



The Scriptorium

Fall 2024: The Lost Road



The Scriptorium

Fall 2024: The Lost Road
House of Humane Letters Student Journal

Table of Contents

<i>Letter from the Editor-in-Chief</i>	ii
<i>Editorial Staff</i>	iii
FEATURES	1
Myth and Its Elements by Elizabeth Eusterman	2
On Digital Art by Gabe Chou	4
On Samuel Johnson by Olivia Hornstra	8
Gift of the One to Men by Luke Prizzi	10
On Friendship by Natalia Testa	13
STUDENT LIFE	19
On the Importance of Memory and Stories by Annalise Martin	18
Conversations Shape the Camp by Grace Gerardot	21
God's Glory by Jonathan Jecko	24
Commonplace Quotes	28
Interview with Dr. Anne Phillips by Fiona Altschuler and Annalise Martin	31
ART	39
The Bookstore by Elsa Altschuler	40
The Beebox by Elizabeth Knight	41
Peony by Raeleigh Kirby	42
Gateway to the World of Stories by Lucy Limesand	43
FICTION & POETRY	45
The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars by Elizabeth Eusterman	46
Journey Into the Light by Isaiah Snowden	50
Misty Oak and the Healing Stone by Vyona Thompson	57
The Duck Moon Rising by Max Chou	61
Lady Winter by Tabitha Turnage	65
The Torch by Josiah Mullins	66
The Four Loves by Bishop Gilmore	67

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Reader,

When the Scriptorium team was considering titles for the new HHL student magazine, we had many, many ideas. Our Managing Editor, Grace Gerardot, suggested *The Polyphonic*, which meant having many voices all singing different melodies that harmonize beautifully, and also served as a nod to the end of *Gaudy Night*, which many of our staff members name as their favorite book. I suggested *The Torchbearer*, which would put everyone who submitted to the magazine in the position of someone carrying the fire of past times to a new generation. Miss Angelina Stanford suggested *The Golden Thread*, as our goal was to lead people out of the dark cave of modernity into the bright, beautiful world that authors such as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Northrop Frye inhabited.

In the end, we finally settled on *The Scriptorium*. Dr. Anne Phillips explained that a scriptorium was the room in a monastery where monks would copy down and preserve old books, and create some of their own. We loved that *The Scriptorium* could be a “room” in the House of Humane Letters. And we loved even more the idea that this preserving and carrying on of the literary tradition was exactly what we aimed to do in this new magazine. The submissions we received for this first issue of *The Scriptorium* skillfully reflect this philosophy. Every story, essay, and piece of art that our excited editors received made evident our community’s thorough understanding of what our standards concerning literature should be. Stories such as *Journey Into the Light* by Isaiah Snowden and *The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars* by Elizabeth Eusterman are chock full of allegory. I got multiple thrills reading over them and seeing the different symbols and literary tropes the authors used.

The essay *On Digital Art* by Gabe Chou, which explained his views on physical vs digital artwork, were perfectly cohesive with the beautiful pictures that appeared in this issue: *The Gateway to the Land of Stories*, a lovely picture by Lucy Limesand, and *The Peony*, a stunning painting by Raeleigh Kirby—as well as many others.

You can tell simply by the names of the different essays and poems that the authors are ridiculously well-read: Works covered in this issue include *Beowulf*, *The Silmarillion*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, and *The Four Loves*. The commonplace quotes come from such authors as Charlotte Mason, Elizabeth Goudge, and Mark Twain.

The Scripties have had heaps of fun shaping these witty, fascinating, and beautiful submissions into a cohesive magazine that will set the tone for *The Scriptorium* for many years to come; and I hope you have heaps of fun reading it. Until next time, stories will save the world!

Yours,
Fiona Clare Altschuler
Editor-in-Chief

Editorial Staff



Fiona Altschuler

Editor in Chief

15 years old

Maryland

Anglo-Saxon 1, Early

Modern Literature, Latin 2



Gabe Chou

Arts Editor

16 years old

Illinois

Early Modern Literature,

Latin 1, Out of the Depths



Grace Gerardot

Managing Editor

17 years old

Indiana

Anglo-Saxon 1, Out of the

Depths



Olivia Hornstra

Fiction and Poetry Editor

14 years old

Tennessee

Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval

and Renaissance

Literature, Out of the

Depths, Readings in

Medieval History



Luke Prizzi

Features Editor

18 years old

Pennsylvania

Anglo-Saxon 1, Early

Modern Literature



Annalise Martin

Design and Layout Editor

16 years old

Japan

Anglo-Saxon 1, Latin 1,

Out of the Depths



Natalia Testa

Student Life Editor

14 years old

Texas

Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval

and Renaissance

Literature, Out of the

Depths, Readings in

Medieval History



Elizabeth Eusterman

Features Reader

15 years old

Colorado

Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval

and Renaissance

Literature, Readings in

Medieval History



Sarah Jane Solomon
Student Life Reader
14 years old
Maryland
Anglo-Saxon 1, Early
Modern Literature, How
to Read Literature, Latin 2



Janie Fender
Copy Editor
15 years old
Arizona
Ancient Literature



Madeleine Berns
Arts Reader
17 years old
New Jersey
Anglo-Saxon 1, How to
Read Literature



Jenna Turner
Copy Editor
17 years old
New York
Ancient Literature, Anglo-
Saxon 1, Latin 2,
Readings in Ancient
History



Eliza Graham
Fiction and Poetry Reader
17 years old
Oklahoma
Later Modern Literature,
Latin 1, Out of the Depths,
Readings in Later Modern
History

Special Thanks To



Elizabeth Knight

Cover Drawing

15 years old

North Carolina

Anglo-Saxon 1, Early

Modern Literature, Latin 1

Faculty Advisors

Angelina Stanford

Teacher/Founder of the

House of Humane Letters/

Director of the Fellowship

Good Books, How to Read

Literature, Medieval and

Renaissance Literature,

Early Modern Literature

Dr. Anne Phillips

Teacher

Latin 1, Latin 2

Jenn Rogers

Teacher

Anglo-Saxon 1



Features

Myth and Its Elements

The essence of myth is transcendence, a landing place where the divine touches the earthly. Against the classic backdrop of gods and goddesses, nymphs and satyrs, truth dances across the barriers of time and space to touch the minds of those who hear. Myth is omniscient, it's images a language passed down and spoken by all who write in the fashion of the poets. The babe on the mountain, (an heir to be killed), the hero without a father, (divine parentage) and the slaying of the beast, (chaos to be overcome before order is made), all speak beyond the contemporary page. They have found their way into the hearts and lives of man and his stories, not because they are from man, simply the opposite, they are from the heavens. Man's inventions can be summed up in history books, and many an empire has crumbled at its time, but that which is touched by the divine naturally thrives for eternity. Rome may have fallen; her myths live on.

How many heroes do we see searching for a parent? How many princes haunted by wicked kings? How many serpents crushed by a young warrior establishing peace? These are the images of the timeless myth, rooted so deeply in the minds of men the only way to forget them would be to forget oneself. As Apollo slays Python, a serpent born of mud and chaos, Beowulf wrestles Grendel, Cadmus spears the dragon and Jonathan hunts Dracula. Tragic Phaethon, Theseus, Telemachus and Luke Skywalker seek out their fathers, while Perseus, Oedipus, Jason and Harry Potter are sought out by an evil lord clinging to his throne of power. Even the frivolous mind of modernity with its paper-thin notions of literary achievement, still retains these immortal images. The more man seeks out tales, the more he finds them built upon that transcendence of myth.

The body of myth is wonder, its images speaking to sentiments other than our modern minds, waking us up from our slumber of rationality to the joys of the fabulous with the kiss of wonder. We cannot help but marvel that the sun goes about in a chariot of fire, that nymphs vanish into trees and that a hundred eyed man guards a tree of golden apples. This fantastical setting of our own earth spreads a glorious backdrop where truth can frolic about, encumbered by the heavy boots of pragmatism. If we lived in a world in which every cow could be a lovesick god, we would be willing to believe other such fantasies, perhaps even the ones we forgotten to be true, for one cannot cling to skyscrapers when Mount Olympus looms above all. Myth is a fair mistress. She levels the playing field with golden apples.

Lastly, the workings of myth are true. Its body of wonder and magic lays the foundation for the timeless images. The body serves the images, illustrating their truth in glorious ways. Odysseus could have been a singular hero on his own. Odysseus with Athene is myth. It is this wonder that modernity dissuades, seeking to pave with concrete Elysium. We do not recognize truth unless it is presented to us with its head on a platter. Wonder is for the ancient schoolboy, and modernity is above such things. But without wonder, there can be

no truth, for wonder is the act of a child, a child is open to receive, and by receiving, we accept truth. In rejecting the wonders of myth for the hardness of facts, we simultaneously reject the images of truth contained in them. If there are no dragons, there is no chaos for Cadmus to conquer before establishing a city of peace. If there is no Phoebus, there is no chariot from which Phaethon can tumble in hubris. When wonder is put to the sword, truth goes with it.

Myth is a “strange and fascinating thing” as a poet once said. She sings her epics to the children and reveals her secrets to the learned. Her soul is transcendence, her words omniscient, her body wonder, her dealings true. Her works are ageless, for truth is ageless. The mind of men cannot sweep them from the face of the earth, for they are below such powers, however all men can forget. As Helen mixed a potion of forgetfulness in her white hands, man can forget, either by his own whims or by the neglect of others, those tales of yore. The images of timeless myth can be lost to him, buried forever in the sands of time with a six-story condominium built on top. I would advise him to tear the building down, sift through the sand and uncover the myths. Little by little, as he reads (and remembers) he will come to see, and like Odysseus, return to the land of his fathers.



Elizabeth Eusterman

15 years old

Colorado

Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval and Renaissance

Literature, Readings in Medieval History

On Digital Art

*He pluckt a bough; out of whose rifte there came
Smal drops of gory bloud, that trickled down the same.*

~EDMUND SPENSER

Art is the mind of the artist perceiving the immortal beauty and giving it physical existence. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, it is ‘a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am.’ Art is the true and beautiful passing from perception of the artist to be born as the material. When Raffael painted *La Disputa*, or Leonardo da Vinci painted *The Last Supper*, or Gustave Doré illustrated The Vulgate, they, and every artist before and after them, were turning an imaginative concept into a physical expression. Art is the transcendental become the icon, it is the bread and the wine become the body and the blood, it is the word become the flesh. Art is communion.

In the modern age we do not think in terms of poetry, symbolism, or beauty. We think in terms of efficiency, productivity, and utility. We are no longer a people connected to nature, we are a people connected to machines. This shift in our thinking has altered the way we perceive the universe and our lives, and the way we create our art and our stories. In the past, we lived and thought through and with nature. Homer’s heart beat along with the pagan drums and the pounding thrum of Dionesian earth; Virgil breathed Jupiter’s humming air with Roman regality and fate; Chaucer dwelt under the cosmos of the Divine skies and the howling of Zephyrus; Shakespeare had the bustling Elizabethan dirt rolling beneath him and Her Majesty the Sun reigning above; and the Romantic poets, living in the shaking death of this connection to nature, cherished what memories time had left of these relationships.

From there, through the last couple hundred years, the modern era has worn away our connection to the earth we live and breath on. William Wordsworth famously wrote,

*The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!*

The world is indeed too much with us; we have shrunk it. As C.S. Lewis writes, ‘The truest and most horrible claim made for modern transport is that it “annihilates space.”’ We do not live our lives as we flow within time, we spend our lives as we spend time. We discard our divinely appointed connection with nature, giving ourselves away to our automatic rushing world.

The Ancients and Medievals lived in nature and were in tune with nature. But in creating our machines, living with our machines, and relying on our machines, we are becoming machines; the last step to mechanising the world is to mechanise the man.

Where nature is slow and wild, machines are productive and efficient. Efficiency means only making time and place smaller—annihilating space. Efficiency is the concept behind the desire to make the creative process easier, to enhance it with toolbars, undo buttons, and layering technology; this is what Dorothy L. Sayers warned against when she wrote ‘To sit down and let ourselves be spoon-fed with the ready-made is to lose our grip on our only true life and our only real selves.’ Efficiency is spoon-feeding that leaves us unable to engage in the creative act without it.

Productivity is creation without a justification in the act of being created. To produce something is to manufacture. ‘In the beginning, God produced the world’ has a different ring to it. This is from the mechanic urge to make art useful, and therefore to make useful art. But Oscar Wilde, responding to this utilitarian view, was right when he wrote ‘art is useless’.

Dr. Jason Baxter, speaking of our vocabulary, said in his talk from *Dispelling the Myth of Modernity*, ‘Don’t we talk about ourselves as consumers and producers who bring our labour supply to human resource departments and work hard all day, every day, to optimise our work? Don’t we apologise to one another because we just don’t have the bandwidth to worry about that right now? “But if you just give me a minute, I’ll process what you said so long as I don’t revert to my default mode.” “Well, that’s okay, you’re just hardwired to think that way.” We refer to the assets of our office or department and worry that we don’t have the resources we need to sufficiently maximise our outputs.’

This is what Dr. Baxter calls ‘the psychological internalisation of the mechanisation of the world picture.’ Our vocabulary is the purest flow of thought to outward form, and from it alone—nevermind statistics—we can see the drastic transformation in thinking. We are not submerged in screens merely externally, but internally. From our loss of connection with the real world, and mechanising of our minds, arises the question, ‘If the menial is better done by machines, if labour is better done by machines, if our lives are enhanced and bettered by machines, why would art not be better done through machines as well?’

The Impressionist period bears a foreshadowing of the mindset that would lead to digital art. In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, G.K. Chesterton wrote, as officer Gabriel Syme rushes through a Dantesque forest, ‘The inside of the wood was full of shattered sunlight and shaken shadows. They made a sort of shuddering veil, almost recalling the dizziness of a cinematograph. Even the solid figures walking with him Syme could hardly see for the patterns of sun and shade that danced upon them. Now a man’s head was lit as with a light of Rembrandt, leaving all else obliterated; now again he had strong and staring white hands with the face of a Negro. [...] Everything only a glimpse, the glimpse always unforeseen, and always forgotten. For Gabriel Syme had found in the heart of that sun-splashed wood what many modern painters had found there. He had found the thing which the modern people call Impressionism, which is another name for that final scepticism which can find no floor to the universe.’ The Impressionist period of art was not a perception of nature, but a perception of the mind’s perception of nature. It rendered nature both as loose and intriguing as the human

mind, and as twisted and distorted as the human mind. It was holding a mirror to the window, rather than looking through the window.

Digital art operates much the same way, and on two levels. Digital art is an impression of the machine perceiving nature. Every medium is an impression of a true, physical medium, and every work of art done digitally is an impression of what could have been a true, physical piece of art.

When art is created on a screen, the art is, simply put, *not real*. Digital art exists only in the representation of a representation, from perception to mind to machine, but it is not art you can touch, own, break, or burn. It exists only in the world of representations of representations. Digital art is not paint, oil, watercolour, or pencil, but it is a program representing paint, oil, watercolour, or pencil. The sacred act of symbolism is sacred because it is symbolising what is beyond us, but to symbolise the mind is to symbolise what is within us; it is Narcissus. A picture of the Mona Lisa is quite clearly not the Mona Lisa; no one is resoundingly declared a thief and promptly apprehended for having a googled photo of such a piece. But a digitally rendered work skips the incarnation into reality and becomes only a photo of itself. No matter how much security is assigned, or how unique the original art's underlying code is, no man owns digital art. Machines own digital art.

If art is indeed communion, as Coleridge explained, and if art is indeed connected to our connection to the earth, as the past would illustrate, but digital art is merely a representation of a representation, and one that is *not real*, what does this mean to us? It is communion not through our taste and God's being, but it is communion behind glass and through screens. Communion is sacred because it is *us* engaging with the experience; the temple curtain has long since been torn and we have long since been allowed the act. But it would be better to reinstate the priest and law than to allow a machine to spoon-feed us the bread and wine; the machine does not only make it less human, it enacts the transformation we should experience. Even as digital artists attempt to infuse digital art with the human mind and creativity, and pieces are laboured over with human time, it is only from the human that it happens. Digital art may have exterior aspects of art, such as aesthetic technique, or the ability to inspire other pieces, but it will always be a dead shell of the artistic tradition, the artistic tradition which is communion, not a lifeless and automatic thing, but a living and free-willed spirit. To put it in other words, the more digital that digital art becomes, the less art it is. It is not a harmony of the machine through the communion, it is the communion through the machine, and the machine must mechanise the communion. The digital artist is always at war between the digital side and the artistic side; there is no room for both the muse and the machine. Art expresses the word as flesh, digital art expresses the word as gigabytes and pixels.

There will be with digital art, as there always is with any technological advancement, unprecedented symptoms as these generations, the first to never know a world without the disenchantments of technology, grow old. The machine is so integrated into our minds that,

alone from automatically asking ‘how can art be done more efficiently and productively?’, we neglect to seriously ask a good many things which ought to be asked. Things such as ‘what is art?’—communion—and ‘why do we create art?’—to worship and be fully human. But the past shows a good deal of where the traditional route leads, and the present is derailing from this entirely. Even as digital art consumes our interaction with the realm of art, as machines continue to own more and more of us, and as human creations interact with the communion of our creation in place of God’s creation, as we move from our impressions of reality to the machines’ impression of our impression, and as we all create art that is not art and reality that is not real, we cannot know exactly where this is taking us. But just as the Inklings predicted the collapse of the human mind with the collapse of story, we can predict that the discarding of our God given connection with the real world will lead to a collapse of art—a sordid boon. Lewis wrote ‘We do not look at trees either as Dryads or as beautiful objects while we cut them into beams: the first man who did so may have felt the price keenly, and the bleeding trees in Virgil and Spenser may be far-off echoes of that primaeval sense of impiety. The stars lost their divinity as astronomy developed, and the Dying God has no place in chemical agriculture.’ We may destroy the nature inherent in our communion in place for efficiency, productivity, to satisfy our mechanic urge, and see no harm to ourselves. But nature is living; nature bleeds. Though we pluck the bough for the use, the blood trickles down the same. And as the blood flows down the tree, the meaning of art drips further and further away in exchange for the programmed satisfaction of the machine we are becoming.



Gabe Chou

16 years old

Illinois

Early Modern Literature, Latin 1, Out of the
Depths

On Samuel Johnson

Samuel Johnson was a man of rare brilliance. He possessed an extraordinary wit and was a critic and Lexicographer truly worthy of praise. He has bequeathed a lasting legacy that has influenced many an author and scholar after him, including Jane Austen, of whom it is said by C.S. Lewis in his essay *A Note on Jane Austen*: “In her, we still breathe the air of the Rambler and Idler.” He is also responsible for giving us the first Dictionary of the English Language in 1755.

Samuel Johnson’s education started at a noticeably young age; he read within a wide range of subjects and learned a wealth of things even before being sent to school at the age of nine. When at school he was more well-read than many there and had a great affinity for the Latin and Greek languages. What he would later say as advice to another holds true in his life as well: “A man ought to read just as the inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in a day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge.” Johnson learned more in this way than anything that was taught to him at school. Throughout his life, Johnson was always an honest and wise man.

He could talk to every sort of person conversing on a wide range of topics, and never changing his style of address. This allowed him to take part in many conversations, with many who did not share the same ideas as him. Johnson struggled with a deep melancholy for all of his life and, in order to compete with this, his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds suggested starting a literary club: “For his enlarged and lively mind could not be satisfied without more diversity of employment, and the pleasure of animated relaxation.”

‘The Club’ as it was called started in 1764 and was held in the small Turks Head Tavern. The members were some of the best of the age: Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Sir John Hawkins, Thomas Davies, Topham Beauclark, Bennet Langton, David Garrick, and many others besides.

Samuel Johnson was very much of the old sort. He kept literary tradition alive with precious few others; holding onto scraps of truth while the enlightenment world deconstructed everything within reach. He was a devout Anglican for all his life at a time when many were Deists. He strongly opposed men such as Rousseau as is seen in a conversation between himself and James Boswell:

Johnson: “I think him one of the worst of men; a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society, as he has been. Three of Four nations have expelled him; and it is a shame that he is protected by this country.”

Boswell: “I don’t deny, Sir, but that his novel may, perhaps, do harm; but I cannot think his intention was bad.”

Johnson: “Sir, that will not do. We cannot prove any man’s intention to be bad. You may shoot a man through the head, and say you intended to miss him; but the judge

will order you to be hanged. An alleged want of intention, when evil is committed, will not be allowed in a court of justice. Rousseau, Sir, is a bad man, a very bad man.”

Some must be said on the writings of Johnson, for they are both numerous and of great worth. The crowning achievement of Johnson’s literary career is his *Dictionary of the English Language*. It was the first full dictionary ever published, and the work done on it took many years. There are many definitions that are wrong and in fact quite comical, but Johnson declared himself that these mistakes were made out of “Pure ignorance”. Be this as it may, it is a brilliant work and must be admired for its greatness as the first of its kind. Walter Bates says: “It easily ranks as one of the greatest single achievements of scholarship, and probably the greatest ever performed by one individual who labored under anything like the disadvantages in a comparable length of time”. Some of Johnson’s first work consisted of translating works from Latin and Greek and other small writing jobs. He worked mainly under a Mr. Edward Cave whom he later wrote the life of. His works were also published in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*.

The first of his major works was *The Life of Mr. Richard Savage*, which was published in 1744, and then in 1749 his tragedy *Irene* was published. This work, however, did not do very well when published. Johnson, though disappointed, took the failure with grace saying: “A man who writes a book, thinks himself wiser or wittier than the rest of mankind; he supposes that he can instruct or amuse them, and the publick to whom he appeals, must, after all, be the judges of his pretensions.” In 1750 Johnson began *The Rambler*, a newspaper of essays. The like had not been seen since the age of magazines such as *The Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, and quite an interval had passed since their time. “*The Rambler* shews a mind teeming with classical allusions and poetic energy: illustrations from other writers are, upon all occasions, so ready, and mingle so easily in his periods, that the whole appears of one uniform vivid texture.” It continued to be released every Friday until its end in March of 1752. In 1753, he released *The Adventurer*, and then *The Idler* in 1758 about which was said: “Less body and more spirit, it has more the variety of real life, and greater facilities of language.” His book *Rasselas* is a brilliant work, and it carries a wonderfully similar plan to that of Voltaire’s *Candide*. One more work that should be mentioned is his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. This was written when traveling with his friend James Boswell.

As can be seen he was a man of rare talent. He has left an impression on the world that will not be forgotten. This is not only due to his writings alone, but also to the work of James Boswell who made him the subject of one of the best biographies in history.



Olivia Hornstra

14 years old

Tennessee

Anglo Saxon 1, Medieval and Renaissance

Literature, Out of the Depths, Readings in

Medieval History

Gift of the One to Men

Two Views of Death in Tolkien's Legendarium

J.R.R Tolkien breathed life into a mythology, but he lived in a world filled with death. He lost his father at the age of four; his mother died when he was twelve. In his early twenties, he was plunged into the cataclysmic nightmare of the First World War. "By 1918," he recalled afterward, "all but one of my close friends were dead." (*The Lord of the Rings*, p XV) During the Second World War, he watched his own sons go onto distant battlefields, where he was powerless to help them. He outlived both his wife Edith and his friend C.S. Lewis.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Tolkien's writings are obsessed with death. He wrote concerning *The Lord of the Rings*, "The real theme for me...is Death and Immortality." (*Letters*, p 246) Rather than despair over the destruction around him, Tolkien used his writing to come to grips with his fears and uncertainties concerning human mortality and to condemn false escapism and the desire for what he called serial longevity. Tolkien explores the theme of mortality implicitly in *The Lord of the Rings* but far more explicitly and with greater depth in the body of works published as or related to *The Silmarillion*.

The Silmarillion's protagonists belong to the distinct races of Elves and Men, the first immortal in this world and the second fated to endure death. Many of the men in *The Silmarillion* are unreconciled to death. They envy the seeming immortality of the elves. They are filled with self-pity, thinking themselves neglected by the gods. A tradition runs among them that they "were not made for death nor born ever to die." (*Morgoth's Ring*, p 309) They hold themselves robbed of eternal life. The proud among them embark on a futile attempt to destroy death with medicine. They are susceptible to the lure of dark promises from the enemy offering power and long life.

The Dark Lord Sauron's most terrible servants are the Nine Nazgul, the Ringwraiths: men who accepted evil Rings of Power which bestowed apparent immunity from death. Yet, despite this apparent immunity, the Rings given to men are catalogued by the writer of the elvish ring verse as "Nine for mortal men, doomed to die" (*LotR*, p 49). The Rings of Power prolong the wearer's lives but they confer only serial longevity not immortality. The owner's lives become a burden to them, one prolonged period of fading without light or hope of betterment. They exist only to do the evil bidding of Sauron, and they are completely dominated by his will. The Ringwraiths may seem to have escaped death, but their lives have become living deaths from which physical destruction might well come as a release.

The Elves on the other hand envy the mortality of Men. They speak of themselves with sadness, saying, "Our hunter is slow footed, but he never loses the trail.... And no one speaks to us of hope." (*Morgoth's Ring*, p 312) The Elves live until the end of the world, (even those who die in battle are reincarnated), but beyond the end of the world they have no

certainty or knowledge of what will befall them. They hear rumors of a life after death reserved for men in which the hurts of the world will be healed, and they are filled with longing for it.

For them, the death men dread is the gift of the One to men. They regard man's longing for bodily immortality as perverse, a rebellion against nature stemming from an unreasoning envy of the elves.

Tolkien pits these two conceptions of death against each other throughout his *Legendarium*, but most clearly in the section of *Morgoth's Ring* titled, in elvish, "Athrabeth Finrod Ah Andreth," a dialogue where the elf lord Finrod and the mortal woman Andreth come to grips with the other's differing conception of mortality. With profound insight, Tolkien reveals that both views, in their way, are true. He reconciles the two prospectives to show that death is at once both a dreaded punishment and a gift of unspeakable beauty.

The implicit, but never stated, background to the dialogue is the book of *Genesis*. Andreth believes that some past occurrence doomed men to death. She guesses the ill happening was brought about by the actions of Morgoth, the Satan-like chief enemy of the world. Finrod disagrees with her. He says that such a deed is beyond even Morgoth's strength, "None could have done this save the One... What did ye do, ye men, in the dark?" (*Morgoth's Ring*, p 313) he asks, unable to imagine what crime could bring about such a change in nature.

Andreth does not know the answer to this question. She cannot see a way out of this world's darkness. She hears rumors that one day God will himself come into the world, but she does not credit them, "All wisdom is against them," she says. (*Morgoth's Ring*, p 321) She cannot imagine how God could enter his creation without destroying it with the grandeur of his presence. Hers is the mindset of the noble pagan, there is good to be done in this world, but in the end, all will fade and pass away. There is no way to escape the wheel of fortune or to keep fastened the thread that governs life.

Though Andreth cannot see a way out, Finrod can see one for her. He is horrified at the corruption of man of which death is a reminder, yet he still has hope for Andreth. As the hero-King Aragorn says on his deathbed thousands of years later, man is "not bound forever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory." (*LotR*, p 1038) Suffering in this world (including the dread of mortality) is a punishment for the Fall from which death comes as a release. In *Genesis*, Adam is banished from the garden of Eden not only as punishment for eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil but also, "lest perhaps he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever." (*Genesis* 3:22) If men lived forever, they would remain dead in their sins, but a Christian death offers hope. Christ has conquered the pagan death feared by Andreth by his own Passion on the Cross, "Christ has destroyed death by undergoing death" (*Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom*). Christ's redeeming death offers a way out of the circles of the world for those who can find it.

This view of death is supported by Christian teaching. Repeatedly we are told to avoid worldly pursuits, and to long for death. St. Augustine of Hippo teaches "of this first and

bodily death, then we may say that to the good it is good and evil to the evil.” (*City of God*, XIII.ii). St. Thomas More pithily writes to his daughter while awaiting execution "A man may in such case lose his head and come to no harm.” (*For All Seasons: Selected Letters of Thomas More*, p 293). St. Ambrose crowns this philosophy by pronouncing, “Death, then, is not to be mourned over, for it is the cause of salvation for all” (*On the Death of Satyrus*, II.46)

It is natural for men to fear death, resulting as it does from sin. Yet, amid his bereavement, Tolkien saw that death is the door out of the Shadowlands, the path that leads to true reality. It is a journey that although fearful and full of pain may still end in laughter if we embark on it with sorrow but not despair. “And then it seemed to him that as in his dream in the house of Bombadil, the grey rain curtain turned all to silver and glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise.” (LotR, p 1007)



Luke Prizzi

18 years old

Pennsylvania

Anglo-Saxon 1, Early Modern Literature

On Friendship

*C.S. Lewis and Francis Bacon,
The House of Humane Letters
and the Fruits of Love*

WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP? WHAT IS IT LIKE? WHO IS IT FOR?

It is questions such as these that have plagued and been asked by humankind and in every civilization since time immemorial, since Adam and Eve looked without and asked what Love is like and Creation said, “It is He who made me.” Can man live a good life without Friendship? Is God our Friend, or something else, more lovely or more terrible? Among those countless who have written of this phenomenon between men, there are two in particular whose essays sing glad laud of Friendship. One is household name, medievalist, theologian, and novelist C.S. Lewis, in his book *The Four Loves*, the other, said to be the father of modern scientific thought, is Sir Francis Bacon in his *Essays*.

These men were very different: Bacon leaned towards the modern age; Lewis, writing nearly three hundred and fifty years later after the Great Divide, leaned towards our medieval past. Lewis wrote medieval treatises, children’s literature, and Christian apologetics. Bacon witnessed passions and intrigue in the courts of Queen Elizabeth and King James. And yet, these two men, Lewis by witness and experience, Bacon possibly in observation of humanity, both agreed as if by instinct that Friendship was something important and of value, something to be cherished when found in a changing world, and in Lewis’ case especially, a world wracked by wars and whispers of the Fall.

More than anything else possibly, they saw that Friendship, when cultivated rightly, could yield lifelong fruits. According to C. S. Lewis, there are four loves, each individual yet important of the whole. These are *Storge*, or familial Affection; *Philia*, Friendship; *Eros*, romantic love; and Charity, and in his own way, Francis Bacon covers all of them in different places.

But in our culture today, there seem to be only two of the previous four loves still in attendance, and these are those that a person comes by rather easily and does not choose for himself. These are Affection, or that love seen most often in families, between mothers and children, and brothers and sisters; and Eros, by whom we are, so to speak, pelted with arrows.

That most unappreciated, generally, unless too highly exalted, is that of Christian charity—and that fourth that that no man needs and, which, in the words of C. S. Lewis, “has least commerce with our nerves; there is nothing throaty about it; nothing that quickens the pulse or turns you red and pale”¹ our cherished *Philia*, which we learn was to the Ancients “the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue”² and even to Francis Bacon, it was evidently something to be cherished. Yet it is vaguely

talked of today—if you hear a person speak of a mutual acquaintance as a friend, you wonder at what could possibly justify the term. They are merely Companions. Although of course, we do not wish to offend our comrades, this is perhaps another example of the debasement of language and its consequences as we refuse to define our terms.

Is it better to have more than one Friend, anyway though? After all, Bacon, in his curious court way, seems to think two is the ideal number for Friendship, and it is much simpler to think of life in Pairs. With an air of satisfaction, we tot off with our fingers: mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, and Friend 1 and Friend 2. It's a gloriously modern method of thinking, hampered by being trapped in a box that we've no business seeing any further out of. Churches are in this way always in danger of making disproportionate the number of the multitude, by either eliminating the Christian's fellows or including them too much. It is true in a sense that there is a privacy between God and him, but what of these brothers and sisters in Christ whom we were given to serve and honor? By eliminating our brethren, we alienate our God and our relationship with Him.

One Friend is all I need, so why have more? After all, Friends are in danger of taking up so *much* of one's time! But a Friend is extremely Useful of course too: they can pull you out of scrapes and fight at your side, like assets, right? With this in mind, we are made instantly uncomfortable by *The Four Loves* and of a stern mind to take offense at C. S. Lewis when he says that Allies are not the principal stuff of Friendship. What Lewis says confuses us because it does not make our Friends so very Useful as we should like.

Actually, he says that "the mark of perfect Friendship is not that help will be given when the pinch comes (of course it will) but that, having been given, it makes no difference at all."³ And, lo, here he says too that the more Friends the better! We slam the book shut in frustration. Truly, this man is infuriating. We toddle off to complain of him to our friends and endeavor badly to sound wise. As moderns, we would have "the least jealous of loves"⁴ as the most jealous of all.

"But two, far from being the necessary number for Friendship, is not even the best"⁵ says C. S. Lewis, "In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out."⁶ In truth, the same singular friend has only the power to get you so far, like a pagan hero failing to rescue his bride. Only something greater can lead us out of our boxes, as only Christ can lead us out of the cave.

By my lonesome, I am not deep enough to save my Friend. If, in a trio of friends, one of us is from our company "untimely ripped" I cannot see again Jane's reaction to a quip made by our fallen friend Freddie. I have less of Jane then I had before. There is a part of her even only bumbling Freddie could awaken in her, either by his talking always of soap and never of Shakespeare or of his talking of something else entirely, in fact, the cause of this, whether it was of either annoyance or kinship is arbitrary. If we asked Jane to speak of my state after Freddie's death, she would say the same. A part of both of us dies with Freddie

which we shall never know again, unless such familiarity is possible in a life after death. This, of course, is every Christian's hope.

One point on which Bacon and Lewis agree is that Friendship transcends contexts, so to speak. At home, I have a general character such as a daughter or a sister but with my friend Jane it is an affair of disentangled, or stripped, minds.⁷ We can meet in the middle, as two souls. "So again, a man's person hath many proper relations which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person."⁸ Friendship is thus arbitrary from the roles of Affection and Eros.

What would the Romantic poets have looked like if they hadn't given us the need or context for the adjective "Byronic"? Perhaps this is what C. S. Lewis answers when he points to Romanticism as the place where friendship was shot down, ironically populated by close-knit genius groupings of people, because, although "What we now call 'the Romantic Movement' once *was* Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Coleridge talking incessantly (at least Mr. Coleridge was) about a secret vision of their own"⁹ as Friends, it became disproportionate with: "Romanticism and 'tearful comedy' and 'the return to nature' and the exaltation of Sentiment; and in their train all that great wallow of emotion which, though often criticized, has lasted ever since."¹⁰

Though Lewis doesn't put so many words to it, both he and Bacon agree that with a friend one has a confidante and a partner in accountability. We are all familiar with this idea. To be said to be "fallen in with the wrong crowd" indicates exactly that which the first word symbolizes: a descent. In a sea of "talk like a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love"¹¹ I am timid and unsure of my views and standards, but put me with my fellows ('one knows nobody so well as one's 'fellow'!¹²) and in seven minutes I will feel quite happy again¹³ and know just Where I Stand.

Like C. S. Lewis, we live in an age wracked by war and whispers of the Fall. Man stole what was 'for the Fairest' long ago, it is true, and brought Discord into the world, but there was salvation *given* unto the world—someone who could lead us out of the caves, unlike the many pagan heroes who had tried before but looked back. We now live in an age where the worldview does not include Friendship. But we must look under the surface.

We need Friendship and Truth, and Him who *is* the *Truth*, and who, as he is also the Way and the Life, is not merely our Bridegroom, taking his Bride by the hand, but our Friend, fully man and fully divine, leading us to our Father and therefore taking us into himself. Like Francis Bacon, we stand poised on the precipice of an uncertain future, and must gather our strength for what is to come. We must do this by finding our brothers and sisters in Truth. With our brethren we can look ahead with nostalgia for the future.¹⁴

Within the ever-glorious House of Humane Letters, we are starting to see true Friendships form, stemming from a shared culture of Story and in pursuit of the goal of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Students have begun planning get-togethers and book clubs

upon book clubs to cheer the separation from their newly found kindred spirits after Family Camp, where students had a chance to meet for the first time their long-time virtual correspondents.

Friendships had time to blossom, because time passed as if in a faerie realm: students were convinced camp was fourteen instead of three days, and that they'd known each other for years and years and even decades instead of six hours, one day, three months, or two years. Friendship, stemming from such rich Companionship, could not but be remarkable. Lewis sums it up in *The Four Loves*:

"Especially when the whole group is together, each bringing out all that is best, wisest, or funniest in all the others. Those are the golden sessions; when four or five of us after a hard day's walking have come to our inn; when our slippers are on, our feet spread out towards the blaze and our drinks at our elbows; when the whole world, and something beyond the world, opens itself to our minds as we talk; and no one has any claim on or any responsibility for another, but all are freemen and equals as if we had first met an hour ago, while at the same time an Affection mellowed by the years enfolds us. Life—natural life—has no better gift to give. Who could have deserved it?"

It is this which is at the heart of friendships between House of Humane Letters students and which we witnessed at Family Camp. We could not have deserved it; at this feast it is He who has spread the board and it is He who has chosen the guests.¹⁵ And now with our heart-given brethren we stand, looking to the east, watching the sun rise and praising God with a boundless joy in each of our hearts that is more ancient than the sun itself, for God has bestowed upon us the precious, long-desired boon.¹⁶

¹ *The Four Loves* (58)

² *FL* (57)

³ *FL* (70)

⁴ *FL* (61)

⁵ *FL* (61)

⁶ *FL* (61)

⁷ *FL* (71)

⁸ *On Friendship*, Francis Bacon

⁹ *FL* (68)

¹⁰ *FL* (58)

¹¹ *On Friendship*

¹² *FL* (71)

¹³ *The House at Pooh Corner*, A.A. Milne (ch. 3)

¹⁴ *The Medieval Mind of C. S. Lewis* by Jason M. Baxter

¹⁵ *FL* (126)

¹⁶ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs



Natalia Testa

14 years old

Texas

Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval and Renaissance

Literature, Out of the Depths, Readings in

Medieval History

A decorative border in a muted green color frames the page. It features intricate floral and vine motifs, with leaves and small flowers interspersed along the top, bottom, and side edges.

Student Life

On the Importance of Memory and Stories

Missionary Kid Life and the Anglo-Saxons

For most of my life, I have been a missionary kid living in Japan. For my family, this means that we live in Japan for several years, then go back to America for about a year to connect with prayer and financial supporters, then back to Japan again. I have lived in three completely different places in Japan, and though we come back to the same city in America, we always live in a different house and in different neighborhoods. We are also supported by several churches. All of this means that when we visit different families and churches, I am constantly scrambling to remember this person's name, or that place, or all of these other little details that I have not had to think about for years. I am very aware that memory is fragile. My memories do not start until age five, and even then, they are patchy and few and far between. Many people might not experience this because they do not live in a constantly changing environment. But because this has been my life, it has given me the opportunity to think about the significance of memory.

Memory can be strengthened and solidified in a number of ways, one of which is to tell and retell the memories. The stories I remember best are the ones my family and friends have referenced and repeated. The other way that I have found to be the most effective is simple exposure. Living in and belonging to a place with all of its sights and sounds and smells and idiosyncrasies— seeing that tree that you used to sit under and play with your friends, talking with the same neighbors, going to the same places from day to day, or smelling that odd combination of odors at the grocery store— all of these mundane activities slowly etch memories into your heart and mind. It is a wordless tale told over and over that stirs memories just enough to keep them from fading away. But because I have not been rooted to one place, I have to cling all the more to the stories.

But why is it important to remember in the first place?

In the book *Everything Sad is Untrue*, the author Daniel Nayeri tells his memories of how his mother converted to Christianity and then fled from Iran with her two children to protect their lives. He weaves his own childhood memories, family stories, and old Persian legends through the book. At its heart, it is a story about stories. Why they are important and why they need to be told and retold. In the opening pages, Nayeri frames his entire story within the context of The 1001 Arabian Nights. He is Scheherazade and the reader is the king listening to him recount his memories. Throughout the book, Nayeri frequently references Scheherazade, and eventually he says this:

“Dear reader, you have to understand the point of all these stories. What they add up to. Scheherazade was trying to make the king human again. She made him love life by showing him all of it, the funny parts about poop, the dangerous parts with demons,

even the boring parts about what makes marriages last. Little by little, he began to feel the joy and sadness of others. He became less immune, less numb because of the stories.”

Whether they be memories or books or any other kind of story, we need to hear them over and over. The king had been hurt by his unfaithful wife and had chosen to become immune and numb because of that. Our hearts can become hard like the king’s in response to pain. But when we listen to the stories, we are reminded of the True Story; the story of Christ our King rescuing His people and bringing us to our eternal, perfect home. We lose our hope for this home if we do not remind ourselves of the promises that God has given us in this Story. The Israelites were promised their own home, free from the oppression of Egypt. But they failed to remind themselves and were instead caught up in their present discomforts, becoming delusionally enamored with the idea of returning to slavery in Egypt.

Then, after God had brought them to the Promised Land, He gave them the year of Jubilee. This year was set aside for rest and renewal. The fields would lie fallow, slaves would be set free, and debts would be forgiven. It was meant to be a tangible reminder of how God redeems His people and remains faithful to them. Yet in all their hundreds of years before Christ, they never celebrated it. Again they failed to remember.

In the past when I read about the Israelites, I wondered how anyone could be foolish enough to forget so much so quickly. However, the more I have reflected upon it, the more it makes sense. The mother of the muses in Greek mythology is Memory for a reason; telling stories helps us to remember them, and we need to remember the stories for them to live on.

Perhaps surprisingly, it is the Anglo-Saxons who bring all of these ideas together. The Anglo-Saxons were constantly reminded that they were living in a fallen world. They were literally living in the ruins of the more technologically advanced Roman civilization, always faced with the reality that progress doesn’t last forever, that their civilization was not as great as what came before. Then in addition to that, their culture itself was unstable, full of blood feuds and looting and destruction. This ability to see the brokenness of the world heavily influenced their stories. Their stories are full of echoes of doom and the feeling that everything is passing away. They knew that everything they saw was extremely fragile and would not last long.

I have been drawn to the Anglo-Saxons for this very quality. While I do not live amidst blood feuding and mass destruction, the ever-changing surroundings of my world do not lend themselves to providing a sense of stability and permanence. I do not have a strong sense of belonging to any place; I am a foreigner no matter where I go. It is easy for me to see that this world is not my home. Further, it is easy to feel the brokenness and darkness in a country with very few Christians like Japan, and it can be easy to despair.

But seeing the world through Anglo-Saxon eyes has brought me comfort. Even though the Anglo-Saxon mood is marked by doom, they did not despair. They clung to their stories. In *Beowulf*, after Beowulf fights Grendel, the people immediately start telling stories. Telling

the tales of great people and their deeds right after Beowulf did something great was a way to show that his deeds would also be added to their list of stories. His song would be sung.

The Anglo-Saxons protected their stories from ruin by telling them so often. They knew that everything was passing away. Nothing would last forever. But through these tales, they pointed to what *was* eternal.

The *Beowulf* poet does this more explicitly. The original audience were newly converted Christians who were trying to make sense of their pagan heritage and Christian beliefs. He tells the old stories of the hero that they would have already known but deliberately frames it in the context of the Christian story. He references the Old Testament over and over again but never speaks of the New Testament. The poet tells *Beowulf* in a way that points directly to Christ. Everything Beowulf does is marked by doom. Even though he was the best of the best, he was finite. The blood feuding and raiding were too deeply embedded in Anglo-Saxon culture to be stopped by a mere human. The only one who could stop this vicious cycle of feuding and death was Christ. This is just what happened historically. The Anglo-Saxons were never defeated by any other people group. The reason they stopped plundering and killing was because the gospel came to Britain.

Like the Anglo-Saxons, I have found comfort in stories. When I have felt despairing and brokenhearted, the stories remind me of what is true. The world was never meant to be broken like this, but God will one day heal all hurts and wipe away all tears. The pattern of the gospel is imprinted on the human heart; every story we tell echoes the True Story. That is the way to be truly human. To be reminded of the story of the gospel. The Anglo-Saxons knew that. When we are surrounded by all that is broken and lost and not right in the world, the only way to not despair is to look on Christ. The story of the world is not over yet; we are still in the middle of it. And if we have read the stories, we know deep within ourselves how the story will end. Nothing is more truly human than to remember the story that God is telling us—through the Bible, through every story we tell—and to have that deep longing for our true home and to know that it can only be satisfied in Him.



Annalise Martin

16 years old

Japan

Anglo-Saxon 1, Latin 1, Out of the Depths

Conversations Shape the Camp

Friendship arises out of mere Companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, "What? You too? I thought I was the only one." -C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves

June 3rd, in the year of our Lord 2024, I entered into fairyland. Up I went through the mountains and narrow woodland passages until arriving at the long-awaited, House of Humane Letters Summer Camp. At this camp, I finally experienced how true friendships, formed over mutual interests are the most enduring, fulfilling, and joyous. In today's culture of young people (and I suspect adults), there are many who are starved for friendship and fellowship, often because they confuse this longing with a desire to be "social." Mere socialization (the presence of other people) is not sufficient to fulfill the human longing for meaningful fellowship and cannot create true friendships. For any companionship, it is essential to converse. If one wishes for that companionship to become a deep friendship, one must converse deeply and at length, and to converse deeply and at length one must love and wish to pursue a greater understanding of truth. So in the end, the friendship is not the point or the beginning, it's the outpouring of something that has already begun in the human heart. What I discovered at HHL Camp was this: conversations are vital to the formation of friendships.

During the day, our conversations played out over meals, classes, and cups of matcha, allowing us to experience the reality of what we'd read. Many of us had been acquainted through our online classes on digital platforms, but there was something far more bonding about being in person and sharing experiences together. All of the works we so loved had an influence on our references, humor, and behavior. Soon enough, our meal tables became our Anglo-Saxon mead hall where "What hos!" and "Hwaet!" were exclaimed in greeting, rousing tunes like the Wellerman were sung, cheers were raised for the venue staff, and cups were tapped on tables for more "wine" (watery kool-aid) poured by anyone at the table who had claimed the position of Jeeves for the day. This table was of an ordinary size but crammed with as many chairs as we could fit, for no one wanted to miss a single word of the conversations shared over vegan eggs and burnt bacon. There was such jollity to mealtime conversations that we suddenly understood the camaraderie of the Danes, the Arthurian court, the Benjamin Haydon dinners, the Tea Club and Barrovian Society, and the Inklings. These stories had suddenly poured forth into our living reality, making us feel as if our silly, musing, and lively interactions were derived from and playing into a greater inheritance of fellowship.

Each day at camp was concluded with a laughter-filled immortal evening. These were spent in the lobby of Asheville Hall, comparing artwork, reading aloud, debating the stature of elves asking questions, or, most memorably, looking over bad literary commentaries and horrid homeschool curricula. These modern criticisms reduced our favorite works to cautionary tales or psychological diagnoses. On our own, most of us had felt hopeless and alone by reading these perversions of goodness. But together, we laughed heartily over them. The importance of laughing together is not to be overlooked, it bonds people and brings them together, us even more so because we were laughing at lies. I've heard it said the devil hates to be laughed at, that Satan is prideful above all, and that a simple laugh can injure him tremendously. All of us in that room who loved truth learned how to combat error with mirth. Our laughter wasn't pretentious but was directed at critics who were. And in that room of merriment in the lobby of our Hall, the lies of the world and those who obscure the goodness of literature didn't seem so powerful or scary. We were all there together, we understood in the pureness of our love for these works that the commentaries were only silliness, reduced into a small little Rumpelstiltskin by the tiniest joke. There was hope, because there was a room full of young people who all knew to recognize and laugh at the lies. These modern falsehoods had no power over fairyland.

In the discussions following camp I often heard the meaningful conversations mentioned and praised, but I'd like to note that for me, though it came naturally, it did not come easily. I regret to say that after so long bringing up topics near and dear to my heart and being met with only disinterest, I entirely resigned myself to shallow conversation in public, and depth of thought in private hours (I have heard similar observations from other camp members). This is the way that intellect and socialness become separated to the detriment of both. Ideas are not shared and socialness becomes doomed to a hollow shell of human interaction. Intellectual conversation is the combatant of this separation. The skill of intellectual conversation becomes like a muscle that is vital to the human body but has grown weak from its lack of use. However, I was constantly compelled to exercise this muscle by the atmosphere of camp.

The atmosphere at camp was created by students who were constantly pursuing their areas of interest (music, art, literature, etc) and connecting these to the literary and language tradition they had learned to love through their classes at House of Humane Letters. Everyone was so interested in everything that every person was naturally interesting, making them enjoyable conversationalists. This is why the formation of friendships was so inherent and quickly established at camp, we were compelled into deep and meaningful conversations by the strong desire to elaborate on the topics we adored and better acquaint ourselves with our fascinating peers, who were evidently just as odd as ourselves. By first pursuing our loves, we bonded in friendship. *"It is when two such persons discover one another, when, whether with immense difficulties and semi-articulate fumbings or with what would seem to us amazing and elliptical speed, they share their vision - it is then that Friendship is born. And instantly*

they stand together in an immense solitude.” On our last morning at camp we stood together on the sweeping colonial porch with cups of Earl Grey tea watching the sun rise. In a few short hours, each of us would be driving down the mountain and back to our respective homes, most of us marveling at what had passed. Yet in that moment together, gazing through the trees and breathing in the mountain air, time stood still. That moment of immense beauty will be immortal in my memory forever.



Grace Gerardot

17 years old

Indiana

Anglo-Saxon 1, Out of the Depths

God's Glory

Honeybee on Milkweed



Mighty Mushroom



Field of Bluets



Black Mountain



Jonathan Jecko
16 years old
North Carolina
Anglo-Saxon 1

Commonplace Quotes



Veva Jack
15 years old
Tennessee
Early Modern Literature,
Readings in Early Modern
History

“You'll often hear it. Perfect love. It means love that goes on doing until there isn't any to be done, and that goes on suffering until it can't suffer anymore. That's why, when Jesus hung on the cross, He said 'it is finished.' There wasn't one sin left that couldn't be forgiven, not one sinner who couldn't be saved, because He had died. He had loved perfectly.”

—Patricia St. John, *Treasures of the Snow*

“...we spend a good many years, while we are young, in getting the knowledge which should enable us to think. When we are grown-up, also, it is still necessary to spend time in getting knowledge, but few can give the chief part of the day to this labour, as we all have the chance of doing while we are young. This chance is, however, wasted upon young people who read to learn up facts towards an examination. The lectures we hear, the books we read, are of no use to us, except as they make us think.”

—Ourselves by Charlotte Mason

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.”

—Plato



Bethany Hansen
15 years old
Massachusetts
Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval
and Renaissance
Literature, Out of the
Depths, Readings in
Medieval History

“As this world becomes increasingly ugly, callous and materialistic, it needs to be reminded that the old fairy stories are rooted in truth, that imagination is of value, that happy endings do, in fact, occur, and that the blue spring mist that makes an ugly street look beautiful is just as real a thing as the street itself.”

—Elizabeth Goudge



Ann Elizabeth Jecko

18 years old

North Carolina

Latin 1, Medieval and Renaissance Literature



Emma Jane Upchurch

13 years old

Tennessee

Good Books

“Songs we have that tell of these things,
but we are forgetting them, teaching them
only to children as a careless custom. And
now the songs have come down among us
out of strange places, and walk visible
under the Sun.”

—The Two Towers by J.R.R. Tolkien

*“Don’t let schooling get in
the way of your education.”*

—Mark Twain



Jewel Jack

12 years old

Tennessee

Good Books, Latin 2,

Plutarch for Kids

“As they sang the hobbit felt the love of beautiful things made by hands and by
cunning and by magic moving through him, a fierce and a jealous love, the
desire of the hearts of the dwarves. Then something Tookish woke up inside
him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees
and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a
walking-stick. He looked out of the window. The stars were out in a dark sky
above the trees. He thought of the jewels of the dwarves shining in dark caverns.
Suddenly in the wood beyond The Water a flame leapt up – probably somebody
lighting a wood-fire – and he thought of plundering dragons settling on his quiet
Hill and kindling it all to flames. He shuddered; and very quickly he was plain

Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-Hill, again.”

— The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien



Penelope Palmer

12 years old

Wisconsin

Good Books, Plutarch’s Lives, Latin 1

Interview with Dr. Anne Phillips

What was your first exposure to foreign language and what made you decide to go on this path?

My dad's side of the family are all French-Canadian immigrants that immigrated to the Los Angeles area when they were pretty young. They were a non-English speaking household for a very long time. So I have a lot of early memories of French being spoken. My dad would speak French with my grandmother on the phone, or he'd speak French with his sisters, or speak French to us kids. I had a decent, basic grasp of French as a kid so I could understand it.

When I was probably fourteen or fifteen, I became really obsessed with the Italian Renaissance. I discovered Petrarch, the Italian poet and classicist; he was what first got me into classics. For some reason, I was very entranced with Petrarch's poetry and started wanting to know more about Petrarch and discovered that he was instrumental in reviving the field of classical studies.

He was a brilliant Latin stylist. I thought, "I want to be like *that*." So I picked up all these textbooks that my parents had laying around the house and I just started learning Latin. I used Wheelock's primarily, but there were a couple other books we had as well. I was motivated by my desire to read and to read fluently. That was what I really wanted to be able to do.

The summer before I went to college, I decided that I wanted to do classics. My dad got me the textbooks that Hillsdale College uses in their intro Greek classes, and I spent my entire summer doing nothing but Greek. I didn't want to do the intro classes, I wanted to start reading Greek as soon as possible. I actually fell a lot harder for Greek than I did Latin. I love Latin; I read Latin every day; but Greek is my heart language in a lot of ways. I went to Hillsdale and double majored in Latin and Greek. I pretty much spent all of my time that I could possibly spend on Latin and Greek. That has been my obsession for the last ten years.

Why is language important?

There's levels to that question. First, the only way humans communicate with each other at all is using language in context. And so there is this intensely pragmatic: "We just need language to communicate with each other." And we also need to have an understanding of language in order to communicate effectively. If you don't have that, that is a source of a lot of our current problems. Not to bring in current events, but the general sense we have of being unable to communicate with other people is largely a problem of language. We use language differently in different groups, but we can still translate ideas between different groups. Part of why that is is because we lost this higher view of language and substituted it for a lower view of language that essentially views it as putty or play-doh, to be manipulated

however you need. And that is not a new thing. That issue goes all the way back to Plato. You will find that in several platonic dialogues, particularly Protagoras and Cratylus. In those, he complains about that exact problem. There were people in the Greek world who were advancing this view of language— that it is just something to be manipulated however you want. It is not an instrument for truth, because we are limited in our ability to apprehend the truth. Plato said no, that can't be true. He spends a lot of his dialogues working out that understanding of language and that problem of language.

So brute communication is the first level. The second, deeper level is that language is our only medium for communicating anything about the world we live in. That includes naming things, and pointing things out about the world to each other. Yes, there is the issue about different languages having different words or names for things, but is there an inherent connection between the word for a thing and the thing itself? That is something that Plato is very concerned about. Superficially it might seem like there is no connection. One is tempted to think that we just randomly decide as a society to assign names to different objects. The problem with that is that when everything is socially determined, there are no limits. There are no limits on what can be rejected and for a society to function, you need those boundaries and limits. That view of language takes those limitations away. And that causes a lot of problems. I think we are seeing that today in a lot of different ways.

The third and final level is this: God used language to create reality. God used language to communicate with humans in the form of Scripture and also through prophets using language. There is something about language that has some intrinsic power, especially understood as an instrument in the hands of God. One of the first things we were commanded to do as humans was to name everything in the Garden of Eden. That becomes a symbol of the dominion that humans were supposed to have over creation, and they had a similar kind of mirroring power. Not in the same way as God, obviously, but to be given the task of naming things was very important. And that was one of the things that set man apart from the rest of the creation.

What I am trying to do in my general life, my scholarly life, my teaching life, is to help restore that high view of language that understands what it is. There is a lot of mysteriousness about language and how it works, and I think that is how it should be because if language is the instrument of God, there is going to be a certain amount of incomprehensibility to that. We are finite, we cannot understand everything, there is still so much that we do not understand about the world we live in. So restoring that higher view of language and understanding that it is important to preserve the integrity of language and what it is meant to do.

What is the relationship between language and story?

Northrop Frye wrote an essay called 'The Double Mirror' and in that essay, one of the things he says is, "What words do with the most power and accuracy is hang together."

He was also writing in the middle of the deconstruction movement. That started to develop and I think it came to its fullest fruition in the 70s and 80s because that is when Jacques Derrida was writing. That is when all of this stuff was really starting to mature. But Frye still saw where all this was going long before Derrida and others like him. C.S. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers also saw where this was going and were very concerned about it in the 20s and 30s.

One of the things that the deconstructionists do is take individual words out of any meaningful larger context and suck all the meaning out of it. There are very few people who don't commit that fallacy, and it is a fallacy, because meaning is only generated in a structure, meaning a sentence, a story, a metaphor, etc.

In order for any individual word to make sense, you have to consider it in its sentence. In order for a sentence to make sense, you have to consider it in its larger structure. If it is a sentence in a story, you can't just take that individual sentence and suck all the meaning out of it, without also considering where it comes from. Unfortunately, I have sat through a lot of lectures and a lot of classes where that is exactly what everybody is doing. One of the things that drives me batty is when people do this: they take a dictionary, flip to one individual word that has lots of possible meanings and just go through and go, "Oooh, I like that one. I am going to pick that one because it is advancing the argument that I want to make right now."

That is not how that should work. People do this with the Scripture a lot. Well-meaning individuals will take a single word like '*logos*' (a Greek word that means 'word'), and they will go through the dictionary and just cherry-pick whatever random meaning that it might have and apply that to whatever they are trying to say. That is a destructive thing to do to language because it does not consider the context in which the word is used, and how other words influence that single word. A lot of Christians do this and don't realize how bad that is and how ultimately destructive that is for the message of Christianity. Because Christianity is a story. It is THE story. It is the pattern of reality. God created the world, created the world perfect, man fell, and the Scripture is about the story of when we were in Paradise, Paradise was lost, and God promises to send a redeemer. Everything in the Old Testament is part of that story building up to when the redeemer comes. The redeemer being Christ. Christ blows everybody's expectations out of the water as far as that is concerned, because they expected some glorious military campaign, and that is not what happened. He came to sacrifice himself, to die on behalf of his people and to rise again. That sets the pattern for all of reality. Whether we want it to or not, the sound of the human heartstring is ultimately tuned to the gospel. That is why it has been so interesting to watch Hollywood try to invert the formula, because it is trying to break from anything that resembles a Christian narrative. Every movie that comes out is trying to invert that, it is trying to suck all the meaning out of the story, and it is not working. Because, again, it doesn't resonate, it doesn't strike the right notes and people reject it. I don't think the vast majority of people know why.

How we get from language to the story is that at the end of the day, the Bible is an incredibly literary book. It is a structure. And that structure is made up of sentences; it is made up of words. All of these things are built together. I am sure you have experienced people taking a random verse out of the Bible, and taking it out of context. You can't do that. That does violence to the text. It does violence to the language. And so that is the kind of big picture that I have in the back of my mind when I am talking about the nature of Story. Because, at the end of the day, all of the literature we consider to be classic, traditional literature, is following Biblical patterns in some way. There are millions of ways that can happen. There is infinite variety, and that is the beauty of it. It is not like everything is exactly the same. It is all gloriously different and it can emerge in all these different languages. It can emerge in all different kinds of genres and media. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Shakespeare's plays are all following these Biblical patterns in different ways. But where that starts is with understanding how language itself works. The basic units of meaning come from these sentence types.

One of the other important things about Story is imagery and metaphor. A metaphor is a type of predicate sentence. This equals this. When Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd," that is a predicate sentence, which is how you make a metaphor or an image. This = that. What is happening there is Jesus is using language, he is using this type of sentence, this meaning, to take an abstract idea about his role and his relationship to humanity and transfer it to a concrete image that we can picture. Or when he says, "I am the vine." Abstract idea, translated into something concrete, something physical, something you can touch, something you can imagine, that you can see. And the Bible is built on those kinds of images. Jesus as the Lamb of God. There are always layers to these things too. The Lamb of God means the sacrifice. The sin offering. And that God ultimately provides the perfect, final offering for sin in the form of Christ, in the form of himself. That is *huge*. All of these characterizations, all of these images are wrapped up in the story—the story of the Bible.

All the stories that we write and generate as humans, as subcreators, to use Tolkien's idea—tap into those metaphors and images. That happens at the level of language. You have characters that are symbols for things. In a fairy tale, when you have the everyman character, who is a character and an individual in the story, but also represents everybody. Every human being, because at the end of the day, we are all in the same position as sinners in need of redemption. Sinners on a quest to God. That gets lost a lot of the time.

The more I read older books, the more I read medieval literature, and the more I read poetry, I think this was a much more instinctive thing that people used to just understand and because of deconstruction, we kind of break everything down into its constituent parts. We don't really understand the idea of the metaphor as a kind of predicate sentence. We don't understand that it is taking an abstract idea, an abstract reality, and transferring it onto something concrete in the physical world. That goes back to the whole question of, "What is the relationship between language and the thing?" The word and the thing it is referring to.

Saying Jesus is the Lamb of God, we can all picture a lamb, generically speaking, and for that context, that culture, taking a lamb as a sin offering every year would have been something they intensely understood and identified with in that context. This translates across all these different languages. I am using the English word but there is the Greek and the Hebrew— and the same image carries through. It is the same in all languages. Which means that there has to be something that exists outside of languages that is fundamentally true that the languages are pointing to. Language is a signpost for reality.

This is the answer that Plato was grasping at in his dialogues but doesn't quite get there, because what is lacking is he doesn't have the understanding of God as the user, the generator of language. He doesn't quite get there.

What are your thoughts on translation?

I don't think you should ever say that a translation is equivalent or just-as-good-as, because it is not. And again, that goes back to the whole imaginative side of learning a language is to learn how another people group thinks. I spend a lot of time explaining how the Latin-language mind works different from the English-language mind in my Latin class. The building blocks of language are the same in all cultures. Every language has nouns, verbs, infinitives, participles, or the equivalent thereof. Every language has all of those things, but how an individual language uses those things will vary widely. You actually do get a lot of insight into how another group of people thinks by diving into a language and learning all those kinds of things.

I spent a lot of time in this book: *Bradley's Arnold Latin Prose Composition* which gets really into the nitty gritty of the differences between Latin and English and the internal logic of Latin and how it is different from the internal logic of English. It makes me think a lot about the literature I read in Latin and how this is all part of that bigger structure. The language structure affects their story structure. It affects everything. It is all interconnected. The same thing with English. If you understand the background of English and how we got to this point, it actually makes a lot of things about English make more sense. It makes a lot of things about our literature, our stories, make more sense. And the same is true of French and German. So, you should never tell people or let people think that it is the equivalent of reading the thing in its original language, in its original context.

At the same time, translations are necessary. I am not going to have time to learn all the languages that I want. So if I want to have a wide experience of literature, I do have to settle for a certain amount of work in translation. And that's okay. I just do it with the understanding that it's a diminished experience rather than if I were reading it in the original.

The pitfall is that you have translators who are very honest and upfront that this is a severely diminished experience and then you have translators who aren't so upfront and will translate things specifically with a larger agenda in mind. And of course they won't necessarily tell you that. I am not going to badmouth any translators or translations

particularly, but I have noticed recently that there has been an uptake in these agenda-driven translations of things because they are trying to make things more palatable to a modern audience. I find that to be extremely dishonest. It is a very fine line because there can be translations that are perfectly accurate but don't take into account the context in which things are found.

For example, Homer's Iliad is incredibly violent. There are plenty of ways that you can soften what is happening, you can soften the language, and it is not technically *wrong*, but it doesn't really convey the full force of the story in its context. Which again, goes back to that whole structure issue. You can't just cherry-pick a definition that you like and stick it in there and have that be just as good. Especially if you are considering the larger context. The language that Achilles uses, especially in the first half, is incredibly violent language. I think a translator does you a disservice by softening that too much.

The encouraging thing for me about translating is, again, the idea that there is a meaning. There is something that exists outside of the text that is being communicated. My job is to find ways to make them as closely aligned as possible because they are getting at this larger meaning. If there were no such thing as meaning, translation would not be possible. I try to be very cognizant of those things. It is very difficult.

I try to be fair, but there is a lot of agenda driven stuff right now. I don't really understand what is to be gained by doing that. They will say, "Okay, well we are trying to get more people to read Homer." or "We are trying to get modern people interested in Homer." Well, if you are going to do that by trying to make Homer look more like us and sound more like us, what is the point? I don't read Homer because I want to see my culture mirrored in Homer. I want to read about a world that is different from anything I have ever experienced. That is what you should want.

What do languages reveal about the past?

Lots of things that I have touched on already. The different internal logic of other languages can reveal a lot about how other people groups think. As Tolkien says, language is the lifeblood of a people. If you really want to study another people, the best way is to go where they live, to learn their language, to learn how they think— because that is how you are ultimately going to connect with another culture, another group of people. The same thing applies with studying language.

When Angelina talks about this in her Beowulf class, she spends a lot of time talking about the Anglo-Saxon mindset. A lot of that is derived from their language and their literature. The sense of melancholy, the sense of being in the ruins of this once-great empire. That reflects through their language, through their literature, there is this profound sense of sadness that comes through. That is not something I have direct experience with, but that is something that I learned from the Beowulf mini-class.

From my experience with Latin and Greek: you learn a lot about different pockets of

the Roman empire based on how authors from those regions wrote. You learn a lot about their general mindset from their language. One thing I have observed: Greek is incredibly flexible as a language. I'm talking about Ancient Greek, to be clear— I cannot speak to modern Greek; I know very little modern Greek. There will be lots of different ways to express the same idea. There will be five or six different acceptable, correct ways to express different kinds of ideas. Latin has much more rigid rules. You cannot use certain constructions that more closely mirror English constructions. In English, we use the infinitive to express purpose. “I am going to write a letter,” that is a purpose sentence in English. In Latin, if you want to say that, you cannot use the infinitive, you have to use a completely different construction to do that and it is stylistically very wrong to use an infinitive in that way.

The Latin language is actually suboptimal for philosophy because it is so rigid. Greek is a much more flexible language that allows for philosophical thinking much more easily. Because of that flexibility, you can dig into certain questions much more easily in Greek than you can in Latin.

Studying languages on those levels can reveal all of that, I think a lot better than what you would get in translation. And it is just something that you really don't understand. I mean, you can't understand it, but you will really see it when you experience it. That is something I try to bring out in my classes. I try to give you those larger structures, that context, that understanding. That is what I think. Language can reveal a lot about the thinking tendencies. The process of translation itself can dramatically change the intellectual landscape. It is also important to keep in mind that the Bible, the Gospel story, works in images rather than linguistic, deeply philosophical tricks or concepts, it is much easier to translate it across cultures. Lambs, vines, shepherds, redemption— all these things can be conveyed in very concrete terms. There are language issues, there are lots of layers to the Bible, but the fundamental story, the core of it all, is all these images packed together— that can be very easily translated. I think that was by design.

What projects are you working on at the moment?

I am working on a translation of *Cupid and Psyche* for the How to Read Literature class. What I want to do with that is have it be an annotated translation that explains why I made certain translation choices. The public domain translation surprisingly cuts a lot of details out. There's a lot of snake and dragon imagery in the Latin that does not really come through in that translation.

The other thing I am working on is a translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. That is also an extremely important and influential work for literary theory and our literary theory in particular. One of the fundamental principles that Aristotle dwells on a lot is that it is about structure, not about character.

There are lots of translations of the *Poetics* that exist. So it wouldn't be anything all that new or revolutionary. If anything, it would be more notes. The notes would be very

focused on connecting it to the literary tradition and would be advancing our understanding of literature through the translation.



Dr. Anne Phillips

Teacher

Teaches: Latin 1, Latin 2

Interviewed by:



Fiona Altschuler

15 years old

Maryland

Anglo-Saxon 1, Early Modern Literature,
Latin 2



Annalise Martin

16 years old

Japan

Anglo-Saxon 1, Latin 1, Out of the Depths

Art

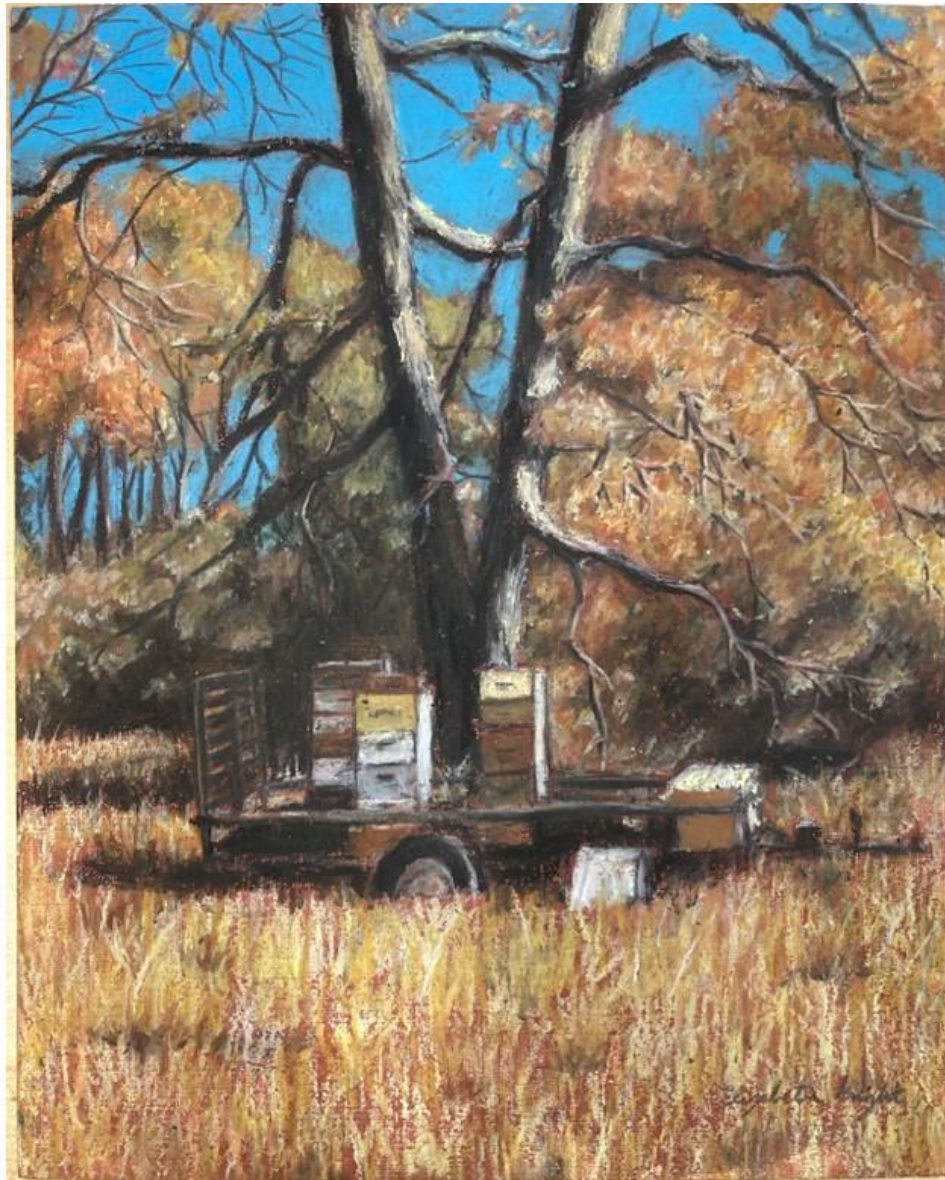


The Bookstore



Elsa Altschuler
12 years old
Maryland
Good Books

The Beebox



Elizabeth Knight

15 years old

North Carolina

Anglo-Saxon 1, Early Modern Literature,

Latin 1

Peony



Raeleigh Kirby

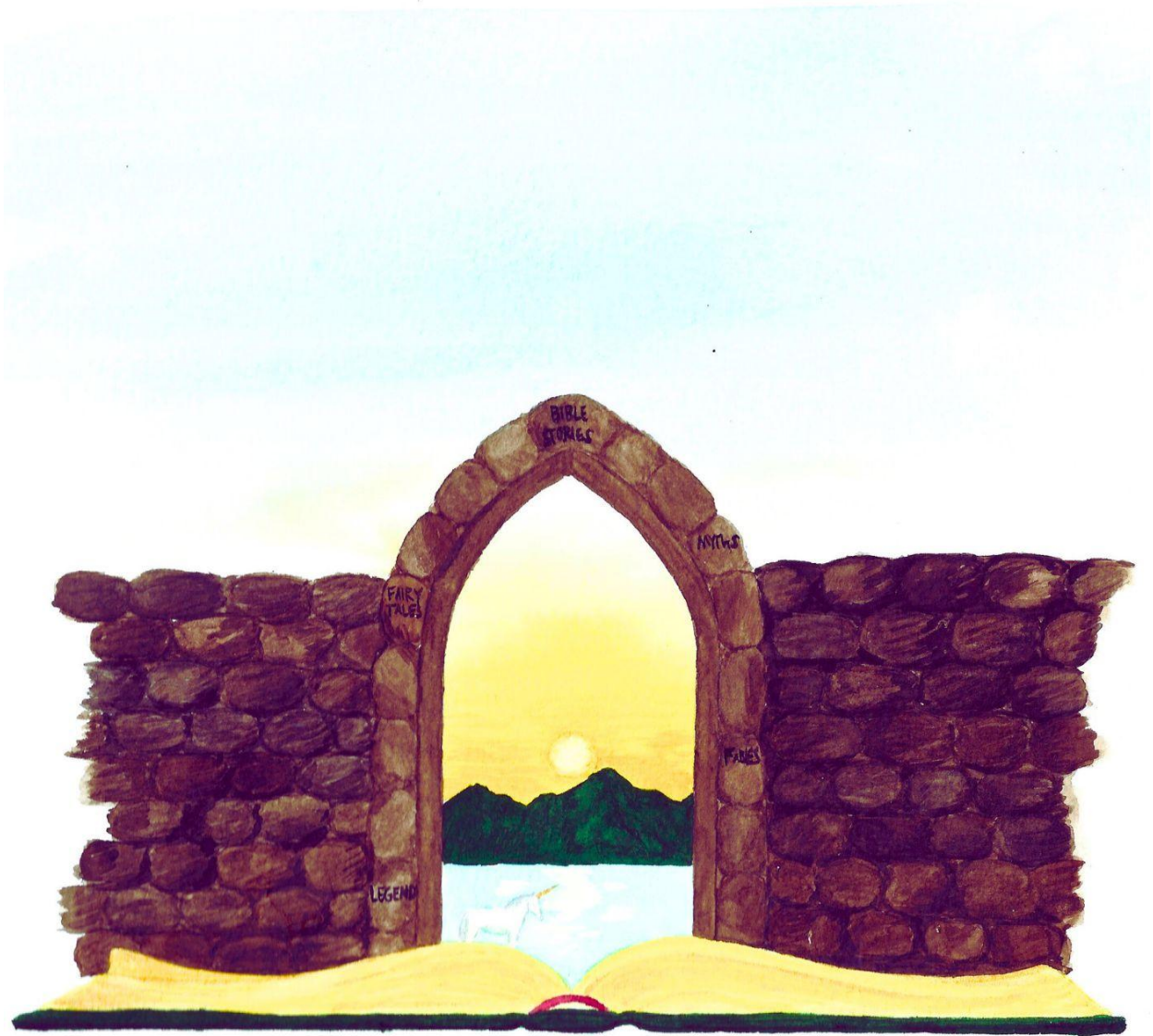
15 years old

Puerto Rico

Latin 2, Medieval and Renaissance

Literature, Readings in Medieval History

Gateway to the World of Stories



Lucy Limesand
14 years old
Missouri
Medieval and Renaissance Literature

A decorative floral border in the top-left corner featuring green vines, red and orange flowers, and small red berries.

Fiction

&

Poetry

A decorative floral border in the bottom-left corner featuring green vines, red and orange flowers, and small red berries.A decorative floral border in the bottom-right corner featuring green vines, red and orange flowers, and small red berries.

The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

Once upon a time there lived, in the center of a wide green field, an old farmer and his daughter. His daughter was a fine young woman whom everyone simply called “Lady.” Lady delighted in working alongside her father in their wide green field, rending the new buds and small ears of wheat that pushed up from the earth below. Her favorites were the fruit trees and her father often watched from the window of their meager cottage, as Lady went about the orchard, murmuring to the trees as if they were old friends.

One morning, as Lady was walking through the orchard, she came upon a milk-white unicorn caught fast against the apple tree.

“Dear Lady,” the beast pleaded, its horn tangled among the branches, “set me free.” Lady hurried to him and, working carefully, freed the unicorn from the thorny brambles. The liberated unicorn turned to her, bowing low. “Dear Lady,” it spoke, “I came to this garden to seek you out. The king, whose palace is just over those mountains, has a son who wishes you to be his bride. You are truly as good as they have spoken. The prince has loved you from the moment he first saw you and makes himself ready to come to you with all haste.”

It was with great joy that Lady accepted the prince’s proposal. The unicorn told her that the prince would fetch her in three weeks’ time and before departing, gave the girl an invisible ring. “This is a gift from your bridegroom,” the unicorn said, “as a reminder of your pledge. Meet the prince under that apple tree where you first freed me, three weeks hence and you shall be wed. But take care you do not forget the meeting, for the rings, while able to be felt, cannot be seen. Do not forget.”

Lady promised she would remember always, and she and her father bid the unicorn farewell. The last she saw of him was the sun, glinting off his polished horn and he disappeared towards the mountains.

The days began to go by, and Lady happily anticipated the meeting with the prince. She would feel the wedding band upon her finger and smile to herself at the thought of her bridegroom. But after one week was scarcely over and life went on as if no unicorn had ever visited the cottage in the field. Lady began to forget the ring on her finger. Being invisible, she often forgot its existence and the feeling of the cold band against her skin. As the first week drew to a close, the ring was seldom thought of and as the second week ended, Lady had begun to forget the prince himself. On the night of her appointed meeting with the prince, she had quite forgotten both the unicorn and her bridegroom.

That night a great storm battered the small cottage and the garden around it. As Lady lay down to sleep, she thought she heard the sounds of sorrowful lamentation drifting from the garden. It was the saddest song she had ever heard, and though she could not place its meaning it pierced her heart with longing.

The next morning, Lady and her father woke to find the garden in disarray. Broken

trees and trampled leaves littered the ground. Instead of flowers, thorn bushes reared their scraggly heads and even Lady's beloved fruit trees refused to bear fruit. Lady saw all this and suddenly the memory of the unicorn, the ring and the bridegroom rushed upon her.

"O Lady!" her father exclaimed. "We are ruined here. This is no way to life!" Lady looked out over the disorder and wept bitterly.

"This was my fault, father," she said, "and I must be the one to remedy it. I shall go to the king over the mountains and beg him to restore our garden, in the name of his son who once loved me." Her father was loathe to see his only daughter leave him, but as he was too old to make the journey, gave her his blessing and a single blossom he had saved from the apple tree. Lady set out across the wide green field and towards the great mountains looming off in the distance. She could feel her ring still and often touched it for courage, though it sent bitter pangs through her heart when she did. Lady journeyed on towards the mountains, crossing three rushing rivers, a wide valley, and finally coming to the edge of a deep wood, stretching before her with all manner of shadows and strange whispering winds. She was not halfway through when a great hall rose up from the center of the wood, studded all over with all manner of glittering diamonds and pearls. Lady, seeing that the hall lay in the center of the path, and deeming it unwise to set foot off her course, approached the shining doors and knocked. At once they opened, revealing a young child on the threshold.

"The night is young, and so are you, dear child." Lady said. "Might I pass through your hall and be on my way?"

The child bowed and replied, "Lady, favoured one, you may pass through my hall of stars if you aid me in but one deed."

"Name it." Said Lady.

The child led her into the glittering hall above which, where the ceiling should have risen, was spread a black sky, scattered all over with stars.

"Hold the stars with song, and you shall pass beyond." The child sang, and departed.

Lady began her song, and the stars sang back, holding their course and pattern. However, as the night wore on, Lady began to weary and the melody to falter, the words growing dim in her mind. She could not remember the theme to hold the stars and the more she forgot, to her horror, the constellations above began to sway and stray from their course. Lady wept bitterly and began to give up all hope of being able to see the king over the mountains and restore the house of her father. At that moment, a man stepped into the hall, holding in his hand an ivory harp.

"Dear Lady," the man called, "why do you weep?"

"I must hold these stars with my song I am to continue through the wood and seek the king over the mountains."

"Fear not." The man replied, laying a hand on the strings of his harp. "I shall help you."

And there in the hall, as the man harped the forgotten melody, the stars returned to

their places and journeyed the paths of the heavens once more. The child returned in the morn and, viewing the stars of the sky, nodded with pleasure.

“It is good.”

So, Lady traveled on.

The night was setting in when she came to a second hall rising from the center of the wood, this one forged of the purest silver and shining like a glorious mirror. Lady, seeing that the hall lay in the center of the path, and deeming it unwise to set foot off her course, approached the doors and knocked. They opened at once, revealing a splendid maiden standing on the threshold.

“The night is in its glory, and so are you, dear maid,” said Lady, “Might I pass through your hall and be on my way?”

The maiden bowed and replied, “Lady, favoured one, you may pass through my hall of the moon if you aid me in but one deed.”

“Name it.” Said Lady.

The maiden led her into the great hall, where, instead of a lofty roof of plaited silver, spread a vast black sky and the moon itself flowing in its midst.

“Hold the moon with song, and you shall pass beyond.” The maiden sang and departed.

The night went akin to the one before. Lady began to sing the melody to hold the moon at its course, and she sang longer and stronger than in the hall of the stars, as the moon climbed steadily above her.

However, as the moon began to reach its zenith, Lady grew weary and the melody dim in her mind. The moon faltered in its course as Lady’s voice paused and the girl wept again over the forgotten tune.

At that moment a man stepped into the hall, alike to the man in the first hall, but bearing with him harp made of silver.

“Dear Lady,” the man called, “why do you weep?”

“I must hold the moon with my song if I am to continue through the wood and seek the king over the mountains.”

“Fear not,” the man replied, plucking the strings of his harp. “I shall help you.”

Once again, the man played the strains of the forgotten melody, the moon righted itself and continued down its course before disappearing into the dawn.

The maiden returned with the sunrise and nodded her head with pleasure. “It is good.”

So, Lady journeyed on.

She had nearly come to the end of the forest by now and could see the keen tips of the mountains soaring up to the sky ahead, but lo! In her path, a final hall rose before her, more glorious than the last two combined: its roof seemingly thatched with fire and its sidings of pure, hammered gold.

Lady knocked.

The doors opened at once, revealing a bent old woman standing on the threshold.

“The night is old and so are you, dear grandmother,” said Lady. “Might I pass through your hall and be on my way?”

The old lady did not bow but fixed the girl with a penetrating eye and replied, “Lady, favoured one, you may pass through my all of the sun if you aid me in but one deed.”

“Name it.” Lady said.

The old woman led her into the fiery hall, wherein rose a vision of daytime splendour, though it was the dark of night outside the walls. The sun burned in the arms of a blue sky, warming all its light touched.

“Hold the sun with song, and you shall pass beyond.” Sang the old woman. “But heed! Only one try and if ‘tis failed then you shall die.” And she departed.

Lady wished for no such end, but comforted herself with the fact that she now knew more of the melody than ever and surely could not fail. So, she began to sing, and to guild the sun across the sky.

The glowing chariot was nearly set, and crimson light of evening had filled the hall when Lady felt a great wave of weariness and said to herself, “The sun is about to set anyways. It should not matter if I rest now. If I lose hold of the sun, it shall simply fall down below the cloud as it should.” With that, her eyes flickered, and she sank down with a sigh upon the floor of the hall.

As the sun crashed out of its course, plunging the hall in darkness, the warmth fled from Lady’s cheeks and lips, now tinged with icy blue. Frost crept across her brow like a barren crown. Even the single apple blossom in her hair withered and died. The frozen maiden lay on the floor of the hall in the darkness, where the only sound was the steady “drip-drip” of water trickling from the rafters, until even that was silenced and frozen. The hall crumbled into dilapidation and ruin, travelers passing by whispering to each other about the ice maiden who lay forever in an eternal winter of darkness.

Time seemed to stand still.

Suddenly the doors of the hall were wrenched open, and a brilliant light poured forth into the frozen wastes. A great theme was begun, the forgotten melody which Lady could not remember, and the sun rose up again in all its splendour, the moon following, and the stars. No longer were all these lights separate, but together, moving in what could only be described as a dance.

In the midst of all this, a prince walked into the hall. It was he who had cast down the doors and such a light came from him that the sun appeared to dim above. He went to Lady and laid his warm hand upon her brow. The cold faded from her cheeks and the ice vanished, melting into water and running all about the hall in joyful streams.

Lady opened her eyes and saw the sun, the moon, the stars and the prince above her.

“My name is Prince Bright,” the young man said, “and it was I who claimed you in your beloved garden as the unicorn and gave you the ring as my promise. It was I who sang to

you each night and held the heavens in such harmony since you could not. Come, dear Lady, to my father, the king over the mountains and we shall be married in your restored house.”

So, Lady and Prince Bright were wed and together sang the forgotten melody which Lady now found she knew in its fullness and glory, living forever: happily ever after.



Elizabeth Eusterman

15 years old

Colorado

Anglo-Saxon 1, Medieval and Renaissance

Literature, Readings in Medieval History

Journey Into the Light

The road was long and perfectly straight, extending off towards the horizon, though its more distant reaches were somewhat obscured by a perpetually shifting curtain of rain. The rain drained the road and the fields surrounding it of all color.

The depressingly uniform cast of the surrounding world were, sadly, a perfect mirror of Mordecai's emotional state, though he had no frame of reference for a broader spectrum of feelings or color. He was surrounded by what seemed a dark forest of sign posts standing along the roadside, pointing him in whichever direction he desired, but he felt lost and confused.

Mordecai peered at a reflection of himself in a puddle, rippled and warped by the continuously falling rain. His face still had the youthful roundness of his age, seven, but his skin had acquired a pale and sickly tone; though young, the world had worn on him, and he felt immeasurably tired. Dark brown hair was plastered to his forehead, which was creased with worry lines, and the corners of his mouth were wrinkled through a much too frequent frown.

He was frowning now, and, though he couldn't put a finger on *why* exactly, he found himself crying, which was a common state for people of his generation. He stood, and wept, and the sky above wept with him, mourning the world around them.

There was no sound, but for the patter of rain and the distant hissing of an overseer's machine, which made sure all laws were followed. If he broke one, the machines would know. Finally, he straightened and continued his slow and aimless walk down the road. He had no destination in mind, and he didn't even raise his head to look up and survey his surroundings. The fields, and the plants that grew in them, were monotonous; they were not used to delight the eye, but only to produce crops at maximum efficiency. Mordecai felt no need to look up, and, therefore, his surprise was extreme when he walked into a hedge. He staggered back, sputtering and wiping his face, as he studied the six-foot high wall of rich green leaves dotted with deep red, though he didn't understand the source of the crimson.

He had never seen a rose before, and he bent down to examine it, marveling at its delicate petals. Though it was foreign to his vocabulary, the word *flower* drifted, unbidden, to his mind. It seemed a fitting description of the blossom, and pleased, he stepped back to get a better view of the hedge's size and shape. His tears ceased to flow as joy began to return, thawing the frost the world had left on his heart.

There were two lines of the hedge, embracing a dirt path which led away from the asphalt road he now stood on. His feet carried him forward, as though of their own volition. Though the mud was something that at first made him cringe, he began to enjoy it as he continued on. There had always been a hard layer of asphalt or something else lacking life beneath him, and the absence of this was refreshing.

Mordecai admired his surroundings as he strolled down the path; somewhere, a chorus of birds sang, which was something he had rarely heard. Music in general was frowned upon, as it disrupted the concentration of others. He found himself humming along with them, though he had never sung before and his voice was frightfully out of tune. An unfamiliar feeling began to rise in him—delight.

At length, the hedges on either side of him opened up into a wide, grassy field, with large swathes of wildflowers flourishing along the banks of burbling streams, which were fed by magnificent fountains. There was a break in the clouds above this place, and he could see the blue sky and the sunlight streaming down. It was more than his eyes could take in at once, so he stood, staring around at the *garden* (as the word came to him), which overflowed with life in a way he had never seen before.

After a long period of wide-eyed, enraptured observation, he turned his eyes to the center of the garden, where a large building of some sort stood. There were many large windows set into the stone which formed the primary material of construction, but they were all dark, covered with dust.

He strode towards it, curiosity bubbling up inside him like the water in one of the garden's fountains. There was a large wooden door, set in a stone archway, with a rusted metal handle on one side. He grabbed hold of this, and pulled.

The door creaked as it opened, swinging on un-oiled hinges. Mordecai looked eagerly inside. It was dark, and he could not make much out.

He did not cross the threshold, at first; he had a general impression that it would not be a mere lifting of one's foot and setting it down again, but that the step also carried a certain weight, that it was a decision as well.

There was an old smell from within, though not the smell of mold and decay. It was, rather, as with cheese or wine, the smell of that which has matured over time, growing richer while other, less fortunate objects grew stale.

Taking a deep breath and summoning his strength, Mordecai stepped through the doorway, into the building. Inside, he found a broad staircase formed of wood planks leading upwards. He climbed slowly, pausing after each step, gingerly placing his feet on the planks of the stairway, wincing as they creaked, complaining of too much use. It took him what seemed an eternity, but time's passage had ceased mattering to him. People too often spent their days rushing from one thing to the next, trying to force every last drop of usefulness from every last hour as though juicing a lemon, until all that was left was the peel.

Once he arrived at the next floor, he paused and looked around him. The light was dim, barely penetrating the large dusty windows. What illumination managed to break through showed him that he now stood in a spacious room, with tall shelves nearly reaching to the ceiling surrounding him, then branching off and forming aisles which twisted and turned out of sight. There were strangely shaped objects which didn't look like anything he had seen standing in rows on the shelves.

Mordecai stepped forward to give the shelves' contents a closer inspection, and, when his face drew close to them, he inhaled a small cloud of the dust and sneezed violently, banishing, for the moment, all the dust within a few feet of him. The objects still did not look at all familiar to him. Each was a couple inches thick, and slightly rounded on one of the thinner sides, the one facing out towards him. They sat on the shelves with the flat faces on either end pressed against the ones on either side.

He reached out, and, trembling, slid one from its spot on the shelf. He turned it over and over in his hands as he gently fingered the leather exterior, inspecting it carefully. By now, he was beginning to dislike having to call the object simply 'it', and as he looked at whatever it was, cocking his head from side to side, the word book formed in his mind, and he knew this was the right thing to call it.

As he held the *book*, inspecting it from all angles, it fell open on one side, and he now saw that the inside was formed by hundreds of pieces of paper, all with words written in neat lines across them. One of the flat sides had a more ornate design worked into the leather, so he closed the book and opened it again from that side.

He took the book to one of the windows, and wiped off the coat of dust so the sunlight could better penetrate. He curled up in a nearby armchair, warmed by the light of the sun, as he began to read. Reading was not something he was much accustomed to, but he had learned a rudimentary understanding of the process at school. He found that the little learning he did possess had not prepared him for this particular book, but he was able to make his way through, gaining confidence gradually. The book was different from what he was used to, but he began to enjoy it as the time wore on. All in all, it was a foreign but enjoyable experience.

There was one character, a heroic prince, that Mordecai particularly enjoyed. The young man showed bravery, wisdom, and selflessness, none of which Mordecai had ever encountered before. He was shocked when, close to the end of the story, the prince was slain. He stopped reading, filled with emotions he wasn't able to describe. There was something like the sadness he had felt before he had come here (it was *unfair* that the prince had died, he felt), but it was most certainly different. It was mingled with... he frowned as his fingers drummed against the book's cover.

As he sat there, he watched the sun descend towards the horizon. A thought occurred to him: he would need to return to his previous home before long. As soon as he had set foot in the library, as he now knew it to be called, all memory of the outside world had vanished from his mind, but now, it came rushing back with a vengeance, and he knew that he most certainly never wanted to leave this place. He began to cry as he realized he would probably have to leave. This was the first place he had ever found to be welcoming, the place where he had learned what books and wonder were. But if he didn't leave— there were rules about wandering after dark, and he would be punished if he returned to his house after curfew. Could they find him here? Could he stay, and risk being discovered by the machines and technology that were at the disposal of those in authority?

As he sat there, tears dripping down his cheeks, there was a muted thump. He turned to look over his shoulder, but the only thing out of place was a book, lying on the ground nearby. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a flicker of movement, and something disappeared around the corner of the aisle closest to the book. Mordecai stood up quickly, legs trembling with exhaustion, and hurried after whatever it was he had seen, as several other books thumped to the ground in the corridor.

He peeked down the aisle it had disappeared down. There were several books lying on the floor of the aisle, and at the far end, he caught a glimpse, longer this time, of the being he was following. He didn't see it in its entirety, but there were two back legs and a long tail, both of which appeared to be those of a lion. Hardly a moment later, it whisked around the corner. As he prepared to continue his pursuit, the thought entered his mind that what he was doing could be dangerous. Lions weren't tame, or so he had heard. He took a deep breath, but stopped as a book began to quiver on the ground in the middle of the floor, a stone's throw away from him.

As he stared, fascinated, a large bubble of water floated out from between the book's covers, with several joyful fish swimming in its midst. Further down the passageway, another book also began to shake, and within several seconds, a flock of songbirds flew up from the pages, accompanied by a bird that glowed like an ember, with rich red and gold plumage and tongues of flame dancing along its feathers.

Mordecai stepped out into the passageway, walking slowly down it, staring at the different creatures coming out of the books. He continued until he reached the turn, then looked around at the next aisle. There were several books strewn across the floor, as well as a cat and a dog, both stretching as though they had just woken up from a very long time asleep. His eyes widened and he gave a squeak of terror and amazement as a large animal— what looked to be a lion with the wings of an eagle— exploded from a large leatherbound book lying just a couple feet away from him.

He stared up at the creature as it circled, until it flew out of sight above one of the shelves. When he walked past another aisle, he stopped, watching as several people straightened themselves from the books they had occupied. Many of them wore robes and long, flowing cloaks. There was even one man wearing a suit of armor, and carrying a long sword which looked very sharp. *The people in the books are coming to life!* Mordecai thought. *I wonder, has the prince in the story I was reading come too?* Then he remembered that the noble prince had died, and sadness tinged his awe.

Mordecai returned to the window he had read by, and looked out at the sky as small pinpricks of light began to shine in the darkening expanse. If he didn't leave soon, they would catch him, and that was something he most certainly did not want to happen, but neither did he want to leave.

As he sat there, he noticed something different about the sky outside. There was a

small patch where the lights were closer together, and moving rapidly. These particular lights flashed suddenly as they drew closer, sending long, bright beams down to the ground beneath. It was enough illumination for Mordecai to see that it was one of the machines employed by the enforcers of the law, and he was sure it was looking for him.

The man with the sword walked past him. For the first time, he had a thought which wasn't centered on his own fears and worries: what would they do if they discovered this building full of books, and the people and creatures inside? Was it all in danger? If so, it was, he realized, his own fault. He had led the overseers of his world to this wonderful place.

Tears sprang to his eyes once again as he watched the flying ship draw steadily closer. He considered running off, leaving, so that this library wouldn't be discovered and misused, but at the thought of such physical exertion, he swayed on his feet, as he remembered that he was only a sickly, seven year old child. Exhaustion was catching up with him, and as he tried to turn and run, his legs buckled, and he fell to the floor, looking up helplessly as the lights from the ship, at last, shone down through the window. It was too late.

As he sat there, frozen, watching the ship settle down not far from the library, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned, looking up to see...

There was a man standing there, with the look of youth about his face, and yet also bearing the immeasurable wisdom of age, wearing an expression of deep kindness and happiness blended with a deep sorrow. Mordecai could tell that both emotions were personal, directed at him, and it felt as though this man, dressed in the clothing of royalty, knew him and cared for his well being. And, though Mordecai did not recognize the face or the golden circlet that sat upon the head, he also felt deep in his bones that he knew— and had known for quite some time— this man, or prince, or whoever he was.

"Child," He began. "What is the cause of your sadness?"

"I—" Mordecai answered, finding his tongue; "Well, the— the overseers, over there... they're coming, and I don't know what they're going to do to me, or everyone here." The man nodded in understanding, and Mordecai stood up, shaking. As they stood like that, looking out at the ship, a beam of golden light, so strong and pure that it revealed the machine's light to be the mockery it had always been, came down from the stars and shone on the flying ship, and, beneath the weight of the light's glory, the metal buckled and, within moments, disintegrated into nothingness.

"Who... are you?" Mordecai asked in wonder.

"I think you know me better than you let on." The prince's eyes strayed to the book, sitting on the chair, forgotten for the moment.

Mordecai's eyes widened in amazement. "You're the prince! From the book! But—" His expression melted in confusion as he stared up at the Prince's face. "You... died." He finished, quieter than before.

"Did you finish the story?"

“No... but— how?” Mordecai smiled slightly, through his amazement. It was impossible! And yet...

“You have much to learn.” The Prince offered him a hand, and drew him to his feet.

“Where do I go?” Mordecai asked, standing on his own, though he was trembling through combined fear and weakness.

For the first time, he noticed a door in the wall. Several of the newly awoken people and creatures stood nearby it, waiting for him, it appeared. “So... I can come with you?” He exclaimed, in overflowing joy.

“Of course.” The Prince smiled, and took his hand. Together, Mordecai supported by the Prince, they walked forwards, towards the door.

One of the men standing there twisted the doorknob and pulled, and as it swung open, a bright light, almost tangible, poured out into the room.

They paused on the threshold, and the Prince looked down at him. “Are you ready?” he inquired.

Mordecai took a deep breath and nodded, eyes fixed on the light before him. Then, the Prince stepped forward, leading Mordecai’s little, feeble body onwards—on, into the light.



Isaiah Snowden

16 years old

Indiana

Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Out of
the Depths, Readings in Medieval History

Misty Oak and the Healing Stone

Once there was a kingdom, and the king of this kingdom had three daughters. Their names were Sycamore, Persimmon, and Pine. One day Persimmon got sick. Misty Oak feared that she would die if she was not healed. The king loved his daughter very much, so he went to see the great wizard Sequoia. Sequoia, when King Oak told him about Persimmon, said that the cure for her could be found at the end of the world, over oceans, and across forests.

King Misty Oak set out on the journey accompanied by only ten people, leaving Sycamore the eldest in charge of his kingdom. Though Sycamore ruled the kingdom well in his absence, they were angry that the king had taken their family members (even though they had chosen of their own will to go) with him on a hunt for something they thought was impossible.

Meanwhile, Pine became very intimate with her sister for she sat by her sisters bedside telling her of wonderful things to make the time go by. Persimmon never moved from her bed and barely ever opened her eyes.

The king aboard his ship was becoming uneasy. His men were beginning to become angry with him. Since they had left the kingdom, everything had gone wrong. At sea, there was nothing but bad weather; in the forests, they had had to wade through swamps and bogs. And even though the people with him had chosen to come, they began to wish that they had been allowed to stay at their homes with their families.

As the ship went farther and farther from his home, the king began to worry more and more about the fact that he knew nothing of what his daughter's cure looked like and how he would know it when he saw it. He wished that he had asked the wizard to tell him more details about it such as what it looked like, where he would find it, and if it would be an herb or another sort of cure.

King Misty Oak landed his ship on a land that he thought looked promising, though he could not think why. He and his ten people who accompanied him searched for the cure for Persimmon and it turned out that a man named Ash found it. Unlike the others, he had not been angry with Misty Oak, or wished that he was back at his house; he had remained loyal to his king.

How it happened was like this: he had just come over a hill, when he suddenly felt like his journey had come to an end. He looked around him and, after looking for a little while, he found a smooth, white stone that had on it writing and this is what it said:

This, the healing stone for Persimmon, may be lifted only, by the hand of a king.

If you have an evil purpose, do not dare to steal this stone,

But if you take it only for the concern of another it shall be easy to carry.

Ash went over to the stone embedded in the ground and bent over to lift it up and when he could not, he knew that this was what they had been looking for. He stood up and ran to find the king.

When he was gone, a figure went and stood over the stone. She knew he would be back soon, but she wasn't afraid. When he returned, she'd be ready.

Ash found the king discussing going on beyond this land to find the cure for his daughter there because no one had found anything here (and even if they were in the right place, wouldn't have because they weren't trying very hard). The king was overjoyed at the news that the cure had been found. King Oak, and all of his company went to the clearing that Ash had found the cure in, but, when they entered, they were greeted by the sight of a young woman (and though they never knew it, her name was Vine). She was sitting over the healing stone. As soon as they were all in the clearing, she started a battle with her feared tendrils (that had been known to coil around heroes that never breathed again).

It was Ash who saved them all because, instead of trying to kill Vine directly, he went for her tendrils. He knew that if she didn't have her tendrils, she wouldn't have any weapons. He hacked the tendrils off one at a time, until they all lay on the ground, some still twitching with life. Then Ash went around to all the people that were still wrapped in Vine's coils. His sharp blade cut through the tendrils. It was only after all the people were accounted for, that he remembered that the reason they were here was because of the cure. Ash went over to the group of the people that had journeyed so far to lead them to Persimmon's cure.

"Your Majesty," said Ash. "The cure for your daughter is this way. Follow me." The King followed him. Ash knew that the king was hoping that he was right and that he hadn't been mistaken. The king told the people to not follow them. When they were out of the hearing range of the rest of the company, Misty Oak said to Ash, "Was that creature there when you first came?" Ash answered "No, there wasn't a sign that anyone had been here. She must have come after I left." At this point they came to the place where the stone was embedded in the ground. Misty Oak turned to his subjects and said, "I would like you all to witness this." They turned and saw clearly what the stone said. It seemed like everyone in the clearing was holding their breath including Ash as well as the king. Misty Oak bent over the stone, and in the eyes of everyone present, lifted it as easily as if he was lifting a leaf from the ground. He turned to them all and they knew that he was their king. He held up the stone for all to see. The writing on it faded and then appeared again, but this time the writing said as follows:

The cure is found. Persimmon is saved. Misty Oak is king.

All who are here will know from now on that you are looking at your true king.

And those who were watching felt in their hearts that they were looking at their true king.

It was a solemn and thoughtful group that made their way down to the little beach where their boat lay in harbour like a bird that was nestled in between the wings of its mother.

They boarded the ship at once and began a voyage that was nothing like the one there. In the forests it was dry and shady with plenty of springs and streams to drink from. There was abundant food on land for them to take aboard their ship.

At sea, there was not one storm all the way back to the kingdom. But Misty Oak could not help worrying that he didn't know what to do with the stone. How could a stone save his daughter? She couldn't swallow the stone to be cured and the stone couldn't be dissolved for her to drink, so how could a stone be of use? He kept worrying about this for the whole ship ride home. What if he couldn't find out how to use the stone and couldn't save Persimmon? Then what would he do?

Back in the kingdom, Pine anxiously sat by Persimmon's side. All day she told her stories from when the kingdom first was founded up till the present day. Persimmon never turned her head, which lay on her pillow, or opened her eyes, but Pine was sure that she heard her and, somehow the stories and other wonderful things that she told slightly healed Persimmon or at least took her mind away from her illness.

When Pine and Sycamore saw their father's ship come into sight, they were overjoyed, but when they saw his face they both knew that he was worried. The first thing that he said was, "Is Persimmon alive?" "Yes!" they both answered. He went to Persimmon's bed and when he first saw her, he knew how to save her.

On her forehead there was an oval-shaped indent, exactly the same shape as the healing stone. Anxiously, Misty Oak placed the healing stone into the indent. He stood back and watched. Slowly, color came back into Persimmon's cheeks, then her face got smoother and she started to look more like she did before the days of sickness. When she looked like she was not sick at all, the healing stone fell from her forehead. The light that it had previously held was no longer there and it looked like a normal stone; not important at all.

Persimmon sat up and embraced her father. They were both overjoyed to see each other and it was some time before they let go. The worry had left the king's face and they realized that he had looked older since Persimmon got sick.

When they went to proclaim Persimmon's healing, everyone knew that Misty Oak was their true king. Though no one ever said, they were sure that the people had told their families about the writing on the stone.

Misty Oak's kingdom was even more prosperous on his return and, up till this day, the earth where fruit grew plentifully was envied, though no one dared to attack it for they knew that to conquer the land would be impossible.

When Misty Oak died (which was not for a very long time), even though Sycamore was the oldest, Pine became the queen, and she ruled quite as well as her father. She married Ash and the people loved them and the country grew more and more plentiful after years of good harvests and trading with the other plentiful countries (though none as plentiful as their own).

The people never doubted their kings or queens, and if they ever did, the oldest of them told them the story of Misty Oak and the healing stone for his daughter that they said their father had heard from his father and so on. The kings and queens were also happy with their kingdom and so everyone in the kingdom was happy until the end of time.



Vyonae Thompson

12 years old

Virginia

Good Books, Plutarch for Kids, Narrating the
Good Books

The Duck Moon Rising

A Nightmare

Eli tore his head off his sweat-soaked pillow. “Fear the Duck Moon rising,” these were the words that had woken Eli from his nightmare. But what could it mean? He knew of no Duck Moon. He attempted to recall the rest of his dream, but it had all faded away except the last sentence. Unable to sleep, Eli lifted himself out of his bed and got dressed. He wandered out of his room and down the stairs of the mansion in which he lived. His servants were sure to have seen him, but they knew better than to disturb him in the night. Eli walked into the library, knowing his mind wouldn’t get any rest until he knew what the Duck Moon was. He searched every book he could on the shelves for information, until he collapsed into sleep out of exhaustion on the floor. It was not until morning that Eli woke, he picked himself off the ground and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. When he turned around to go up to his room he was surprised to see a little man standing in front of him. The man was nobody Eli knew, he was wearing a brown suit, with a green undershirt, and a top hat on his head. But the most stunning thing about his appearance was that pinned to his suit pocket, there was a pin about two inches wide, and the same tall. The pin was a duck. “Who’re you?” Eli said louder than he intended. The little man became furious at Eli’s rudeness, his expression twisted into one of anger. The room around the two men seemed to dim, and the little man appeared to grow six inches in height. “FEAR THE DUCK MOON RISING!” the little man who was no longer little howled. Then his duck pin bulged and grew larger, and spun around six times, and then the little man disappeared. Eli stumbled back a few steps, and then rubbed his head. *I must have been dreaming*, Eli thought, and then walked back to his room. On his way out of the library, Eli failed to notice the brown duck feathers on the ground.

Later that day Eli went to see his friend, Jones. His friend’s house sat atop a hill, next to the woods that bordered the town. Jones was not as wealthy as Eli, but still had a considerable amount of money. Jones was a man who enjoyed hunting but Eli seemed to have forgotten what exactly it was he hunted. The moment Eli walked into his friend’s house, he was met with a hall whose walls were filled with stuffed duck heads. Eli was almost certain that they had not been ducks before, but he didn’t think much of them, as he was rushed into the kitchen by his friend. “Here, have some tea.” Jones said as he began pouring out of a kettle. Eli and Jones talked for a while. Jones was a man who found any sort of silence unbearable so he filled every spare moment with chatter. The air of the conversation was empty with all the chatter. At about half past seven, Jones abruptly said he had an appointment he needed to get too, Eli got up from the table and walked down the duck-filled hall. Jones followed him down the hall and began speaking about his duck collection, “This duck here is one of my favorites, just look at that bill! Oh! This here is my best duck, I hunted

it down about...oh...three years ago. At the last Duck Moon. Oh, you must see this one..." Eli stopped in the act of slipping his arm into his coat. "The last what?!" Jones stopped talking and turned to Eli, "Why, the Duck Moon! You must know what that is! It's happening tonight! I'm going...ah... hunting. With a couple of my friends, it's going to be great fun!" Jones glanced down at his watch " Oh! I'm...um...terribly sorry to rush you out, but I'm running late!" Jones practically shoved Eli out of the door, and then slammed it rather hurriedly. Eli turned around, stunned. He had only seen his friend act like this once before, three years ago. Jones had said he had a hunting trip he didn't want to be late for. He hadn't said what it was he had been hunting. Eli knocked on the door. Nothing. Eli knocked again, still nothing. He banged on the door harder, but Jones wasn't responding. He took a couple steps back, and rushed at the door with all his weight. The door collapsed inward and Eli looked around. Jones was nowhere to be seen. As well as that, the hall was now filled with empty plaques, all the stuffed duck heads on the wall were gone. The floor was covered with brown duck feathers. Down at the far end of the hall, a single duck was standing there, staring at Eli. The duck tilted its head sideways, and then quaked once. It was just a quack, but somehow Eli knew what the duck was saying: "Fear the Duck Moon Rising". Eli fell backward and screamed, he stumbled out of that horrible house. Eli didn't stop running until he reached his home, and then he immediately bolted up to his bedroom. He slammed the door to his bedroom behind him, then in a wild frenzy he shoved anything he could find against the door; his bookcase, his nightstand, his bed. He collapsed onto the bed, twitching from fear. He couldn't think straight anymore. His mind had become flooded with one sentence: "Fear the Duck Moon rising". A couple minutes later he heard a crack on the window. Eli jolted off his bed, looked out his window to the small porch outside. Standing on the ground was a single duck staring up at him. It was the same duck from Jones' house, he was sure of it. The duck opened its mouth and Eli saw in terror that the duck had a full set of teeth. The duck spoke in clear English, "Fear the Duck Moon rising". Eli stumbled backwards, and tripped over his bed. When he got up again the duck was gone. For some incomprehensible reason Eli rushed to the porch door and unlocked it. He pulled the door open and stepped outside. As soon as he stepped outside the moon came into view; but it was not a normal moon, it was far larger than usual, and blood red. The moon's red light filled the sky, making the entire visible sky a dark red. Eli heard a quack from above and looked up. Flying right above him were six ducks with six more sitting on the rim of the roof of his house. Another duck seemed to fly out of nowhere and landed on the railing. Eli took a step back and his back hit the porch door, slamming it shut. The duck opened its teeth-filled mouth and said. "Fear the Duck Moon rising." Eli let out a blood-curdling scream, and remembered no more.

It took the servants almost an hour to get Eli's door open, and when they did, the room was in ruins. Everything was either broken or tipped over, but Eli wasn't there. The servants found the door stuck shut, the handle on the outside was wretched and twisted, as if someone

had tried forcing the door open, but obviously failed. And on the ground, there was a pile of brown duck feathers.



Max Chou

14 years old

Illinois

Ancient Literature, How to Read Literature,
Latin 2, Readings in Ancient History

About the Author

My life began when I was born in the freezingly frigid plains of Kodiak, Alaska (cold!). As soon as I was born I knew I couldn't stand the polar bears; they're just too talkative (extroverts!). I fled my home, and immediately became a stowaway on a ship bound for Sweden. The majority of the sailors were nice, although most of them couldn't speak Elvish, so communication was hard.

I met the bane of my existence on this ship, his name was Alvin (mean!); nobody knew his last name because if you asked him, he would pin you to a wall and pluck out your nose hair (violent!). He was six and three-quarters feet tall, and weighed as much as the ship itself (heavy!). When he found me, his first instinct was to chop off my middle toe on my left foot (pain!), and as you can guess, I was pretty mad about this. I tried punching him (foolish!), but all that resulted was a broken knuckle (more pain!), he grabbed me right then, and flung me out the side of the ship into the cold sea waters (even more pain!). Of course Alvin wasn't the brightest, and he didn't think that creating a hole the size of me (large!) in the side of the ship could cause trouble. Well it did. The ship went down, and I was the only one on the ship who didn't end up washing ashore in Hawaii and becoming a professional cake decorator (the worst!). I guess getting flung out of a ship head-first can be a good thing. I did not wash up on Hawaii, but instead found myself on the shores of California (hot!), where I joined a traveling circus called the Traveling Circus (unoriginal!). I lived in the donkey-eaters wagon, his name was Derk. He was a nice enough fellow, but his breath smelled a lot like a donkey (stenchy!) and I never knew why. After a while, I grew bored with the same old routines (monotonous!), especially the knife juggling and watermelon swallowing (repetitive!). At one point I wanted to shake things up a bit, so I almost killed the tightrope walker, but in the end I didn't.

It was then that I realized my life was not meant for the Traveling Circus, so I moved out to my homeland, Alaska. I quickly found myself enjoying a more docile life (peaceful!). While this life was enjoyable, it was rather boring. As quickly as I came, I left. I moved to

Washington, and began working in politics. Using my wit and my glasses (nerdy!) to bribe my way into becoming President and then moved into the White House (large!). I passed two Bills before they realized I was a fish. I was removed from Presidency, and cast out into the sea (harsh!). I ruled the seven seas with an iron fist of great integrity and justice, but I grew tired with being Poseidon's general, so I moved to Illinois (flat!) and became a non-fiction writer. I recently published one of my best works: 'The Bull Market 101: Tips and Tricks to Manipulate the System for Your Benefit'. And currently, I work as a full time fortune cookie writer. And that's why I write fortune cookies.

Lady Winter

The wind and cold
Rush on so bold
In Winter's hand abiding.

Her cold blue lips
Smile at the tips
Her eyes a look resigning

She lets wind blow,
She lets it snow,
Her sister spring won't come yet

Her raven hair,
The sun's despair,
The darkness hers to pet

She holds her pow'r
In a strong tower
Knowing it will not last

In vain she grasps,
In vain she clasps,
Her strength fades to the past.



Tabitha Turnage
13 years old
The United Kingdom
Good Books

The Torch

A flame lit in a garden
And carried all this way.
A bright and burning fire,
A golden sunny ray.
And we the bearers,
The keepers in the night
Our charge, our seed to hold
Until it blooms in light.
And on that day of blooming
Our eyes shall see, made whole,
The fire which we carried
Shall then erupt in full,
And we shall see no longer
The shadow torch we bore.
But now we have a seed,
A hint of what's in store.



Josiah Mullins

16 years old

Ohio

Early Modern Literature, Latin 2, Out of the
Depths

The Four Loves

Of love, on this good Earth by God eternal made
Betwixt the starry heav'n above and Hell's great fire,
There are four types. Of nature born are the first three,
Of God the fourth, the King of virtues. Thus said the Greeks.

Old Storge is the first, most homely of the loves.
Affection he is called, the family his domain.
A father with his son and mother with her babe
He rules. Familiarity is his lifeblood.

Next, Philia, called friendship, rare now, but
Of high regard in elder days, is noblest of
The natural loves. Unjealous, he affirms what men
Already do. He magnifies both good and ill.

Then Eros, fickle passion, drawing man and wife
Together, leading to a life of union, binds
Them in affection strong. Here, each does serve their mate
Most easily, and sacrifice of self is found.

The greatest virtue comes, the sun and stars are moved
By her. Agape, love of God to men, is queen
Of all the passions. They are means for her to come
To men. Fulfillment is here found for nature's loves.



Bishop Gilmore

16 years old

Alabama

Later Modern Literature

This student publication *The Scriptorium* is a product of House of Humane Letters.
This issue *Fall 2024: The Lost Road* Copyright © 2024 House of Humane Letters

“Myth and Its Elements” Copyright © 2024 Elizabeth Eusterman
“On Digital Art” Copyright © 2024 Gabe Chou
“On Samuel Johnson” Copyright © 2024 Olivia Hornstra
“Gift of the One to Men” Copyright © 2024 Luke Prizzi
“On Friendship” Copyright © 2024 Natalia Testa
“On the Importance of Memory and Stories” Copyright © 2024 Annalise Martin
“Conversations Shape the Camp” Copyright © 2024 Grace Gerardot
“God’s Glory” Copyright © 2024 Jonathan Jecko
Interview with Dr. Anne Phillips Content Copyright © 2024 Anne Phillips
“The Bookstore” Copyright © 2024 Elsa Altschuler
“The Beebox” Copyright © 2024 Elizabeth Knight
“Peony” Copyright © 2024 Raeleigh Kirby
“Gateway to the World of Stories” Copyright © 2024 Lucy Limesand
“The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars” Copyright © 2024 Elizabeth Eusterman
“Journey Into the Light” Copyright © 2024 Isaiah Snowden
“Misty Oak and the Healing Stone” Copyright © 2024 Vyonae Thompson
“The Duck Moon Rising” Copyright © 2024 Max Chou
“Lady Winter” Copyright © 2024 Tabitha Turnage
“The Torch” Copyright © 2024 Josiah Mullins
“The Four Loves” Copyright © 2024 Bishop Gilmore

