



KAMENA

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WARWICK WRITING SOCIETY

EDITION 20



Welcome to the 20th Edition of the Kamena Magazine!

First of all, a big warm welcome to our new editor, Ivana! Ivana has been a contributor to the magazine for many past editions, and we're very excited to be working alongside her after Writing Society's spring elections!

We have received some amazing submissions this time round which cover a vast amount of themes and tones, and we can't wait to share them with you.

To celebrate being our 20th Edition, each editor has contributed a piece, all of which you can find at the end of the magazine!

We hope you enjoy this special edition, thanks for sticking around!

If you're interested in submitting to future editions, check out our website and our various social medias:

<https://kamenamagazine.com>

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This magazine works under Warwick Writing Society. If you are interested in joining our society, visit our instagram, @warwickwritingsoc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Conversation on the Edge <i>by Eve Poirier</i>	4
Eavesdrop <i>by Hina Ishida</i>	7
If You Wear Your Heart On Your Sleeve <i>by Hina Ishida</i>	8
Praying Mantis <i>by Thomas Smith</i>	9
The Habsburg Chin <i>by Emily Jones</i>	10
Tvergastein <i>by Benjamin Watson</i>	11
View of a Restaurant <i>by Zak Robinson</i>	13
In The Mirror Room <i>by Anonymous</i>	17
Envoy to Taime <i>by Daniel Souza</i>	19
White Sea <i>by Ivana Stoyanova</i>	21
Looking Through the Garden Window <i>by Harriet Curry</i>	22
Rewriting Shakespeare <i>by Bex Howarth</i>	24

A Conversation on the Edge

by Eve Poirier

After twenty metres, I come to a thin ledge. A break in the rock more pronounced than the rest, and just enough to stand on. Place a high foot, twist the hips, and I draw myself gently up to full height. Below me stretches out miles of unremarkably green British farmland, broken only by a few roads – and of course this thirty five metre high sheer wall of rock, unapologetically carved into the landscape, its cracks and seams daring to be challenged, to be fought, to be climbed. Perched here on my ten centimetre island in the sky, I find respite from the monotonous and beautiful moves below. The wall features a dynasty of horizontal breaks laid one above the other, always just within arm's reach, miraculously climbable yet relentlessly daring. Each move requires trust – my foot will not slip, my arms will not give out, the next ledge will be within my desperate grasp. And so it has been, move after move, hold after hold, until now – as I reach an outcrop just big enough to support me fully.

Every last adjustment is delicate, purposeful, keeping my weight just balanced on the inside of the little windowsill. My chest is pressed to the wall, my arms spread wide to either side, exclaiming their joy at being released from duty. I turn my head to face the right, touching my cheek to the rock. And there she is next to me. She wears the same helmet, the same climbing shoes, has the same tape on her dodgy shoulder. And in her eyes I recognise the familiar whirl of emotion and adrenaline, of fear, tiredness, and hope. There is just enough room on the precipice for the two of us, condemned to face each other lest looking away make us lose balance.

'I'm so tired.'

She looks on the edge of tears.

'I know, but you're doing great! Think of how far we've come.'

'But there's so far still to go. I don't know if I can do it anymore.'

I'm tempted to chastise her for her pessimism, but all I can muster is a weak pity. Fatigue is painted across her face, weariness at the day-in day-out, the demands she places upon on herself. I try for another attempt at optimism.

'I think the climbing is beautiful,' I proffer. 'It's serene up here.'

'Serenity feels too much like isolation,' she mutters resignedly. 'Right now there is only me. All this fear, all this burden, is mine alone to bear. I've borne it for so long now, so privately, so quietly. I feel so alone.'

The gentlest whisper of a breeze flits past us. I feel the exhaustion begin to retreat from my forearms, the toll extracted by the rock being paid back by the invigorating air. It *is* lonely up here. It's so easy to forget about everyone else, about everything apart from the rock right here and now. It's so easy to feel isolated when apart from those we love.

'Look down.' I instruct. She hesitantly diverts her eyes, which until now have been locked to mine, noticing as if for the first time the rope tied securely to her harness. I go on:

'You are not alone. All the way down there is your belayer, waiting patiently, guarding your life. And your friends, squinting up at you, wishing wholeheartedly for you to succeed. They will cheer you on no matter what comes to pass. Even if you fall, everything will be okay.'

Tears begin to flow. Why does that phrase draw forth such pain? I can tell she even believes it, deep down, and yet that makes it hurt even more.

'I care so much,' she sobs. 'I *want* to keep going, to reach the top. And I know that even if I don't, things will turn out all right. But every day, every new move, drags at me, sapping my spirit. It's do your washing up, hand up, pull. Go to the shops to replace the food you ate, foot up, stand. I love cooking! I love climbing! I want to stay in bed and let go and fall. I love life! I love finding the joy in these movements, in taking on the challenge, in succeeding in move after move and inching closer to the top. But *why is it so hard to do the things I want to do?*'

The tears are streaming now. It rains woe on our precipice, droplets which will evaporate before anyone ever sees them tracing lines through the chalk on the rock. I wonder if anyone has ever cried here before. A hug would be nice, but also impossible, teetering on this ledge of honesty. Answers would also be nice, but the next daunting folds of limestone beckon cryptically, refusing to promise anything. The only way to find out is to climb. I look back at the woman next to me, and I smile.

'I love you. I'm proud of you, and I think you should be proud of yourself too. I'm proud of you even on the days you don't get out of bed, even when you ignore your goals. I'm proud of you when you claim everything you wanted – but I'm proudest of you when you let yourself fail.'

This isn't just pithy encouragement. I truly think she's beautiful, I know how strong she is. I know how much she goes through every single day. And she's still here, standing next to me, balanced on the same ledge, reaching the same heights. It's a testament to her strength that she's managed this well.

'Bring yourself back into the now. If you want to reach the end, you need only make a few more moves – you've already made hundreds. *You have everything you need to succeed*: the same footwork and strength which brought you here to this ledge, with me, is all you need to continue. Or don't! You could let it all go and drop of the edge now, abseil back to the ground, and even then I would be proud of you. But I know you've got more in you than that.'

A glimmer of determination sparkles in her eye, tears beginning to dry on her face.

We breathe.

And while we've been stood here, our strength has recovered a bit. Our arms gingerly cheer us on, bold enough to pull that little bit further. Our mind has calmed, the smallest mote of anxiety has seeped out with each cathartic tear. I blow her a kiss. Placing my hands firmly back onto the rock, I turn my head away from her and take a deep breath. And then I give up my ledge, and keep climbing.

Writer's Note:

This piece is a fusion of two different experiences of Eve's which tap into the same emotional feeling. The first is the experience of being 20m up a rockface, barely able to hold on, and just managing to find a position to rest. The second is some of the things they've said to themselves while having a good cry. Both of these experiences were ultimately very lonely, but they feel that there's a sense of wonderment that comes from the loneliness of climbing, when you are able to look down at wide swathes of nature below you and feel really at peace.

Eve tries and hold on to those magical feelings of awe and love for the world even if they're just crying in their bed in the dark - so while this piece tangles with feelings of depression and the desire to give up, it's ultimately all about hope, and finding the beauty of life even at your lowest points. Most importantly it's about accepting that sometimes that you will fail, and the importance of being okay with that. You won't always have the strength to keep climbing or to get out of bed - but can you love yourself even then?

They are a Philosophy Finalist, and the President of Warwick University Climbing Club.

Eavesdrop

By Hina Ishida

I heard the paper flutter in her hands.
My ear wedged between the white bannisters of the staircase.
The paint is still wet, so I try not to smudge it.
I like to push my hand down to make a print on the new carpet.
“Look at our son! He’s the best in the class.”
When she spoke,
The words passed through a golden grin.
I recognised the sound of her finger
Tapping on the corner of the page,
At a sticker shaped in a star.
And my dad always responded with a
“He’s my son.”

I heard her slam the paper down on the counter.
The paint is flaking off now into little chips, revealing the dark oak.
Was that always there? I thought it was a paler colour underneath.
As I listen, I can’t help but dig my toes into the beige carpet.
It’s rough and the friction burns me.
When she spoke,
The words came out dry.
I recognised the sound of her finger
Tapping on the corner of the page,
At a place where there used to be a sticker.
And my dad responded with a
“He’s your son.”

Writers Note:

Hina Ishida is a second year English and Creative Writing Student at Warwick. She wrote this poem as part of a 30-day poetry challenge for national poetry month. This poem is about the academic pressure that parents put on children and therefore resulting in the child being harsh and overly critical towards themselves when growing up.

If You Wear Your Heart On Your Sleeve

By Hina Ishida

Carry around a seam ripper,
And place your tongue on the roof of your mouth
And lean away from them
And don't let your eyes dilate
And don't look too long at their hands
And don't laugh at every remark
And don't tell them what you like
(Because that's how they'll win you over).
And don't let your feet turn towards them
And don't touch your hair when they look at you
And don't ask them how they feel about you
And oh my god, don't stalk their Spotify songs
And don't convince yourself that you like any of it
And press backspace on that text message!

And after all that,
Even if it feels like its hard to breathe,
And the thing in the left side of your chest
That thing
You know,
That thing,
Still won't stop annoying you

...ok fine.

You can keep your needle.

Writers Note:

Hina Ishida is a second year English and Creative Writing Student at Warwick. She wrote this poem as part of a 30-day poetry challenge for national poetry month. This poem is about feeling like a fool and having your guard up whenever a person finds themselves catching feelings. However, it seems as though love always wins.

Unknown Species of Praying Mantis in the Peruvian Amazon

Photography by Thomas Smith



The Habsburg Chin

By Emily Jones

Beware, beware the Habsburg chin,
Beware, beware that messed-up grin

Charles the second, as he was known,
For thirty-five years did he sit upon the Spanish throne

With his jaundiced face and misshapen maw,
So frequently was he at death's door

And when he finally kicked the bucket,
They found he had but one testicle, as luck should have it

But I suppose that's what happens when one's family tree is a wreath,
And by God, he was its ugliest leaf

So now boys and girls in your dozens,
This is why you do not marry your cousins

Writer's note:

Emily is a first-year History student! They wrote this poem a couple of years ago and rediscovered it recently while clearing out some old notebooks. It's part of a collection of humorous poems about historical figures they've been working on for a while, but 'The Habsburg Chin' is their favourite.

Tvergastein

By Benjamin Watson

"It got to be a great dream to be able to stay on the mountain—not compelled to come down before dark or because of rain and thunderstorms."

A cloud formed into a dragon, then dissipated. I could come up here and stay, but now, it wasn't so. Along came birds, Swifts, flooded effortlessly across the plane of vision. They danced like ballet, rushing purposefully as if the curvature were planned and thought out.

A stream flew, it carved through the mountainside. It reminded of a lizard or something, rushing snakewardly into the valley where it met a lake, small but deep enough to drown oneself if you wished. The water would taste sweet in childhood, it still did. When the water reaches the sea it will spool and whirl and rush and break and flounder rhizomatically, now, it is flowing without turmoil as it should be. The water is an obsession. A harbour offers a place of stability, a calmness from the waves. Out there in the open sea, you wouldn't last five minutes.

The mountainside; fern, bracken strewn and gorse as well and peat. The peat was running out, once it ran out we couldn't burn the stoves anymore. The philosopher proposed that nature was created for our usage. But we practised austerity anyway with respect to the peat. Goats were rare in this part, though not unheard of. No tracks, presently. At the same time, sheep were visible further below. Not usually this high up though.

In mediaeval times, they might come up here, and burn witches and soforth. The dip where it may have taken place was visible. The old woman, who maybe had been around forever, spoke of a burning in 1273 that spake forth smoke until the next valley over. You consider the possibility, it would add a sense of rebellion to the place.

A place which is so alone you could collect yourself if you tried.

On the mountain, out of view of undue manichaeism you could take a proper view of the world. From the heavens, looking down as if to judge humanity detached. Create your own belief-system, attach yourself to a place of your own.

Writer's Note:

Benjamin Watson is a second year PPE student, and they like to write works themed around Philosophical issues. They are particularly interested in themes of environment, space, cartography, and history, and were inspired to write by the works of Olga Tokarczuk, who they see as exemplifying these interests.

View of a Restaurant

By Zak Robinson

Matt looked out through a translucent veil. The grating sounds of laughter floated spitefully into his ears, flowing down through his body into a pool of emotion that threatened to drown him entirely.

“Matt?”

Matt looked up. His eyes took a moment to register where he was. A man was directing words at him.

“Matt, you okay?” Enquired Aiden.

Matt looked up at the crowd of people staring at him. His friends, arranged around the circular table of the restaurant, were pillars trapping him in a prison of echoed happiness that he was unable to feel.

“Oh, I’m fine! Was off in my own little world there for a second!” Matt laughed, smiling jovially around the table. A polite chuckle trickled through the group, before everyone turned back to their conversations and Matt’s grip on the present once again slipped. His eyes resumed their usual glazed-over state as his attention was wrenched inward so he could attempt to stop his own irrational thoughts tearing him apart. It was only as his gaze began to fix on a non-descript point in the distance that something dragged him back to reality. Aiden was staring at him. His stern features were locked firmly onto his own, his brow furrowed in a look of quiet concern. He hadn't really spoken to him, or any of his friends, in months, yet in that moment he experienced an unfamiliar sensation. Feeling. He became aware of the fluorescent lamp above them, its light winding down through the air, feeling out the rough forms of the mahogany table and dancing gracefully among the refractive curves of the wine glasses. The rays streaked across the bustling dining room, lighting up the faces of families, of couples and even of men and women sitting happily alone in the comfort of their own companionship. Matt felt the thoughts and feelings he had spent every day of eternity examining melt away as he embraced the joy of feeling that somebody might care about hi-

“Aiden! Make a guess! What film am I describing?” Shouted a particularly loud man, that Matt only vaguely remembered knowing, across the table. He turned his gaze from Matt and, just like that, the moment was gone. Matt felt himself tense up as his eyes glazed over and the familiar pain of existence seeped back into his mind, making it near impossible to imagine that he had ever felt anything else.

After a round of vague and awkward goodbyes Matt left the restaurant, alone; he watched the group disassemble into its constituent parts, none of which he was a component of. The complex machine that was the world didn't need him; he was merely vestigial. They bounded off into the night, undoubtedly going to continue their evening at some gaudy nightclub or tropical bar in the downtown. Matt however began wandering towards his apartment, barely registering the clusters of rowdy people that sauntered in the opposite direction. He only wished he could sprawl aimlessly onto the sidewalk and wait until the black hole that was his mind finally collapsed in on itself.

“Matt?”

Matt felt the corrosion around the clockwork of his heart fragment a little as the word crashed into him.

“Oh, Aiden! What are you-”

Matt faltered, his all-too-familiar facade of joviality finally falling apart.

“Where r’ you off to?” Asked Aiden, reading him like a book.

“I- I don't know. I mean, back to my place. I just don't feel-”

His voice trailed off.

“Matt? Are you-?”

He looked down at the pavement. A shallow puddle had collected from the earlier rain. Rays of light from the streetlamp ricocheted off its surface, dazzling the surroundings with an unstable glow. Staring into its rippled water, Matt couldn't even make out his own face among the distorted world.

“I’m just tired, I guess.” The hollow template of a smile adorned his mouth.

Aiden’s brow furrowed as his lips pursed. His eyes betrayed his concern. This didn’t seem like a situation where a quick joke and offer to go grab a drink would help.

His eyes scanned his features, trying to break into the fortress Matt had constructed around himself.

“You sure?” He mustered.

Matt slowly raised his head to face his friend, desperately trying to hold back the flood of emotions that threatened to force its way out of his head. He wanted nothing more than to let him in.

“Yeah. Yeah, I’m- I’m fine.”

But he couldn’t. If he couldn’t understand his own thoughts, he couldn’t expect Aiden to. That wasn’t the forte of his male friends. Aiden stared at him, seemingly about to say something more.

“Well, I guess I’ll see you around, Matt.”

His eyes still betrayed his concern for him. The words took the air out of Matt.

“Yeah, I’ll see you later.”

He knew he wouldn’t.

Sitting on his unmade bed in his apartment, Matt felt the immense weight of regret begin to finally crush what remained of his desire to exist. His body sat motionless. His mind was a labyrinth more terrifying than any in legend. Every pathway of thought he explored inevitably led to some terrible monster that sliced him with blades formed of tainted memories and broken dreams. He felt tears building up behind his eyes but the agony within refused to manifest, keeping his suffering a secret.

Matt made a final decision. The world was blurry and it hurt. With effort he willed the drawer of his bedside cabinet to scrape open. Something inside of him screamed at his body to stop, but it was too

late for that. An awful object was drawn from the drawer. The broken beams of blue light that shuffled through his bedroom window bounced regretfully off its tarnished metal surface and into his eyes. It was still sharp. He lifted it – it was funny, tears finally started to push past his eyes – and pushed it into his forearm. He didn't flinch. He decided he would do it all at once. One stroke and he could escape. He started a mental countdown and stopped thinking about the things he would miss.

One.

Two.

Thr-

Sound blasted through the apartment, crashing into the bleak conglomeration of suffering that had built in his mind. Accompanying it was a warm glow which burst through the dark veil of the apartment. Matt watched with confusion as the streaks of light darted across the room. He followed the beams back to their origin, subconsciously already aware where they would lead. His eyes met the glow of his phone screen as it buzzed desperately. If it hadn't been for Aiden's call-

'Sir?'

'Hm? Oh- I- sorry, yeah, the tattoo. Just a big fan of punctuation, being a writer and all.' He joked, smiling knowingly at the stylist as he pulled on his shirt. 'How long until I'm on?'

'I think...'- she looked to her supervisor - 'they're ready when you are.'

He stepped towards the stage, silently chiding himself for allowing his mind to get so caught up in those distant memories. The audience was small but attentive, and Aiden was there. The presentation went great, with small groups of people thanking him for his work and telling him how it had 'changed their lives'. No matter how many times he heard it, it was hard not to respond with a near socially unacceptable level of joy.

Sitting at a celebratory dinner that same evening with family, friends and colleagues, Matt chatted across the table whilst his gaze flickered around the restaurant. The warm glow of the small room made Matt feel full before he had even eaten the food. A group in the corner laughed with each other over their friend's spilled drink. Two girls (who were clearly on a first date) chatted politely whilst suppressed excitement danced underneath the muscles of their faces. A charming waiter served two flustered older ladies in a booth near the entrance. The sun set above the city outside the window as its soft glow blanketed the buildings in-

'Matt, did you hear me?' asked Aiden, who was again sitting across from him.

Matt looked back at his friend, smiling as he responded:

'Sorry, what did you say?'

Writer's Note

Zak is a first year Film and TV Student with a personal interest in storytelling. This short story was developed in conjunction with my own experiences with mental illness, and thus has changed a lot since its inception (as they have). They could say a lot about what this story means, but at its core it is a story about *hope*. Whilst it might seem naïve, it is a fact that things do get better. You just have to stick around to see it happen. If this story reminds one person of that, then it has done its job.

In The Mirror Room

By Anonymous

In the basement beneath my house there is a mirror room. I go there to find myself, and I find myself ten thousand-fold in the army that is the reflection of my reflection of my reflection. Identical and yet different, we stand separated by the delay of the rebounding of light across our infinite space. And yet, I am the smallest and the largest of them. The furthest and the closest of them. Each entrapped, their touch forever condemned only to the coldness of the mirror. This is what it's like to be God, I think to myself. My creation, myself, is everywhere at once. Nothing unknown to me here, nothing that is not me or without me. Even at the horizon there I'll find myself, with a more distant horizon unto that self. Myself in perfect multiplicity and synchronicity, I lord over time and space and every crevice of this reality.

And when I close my eyes, I find myself back in my room of mirrors. In here, though, the mirrors are dirty. Warped. Tinted. My army are all turned to face me, in this reality. Each face a different ask. I feel myself slip into their pull. Those hands claw at my face, and I wonder where has my stomach gone. Those clawing hands, they cover my eyes from myself and there's nothing I can feel but the pulse of flesh and the calling of my name. Here the battle plays out, in my hall of mirrors, as all call out my name. I open my eyes again – who opens my eyes again? I look across my army, my army of faces, and the ones nearest are the ones loudest.

I look beyond their shoulders for glimpses of something that stand out from the all-too-near. There are far reaching places over their shoulders. Mountains and valleys. Hills and lakes. Placid people, in placid places. They who do not call me, they have no need to. It's the darks of their pupils, the curve of their smiles that call me. They who enjoy their own company, they have no need of me. Not as these close ones do. No, it's I have need of those distant ones, as the desert wanderer has need for an oasis. Oasis. This is one name for them. I call after their hundred names, as mine is called for me. Come and see, they smile. Wise old monk smiles they have, for they know the secrets of this reality. My cries travel to them, but they do not draw any closer. No, there is no magic carpet to them, on the isle beyond this army. I can barely see them, on the isle beyond this army. I couldn't imagine making way to them, through the grasping scratching clawing of the half-beasts that separate us. So I simply look. I look for a long, long time. Lifetimes. How the world separates us. How much distance there is, in the beasts, and the land, and the waters between us.

The eager, clawing hands that cover my eyes, that whisper in my ears, that clasp me. These desperate beasts who call forth my desperation, these mindless beasts who make me mindless, these heartless

beasts who take my heart. Sometimes I'll look away from you, and the hollow of my blindness carries me on darker waters than I can tread safely, and my treading lightly betrays me as undercurrents come to take me. Limbs lost to ocean currents, Gulf, North Atlantic, Canary, Equatorial, Brazil... I'll drift and drift and make headless headway in the turbulent flumes of the ever changing. The great roulette wheel of life takes me around and around, and I'm a pinball in a game I never signed up for, no, not for this. The insane excitement of a madman letting go of the wheel and throwing his hands up in the air in the whirlpool of life. The heady thrill of freedom; the slap of consequence.

When I find myself at the bottom of the ocean, there is only one place to go, and that place is deeper still. So I dig my water grave and settle there, among the algae and oil, my early water grave. I am a rock on the ocean bed. I am stone and silt and stasis. Here I can lie, forgotten and unharmed. And then, something pricks up my ear. A fishing hook has hooked me, and it draws me to the surface, the place I've tried so hard to forget. Let me forget those screams, let me forget those monks. My scales aren't fit to be seen. Ocean bed, why haven't you swallowed me whole? But the best of me looks up to catch a glimpse of the glow of the surface, and I know the face of those fishermen although I can't see them. And limp I rise up and the ocean currents send me wheeling, but the fishing line stays strong. Someone pulls me close, against the currents, past the creatures of the ocean. Water filtered light burns at my stone covered skin, and I see the pink of flesh once again, and this burns too against the salt water. How the burning makes me scream, screams that put to shame any beast's scream. I feel beast-desperation, I feel their ugly need, as one they seem to come together with a singular need to escape this. Such torture they can't bear. I feel myself pulled back down, the great sucker of an octopus latched upon me. I am torn in two, but the pulling is great enough to draw up the octopus, to draw up the chain of them. They cannot bear the shallow waters, and the acid light, and the placid faces.

Finally I emerge from the depths, human once again, on the isle beyond my army. In the Oasis the air is lighter, the beauty is greater. They laugh around me, belly laughs of cheer and joy, these ones who are pink, silver and gold tinged. To see them up close, to slip into their reality, this is an intoxication. I lose myself in those, and in them I find myself. These giants of men, these who are taller and greater of spirit and size than I feel any right to be by. They enfold, me they give me their taste for a little while, the scent of their perfume for a little while, and a white jewel is slipped into my forehead. Now, you won't forget, they tell me as sleep comes for me. Now you can't forget. But you must make your own way here, child, fight your own beasts and part your own seas to stand among us of your own size. And I laugh and laugh as my head nods and draws on courage and peace. I can find here once again. I can always look for this Oasis, always reach for this Oasis, amongst friends and light. The wind carries me back now, and the jewel in my brow throbs, and I find myself amongst the half-beasts and the clawing, new born. My eyes are draw to the Oasis, golden hued with monk like faces. "Come!" They call for me now, "Come!"

Writer's note: The piece is about the unconscious multiplicity of the self, as with every good work of fiction, and their inspiration was themselves, as with every good work of fiction. Whether this is a good work of fiction is left to the reader.

Envoy to Taime

by Daniel Souza

And what can I say that has not been said before?
Inspiration runs fleeting and out by the door,
Here so soon and gone forevermore,
Just give me a scent and I'll follow it.

Alas, sweet Taime,
The Muses have forsaken me!
The music has fled my heart.
Has it fled yours?

The birth of a poet is a wond'rous thing,
Like the flutter and crash of angels' wings,
Like the blood of a fallen seraphim,
That burns hell-red in the night.
Yet of late I have lapsed into lethargy,
From whence proceeds this melancholy?
'Tis the sorrow after the epiphany -
Oh Lord, it disheartens me quite.

Alas, sweet Taime,
The Muses have forsaken me!
The music has fled my heart.
Has it fled yours?

Have you ever tried to turn lead into gold?

It cannot be done, all things being told,
What power is it that makes me so bold?
Even as my skill is mislaid.
This pen I wield until my fingers blister,
But the words on the page refuse to glisten.
Came my muse? I must have missed her,
So it falls on me to claim:
'Twixt the fog and the daydream and the bedraggled dark,
I have lost my fire, but not yet my spark,
I can still sing seemly, outwarble the lark,
And someday soon I will say:

Good joy, sweet Taime,
The Muses are awake in me!
The music is in my heart.
Is it in yours?

Writers Note

This is taken from an envoy to Daniel's good friend Tamrold, who is a trueborn handyman and decidedly *not* a squire.

White sea

by Ivana Stoyanova

White sea waves crash against the cliff side
worship shores witnesses of civilizations long gone
reached by forgotten fleets, owned by dead gods
White sea waves have seen the temples that are now ruins
the customs, now shrouded in mystery, subject to speculations
the people, buried in Gaia's arms, engulfed in the eternal embrace
White sea waves sing the songs of bards, stories of wars and heroes,
echoes of a different reality
maenads' frivolous tunes, Dionysian spirit never left our souls
Orpheus' lyre led him to uncover the truths hidden from every mortal's eyes
White sea waves keep secrets; they guard, they protect
human character is volatile and so are they
human life is temporary
White sea waves intertwine with golden Ichor

Writer's note:

Ivana is one of the Kamena editors and a first year English and Theatre student. This poem was inspired by the ruins of Poseidon's temple at the top of a cliff in Sounio, Greece overlooking the Aegean Sea. Where she's from they call it the White sea. There is a possible influence from her Epic into novel module but she was already a Greek mythology fan. Blame her fourth-grade literature textbook and possibly Percy Jackson.

Through the Garden Window

By Harriet Curry





Writers Note:

Harriet made this short comic one day when she was meant to be writing an essay for one of her English modules. She kept thinking she saw a cat in the garden in the corner of her eye but turned out she was just imagining things.

She didn't make it to have any particular meaning, but you can interpret it however you want.

Rewriting Shakespeare

By Bex Howarth

It's not really a love story. Or, I guess it is, but not really in the way you'd think.

They were kids. Sixteen? Thirteen? The only lifelong relationship anybody needs to be having at thirteen is with Disney.

Kids have valid and passionate and wonderful feelings, sure; maybe they'd get a glimpse of someone at a party and think, I'm going to be in love like this forever. Maybe some of us were out browsing for marriage material at that age. I don't know what the fuck I was doing at thirteen.

(Who was my first love? Flynn Rider? Very probably. Brings us back to Disney, at least.)

Look, kids, your feelings are real and they're important, but you're not in love with someone you met at a party a day ago. You're delirious with repression and burning up with craving, to live all of the lives and feel all of the feelings. You're angry because the world is big and cruel and filled with wars you don't understand. And you're not a child anymore, but you're not an adult, but nobody talks to you like they understand that. Nobody gave you the sex talk because it's the sixteenth century and lust is the devil's heartbeat.

And even in spite of all that you still only have a couple years max before they start pestering you to tear up your body and give them babies of your own.

None of it is fair, but you're not in love with each other. You don't even know each other. You're in love with everything around you and in front of you and inside you. The ideas and adventures and the whole garish spectacle of it. One day it'll make sense, but for now you're kids.

Except, now I'm doing it; telling children what they think and feel. Maybe they can tell us that for themselves. It's their feelings, theirs. Nobody else in the whole world but them knows how they feel.

(I'm barely older than they are, if you think about it in the long run.)

Maybe I just don't understand passion, or the beauty of impulsive spontaneity. Maybe I just need to experience the lightning strike of looking into someone's eyes and seeing my life flash by like the bards and poets say, except it's a life with them, and I'm not dying, it's the opposite of dying, it's living for the first time as two people instead of one and knowing that everything before this moment was the

curve of the pendulum before hitting the apex, and that now everything is whole where I didn't even know I was half empty.

Maybe. Who fucking knows.

So let's ditch the cynicism and say it all worked out.

They're married within the week, and every week that follows glows brighter. He's not one of those sixteenth-century husbands who are cruel to their wives; she's one of those sixteenth-century wives who clings to her husband's every word and command. She serves his plate, he thanks her politely. They have sons, probably. Every sixteenth-century household wants sons. When they die, they have enough years and experiences behind them to cushion their fall.

Just kidding. It's a tragedy. That's the whole point.

So, okay, they break up. Forever is so much time and space that their hearts can't fill it. Makes sense, because they're kids.

Still. It's rough, for like a week.

She sobs prettily into her pillow and swears off men. He writes shitty poetry, because you know this bitch is the same genre of man as the Orpheuses and the Troy Boltons of this world. You cannot convince me that, if this boy existed in the twenty-first century, he wouldn't own a ukulele.

But whatever. Eventually he'll move on to the next somebody to mope over, and she'll remember him fondly. Then she'll think about how it was kind of weird anyway that he decided to just climb over her wall one night and spy on her, and that maybe she dodged the sixteenth-century equivalent of a bullet.

After breakups, you go on living. Except we know that's not what happened.

Maybe nothing else could've saved them. Maybe they were eaten up with their own passion, and their bodies had to be abandoned to let the soul shine through. The afterlife, some idyllic afterlife where feuds can't tear people apart and blood doesn't spatter the streets, is the only place that will welcome their love.

They're forever trapped in their youth now, always unchanging. The best part is that they never have to grow up or wake up and realise that sometimes love isn't forever, and that only work and time and care can foster it.

Or maybe their love is perfectly preserved in its glass display case, and they're spending their afterlife in celebration of their 426th anniversary.

The Afterlife Woman looks up on one of those days where the moon haunts the daytime sky, and wonders what the stars would think, to see their child turning her face to the sun. The moon doesn't care. She reflects the light that's thrown at her, every hour of every day. The Afterlife Woman dreams of the days where the bodies of sun and moon would eclipse together, and burn out the sky.

Then she turns to me, and she looks pissed off. Understandably so. I'm just an overly-critical twenty-first century idiot who definitely can't write a play even a quarter as good as Shakespeare's.

"I really was in love with him," she tells me, and I almost believe her.

If I was the playwright, I probably would've made them older.

Writer's Note: Bex is a Kamena editor and a first-year English and Creative Writing student. She wrote this after watching *West Side Story* with some friends and getting very frustrated with the main characters. She wants it to be known that this piece is pretty light-hearted and not to be taken as a serious criticism of Shakespeare, because she does not want to get stabbed.

She also did not actually reread the play before she wrote this, but that's neither here nor there.

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the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (1974), and the *Journal of Experimental and Clinical Psychology* (1975).

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