

CALLIOPE

XXXVI

#35yearsofcalliope



CALLIOPE

VOLUME XXXVI

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Jewel- Aubrey Brumbelow

Out of everything in their apartment, Emerald liked the couch best. Maybe it had a hole in the side and had sunken down in the middle, and Emerald couldn't bounce on the cushions like she would have wanted to, but she liked even that about the couch. She liked to trace the ripped edges of the hole, feel the scratchy material it was made of.

Her mother didn't really come over to the couch often, but, when she did, she would tell Emerald stories. In Emerald's favorite one, a girl had to break out of the tower she'd been locked inside. An evil witch had kidnapped her, hoping she could use the girl's superpower for herself. Often Emerald would bring her dolls into the living room and act out the stories on top of the couch.

Right now Emerald watched the clock. Then, the moment the time turned to midnight, she rushed to the door and hovered. She bounced her weight back and forth between her legs. Ten minutes later, Emerald had grown bored and decided to look for a pencil she could doodle on the walls with. But then keys rattled, the door opened, and Emerald's mother was home.

Emerald clapped her hands and babbled, sticking close to her mother's side like a barnacle. Her mother nodded, her face unchanging. She drifted to the kitchen table. When she put her purse down on the table, it rocked back and forth, as if contemplating collapse.

"Have you eaten?" her mother asked.

Emerald said she had liked the sandwich she'd made. It had had mayonnaise and ham and the last of the crunchy peanut butter. Her mother nodded slowly, then sank down into the kitchen chair.

The silence slumped Emerald's shoulders. Suddenly, she said, "Mama, I'm your jewel, aren't I? Still?"

It was a prompt for one of her mother's stories. A shorter one, but one Emerald loved.

Her mother turned. Her eyes were darkly and deeply set into her thin face. She reached out a palm to Emerald's hair, and Emerald sighed and leaned into the touch. "I named you Emerald," she whispered, "because you were our jewel."

The words were the same as always except for one word. Emerald looked up with wide eyes. "Our?"

Emerald's mother withdrew her hand, slipping it inside her purse to return with a lighter and a white square pack of cigarettes.

"I thought I was just your jewel."

Her mother lit her cigarette. The smoke curled out into long ribbon-like strands. They curled and curled. When Emerald looked back at her mother, she saw a trembling palm, the thin white of the cigarette vibrating.

"You look like you're shaking from an earthquake," Emerald said, cocking her head. By then, the sprawling smoke had begun to fill her nose and scratch at her throat, so that she was forced shift away with a cough. "Are we having an earthquake?"

Her mother's arm crashed down onto the table, and Emerald jumped. "I can't do this." She wasn't looking at Emerald. She was looking at the wall of the kitchen, which had yellowed. There was a hole in the wall from the people who'd lived there before.

"Mama, I'm sorry." Tears streamed down Emerald's face. She looked down at her feet. They were bare and tiny next to her mother's shoes.

Her mother said nothing. One moment she was there. The next she had disappeared inside her room without a sound. Sometimes Emerald thought her mother might be a ghost. When Emerald had to go to school, she got on the bus, so no one ever saw her mother. When she got back home, she never saw her mother until late at night. No one could tell her that her mother was really real. Really there.

Her mother's door was shut, so Emerald went to bed. She had her own room. It wasn't very big, but Emerald didn't need much. She had an air mattress on the floor, and it was her favorite color. Bright blue. Nothing like the ugly pale green of the kitchen's peeling linoleum floor. She'd rather forget about that kitchen all together. She went to sleep after a lot of tossing and turning, and then she dreamed she was a ghost, looking in at her mom, but there was something trying to chase her. She woke up when it was still dark outside. Her heart beat really fast.

She thought the thing might still be chasing her, so she rose from her bed. Her feet echoed against the creaky floor. She wanted her mother. She knew she wasn't supposed to open her mother's bedroom door, but tonight she knocked anyway. Her mother didn't wake up. She knocked again, then sniffled and called out.

Please let me in!

No sound.

Emerald shivered. Finally she turned the knob, and slowly the door groaned open. She stepped inside. "Mama?" she said, braced for her mother's scolding tone.

But there was nothing. Emerald went to the bed and pulled back the covers. Her mother was not there. Emerald blinked.

She went to the kitchen. Not there.

She went to the couch. Not there.

She went to the door. Not there.

She stood for a moment, as light began to seep through the blinds. She blinked again and again. She thought suddenly that her mother really was a ghost, and she'd only imagined her the whole time, and that, by going into the room she wasn't supposed to go in, she'd broken the spell. Or maybe she had been the ghost the whole time, and her mama had finally figured it out.

She went back to the room. The closet was open and empty. Most of the clothes were gone. The apartment was empty.

Eventually, as the light grew harder, Emerald went to the couch. She sat on the couch, and she traced the hole, making it bigger. She scratched at it, nearly ripping the leather from the couch like skin off bone. Then she stopped, sitting very still. Her feet did not touch the ground.

She sat on the couch and waited, staring at the barren wall.



A Little Piece of Heaven- Rebecca Thiele

As long as I can remember, this house has been my home. As I pull into the hidden driveway on the main island road, I see the tiny, yellow house before me and a huge wave of relaxation washes over me. I park and immediately head around the side of the house to make sure the beach is still there (a joke my grandparents have always made upon arrival). There she is: St. Helena's Sound in all her glory. I arrive in time to watch another spectacular sunset over the glistening water. The sun passes behind the clouds and proceeds below the horizon as I take deep breaths, the salt air filling my lungs. A huge flock of pelicans glides past me. I count over eighty before I lose my place and return my thoughts to the sound of the waves crashing against the shore. I can not resist turning around and glancing back at our little cracker box of a house. I hear the laugh of a seagull and remember I still have to unpack, which has always been my least favorite beach activity. My mind floods with memories. Eighty years and five generations of love, joy, sadness, and healing lay inside that tiny structure.

"Just because you're little doesn't mean you don't have to help, Becca," called my big brother, annoyed by my laziness. I was seven and so excited about being at the beach again that I completely forgot to carry in the extra towels. That year, there was a big storm and all the lights on the island went out for two glorious, candle-filled days and nights. The beach was covered with displaced sea urchins and sand dollars, which we fruitlessly tried to save. We spent the days running up and down the beach, collecting shells and hermit crabs, swimming in the cool waters, and spending quality time with our beloved grandparents we called Papa and GranRachel. Papa always made us carry a bag for trash, or "people shells" as he called them, when we walked along the shore. Together, they taught us the names of all the shells and animals, made sure we respected the loggerhead turtle nests dotting the coastline, and spoke of the history of the island all the way back to the original settlers.

When I was a bit older, I got to spend part of a summer there with my grandparents and no siblings. Oh, the joy of being an only child for a few weeks. GranRachel had suffered a short but triumphant battle with skin cancer and was recovering in the healing salt air. I was there to help change bandages on her hands and fix the occasional ice cream scoop covered in grape soda, a "purple cow." Papa came up for a week and recruited me to help re-shingle the cabana, a small shelter at the end of our boardwalk. He told me the college students throw parties and come over and sit on top of it, breaking off the shingles and leaving people shells all over the dunes. While he worked, I handed him tools and got him water. He was so patient with me, explaining why he was doing each step. GranRachel would come to the deck and sit and read.

"Rebecca, look at the pelican!" GranRachel shouted from the deck. The huge bird flew over the tops of our heads, so close, I felt I could reach up a hand and stroke its belly. At this time, brown pelicans were rare because their habitats were being destroyed to make room for monstrosities, which what we call the newly constructed giant houses popping up all over the island. People had discovered its serenity and planned to exploit it. However, my grandparents and the local islanders were not willing to accept it. In order to keep it a family beach, they held meeting after meeting, forbidding big corporations from moving in and pushing the peace-loving island dwellers out. In the end, our side won. The only corporate busi-

nesses on the island to this day are one gas station and one grocery store. Everything else is still locally owned and sourced. At least some things never change.

One thing did change. I changed. When I got to high school, the beach no longer seemed as fun and exciting. I wanted to stay home and hang out with my friends. It is so odd now to think that I would have consciously chosen not to go to a place so full of wonder and serenity. When I did go, I would complain and be an all around nuisance. The beach was too cut off from entertainment with only basic channels and rented movies from a small VHS only rental gallery. No video games for me to pass the time playing, only books to read. Those years, I spent most of the time arguing with my younger sister to the point it drove my mom a little bit crazy.

When Papa turned seventy, we had a big party. Everyone in the immediate descendant line of my grandparents came; we crammed over twenty people in the cracker box that only sleeps six. We boiled fresh shrimp and peeled it just for him. Songs were sung all day, mostly hymns. We all went swimming together, bonding in the saltwater. My cousins were expecting their first child, the first of generation number five, and we were all thrilled for that. It was such a great time and everyone was so glad to be there - well, almost everyone. I wanted to be home. I missed my friends. I didn't know that would be one of the last times I would see my Papa alive and coherent in his favorite place.

We were at the beach when we got the phone call. I could see my sister's face fall. We knew it was coming, but we were not prepared to be here. I remember lighting a candle in the window and walking down the boardwalk to say our goodbyes. We sat there in front of the house, feet in the sand, quietly crying side by side. I grabbed a handful of sand from underneath the cabana that he worked so diligently to keep up and carried it to the water's edge. I opened my hand and watched the wind blow the sand into the water.

"Be at peace, Papa," I whispered, "no more suffering or confusion in heaven." Heaven - I imagine it is nearly an exact replica of this place, which meant he was home. With that thought, I was able to regain control of my emotions, knowing he was finally at peace. A group of pelicans, no longer endangered, flew above my head. I counted so I could tell my grandmother when I saw her next. Forty-eight brown pelicans were there to send my Papa home.

I unpack my car. This time, it is just me. I no longer have a desire to be anywhere else if I could be here. Even alone, I can feel his presence. His writing, small and neat, still displayed in the closet, labeling where each tool should be. The history of my family drips from tattered books and incomplete jigsaw puzzles. I could almost hear his voice telling me to go check on the beach.

"I already did, Papa, and it is still there."



Hollow- Tatiana Joseph-Saunders

Welcome, come all to the dark place between our hips
The empty space between our bastard lips
That place where our hands meet and we can't feel a thing
That spot between your brows that is reminiscent of adolescence
That slight dip above your lip that reminds me of (y)our innocence

Welcome, come all to the place where rash decisions are made
Where unlike are beds and minds, everything is made up, never real
Where I forget when to lick my lips and you forgot to hold my hand
Where everyone's intertwined but doesn't remember their rehearsed lines
The place where I can't get out and never would want to

Welcome, welcome to the place where I run to when there're no more games to play
Welcome to the place where I can walk through walls but can never reach you
Welcome to the place where I hide within cupboards from my mistakes
Welcome to the place where I become glass and cut myself on my lies
Welcome to the cave, where I hope you forget and stay behind

SOUTH FOR WINTER- Jacob Smoyer



White Death- Mary Teresa Woodcock

The feeling of chalk on my fingers- dry, dusty, bony, like teeth. I scratch them together and my insides squirm at the sight of those little dust clouds of white death. My fifth grade teacher stalks across the room. Scritch, scratch, scrooch. He draaags his feet and I can feel it-- those tiny parched particles rubbing against his rubber shoe soles, making me think my teeth will fall out, but then, he looks in my direction, mouths for me to write an answer on the board, and... I freeze. He protrudes a tiny stick of white chalk, offering it to me. I reach out. I have to take it now.

Grasping it with just two fingers, I already feel the urge to lick my entire hand. All eyes on me, my eyes on the chalk, chalk inching towards the board and then SCRITCH! I draw a line. SCRATCH! Another. Scritch, screech, scratch, scooch, scrunch! I finish. Tiny clouds of white death fall with each stroke. Hastily, I drop the chalk, suddenly aware of every tooth in my mouth. They, too, are chalk now. I lick my fingers, all of them, and wipe them on my pant leg, those dry, deathly particles now resting on my tongue until, "Incorrect. Please, have a seat." I gulp them down.

I cannot focus for the rest of class, cannot breathe for the fear that more death will enter body when... the bell rings. My heart expands, tis my escape! I lunge for my books, look up, and hear, "Would you kindly volunteer to erase our board?" teacher asks, handing me a wide eraser coated in white death.

SHADES OF CRASHING WAVES- Jacob Smoyer



Sit Like a Lady- Taralee Arrowood

Men close your ears
Because you may get offended.
Or better yet,
Open them
So maybe you'll learn a lesson.

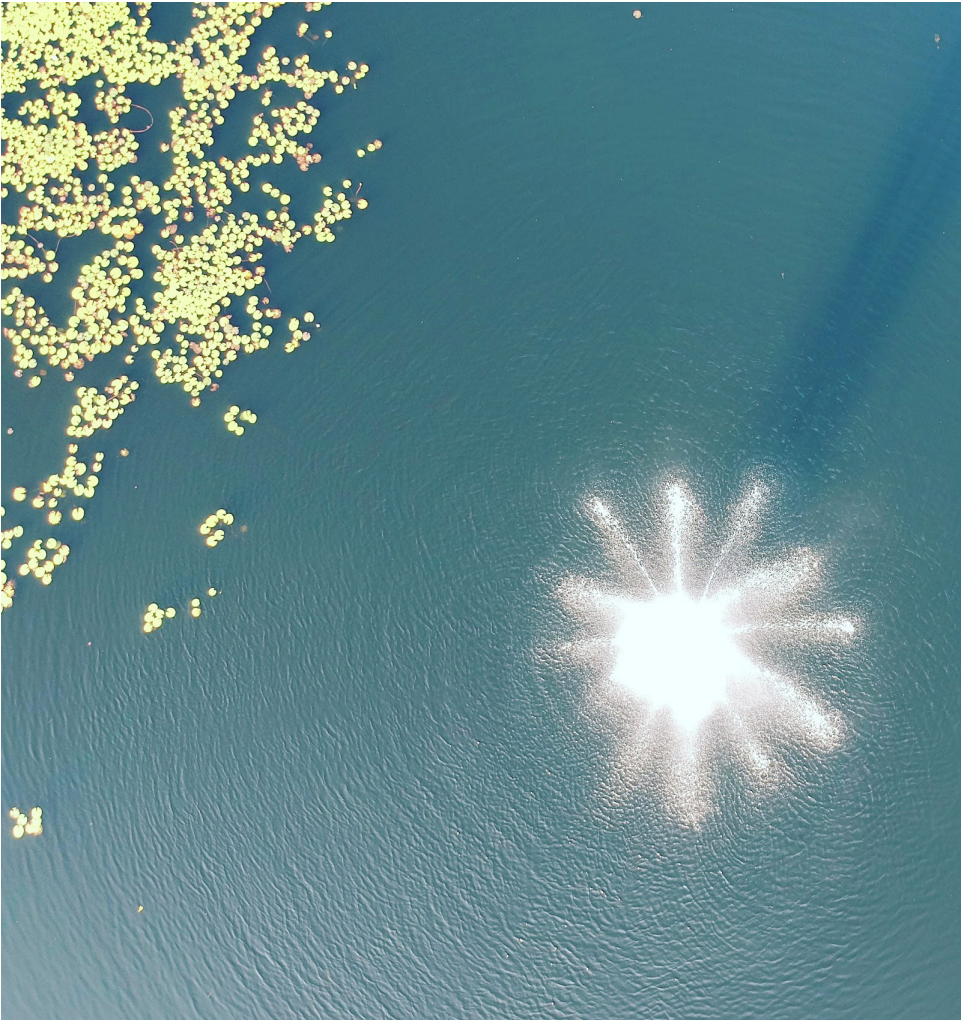
So tell me,
How do ladies sit?

From what I see,
Ladies sit like royalty,
Perched on a throne they built,
With their own two hands.
Crafted with:
Power,
Hope,
And perseverance.

Tied together with
Passion,
Thinking,
And individuality.

Because since birth,
We've had to scrap,
To earn our seat
At the table
that our fathers built.

FOUNTAIN OF HEAVEN- Jacob Smoyer



Goodbye, My Dear- Nancy Smith

The crumpled letter in my corduroy pants pocket
hits the compartment wall I sit against.

On the train home, each word hits
like jagged rocks against metal tracks.

I'm sorry I have to do this -
It begins, as I read the people at the station blur,
and bright, green trees replace shiny skyscrapers.
- but I have to admit I've changed.

My trembling leg shakes my torn up seat
and the guy's next to me. He huffs,
gets up and moves across the aisle.
I'm leaving tomorrow -

- because our love is no more.
I clutch your rusted locket tightly
in my cut up hand as my chest thumps
along to every slam of the old train doors.

It ends with a tear that slides off
my cheek, and punctuates it with a screech
of the wheels from the train tracks.
Goodbye, my dear.

ROADSIDE FLOWER- Mary Teresa Woodcock



He Kissed Me With Color- Jamica Perot

Hidden in your heart is the desire to re-
move the black faces

But let's face it

That's me

The flowing generations, my tribe, my
family

Shall you continue to deny

The promise before your very eyes?

This lush legacy

The splendor of my peoples' tapestry

You choose to set your mind upon
confusion

When there's far more to what you're
viewing

Look beyond my pottery, my clay

Take into consideration why my King made
me this way

He chose to prove His love

By clothing us

In His finest apparel

His handcrafted vessel

We were married to the hues of the Earth

At birth

Bright golds, cinnamons, and black onyx

The richness of the soil cried out in
triumph

We have been formed with the Masters'
skills

Blinded, you can't see this and some never
will

Please see beyond

To something profound

A canvas of Gods' making

A true breathing bold statement

He chose random vivid colors in this life

Amen that He chose what He liked

Left in man's hands

We never would've been a
part of the greater plan

Take my Fathers creativity out of the
box you meticulously placed it in

Find the living colors amongst
you and blend baby blend

To disregard any aspect of His pal-
ette is to doubt Him

How can you walk around say-
ing you know all about Him

So many mix twisted prejudic-
es with Sunday morning faith

And expect God to bless you to your face?

Beloved that's just a shame

But no worries I'm pray-
ing for you just the same

Lord you made me in Your
likeness and your image

I pray that my misguided brethren will get this

I acknowledge and respect this fact

That uniquely you made me beautifully Black

I thank God He kissed me with color

Yea Yea

He kissed me with color

NEW BEGINNINGS- Christina Colon



Figures- Tatiana Joseph-Saunders

We stand still, staring, mocking
Waiting for one another to misstep, say the wrong thing
It's almost as if it's a game, a sick one at best
The loser is the one who mistakes the other for being real

We can see the welcomed discomfort in each other's eyes
But that doesn't wipe the smiles off our faces
If we stop smiling, then we risk spilling out
What else happens when the wall crumble down?

We're standing in the middle of an empty room
We are the only articles within, and we are both disappointed
It's clear that we placed ourselves here
We shift blame with our eye lashes and our unheard words

You moved! I saw it
Your hand twitched as your heart restarted
You had mistaken your heartbeat for mine
You thought I had fallen again

This time it's you
You were frantic as I stopped the world around us
You moved again! This time you blinked
You mistook your tears for mine

You thought I was yours again
We both know how that would end
Yet you still wait for my surrender
When will you learn? Once you start a game,
you must expect a winner



Wyrms- Jacob Whitefield

Cattle die.
Flowers wither.
Fruits turn sour as the Wyrms slithers.

Men grow old.
Women are widowed.
Terrified children peer out the window.

It swallows.
It hisses.
It devours whole flocks.

It follows.
It glistens
Upon river rocks.

All swords turn brittle,
All spears rot away,
All arrows whistle
And still go astray.

The Wyrms eats its fill
And then eats e'en more.
It takes its kill
But leaves the gore.
It slinks back to its dusty caves,
And sleeps again until it craves.

The people wait with bated breath
For sweet salvation or bloody death.
Venom drips on the forest floor.
The Wyrms slithers and withers once more.



Guests of The Aurora Ball- Marion Jeffers

For my friend and my brother who chased the lights.

I know a girl that chases the lights.

The lights that dance across
the northern skies

and I wish I could go with her

and if I close my eyes,

I can imagine myself standing there.

We wait in the hushed silence of the Night.

We are the guests of the Aurora Ball.

The Night, clothed in a gown
of darkness surrounds us

and all we can see is what our
hearts are longing for.

Snowflakes dance across our faces,
tickling our cheeks and noses.

Our gloved hands clutch the
warmth of a thermos

containing rich, steaming cocoa
that thaws and soothes our burning
lips, noses and throats
from the freezing air.

There are no sounds in this
ballroom of the wilderness,

only the chilling wind whispers
patience in our ears.

Suddenly, we gasp in delight at the
arrival of Heaven's Auroras

as they make their entrance across
the canopy of the blackened sky.

Majestically robed and dressed in
glowing greens and yellows,

they bow for those donned of blue
and pink and royal purple.

As they sashay above us, my only desire

is to dance with them above
the snowy wilderness.

The lights extend their
hands to our hearts

and continue to gleam along
our side of Heaven.

I am enchanted, wanting to stay forever.

I no longer feel the chill of the
Alaskan air nipping at my cheeks.

I don't remember the cares
or worries of life

when I am covered by Heaven's beauty.

Almost too perfect to enter this world,

they stay long enough for us

just to know we aren't imagining them.

It seemed almost as soon as they entered,

they began to honorably
depart from our view

ribboning and waving farewell to us,

their beloved guests from below.

The Ball has ended and the
Night accompanies us

back to our sheltered place

where it is too bright to
see Heaven's lights.

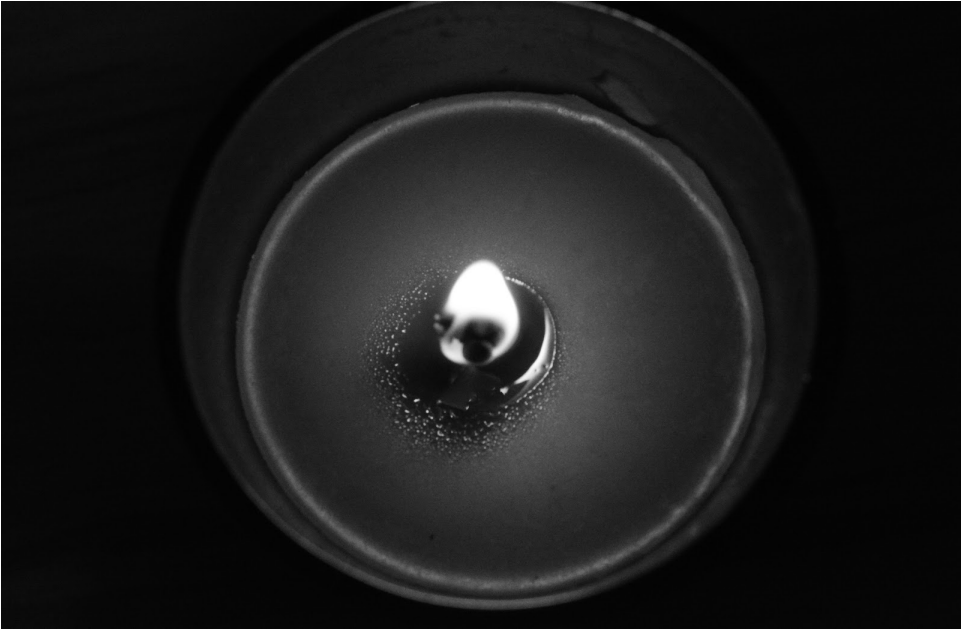
When I open my eyes

I am greeted by the warmth
of the southern wind

caressing my face,

colliding with the swaying
moss of the oaks,

carrying the salt of the sea.



Ceraunophilia- Chandler Hanton

Translation: loving thunder and lightning

She was as wild

As the thunderstorms upon the moors.

Never stopping,

Even for me as I cried out

Within the midst of the lightning

And rain,

Drowning, electrified

Within all that was her.

IN HER EYES- Casey Nash featuring Zoey



My Dog Tags- Casey Nash

Dangling from the neck,
Clanking together,
My dog tags never touched the dirt.

Burning My skin on long hot days,
Frozen in place on frigid nights,
My Dog tags never rusted.

Filling with blood,
Shot in the afternoon,
My Dog Tags never lost faith

Sealed in my doom,
Granting my freedom to the other side,
My Dog Tags never stopped clanking

Heavens gates open,
Fidler's Green honored me,
But My Dog Tags never fell in the dirt.

CALM AFTER THE STORM- Jacob Smoyer



Give Up- Brooke Alley

It's actually freeing to give up on things,
To give up on hopeless love,
To give up on impressing uninterested people,
and to give up on those that see you as nothing.

Giving up isn't always quitting,
It's realizing you are better than what some think.

DIRT DIAMONDS- Jacob Smoyer



An Ode to Rockstars- Allison Noonan

rock of ages;
bedazzled, platform boots
long hair, bell bottoms, flowy shirts

*standing by the stage
black stockings
see-through dress¹*

faces adorned:
lightning bolts, stars, whiskers
young girls on your arm

*just me and you
backstage
sex and outrage²*

cigarette hangin' out the corner of your mouth,
whiskey in hand,
cocaine in your gums

*you make all the men stagger
with your oh so heavy love
red hot mama³*

thrust your sunburst les paul,
bang away on your drums,
whine your sweet swan song

*hard plastic molds
perfect love in the shape of a penis
a token for your ever growing collection⁴*

your eyes made up with coal black liner
bright red dripping from your tongue
feathers strewn about in your lovely locks

*your favorite thing to ride
besides the stars of course
is the big, grey tour bus⁵*

the thunderous applause,
the roaring crowd,
a sea of lacy bras

*oh!
christine's only sixteen!
who cares?⁶*

1 "All Night Long"- Rainbow 2 "Sex and Outrage"- Motorhead 3 "Dolly Dagger" -Jimi Hendrix 4 "Plaster Caster" -KISS 5 "Once Bitten, Twice Shy" - Great White 6 "Christine Sixteen" -KISS



sun-drunk parking lots- Lauren Crisp

Watching birds fight over french fries in sun-drunk parking lots
With pills in the front seat
My life in the back
Another faded advertisement as static in the background
Of careful strangers screaming behind backslidden windows
In the car, out of the car, and in the car again
Hoping the engine turns over just one more time
Switchblades queered beyond recognition
Always sound a little out of key
But it's better than bare fists
Or the clanging of chains
Or the quiver of just one more second
Of wait
Wait
Waiting
In this godforsaken parking lot
Where a seagull overpowers the crows
And takes his token
Waving a quarter of a french fry as his sovereign flag
As the empty black beaks gape open
In cries unheard
Underneath the sound of keys clicking into place
One more ride
One more drive
The pills are impatient, kicking at the dashboard
But the backseat is full
Of waiting
And watching
Fast food fattened flocks
Scramble for one more taste
Of midwestern heart attacks

CANNIBALS- Jacob Smoyer



Every Moment is Hurt- Caleb Ely

Ladson

Every moment I feel hurt
Because I'm surrounded by the ones who hurt.
Every moment I want better
But it's not as easy as writing a letter.
At my core is love
But love isn't working.
So, what do I do?
How do I move forward?
How do I break free without breaking a heart?
How do I create my own start
Without my love sounding like a mean bark?

BOUNDARY CROSSING- Jacob Smoyer



Two Separate Ships- Marion Jeffers

Two separate ships
are resting in the harbor
as the water urges,
teases and laughs against their hulls.
Gulls cry and scream
above them as their mockery
fades into the air,
while the docks are alive and groaning
from footsteps, supplies and luggage
to be taken aboard.
The voyages begin
and the sails of one
wearily wave farewell to the other
as they coast in opposite paths,
aware of the destination
yet unsure of the journey ahead.
Only silent nature will comfort
the lonely, traveling vessels.
There's a chance they'll port
together again for a time
that lasts longer than before
or possibly shorter,
or they shall catch a glance of the other
upon the sea by merely flag or feature.
They that were once resting together
but are now
two separate ships.

STEADFAST BLUES- Jacob Smoyer



EDITOR'S NOTE-

Since 1984, the Calliope has provided Armstrong students with the opportunity to show off their artistic talents. We have celebrated in the written form through poems and short stories, as well as visual art such as images of paintings or staged photography.

In 2018, Armstrong campus students had reason to fear that the Calliope that we know and love had its last edition printed that year, but we are very fortunate to announce that, at least for now, our tradition will continue and become part of the new Georgia Southern University. This year's edition of the Calliope features works of art from all three campuses; Armstrong, Liberty, and Statesboro. As our cover image suggests, we hoped the Calliope could act as a bridge that connects the three campuses.

A special thank you to the committee of contributors for this year's edition: Ben Cela, Casey Nash, and Hannah Whitehead.

Also, I want to thank Dr. Robert Terry for his guidance and his perseverance to keep the tradition of Calliope alive. Finally, a thank you to all that submitted to the Calliope. There were a lot of great pieces of work submitted in this year's edition, and I hope that we can continue to see the same drive for next year.

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Ben Cela

Hannah Whitehead

“As we enjoy these glimmers of magic, these echoes of old dreams and hopes new and daring, may we each appreciate a little bit more that magic which surrounds us daily.”

-Rita B. Enzmann, Editor, Calliope Volume I, 1984

*Celebrating 35 years
of
“Glimmers of Magic”*



ON EAGLES' WINGS YOU SOAR

-Alma Mater

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF CALLIOPE

