  
What horror had I beheld  
That warm crimson from this innocent  
Still beating heart ripped from open chest

Laid upon the devil's hand  
The sacrifice complete  
The fires grew larger  
And even hotter still

Deafening! Uproarious! The ground began to quake  
Dark prayer had been answered  
Clawing, crawling they arose  
Demons and creatures foul  
Fiends all gathered and summoned  
From the depths of the abyss  
The only feeling in my heart  
Was cold unshaking fear

Fire and brimstone did emerge  
A sound most unholy  
The howls of suffering damned souls  
Rising from the pit

The devils hunted down the revelers  
For feast of souls most rotten  
I prayed and tightly clutched my chest  
That I might be kept hidden

They tore at throats  
They opened bellies  
The ground grew muddy red  
The demons ate their fill

No recourse left except escape  
I made my flight with haste  
The screams still ringing from behind  
I did not dare to turn

From behind I heard a laugh  
Callous, evil, vile  
Had I been seen, had I been caught?  
Were the devils on my heel?

A church! I had to find some holy place  
Hallowed ground would be my safety  
Sanctuary I did seek from unholy horrors  
When I spied a cross upon a steeple

The acrid smell of sulfur  
Was closing in around me  
I ran and prayed on heavenly hosts  
And on all the saints to save me  
Surely it was an hour most unholy  
When I felt a ghastly hand pull me back  
From church door in my hand  
It was the end, no doubt

From the blackness that had swallowed me  
My eyes opened wide  
Cold sweat upon my brow  
T'was hellish dream

Not in worst nightmare could I describe  
The sight I had just seen  
I could not eat, nor rest, nor sleep  
For all my days this visage has since haunted me



# *Active Imagination*

*First Place Winner: William Snider*

How often do you dream? How often are those dreams nightmares? Or maybe I should ask, how often do you daydream? And how often are those nightmares?

I'm a person that most people would say, "has their head in the clouds". I like to daydream, I like to imagine, I like to zone out, and I especially love to make up worlds and stories. I'm always picturing a fantastic world going on around me, in the same world which I live, work, and breathe in. No one else is aware of my imaginings, only I am. My own special fantasy existing alongside me with each passing day. It is, I guess you would say, a dream come true.

I've found that most of my daydreams will start as small musings in the back of my mind, and if I let them fester a little more, they grow into something more solid, more physical, more real. Of course, they aren't real, they can't touch me or hurt me in any way, nor can they interact with other people. But the more I think about them, the more real they become. Almost to the point where I can feel their touch.

One day, a thought occurred to me- If I can create these incredible daydreams just by thinking about them, could I possibly also create a nightmare?

So, I tried it, when I was at home alone, I imagined something always waiting around the corner, something that always looks at me when my back is turned. Throwing together ideas of anything that could go "bump in the night". My overall image of this thing was a witch-like, elderly woman with grey skin, sunken, bony features, long arms that hang at the sides with long fingers and black nails. It wears ragged, colorless clothes and its face is bony with thin lips, a sharp chin and nose, and greasy stuck down grey hair. The most notable features are its teeth and its eyes, its teeth are long and pointed and its eyes are ebony black, yet have silver reflections in the pupils.

This new “boogeyman” was fun at first. Every now and then I would look over my shoulder and see it looking at me, or see it peeking around a corner at me. A perfect monster just in time for Halloween! Over the past few weeks I’ve started to see it more and more frequently. First it was once every few days, then once a day, and now its several times a night. But something about its appearance is becoming more unsettling.

Every night in my apartment now I look over and see her eyes staring at me from the shadows; two silver dots floating in the abyss like the reflection off a cat’s eye from shining a light into it. Never moving. Never blinking. I’ve seen her watching me from everywhere there is a shadow in my apartment. When I get ready for bed or I’m brushing my teeth, I look over and see her peeking at me from around the corner. I’ve noticed that some nights her arm quivers a little, like she wants to reach out to me, but stops herself. I lay in bed, my room shrouded in complete darkness, yet her eyes still shine faintly as she sits and watches me. And I swear that she gets closer every time, just a little bit. I’m starting to wonder if she is touching me in my sleep. But I can’t think about that. The more I think about her, the more real she becomes. This vision is no longer an “it”, now it’s a “her”. But she’s not real. None of this is. But why am I worrying so much?

Yet, she’s much bolder now. Even as I’m writing this, surrounded by blackness in my apartment, she sits across the table from me. Her hands at her sides, her body motionless, her smile wide, and her stare unblinking. But what’s that touching my leg?

# *All Obsessions*

*Will Amos*

Monsters make me nervous. There has never been a time that I didn't dread Halloween. After finishing my classes for the day, I make sure to skedaddle to my dorm. Its Wednesday and I have no more classes to attend for the week. To stave off the accursed accosting, I will abandon society for the remaining week. My girlfriend said she would join me here or there. Oh, Sophia. The only person whose stupidity isn't abrasive, but quite charming.

I mull over just more monotonous, maladroit homework before tossing it aside. I excitedly light the tip of the scented candle stick. This comely collection of characters has made my entire week. It helped getting through the insignificant courses that are required for my degree. My eyes glaze over a deliciously coarse work of decrepit leather and daffodil paper, something at least as old as the last century. Ogling each entropically written entry within such a hideous, hide-bound homunculus, screams directly into my soul. Despite the text being written in a complicated calligraphy of unintelligible rambling, a paltry paragraph writhes about in eccentric English. It's sad that this voluptuous volume would impishly invoke such pretentious proselytizing; nevertheless. I continue to delve into its brackish depths. Each alien serif of the tome only excites me further.

I occasionally have to stop as a migraine meanders, relaxing on the most recent word. I look to my candle and see that its flickering on a withering wick. My hand wavers weakly over to my phone, clasping it with greater difficulty than I expected. Ten o'clock looms greatly as a notice not a waning or waxing moon, but the full, freckled face of the celestial body. Beyond the digital clock, a message from Sophia arrived hours ago. She is out with her friends in this moment. While she understands my hatred of Halloween, she needed to cheer up a friend of hers. I'm only somewhat disappointed. Regardless, I turn back to the book. Despite the looming darkness of the room, my eyes have adjusted quite well to the palpable gloom.

As I continue groping each page, every word begins to make far more sense to me. The headaches worsen, but I've felt such pains before. I've even grown a bit numb to them. I wildly scan the leathery gold pages for what feels like minutes. The tome tells of something beyond the arctic mountains. There are beautiful creatures that slumber heavily far under the waves. Such mind opening truths are listed under the sprawling paragraphs.

The sudden crunching of a key within a doorknob jostles my being for a moment. Dropping the drapery of pages, I lean up to my feet. Despite the foreign sensation of standing, I am surprised that I feel such a need to see Sophia. The door opens to reveal the surprising bright hallway, forcing me to avert my eyes.

"Hey, babe!"

A soprano squeak rings about my ears weirdly as a sudden warmth wraps my torso.

"I didn't think you'd get so into Halloween! I thought you hated it."

I am a bit confused by her words but knowing her she has never known hate for me. To the contrary, her touch only tightens around my torso.

"You did such a great job too! You feel so cold and clammy! I wish you had been at the party!"

Her words warp weirdly within the sound waves that carry them. Given my confusion, my legs struggle to carry me to the bathroom mirror. I look upon myself to finally notice purple, viscous vivacious skin. My head is bare except for the purple skin with a bulbous, oblong shape to my scalp. Medium length squid tendrils extend from where my lips once layered my face. My hands are tetradactyl with but callous claws. White pupil-less eyes rest within my fleshy sockets. Sophia slinks herself around my slimy self, smiling. She even leans close, licking my cheek as she does in proclivity. My gaze hurtles to her with hunger.

# *otherness*

*Second Place: Ben Cross*

“you know, everyone says i look like her,”  
she says to me in the october rain.  
it’s cold despite the warmth of our thick furs,  
holding each other to numb the chill pain.  
the other is unknowable but soft.  
i can’t hold back, so i hold her body  
against me in the damp cold air. she coughed,  
and it’s moments like this, stomach knotting,  
the unbearable barrier, ego,  
that binds our souls apart in mortal minds,  
rests heavy and crushes me. that vertigo.  
pitiless nausea. gut-wrenching it grinds.  
knowing our spirits will never quite bond,  
i kiss the other. her lips are so fond.

biting, gnashing, i fall into her mouth,  
lips parting to imbibe my essence whole.  
out of my otherness and further south  
out through her maw and down into her soul.  
dread, woe, anxiety. Anxiety.  
awareness of myself as the other.  
welcome? no. wanted? with great piety  
all primal longing and instinct governed  
kinwise through ancient, silent spells, our genes.  
ephemeral mortality be still.  
neverlasting life. the taste of blood. screams.  
iron in the air and on the floor spilled...  
now violently awake with a start  
given nightmares, i telephone my heart.

her voice greets me, soft, warm, tired, and pleasant,  
contrasting the cold anxious sweat I feel  
across my body in the cool night air.  
desperate and longing for her presence,  
I ask if there's a moment I could steal  
under the pale light of the moon so fair.  
beneath the streetlamp she doesn't look real.  
i avert my gaze so as not to stare  
as i approach the other through the dark,  
fumbling and clumsy, i fall to a kneel,  
and she's laughing a laugh like there's no care  
in the world for this midnight morning lark.  
i right myself, greeting her with a smile,  
"would you mind if we walked a little while?"  
night skies are typical, but this was rare,  
meandering incautious through a park  
at night, holding the hand of the other,  
to a graveyard, woods, a clearing. that pair,  
walking and talking under moon and stars.  
we kiss. a change in me i cannot smother

i am lust and hunger, trapped in a maze,  
lust for that flesh all silver in moonlight,  
littering the scraps of cloth that alight,  
tearing at every bit that dares and stays,  
eating her heart all a frenzy and craze,  
all bloodless and empty. unholy sight:  
rending flesh, parting lips, hair, teeth, and might,  
yearning and howling. biting in a daze.  
out in the open, exposed in nature,  
unnatural devouring. the full moon  
out shining. those stars that could have saved us.  
please, i pray, forgive me this kills all pure  
ecstasy. forgive me when i die. soon.  
now! silver bullet; remorseful disgust.

lavender hued skin in early dawn's light.  
it's the moon's fall that brings revelation.  
forms take shape. a body on the ground: slight,  
ethereal, my heart's conflagration,  
and she's still as death, my adoration,  
full of me, nude, cheeks carmined with blood, flush.  
though still spellbound by love's consecration,  
each breath is slower than the last, more plush.  
really, after death, there's no need to rush.  
damned we may be, but we're back from heaven.  
even now i know otherness could crush  
all joy from my heart or make it leaden.  
trust and love the unknowable other.  
How? when we're apart, how can i love her?

in Hegel's master slave dialectic  
there's a fight to the death between people.  
it may be observed that that's quite hectic,  
so one compares still death to church's steeple.  
look. how tall and imposing and factual,  
over our heads in perpetuity,  
voracious, they devour all that's natural,  
eating everything with fatuity,  
though i'm not unlike them in love and life:  
hungry and tall, her lips on my lips. ghosts  
of that night, moonlit field, she's like a wife  
under the stars and me, but there's no toasts  
growled from jealous throats, seeking to atone.  
how do i know it's love? we were alone.

# *Eternal Halloween*

*Third Place: Andy Ryan*

Once upon a time, in a world more vibrant than this, Halloween was my favorite time of year. The candy, costumes, and decorations would call to me, begging to immerse me in a universe of death and thrill. I would run around in costumes that didn't fit, stirring up childish chaos and smiling until my cheeks hurt. At that age, I'd have run away to a world full of ghoulish things crawling out of every corner in a heartbeat. My eternal Halloween. It was an innocent childhood dream back then, a dream that now, decades later, had become a nightmare.

"Katie, come on! It's now or never, kiddo!"

"Dad, don't rush me! Are you sure we can't paint my face?" She adjusted her butterfly wings, a colorful sight that had now become a thing of distant fantasy.

"The oxy mask will just rub it off." I sighed.

"Alright." She rolled her eyes. She'd gotten good at that, lately, "Let's go! All the good candy's going to be gone!"

I adjusted her grey oxygen mask and slid mine on, preparing to expose ourselves to the toxic air outside. Parents and children were already going door to door along the street. It looked more like a march than a celebration. The grass of each lawn was long dead, never to grow again. I discreetly distracted Katie from a pile of bones where some unrecognizable animal had laid down to die from the heat.

"Let's go to that house! They have the best candy!" Katie dragged me, her voice muffled by the mask.

She's never lived through a Halloween where you didn't have to lug around an oxygen filter mask. They're heavy and inconvenient, but for her, it wasn't any different than the shirt on her back. She never got to run around the streets, breathe the crisp autumn air, warm her frozen nose with hot red cider, or feel the crunch of the fallen yellow leaves beneath her feet. It seemed like a distant memory that had faded along with the world we forgot to take care of.



An ever-present aura of dread hung over the town. Black skulls and crossbones were painted on doors as a warning. Sickly toxic-waste barrels sat beside houses oozing sludge into the earth. Brown spiders and cockroaches skittered through piles of darkened trash and across the street, disrupting the march of families in search of something sweet. The houses stood decrepit and haunted, black with soot from angry wildfires. Lifeless withering trees lurched in the wind, like Mother Nature shaking her fist at us for forsaking her. The decorations of death had become permanent.

Katie innocently skipped down the street, keeping one hand on her mask, stopping it from moving. She doesn't miss the bright leaves, the autumn air, or the freedom to run around the streets begging for more colorful sweets to eat. That world dried up alongside the dirt. My baby's chocolates had been eaten up by the greed of the few and powerful and she was too innocent to know. Was I foolish for wanting Katie to experience the shouts and laughter of children running through the streets, sheltered by the verdant trees giving way to orange? Who was I, wanting to bring life back into Halloween?

House after house, Katie smiled, asking cheerfully for small caramelized sugar pieces. By the end of the street, her eyes were wide with childlike joy.

"I have so much!" she cried, showing me her handful of sweets. I pushed my memories of overflowing pillowcases of brightly colored candy from my thoughts.

She had no idea. How could she know?

My eternal Halloween was here.

And I should have been more careful what I wished for.

# *A Lesson in Subterranean Paradiddle*

Jonah Dietz

“Gee, who would have guessed an old, abandoned, bunker in the middle of the forest, presumably built for the occasion of some horrific event, would be dark. That was an invaluable observation. Thanks for your input, Marsden.”

“That was some incredibly specific sarcasm, Ingrid.”

“You made a dumb statement is all.”

Ingrid had finished descending the ladder and joined Marsden at the mouth of an expansive tunnel. The beam of the flashlight did its best to reach out into the dense blackness before them, but failed at an alarmingly long way in.

“Can I have my lockpick back?”

Marsden reached into his back pocket with his left hand, still holding the flashlight ahead with his right. The yellow pillar of light shook enough as he rummaged to hit the walls on either side of the tunnel, illuminating considerable amounts of grime and what looked like markings; deep, intentional, worryingly pictorial markings. Ingrid was interrupted in her attempt to point these out by the sudden drop of the lockpick. It hit the cement floor and bounced. The clatter it made, louder than anything either of them had ever heard, echoed down the tunnel, never seeming to stop. When it did, the sound had become warped and thin.

Ingrid picked it up. Marsden let out a long breath.

“Thanks.”

“Don’t mention it.”

They stood a moment, neither wanting to suggest the next move. Marsden eventually felt that it really wasn’t his pride on the line.

“Now we go get the grown-ups qualified to go in there, right?”

Ingrid took the flashlight from him. She pulled her toboggan tighter and grinned the grin Marsden had been dreading. He waited until her features had nearly disappeared before following her in; doing so having fully acknowledged how unwise this was. Prior experience in leaving Ingrid on her own, which always resulted in an afternoon of guilt followed by an evening's-worth of breaking news, had taught him that he'd rather be interviewed together with Ingrid, beneath a hypothermia blanket, than tossing and turning all night underneath his duvet. Their footsteps clambered about the hall, bouncing off the marred walls and piercing their ears. The menace of the markings was slowly usurped by the gentle downward slope of the hallway. The beam of light trembled in Ingrid's hand. Marsden timed their walk with his flip-phone's clock. When it had been five minutes, the bars on the phone vanished.

"Wait," he said, stopping.

"What?" Ingrid asked, slowing down.

"We should head back."

Ingrid stopped. The flashlight's glow only barely touching Marsden. A chill went down his spine at the thought of the seeping darkness behind him. He ran to Ingrid. She stood before a door, where the tunnel had come to an abrupt end. The knob of the door was coated in rust, the edges of it had merged into the wall, leaving only a faint, disturbingly wet outline.

"Oh well," Marsden said, relieved. He checked his phone; still no signal. "Let's go, Ingrid."

Ingrid tilted her head back. This was enough for Marsden to know, even without seeing her face, that she had contemplated, and was now to resolutely carry out, something dumb. He groaned. Ingrid gave the door-knob a good, hard twist. Nothing. The door wouldn't budge. Marsden grabbed her hand and began to drag her away.

"Shoot. We tried."

A loud, metallic clang bounded down the tunnel at them. The sound of a huge metal door closing; a huge metal door like the one they had come through. Next came the sound of feet descending and reaching the end of a ladder. Marsden and Ingrid couldn't breathe. There was an excruciating silence. The flashlight tried and failed to see down the tunnel. But a wall of blackness still met their eyes. And from that shadow, somewhere at the mouth of the tunnel, an unseemly rhythmic tapping broke the silence. Something was approaching. Something was patiently, unabashedly, inexplicably tap-dancing towards them. And the dancer would reach them in less than five minutes.

# *Submersion*

*Jonathon Crump*

“Four thousand meters,” the electronic voice chimed.

“Thank you, Karen,” she replied to the voice that did not actually have that name, or any other, to the voice that could not actually hear her response. With the futile reply her exhalation fogged the glass in front of her.

That glass, any other day might have been set in a window pane of her grandmother’s house as she sighed waiting for her drunk mother or angry father to take her back home where, within a week she’d be sitting with her face against the window waiting for grandma. If not a window, it could have been the transparent elevator, always crowded, transporting her to the work she loves and the job she hates. She thinks it must have been the aquarium visit at eight years old that instilled the love marine biology within her. Years of textbooks and anxiety later the John Anthony Center of Marine Biology hired her. Several strangers had to gawk at her as she commuted on her first day before she felt the grin on her face. Those people may not have recognized the same woman as she left. They would have seen slumped shoulders and, only when she lifted her head, water in her blue eyes. Implicit sexism, life-sucking paperwork, and uninspired coworkers. So disappointingly similar to every job she’d had. But she stayed. She stayed for the last six years because once every few weeks a report would land on her desk about salmon with an exciting new adaptation in a handful of lakes in Alaska or a pod of whales with a strange migration pattern and every minute she spent reading those reports she was visiting the aquarium again watching animals float through the water with a serene face pressed against the glass.

“Four thousand five hundred meters” the voice chimed yanking her from her memories. She whispered her reply this time so as not to fog the glass in front of her. This allowed her an unobstructed view of the impossibly dark water before her. Only one of the two flood lights attached to the outside of the deep sea submergence vehicle still functioned. The other had burst from the pressure somewhere around three thousand feet, according to Karen. The operating light cast its beam a few feet ahead of the nose-diving submarine to sometimes illuminate a few particles out of water’s inky concealment. More seldomly, the light caught a slimy back, a set of scales, or a fin in movement. For fifteen years she had studied marine biology and could not even begin to guess what creatures were slinking here in the freezing, sunless water.

Looking straight ahead, at the nothingness broken only by specks and monsters, still felt like the better alternative to looking at the corpse to her left. Fortunately, this submarine separated the two seats into distinct compartments meaning she did not have to smell the body, this feature felt less fortunate however when the captain, and the only other passenger, suffered a fatal heart attack leaving the vehicle in a nose dive to the ocean floor. Without so much as a button to press on her side of the vehicle she could do nothing but press her face to the glass and wait for the submarine to burst from the pressure. All the while sitting in a cramped compartment of a small submarine.

“Five thousand meters” Karen informed her. As soon as Karen finished, a siren began sounding. It sounded like audio from every submarine movie she had seen. It sounded as though some ancient mechanical creature was finally dying. After several calls from the siren the remaining light outside the vehicle finally broke with a flash and a frenzy of bubbles. Now she could see nothing through the glass. Yet she still felt the monsters slithering outside the submarine, their sightless sensory organs perceiving her through the metal hull, moving lethargically towards her now that the lights were out. Then the glass cracked.

# *The Book*

*Kelley Mickey*

Timmy left school immediately after the final bell rang. He had to get home before his father. He had to fix his mistake from this morning. Maybe, just maybe, he would have time.

It had been a long time since the old garage had held a car. It was used mainly for storage and a fort that Timmy had built in the rafters. He climbed up using wall studs and removed the cardboard door to the fort. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness he hoped that this morning had not happened. But, as he jerked the dirty canvas away from her body, he knew that this morning was real. What he had done was real.

If only he had never found that crazy book. He had been enchanted by it as soon as he saw it at the used book store downtown. It was just a dusty paperback written by an Arab, Abdul Alhazred. But the owner told him it was just fiction written by somebody in the 1920's. Timmy became fascinated by this "book of the dead", reading and memorizing every night. It seemed to have wrapped his mind in a type of strange continuous hallucination. He learned spells backwards and forwards, repeating odd words that had no meaning to him. But, soon enough, it began to make more sense than any book he'd ever read before. Every Sunday, after his mom died, he and his father went to church. Now when Timmy sat in Sunday school he could hear a voice in his head mocking Mrs. Taylor's lessons. When they sang, "Jesus Loves the Little Children", Timmy couldn't help laughing about how silly it was. There was no Jesus, only the elder ones, and they didn't love anything.



The girl under the canvas had been a neighbor since birth. Somehow, Tommy had forgotten her name. She was a couple of years younger than him. On her left foot was a dirty Hello Kitty canvas sneaker. Her right foot was bare. She wore a pair of pink cotton jeans and a yellow tee-shirt. Her face, now pale blue, was framed by curly blonde hair. Her mouth was stuffed with a red shop rag. Tommy knew he had to do something with her, but he couldn't figure out what. His mind was whirling with visions. The book would tell him. The symbols on the cover seemed to move about on their own. They formed new unknown words, sinister and dark. He opened the dusty cover, but now the words were completely incomprehensible and the pages began a shrill child's laugh. He was desperate now. His dad would be home in about half an hour and it wouldn't be long before his neighbors would notice their daughter was not home from school. The book jumped out of his hands and onto the little girl's unmoving chest. At this moment he could hear someone call, "Becky, Becky are you in that old garage again?" Timmy tied a length of nylon rope around the rafters and then around his neck. He looked again at the book and saw a grinning demon on the cover. He jumped.

"It's just so awful." "Why would he do something like this?" "It just doesn't make any sense."

A crowd had gathered near the garage and watched as the ambulance drove away with a body inside. A little girl walked out from behind the garage wearing only one shoe. "Oh my God, thank you Jesus." "Becky, where have you been? We were so worried!" "Tina said you left school with everybody else." "Something terrible has happened to your friend Timmy." "I know momma," Becky said smiling, holding a dusty paperback with a pink unicorn on the cover.

# *A Week in the Death of Charlotte Reese*

*Kayla Lombard*

It's a little like a snowstorm.

At first, there's the slow and silent fall of flakes outside your window. The wind is still and the snow soft; anything bad that it may entail rests peacefully in the back of your mind. But then it's been a few hours and the snow is still falling steadily outside. Sheets of white climb higher up your door frame, and they begin to settle along the walls of your house and silently, viciously but silently, they eat away at the little light that shines in through your window. And your heart starts racing but it's all so quiet, so silent, that you're afraid to panic. The wind has probably picked up at this point. It's probably howling, slamming violently into your mailbox, rocking the foundation of every house on the block. Tree branches are probably snapping and flying over fences and smashing into cars. You imagine this is all probably happening but all you hear is the silence that slowly grows louder as the snow closes off those final few inches of sunlight. You stand frozen, and your own panic is silently boiling over but still you don't speak because a spell has been cast and you're too afraid to break it. So you stand there as silent as the snow, until you are completely sealed in a blanket of ice.

The sun comes out earlier on Saturdays for some reason. Its rays shine through my eyelids and the heat warms my face in such a way that waking up on these days is never a burden. I think my first snowflake fell when I woke up one Saturday in darkness. I got up and walked more quickly to the restroom than usual; there was no reason to, but I thought the darkness left too many shadows everywhere. The fluorescent lights in my bathroom were twitching erratically, and the mirror reflected back to me the distortions on my face, which grew more prominent with each flicker of the bulb.

There was nothing to do but wait until the sun came out, so I walked uneasily to my kitchen and fixed a pot of coffee. I let the pot hum in the background to smother the noises of nighttime that persisted outside my window and went back into the bedroom to change.

That might've been when the second snowflake drifted silently down: my socks felt too tight. I looked down at my ankles and they bulged against the seams of the fabric in such an indiscernible way that it must've been in my head. I am sure of it though: the swelling rose the following day. It was climbing up my calves and by the end of the week my pants felt too tight at the waist. As I sat the buttons barely held, but still, still I didn't dare acknowledge the pulsating flesh that bulged further and further out from under my socks, from beneath my pants, and by Saturday-by Saturday it had festered under my cheeks and I swear it! There was something under there and it was feeding everyday on my muscles and bones! But still I didn't speak! By Saturday it was so bad that I never changed out of my pajamas; I lied perfectly still and let myself be consumed by the thing that ate at me from the inside.

That Saturday when I awoke in darkness, I barely noticed the absence of the sun.

I barely notice anything from beneath the swelling of my eyelids and I barely hear the screams of my sister through the swelling in my ears as she stares at my decomposing flesh. She's been dead for about a week, someone tells her, but it's all mumbles now. There are probably sirens wailing outside my door, and there's probably chatter around my body, but the last flakes glide seamlessly down on top of my head and I am too scared to scream so instead I lie here, frozen in silent terror.

# *The Tapscott Tragedy*

Todd Campbell

Feeble light defiled the veil of darkness as a decrepit man studied the embers of a solitary match. "My life is dark and full of horror," he concluded as he lit a fat cigar. He surveyed the streets below. His paranoia of being discovered was beginning to get the better of him. "How long will I keep running?" he pondered as he took his place behind his typewriter and set to work.

My name is Thomas Avery Tapscott. In youth, I pledged my life to a cult that promised eternal life. I am here to recall the night of All Hallows Eve, 1927. I ventured north to the New England wilderness. It is recorded in Elder Kardec's memoirs that a black door exists near the border.

I found the monument. High were the nine pillars that encircled a marble table etched with Nordic scripture! Blasphemous were the vines that shrouded its polished surface! Rotten was my reason as I procured the jackalope. I held the divine beast by the horns and cut him from ear to ear. Blood filled the trenches of the runes that declared this the hallowed ground of the goddess Hel. They began to glow an ethereal blue as the table split to reveal a well of stagnant, black water. I raised my hand to the heavens proclaiming, "I seek my darling Caroline who was stolen by Spanish fever! To you, Hel, I present this offering with hope that you will allow me to gaze upon her grace once more!" As my blood descended into the abyss, I heard Caroline's voice whispering in the wind, "Thomas, come home. The water is warm." As I bowed my head into the well, black tendrils lashed out and dragged me into the depths. They choked my spirit and drowned my senses.

I awoke to a world void of life. I lay in a clearing of trees, but these were no pines. They appeared to be constructed from mangled corpses. Their visages were wrought with terror, immortalized by burnt bark stretched tight over their broken masks. Their haunting, glass eyes followed me as I crept towards a faint yellow glow in the mist. The source of the light was a wolf with bayonet-like teeth, and eyes ablaze with sickly, yellow fire. It cackled as it spat fire onto one of the corpses. To my horror, the beast charged me and sank its daggers into my leg. As it dragged me into the heart of the forest, I heard the trees wail in mourning for the burning one.

We came to a fountain surrounded by nine spires. Poised in the center was a statue of a woman. The beast released me and wheezed, "This is the prize you seek, my child. Know that she cannot dance with those who dwell above," before crashing into the underbrush. Once the fiery glow of the beast's eyes faded, I rose to inspect the statue. Scarlet tears leaked from her marble eyes as I embraced her unyielding stone. As we embraced, blood began to pour from our mouths until the fountain flowed red. The water began to swirl and engulf us. Slowly, I sank below the depths and into another life.

Thomas ceased his typing and removed his memoir from the machine. He took his account and sealed it away inside the corner safe. He turned to peer out the window only to find two black Cadillacs rolling to a stop in front of the dark manor. As the cultists stepped out, Thomas kicked over an unlit kerosene heater to soak the floor with the volatile fuel. He moved to face a bust bearing the likeness of the late Lady Tapscott. "It appears that this is the final hour of my life. Would me lady care to dance?" he whispered as he dropped his cigar. As the flames seared his soul, he heard Caroline's voice in the crackling fire, "You are my light, for my life is dark and full of horror."

# *Glass, He Eyed*

Dr. Martin Jacobsen

“Well, there are only so many places the damned thing can be? It has to be here somewhere,” Dr. Benjamin Castor thundered to himself as he searched his square-box office. “I just took the damn thing out. Where in the hell could it possibly be.”

His office neighbor, Dr. Tricia Arpetry, appeared at the door, surveying the situation from behind her intrinsically sardonic grin and, ultimately, presenting the inquiry, “What the hell are you looking for?”

“That little glass plate from the panel on the window,” Dr. Castor replied, “well it’s probably acrylic, but whatever the hell it’s made of, I can’t find it. I just took the damned thing out so I could post my office hours, and now I can’t find it. I’m probably looking right through it. I don’t think I’ve ever lost something transparent before, but I’d gamble it’s possible that it might be hard to find if it’s lying flat on something. I’m not even able to figure out where it isn’t. I wish I could look through this glass darkly. I might see it then.”

“Well, that might be,” Dr. Arpetry concurred as she began looking for it too, essentially repeating the same search Dr. Castor has already conducted three times. After a few minutes of fruitless effort, Dr. Arpetry departed for a meeting, and Dr. Castor closed his office door and began another exploration of the same places he’d already looked.

Then, after moving his cap from the top of his inbox for the fourth time, he discovered the missing pane of glass.

“Well, it’s about time,” he scoffed at himself. He felt particularly foolish. He stared at the small, rectangular plane for a moment, and an irrational anger welled up in his soul. He glared at the pane of glass. Then, perhaps in an effort to reassert his superiority over the inanimate, placed his right index finger on the center of the pane, as if he were metaphorically poking it in the chest.

By the time he registered the surprise of his finger passing through the pane, he had already fallen through it. In all the years that he had handled the pane of glass (or acrylic, or whatever) that had been in the panel on his office window, he had always handled it by the outer edges. It was a habit. Perhaps it was a throwback to his years of playing vinyl LPs, which he had always handled by the edges only. Without knowing it, he had adopted that approach for anything that needed to retain a clear surface—from music CDs to small mirrors to eyeglasses. It was a good habit: A very good habit, as it turned out, because, until this moment, his habit had prevented him from making the crucial mistake of touching the pane of glass in the center.

As he reoriented himself after the transition through the nexus, the first available fact was that he could see his former reality, yet he could only see what the pane of glass permitted, which wasn't much since the pane was a little smaller than a standard index card. But very little time passed before he found that he could not move his arms or legs or head, as if he has been slipped into the runners of a display panel, like the one on his office window in which the pane of glass had always resided. Then it occurred to him that he had closed and locked his office door. He had no way to know how long it would be before anyone would think to check his office, and it seemed even less likely that anyone would think to search for him behind the pane of glass that usually resided in the runners of the panel on his office window. No one would think that the "damned thing" he had briefly lost a few minutes ago would become a damning thing that would bring about the much more lengthy loss of Dr. Benjamin Castor.

# Untitled

Jenna Manley

We used to be the best of friends, Joey and I.

He would take me everywhere. Restaurants, the beach, his friends' houses...everywhere. But our favorite spot was the tiny, worn treehouse in his pecan tree. He would bring almost every toy he owned up onto the little platform. However, he would never forget his favorite, most important toy: me.

I am a special, limited edition stuffed bear, purchased for Joey when he was two years old. The factory workers were kind enough to give me a little recorder in my head to tell Joey how much I love him. I still remember the first time Joey's little hands squeezed me around the middle, and the speaker in my head activated.

"I love you!"

And Joey loved me, too. He'd squeeze me at night when his parents fought, or when he had bad dreams. He would try to get me to eat with a spoon pilfered from the kitchen, even though he was perfectly aware that I had no mouth. He would always make sure I was in pristine shape, and kept me away from dirt and sharp objects. He loved me. I was his favorite.

I was his favorite.

It was a sudden change. Joey stopped taking me outside of the house when he was six years, thirteen weeks, and two days old. His friend laughed, and said that only babies carry around stuffed animals. I told Joey that his friend was wrong, but he didn't believe me.

I said, "Oh, Joey. Your friends are just jealous. So jealous. They wish they had a sweet little bear like me." I tried so hard to keep his attention -- to keep his love.

It didn't work. Joey couldn't hear me.

I sat in Joey's room and was ignored for weeks until his mother demoted me to the attic. The dusty, horrible attic, filled with moths that ate away at the faux fur that surrounds my form, gorging themselves with the stuffing inside.

I miss Joey.



And so I sat, immobile, for days. Weeks. Years. Until one day, I moved -- by myself. I don't know what caused this to happen. Maybe it was divine intervention, or maybe all of my love for Joey gave me the power to walk. I walked slowly, making it to the attic door nestled in the wooden floor. It was slightly ajar, and I fit through easily.

I'm going to find you, Joey.

I know this house like the back of my paw, and it took no time to find him. He was in his room, hunched over and listening to loud music. Gone was the little boy that sat with me outside through the warm afternoons, with missing teeth and scraped knees. He was now a grown-up. He'll still love me, though. I know he will.

I sat in the doorway until he noticed me. Eyebrows raised, he approached me slowly, and picked me up. I missed you, Joey.

Joey, with his now too-big hands, gently squeezed me. I choked out my pre-recorded line, feeling the dust shake from the speakers in my head. "I love you!"

He jumped at the crackling of my voice.

I moved closer to give him a big ol' hug. He screamed, and almost dropped me. Joey always was a little clumsy. It's a good thing I held onto his head!

I felt muffled screaming against my tummy. "Help! Heff!!!"

What was that, Joey? Hug? If you say so! I'll give you all the hugs you want!

"I love you!"

Joey sure is breathing hard. And he's being so noisy! I guess he missed me a lot, too! After a while of hugging, he started to cough. Is he sick? Don't worry, Joey. I'll help you feel better.

--

Joey stopped making noise, and he hasn't moved for a while. He must be tired. It's been a while since our last naptime.

"I love you!"

We'll be together forever, Joey. You won't leave me again.

"I love you!"

# *the* Legacy

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The Legacy is seeking submissions for its  
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Submissions due midnight November 8th, 2019.

## Submission Guidelines:

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*Happy Halloween!*