The Scriptorium

Fall 2025: The Poetry of Nature

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House of Humane Letters Student Journal

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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Reader,

The third issue of the Scriptorium has been a joy to put together! With the beginning of the school year, we have welcomed several new staff members: Elizabeth Knight as our Arts editor, Bethany Hansen as our Arts reader, Asher McCall as our Features reader and head copy-editor, Isaiah Snowden as our Fiction and Poetry reader, Olivia Wetzel as a copy-editor, and Mary Graham and Rhome Smith as our Design and Layout crew! They've all been exciting, helpful additions to the team and we're so glad to have them. The process is getting easier with every issue, and with such a lovely staff, putting the magazine together can't be any less than thrilling.

Inspired by the collection of beautiful nature-themed submissions we received for the first two Scriptorium issues, and by the recent classes taught by Ella Hornstra on the Book of Nature, we decided to have the theme (as poetically worded by Janie Fender) the Poetry of Nature.

And the submissions we received did not disappoint. In an age where few really appreciate the glory of a high mountain or a deep lake, we were all reassured by the amount of lovely, poignant nature-themed essays, poems, and pictures that came flooding in. From Emma Covalt's sweet photo of a baby raccoon to Neva Garber's essay on root vegetables to Grace Gerardot's stunning page taken from her nature journal, we were all very much inspired to go take a walk and do some gardening!

We also, as always, received our fair share of unthemed submissions that are just as wonderful. George Shaw's poem The Wedding of Terra is written with a swift and engaging meter, while Asher McCall's essay on Displaced Poetry gave me a lot to think about and Elsa Altschuler's picture Cast Drawing is skillfully done.

At The House of Humane Letters, we know that all of creation reflects God. In this way, mountains can be symbols of His power and stability, flowers symbols of His loveliness: All creation glorifies its Maker. And this issue of the Scriptorium, with all of these symbolic essays and stories, well-written poems, quotes, and translations, and beautiful photos and pieces of art, we are glorifying God, too.

We hope you enjoy this issue as The Scriptorium as classes continue, cold weather begins to settle in, and Thanksgiving approaches. Until next time, stories will save the world!

Yours,
Fiona Clare Altschuler
Editor-in-Chief

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Features

Flight toward the Light

How the Birds of Pagan Myths Point to Christ

By Sarah Scheine

In the ancient myths from Egypt to Rome, there are signs that point to Christ even before He was born. These range from universal flood myths, monster slayings, and creation stories where the world is spoken into existence. One of the most striking Christ images in myths is the bird. The most prevalent among the birds is the phoenix, since it points to Christ's death and resurrection. Besides the phoenix, the eagle and the falcon are also similarly significant but on a lesser scale, so they are, in a sense, lesser-phoenices.

Ancient Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations, and Egyptian myths are some of the most ancient. Even so, the myths are strikingly similar to many passages in the Bible, especially the ones that concern the divine King of Egypt, Horus.

Horus was the avenger god in Egyptian mythology. After his father Osiris was killed by his evil brother Set, it was prophesied that Osiris's son Horus would destroy Set in the end. To try to avoid this fate, Set took the form of a scorpion and stung baby Horus, who died instantly. Horus's mother Isis was overcome with grief, and she went to Thoth, one of the wisest of the gods, and asked him what she was to do. Thoth answered her:

> Horus shall live again. His spirit has but left him for a while to visit the spirit of Osiris in the Duat [Egyptian Underworld]. It shall return in the shape of the Bennu bird – and in days to come the Bennu shall die in the bright heat of Ra's [sun god] glance as it perches on the great obelisk at Heliopolis, and out of its ashes shall the new Bennu rise, and his fame shall be known throughout the world. (Green 27)

The Bennu bird has all the qualities of the Phoenix: it dies in heat, and it is reborn from the ashes. Roger Lancelyn Green confirms this in a footnote on the same page: "Thoth's prophecy was fulfilled – for the Bennu bird of Heliopolis was called the Phoenix by the Greeks."

Isis waited as she was told, and Horus did return. Horus and Set fought many battles, and, after a time, Set was defeated. He took the form of a snake and hid in the ground. But Set returned in the form of a red hippopotamus, which Horus slew by casting a harpoon into the roof of Set's mouth, in the same way knights would slay dragons thousands of years later.

The tale of Horus ends by prophesying that someday Horus and Osiris would return to destroy Set once and for all, and then all the good spirits would rise up from the Duat and live in a pure Egypt forever, free from evil. There is a sense here that Horus and Osiris will establish a new Egypt - a perfect Egypt - without evil or strife.

This prophecy might remind the Christian of a prophetic passage in the Bible:

> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them as their God." (ESV, Rev. 21:1-3)

The tale of Horus is a distorted shadow of the true story of Christ. The births of both Christ and Horus were threatened, it was foretold that they would both defeat evil, they both died and were born again, and it was foretold they both would return to judge the world and make it new.

The ancient Greeks also have a similar story to Horus, the avenger god. The Greek version centers on a hero named Perseus. In fact, his name even means "the avenger" or "destroyer." In the case of Perseus, however, Ovid compares him to an eagle, although the symbolism is similar to Horus and the phoenix.

Perseus was the son of Zeus and the Princess of Argos, whose name was Danae. It was prophesied that when Perseus grew up, he would kill the King of Argos, a man named Acrisius, who was Danae's father and Perseus's grandfather. To prevent this, Acrisius placed Danae and Perseus in a chest and tossed it into the sea. Acrisius hoped that they would drown, and the prophecy would not come true.

The chest floated for many days, and it eventually washed up on the shore of the Island of Seriphos. A fisherman saw the chest wash ashore and opened it. He was, of course, surprised to discover people. Since Danae and Perseus had no money or home, he brought them to Polydectes, King of Seriphos. The king seemed at first to be a gracious host. He let them stay at the palace, allowed Perseus be educated in the temple to Athena, and treated Danae kindly. But he secretly wanted to marry Danae, because she was very beautiful. Perseus knew that Danae did not want to marry Polydectes, so he purposely kept Polydectes away from her. Polydectes realized that he could never marry Danae with Perseus around, so he sent Perseus on an impossible quest: kill the gorgon Medusa, who could turn men to stone just by looking at them. Perseus prayed to the gods, and Athena gave him a mirror shield, so that he could slay Medusa by only looking at her reflection, and he would not turn to stone. After a long journey, he found Medusa's cave, and he killed her by cutting off her head, being sure only to look at her reflection in his shield.

On his journey home, Perseus encountered a city being terrorized by a giant sea monster. This monster was sent by Poseidon, because the queen Cassiopea had insulted Poseidon. The only way for the monster to leave the city alone was for the royal family to offer up their only daughter, the princess Andromeda, as a sacrifice to the monster.

Because of Cassiopea's pride, the city is no longer safe. Cassiopea's hubris calls down

divine wrath and punishment, and the only way to appease it is for Andromeda to be devoured by the monster. There was no escape for her.

Perseus fights the monster as recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

> The monster saw his shadow on the sea
> And savaged what it saw. And as Jove's bird
> Spies in some empty field a dusky snake
> Sunning itself and strikes it from behind,
> And, lest it turn its deadly fangs, secures
> With eager claws its writhing scaly neck,
> So Perseus, swooping headlong through the void,
> Attacked the monster's back and as it roared,
> Deep in its shoulder sank his crescent blade. (714-721)

Here Ovid compares Perseus to Jove's bird - the eagle - in a lengthy simile describing him battling the monster. Perseus arrives and stands between Andromeda and death. He intercedes for her, just as Christ interceded for mankind. "For there is one God and there is a mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time." (ESV, 1 Tim 2:5-6)

The myth ends with Perseus killing the monster, marrying Andromeda (in knightly fashion), and going to Argos to find his uncle, whom he eventually accidentally kills.

Ovid suggests that Perseus is an eagle, because the eagle is associated with majesty, power, and justice in Greek mythology. It is the sacred bird of Zeus, king of the gods, which ties into Horus's story as well, since Zeus and Horus are both sky-god deities. Zeus uses eagles as omens of good fortune. Zeus, too, assists many heroes in this form. For example, in the myth of Eros and Psyche, he helps Psyche, who incidentally is goddess of the soul, fetch water from a sacred spring for one of her quests. The spring is up too high for Psyche to climb, so Zeus takes the form of an eagle and flies up to get the water for her. Because of his help, Psyche is able to complete her quests and be reconciled with her husband Eros. As another example, Penelope from *The Odyssey*, dreams that an eagle speaks to her, and tells her that her husband Odysseus is coming home and will kill all her wicked suitors. In this way, the eagle is a lesser-phoenix: it has so many of the same Christ-like qualities, but, unlike the phoenix, it does not die to save.

Like the eagle, a falcon is also a lesser-phoenix. Take, for example, the "Tale of Rhodopsis" or, as it is often called, "The Egyptian Cinderella." Rhodopsis was a Greek slave in the house of a wealthy merchant. She worked hard, and her master favored her by giving her a pair of ruby-red slippers. The other servants envied Rhodopsis because of her slippers.

One day the pharaoh (though some versions say it was the pharaoh's son: son of a king) invited his subjects to court. The other servant girls decided to go, but they made

Rhodopsis stay behind to do their chores. While Rhodopsis was washing clothing in the river, a falcon (though some versions say an eagle) swooped down and stole one of her slippers. The falcon flew to the palace and dropped it in the lap of the pharaoh. The pharaoh declared that the falcon was a sign from Horus, and he would wed the maiden whose feet fit the slipper. After a long search, he found Rhodopsis, and he married her.

Rhodopsis was in the lowest of states. She had been taken from her homeland and sold to the Egyptians as a slave. But, through her hard work, she was rewarded with a pair of slippers. However, possessing earthly goods made her life even more miserable, because the other servants became jealous of her. Hard work alone could not make Rhodopsis's life better. It is impossible for anyone to be saved only through good works. She was not fully rescued until a falcon, the bird of Horus, took her slippers and gave them to pharaoh. In a sense, the falcon was guiding him to her. Now Rhodopsis was raised from her lowly state and became the wife of a king. Rhodopsis's earthly master could not fully improve her life; only through divine reward was she saved. Similarly, earthly goodness cannot alone save. Only faith can save. The Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast" (ESV, Eph. 2:8-9).

These myths only offer glimpses of the truth. In his myths, Horus does die and come back to life. He does battle evil, and the ancient Egyptians believed he would someday return to make the world new again. But Horus does not die on purpose; he does not die to save anyone. Horus fights evil to earn back his kingdom from Set. Christ, on the other hand, was already king. He died so that the world could be redeemed.

In Perseus's myths, Perseus fights a monster to save Andromeda from death, but he does not die himself. To save Andromeda from being sacrificed, he just kills the monster. He does not take her place as a sacrifice. Christ took the place of man. He defeated death, crucially, by dying for man.

In the "Tale of Rhodopsis," Rhodopsis is saved through divine intervention and not her own works. However, she is given something temporal. She becomes the bride of an earthly king. She and her husband will eventually die and return to dust. Christ gave humanity the gift of eternal salvation.

So these birds - the phoenix, the eagle, and the falcon - are like broken pieces of a picture. They are symbols that point to Christ. There are many ways that the false myths point the way to the true myth, and the usage of birds is one of them, whether it is a phoenix dying to save its kingdom, an eagle battling a serpent, or a falcon ruling over all. But they are only small drops of truth. C.S. Lewis in his essay, *Myth Became Fact*, says that these tiny drops of truth are a cause for rejoicing: these drops show that The Word is written on everyone's heart, and there is a deep, abiding longing for the truth in all.

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The King of Nonsense and the Queen of Crime

Lewis Carroll and Dorothy L. Sayers

By Natalia Testa

If one were to list, in order of magnitude, the largest influences on Dorothy L. Sayers' literary detective canon, without a doubt, Lewis Carroll would come out on top.[1] Even without the myriad of times characters in the Wimsey novels quote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, the structure and thematic backbone of the books is such that it is impossible to separate the adventures of Lord Peter Wimsey (and later Harriet Vane) from that of Alice. In order to attempt to outline the little known connection of these two genius polymaths, it is important to begin at the place where their lines first crossed. Of course, I am referring to Oxford.

Both Charles Dodgson (as we know him, Lewis Carroll) and Dorothy Sayers lost their hearts to the ancient university. Carroll would spend much of his life pursuing mathematics there, and it was there that, in 1893, Sayers was born. Though her family soon moved so Henry Sayers could take a country living, the four years spent in the shadow of the spires would stay with the small girl and only child for the rest of her life. It was there that memories were made and treasured, and there her literary life began. Among these recollections was the venerable, inevitable tolling of the bell called Tom, ringing a hundred and one strokes at half-past nine in the evening, and confusing small Dorothy, who had been told that twelve was the imperative number in clocks.[2] It was under the shadow of the great bell that she first encountered the tales of a little girl slightly older than her, her father's voice reading aloud as she sat curled in his lap and listened to the building blocks of stories.

Her goddaughter, Barbara Reynolds, described her meeting with the books in her biography of Sayers, "She remembered being taken to the school library to borrow these: a boy took two red volumes off a shelf, slapped them together to dispel the dust and handed them to her father."[3] Her imagination was captured; Dorothy Sayers had fallen in love with the Alice books. She would later recall "the sheer gorgeousness of Jabberwocky" and write to the Director of the BBC who also assisted C. S. Lewis and James Welch. "Many things that I could only dimly understand were delightful to me by reason of rhyme and rhythm."[4]

This striking of a chord was only part of what one could call a lifelong affair of hers with the beauty of language and words and the strangely alluring unworldliness of their mystery. A student of French, German, and Latin, along with her own language, James Brabazon notes that she was attracted as a very young child to the wordiness of the Athanasian Creed. With the memory of her youthful captivation, she would later fight for not speaking down to children when writing plays for the BBC.

Stating it simply in the words of Jo March in Little Women, Sayers liked "good strong

words that mean something."[5] One could say, too, that at the heart of her life and legacy was the work of harmonizing the contraries of her own parents' families. On the Sayers side, she traced relation to the essayist William Hazlitt,[6] and on her mother's, Percival Leigh,[7] who wrote stories for Punch and a Comic Latin Grammar. ("Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, Interjection—undeclined. Most schoolboys would like to decline them altogether."[8])

This confident combination of wryness and whimsy is forever immortalized in the middle initial that she insisted on having for her pen name.[9]

While the Sayers' family was in Oxford, Lewis Carroll was too, being a don of Christ Church.[10] Although her parents were not personally acquainted with him, and Dorothy herself said they never met, she used to nevertheless tell people that the great mathematician peeked into her pram when she was an infant.[11] It was with this heritage that she left Oxford for the first time when the family moved to Bluntisham. The next time she would return would be after fifteen years' absence, when she would again make it her own, this time as a student at Somerville College, where she studied medieval French at an honours level, translating *The Romance of Tristan* (1929) and an early, fledgling version of her *Song of Roland* (1957).

Before continuing, it is important to note that a list of connections between the Lord Peter and the Alice books would be almost inexhaustible. Just as with the form of the medieval romance, the work of Lewis Carroll became a part of her own literary DNA which she lived and breathed every day–a language in its own right–until the gap of the workings of her own mind and the square in the quilt of the literary tradition became inseparable and interwoven.

As Philip Scowcroft pointed out in an excellent essay on children's literature throughout the series,[12] *Alice in Wonderland* is noted as one of Lord Peter Wimsey's very favorite books.[13] Often he quotes the King of Hearts' instruction to the White Rabbit,[14] saying, "Begin at the beginning, go on until the end, then stop"[15] until Charles Parker can quote it back to him:

"Your narrative style," said Parker, "though racy, is a little elliptical. Could you not begin at the beginning and go on until you come to the end, and then, if you are able to, stop?"

"I'll try," said his lordship, "but I always find the stopping part of the business so difficult."[16]

Such famous phrases from the world of Alice are in the mouth of Lord Peter as "Curiouser and curiouser"[17] (once tweaked to be "Ingeniouser and ingeniouser"[18]) and quotes from *Alice in Wonderland* are used as chapter epigraphs three times throughout the series, once in Clouds of Witness (ch 9) and twice in *Busman's Honeymoon* (ch 13 & Epithalamion 2).

But there is one particular passage of Carroll's, separate from *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, that defeats all doubts of the depth of his influence. In 1889,

to commemorate time spent in Oxford with Maggie Bowman, who was auditioning to be in a play called *Bootle's Baby*, and whose sister Isa was an actor in a stage adaptation of Alice, Lewis Carroll wrote a poem titled, "Maggie's Visit to Oxford".[19]

Upon close inspection, the poem's plot is revealed to be nearly the same as that of Sayers' Oxford novel *Gaudy Night* (1935). Although the plot of *Bootle's Baby* (found on Wikipedia) cannot entirely be said to have a parallel, its role in the poem, reiterating and confirming Maggie's place in the play, can be compared to Harriet Vane's identity quest and the confirmation of her place in the great game. As noted by Addison Hornstra in the recent Alice webinar, there is a correlation between play (as in a theater production) and play (as one might a chess game). Coincidentally, the dates of Maggie's visit ran from June 9th 1889 to June 13th, the latter of which was Dorothy Sayers' birthday.

When Maggie once to Oxford came
On tour as 'Bootles' Baby,'
She said 'I'll see this place of fame,
However dull the day be!'

So with her friend she visited
The sights that it was rich in:
And first of all she poked her head
Inside the Christ Church Kitchen.

The cooks around that little child
Stood waiting in a ring:
And, every time that Maggie smiled,
Those cooks began to sing—
Shouting the Battle-cry of Freedom!

'Roast, boil, and bake,
For Maggie's sake!
Bring cutlets fine,
For her to dine:
Meringues so sweet,
For her to eat—
For Maggie may be
Bootles' Baby!'

Then hand-in-hand, in pleasant talk,
They wandered, and admired

The Hall, Cathedral, and Broad Walk,
Till Maggie's feet were tired:

Five stanzas into the poem, readers instantly come up against a *Gaudy Night* character: Viscount St George, a student at Christ Church College and Lord Peter Wimsey's nephew, whom Harriet Vane meets after a sojourn at the Cathedral. As he has accidentally crushed her bag parcels,

"'I'm afraid it hasn't improved the meringues.' He looked up apologetically. 'But if you'll say you forgive me, we'll go and get some new ones from the kitchen–the real kind–you know– speciality of the House, and all that.'[20] (. . .) The Christ Church cook was well pleased to produce meringues from the ancient and famous College oven."[21]

Christ Church is also the destination of Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass*,[22] which is very closely linked to Harriet's own journey.

The next two stanzas speak to the threat throughout the book of a monster at Harriet Vane's alma mater, a Poison-Pen that is attacking Shrewsbury College.

One friend they called upon—her name
Was Mrs. Hassall—then
Into a College Room they came,
Some savage Monster's Den!

'And, when that Monster dined, I guess
He tore her limb from limb?'
Well, no: in fact, I must confess
That Maggie dined with him!

Then we come back to the Wimseys, who are always described with cat imagery, and whose own ancestral plate has cats and mice.

In idle mood they sauntered round
Its lawns so green and flat:
And in that Garden Maggie found
A lovely Pussey-Cat!

A quarter of an hour they spent
In wandering to and fro:
And everywhere that Maggie went,
That Cat was sure to go—
Shouting the Battle-cry of Freedom!

(...)
So back to Christ Church—not too late
For them to go and see
A Christ Church Undergraduate,
Who gave them cakes and tea.

Lord Peter and Harriet visit the Botanical Gardens[23] later in the book. The stone statue (which no longer graces Magdalen College[24]) is reminiscent once more of Harriet's fears and the terror in the college.

Next day she entered, with her guide,
The Garden called 'Botanic':
And there a fierce Wild-Boar she spied,
Enough to cause a panic!

But Maggie didn't mind, not she!
She would have faced alone,
That fierce Wild-Boar, because, you see,
The thing was made of stone!

On Magdalen walls they saw a face
That filled her with delight,
A giant-face, that made grimace
And grinned with all its might!

A little friend, industrious,
Pulled upwards, all the while,
The corner of its mouth, and thus
He helped that face to smile!

'How nice,' thought Maggie, 'it would be
If I could have a friend
To do that very thing for me,
And make my mouth turn up with glee,
By pulling at one end!'

Again and again, Harriet questions whether she really wants to be alone, as she goes back and forth on the academic life and 'people cursed with both hearts and brains'.[25] ". . . but I wish he [Peter] hadn't gone and left me in this ghastly place where people go off their

heads and write horrible letters. . . ."[26]

In Magdalen Park the deer are wild
With joy that Maggie brings
Some bread a friend had given the child,
To feed the pretty things.

The next several lines (which are too long to place here) tell of Maggie befriending a group of deer in Magdalen Park. The image that instantly springs to mind is that of Alice and the fawn in chapter three of *Through the Looking-Glass*, when Alice has forgotten her original name but holds onto a trace of her new, true name in the game, Lily. In *Gaudy Night,* this scene could be where Harriet feeds the ducks after taking a punt from Magdalen Bridge, recalling her time at Oxford as a student and her true state of mind regarding her fellow punter.[27]

The poem continues, as Maggie's friends and acquaintances show her around Oxford, repeating again and again that she has a place in the play. Then we meet another character from the Sayers novel, who is recognizable at once as the undergraduate who throws himself at the feet of Harriet. In "Maggie's Visit", Maggie is far too young for the bishop; in Gaudy Night, it is Harriet who is too old for the undergraduate.

They met a Bishop on their way—
A Bishop large as life—
With loving smile that seemed to say
'Will Maggie be my wife?'

Maggie thought not, because, you see,
She was so very young,
And he was old as old could be—
So Maggie held her tongue.

'My Lord, she's Bootles' Baby: we
Are going up and down,'
Her friend explained, 'that she may see
The sights of Oxford-town.'

As in *Through the Looking-Glass*, the story of *Gaudy Night* (and Harriet's entire arc in the Wimsey canon) is told in microcosm in a chess game. In the poem, Maggie and her friends see two people of New College playing a game with hoops and circles–bringing to mind the universality of the game.

Next to New College, where they saw
Two players hurl about
A hoop, but by what rule or law
They could not quite make out.

Then we have a gift, before the story ends, just as in chapter nineteen of *Gaudy Night*:

The Misses Symonds next they sought,
Who begged the child to take
A book they long ago had bought—
A gift for friendship's sake!

The poem closes with Maggie leaving Oxford, somewhat changed and, perhaps, altogether improved, sad to leave but knowing that one cannot stay forever.

Away, next morning, Maggie went
From Oxford-town: but yet
The happy hours she there had spent
She could not soon forget.

The train is gone: it rumbles on:
The engine-whistle screams:
But Maggie's deep in rosy sleep—
And softly, in her dreams,
Whispers the Battle-cry of Freedom!

'Oxford, good-bye!'
She seems to sigh,
'You dear old City,
With Gardens pretty,
And lawns, and flowers,
And College-towers,
And Tom's great Bell—
Farewell, farewell!
For Maggie may be
Bootles' Baby!'

Gaudy Night undoubtedly shares an atmosphere with these last lines of "Maggie's Visit to Oxford". As stated above, Sayers loved Oxford very well. She did not spend her life

there like Lewis Carroll did, but she gave it vicariously to Lord Peter Wimsey (himself a graduate of Balliol College) and to Harriet Vane, who proved themselves to be glad stewards of the place.

She also gave Alice to Harriet and Peter to run away and have adventures with. Careful readers and students of the late classes will see the chapter nineteen's deeds of Lord Peter in the White Knight of *Through the Looking-Glass,* carrying Alice over that last square before she can reach Christ Church and be crowned a queen, and Peter's own chessboard laid out before him in *The Nine Tailors*. She is between the lines of the pool of Mercury outside Christ Church, and her tar-barrel crow in the storm that darkens the sky in chapter thirteen. She is at the heart of the tensions between the alchemical moon queen and fire king, who cannot have dealings until each has reached the end of the chess board's journey. As Harriet says, "It isn't only that I have found a value for myself." She's learned the wages of the actions of men, beginning in her own trial in the court of red roses in *Strong Poison*, wading through the waters of the sea in *Have His Carcase*, at last reaching the golden fruit in the bowl of marigolds at the end of *Gaudy Night*.

Finally, she has been crowned a queen. Now, she can be a phoenix.

[1] Credit to Addison Hornstra for this essay's title.

[2] Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul by Barbara Reynolds (6)

[3] Ibid. (7). Reynolds does not cite this sentence.

[4] Ibid. (7), cited "Letter to Rev Dr. James Welch"

[5] Little Women, chapter four

[6] Dorothy L. Sayers: A Biography by James Brabazon

[7] Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul, Reynolds, (6)

[8] The Comic Latin Grammar by Percival Leigh (Project Gutenberg)

[9] She told a correspondent in 1936, "My personal objection to 'Dorothy Sayers' is that it invites the pronunciation of 'Sayers' as an ugly spondee." (Reynolds, 361)

[10] Dorothy Sayers was also baptized there. (Reynolds)

[11] Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul, Reynolds (7)

[12] Children's Literature by Philip Scowcroft, available on JSTOR: https://www.jstor.org/stable/45305617

[13] Scowcroft cites Gaudy Night, chapter fifteen, as the spelling out of this.

[14] Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (ch 12)

[15] The Nine Tailors (III., pt 2)

[16] Murder Must Advertise (ch 15)

[17] The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club (ch 7), The Five Red Herrings (ch 15), and The Nine Tailors (II. pt 8)

[18] The Five Red Herrings (ch 25)

[19] I have taken the text from Project Gutenberg and the Lewis Carroll Resources page. Regretfully, I have had to only place excerpts here.

[20] Gaudy Night (ch 8)

[21] Ibid.
[22] A Dream Both Strange and True miniclass by Addison Hornstra
[23] Gaudy Night (ch 20)
[24] According to Lewis Carroll Resource's page on the poem.
[25] Gaudy Night (ch 4)
[26] Ibid., ch 18
[27] Ibid., ch 14

Natalia Testa
Age 16
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Early Modern Literature, Readings in Early Modern History, Latin 3, Anglo-Saxon 2

The Map of the Premodern Mind

A Brief Introduction to the Four Humors

By Olivia Wetzel

Moderns view the universe as something outside of mankind, an infinite space where man is merely a speck of dust, inconsequential whether he lives or dies. The general effect is that the cosmos has nothing to do with our every-day lives. The pre-moderns, however, saw the cosmos as symbolic and connected with man. The early Christians believed God created a divinely ordered universe, where there was a place for everything and everything ought to stay in its place. Thus, if one part of the chain became broken and disordered, it affected the rest of the chain. The premoderns believed that different objects, climates, and ideas corresponded with each other, as well. These beliefs held importance in both physical and artistic contexts. One example of the premodern structured cosmic model can be found in their usage of the four humors.

Hippocrates, a Greek physician of the 5th century B.C, developed the theory of the four humors to help explain the cause of diseases. The humors are four substances: blood, yellow bile, phlegm, and black bile, or as they are often referred to, sanguine, choler, phlegm, and melancholy. Each resides in different areas of the body; they work together to keep it healthy and running. Hippocrates believed an imbalance of these humors is what causes illness. This belief persisted for over 2000 years after his death and developed throughout the centuries, peaking during the medieval era. The premoderns believed that a well-balanced person would have the correct amount of each humor. It was best to have the most of blood, or sanguine, and the least of phlegm. The humors could blend to show a tendency to one humor or another, and a person could have a disposition to show an excess of a certain humor, causing certain characteristics.

Sanguine, the favored humor, gave a healthy pink complexion. The personalities of those who had more blood than the other humors were amiable. They angered quickly, but this anger was short lived. Overall, the humor gave a jovial temperament

The choleric temperament was much like the sanguine, although they did not just anger quickly, but also held grudges. Their complexion was a ruddy yellowish colour.

In contrast with this, melancholy-dominated people were creative and great thinkers, but also prone to get depressed easily. Their complexion was dark and sallow.

A phlegmatic is bestowed with a pale complexion. It was the most inactive of the humors, as well as the most unemotional, lazy, and considered the lowest humor.

Because balanced humors were important to the premodern mind, they became symbols of order, both within the individual and the cosmos, particularly in premodern literature, music, and visual art, for instance, characters often represented a certain humor.

The four humors quickly became associated with a variety of objects and atmospheres, best depicted by a table:

Humor	Temperament	Common Quality	Element	Metal	Season	Planet
Blood	Sanguine	Hot and Moist	Air	Tin	Spring	Jupiter
Yellow Bile	Choleric	Hot and Dry	Fire	Iron	Summer	Mars
Black Bile	Melancholy	Cold and Dry	Earth	Lead	Autumn	Saturn
Phlegm	Phlegmatic	Cold and Moist	Water	Silver	Winter	Moon

Although some connections on this table still make sense today, it might be difficult to figure out how phlegmatics came to be associated with silver, or how blood is associated with air. To understand this, it is important to go to the source of the four humors, namely, the elements and common qualities.

Empedocles, a Greek philosopher who lived in the same century as Hippocrates, believed that everything was made of the elements. This pertains not only to the world with its fire, oceans, earth, and sky, but smaller objects as well, such as food. The premoderns believed that by consuming food we ingest elements, which are then broken down into the four humors and sent to different locations of the body. In *The Elizabethan World Picture*, E.M.W. Tillyard, a contemporary of Lewis, encapsulates pre-modern thought on the subject: "Man's physical life begins with food, and food is made of the four elements. Food passes from the stomach to the liver....The liver converts the food it receives into four liquid substances, which are to the human body what the elements are to the common matter of the earth, Each humor has its own counterpart among the elements." (The Elizabethan World Picture, p. 68-69) The premoderns believed that food plays a large role in the balance, or imbalance, of our humors. It is interesting to note that the traditional Lenten fast had people abstain from meat. Meat is a choleric food and eating too much of it was believed to be the cause of a rowdy temper, and Lent was a time of contemplation.

The connection between the humors and elements are the common qualities which are hot, cold, dry, and moist/fluid. Each element has two qualities that predominate out of the four. An example of this is fire, dominated by hot and dry properties, whereas water is cold and moist. It is these qualities that create the web of connections between the humors and elements. Pre-moderns believed that everything was made of the elements, and, therefore, everything was made of the qualities. They also believed that objects could be changed by tinkering with these properties. Thus, base metals have the potential to be turned into pure

ones. E. J. Holmyard, a scientist who taught at Cambridge, in his book *Alchemy* expresses the premodern line of reasoning: “If lead and gold both consist of fire, air, water, and earth, why may not the dull and common metal have the proportions of its elements adjusted to those of the shining, precious one?” (Alchemy. page 23) In the same way, by eating certain foods and exposing oneself to certain atmospheres, a melancholy-leaning person could learn to balance themselves to become a more sanguine one.

It is by these qualities that the four humors are connected to the seasons. Spring, for example, is hot and moist. By changing into summer, spring drops its moistness and assumes dry properties. Because of spring's hot and moist qualities, it is associated with the element of air and with the sanguine humor. In the same way, silver is cold and moist and is connected with phlegmatics and the winter season. By the four qualities, things that do not especially resemble each other are connected by their similar qualities. Observing the pre-moderns, it is interesting to note that they used the humors, elements, and other objects in the web of connections, interchangeably. Pre-moderns believed that man is a microcosm of the universe, and so to call him well-ordered or disordered using symbolic language was to point out how his spiritual state affected the harmony or disharmony of the cosmos. Rediscovering the workings of the premodern mind can help moderns understand how people of the past sought to order their lives and universe.

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Olivia Wetzel
Age 15
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Early Modern Literature

Displaced Poetry

By Asher McCall

"Prose is not the freedom of poetry; rather prose is the fragments of poetry." (Chesterton 157).

I wish in this essay to put forth a theory of the relationship between poetry and prose, a theory based upon the relationship of two major literary genres, the Romance and the Realistic Novel. When Romances first began to decline, a new form began to appear, of the type which Jane Austen wrote, and which became a very popular form during the 19th century. This new 'realistic' way of writing did not discard the universal patterns of the Romance, but it watered them down and obscured them to make them more palatable to modern readers. This is what we call 'displacement.' Addison Hornstra described displacement in this way in her webinar "Through a Looking Glass, Dimly."

> We can think of the Romance as a sort of shot of espresso. And the post-enlightenment world... gradually begins to be unable to stomach such a strong shot of espresso. They don't know what to do with it; they don't know how to deal with it. So they start to add water until they can make a weaker and weaker draft. This is a process we can call 'displacement.' If the Romance is super condensed, then displacing it waters it down by placing it into a more recognizable place.

When we come to speak about poetry and prose there are a number of elements we must take into consideration. I will focus on rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration.

All traditions of poetry in the West until the modern era have had rhythm as a central constituent of their poetic form. In Greek and Latin verse the focus was on the rhythm made by syllable length, in French and English the measure was how stressed or emphasized each syllable was, and in Anglo-Saxon the two were combined. Each of these had a predefined selection of patterns into which the long and short or stressed and unstressed syllables had to fit, and the variance between the nominal structure and the way the words actually sounded created the music of the line. In prose we have a different story. Prose does not have to follow strict rules for where certain types of syllables are allowed to go, but that does not mean it is exempt from attention to rhythm. Rather that attention has been diluted into a milder attention for the well turned phrase.

> Even in our accentual and rhythmic language no analysis can find the secret of the beauty of verse; how much less, then, of those phrases, such as prose is built of, which obey no law but to be lawless and yet to please. (Stevenson 253)

In the realm of rhyme we certainly have a disjuncture between prose and poetry. At first glance this disjuncture may appear to be on an entirely other level than the difference in their approaches to rhythm, a contrast of all or nothing, of a necessity of rhyme and a complete absence of it, rather than a mere change in degrees of emphasis. But this apparent disparity can be explained and corrected first by the fact that rhyme is not truly as universal an aspect of verse as rhythm is. In Classical meters and in Anglo-Saxon poetry rhyme makes no substantial appearance. And second, that rhyme does leave behind a shadow in prose, an echo often hard to catch, but which is certainly there. We might point to the opening line of The Hobbit, "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit." (Tolkien 11) In this sentence 'ground' and 'lived' do form a slant rhyme, a rhyme which is not perfect, but only hints at the similarity. Thus the relative attention bestowed on rhyme versus rhythm in poetry is reflected in the importance given them in prose.

This way of seeing the reminiscences of rhyme in prose bleeds into alliteration. In Anglo-Saxon poetry alliteration figures as an important characteristic, and in prose it functions in the same diluted way as rhythm does, without obvious, protruding patterns but with a proper place. Take for example John 1:1 in the King James Version: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (KJV John 1:1) Seven out of the seventeen words alliterate.

Chesterton says in his essay "The Slavery of Free Verse,"

> But the truth behind all this is that expressed in the very ancient mystical notion, the music of the spheres. It is the idea that, at the back of everything, existence begins with a harmony and not a chaos.… To vary Browning's phrase, we find in prose the broken arcs, in poetry the perfect round. Prose is not the freedom of poetry, rather prose is the fragments of poetry. Prose, at least in the prosaic sense, is poetry interrupted, held up and cut off from its course; the chariot of Phoebus stopped by a block in the Strand. But when it begins to move again at all, I think we shall find old-fashioned things move with it, such as repetition and even measure, rhythm and even rhyme. (Chesterton 156)

And Coleridge sums it up nicely with his definitions of poetry and prose: "Prose – words in their best order; poetry – the best words in the best order."

Good prose is not something of itself, but a displacement of poetry into the water of everyday speech. Good prose is dependent on good poetry.

It must be said, then, that of the two poetry is the higher and nobler art, but that prose has its place. For when someone has no capacity to apprehend the condensed strength of poetry, a weaker mixture is desirable in training the ear to love the music farther removed. A similar pattern can be seen in how Dante develops his language throughout the Comedy. At the beginning and all through the Inferno, he relies heavily on harsher sounds in his choice of

words to wake the reader up. Then, as Dante progresses up Mount Purgatory and into Paradise, the language slowly elevates into the more harmonious musical style fit for one who has undergone the flame of purification and can now properly internalize the full beauty of those harmonies. This is not to say that prose ought to be read first and poetry later, but that poetry, being at the center, the place where the earthly meets the heavenly, is reflected in the prose which forms concentric rings about it, and that when we read prose we ought to be pointed to and reminded of poetry, for all good prose reflects good poetry. Prose does not subtract from poetry, but fills it out and makes it easier for us to grasp and take in.

Northrop Frye says, “If literature is to be properly taught, we have to start at its centre, which is poetry, then work outwards to literary prose, and outwards from there to the applied languages of business and professions and ordinary life. Poetry is the most direct and simple means of expressing oneself in words: the most primitive nations have poetry, but only quite well developed civilizations can produce good prose.” (Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* 74)

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Asher McCall
Age 17
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Early Modern Literature, Latin 3, Greek 1

The Dangers of Excessive Entertainment

By Rhome Smith

In this day and age, we must ask ourselves an important question, which is: What priorities in my life influence how I view the world? Most people would generally answer: religion, family, school, friends, job, etc. While this may be true consciously, often what they are unconscious of is the fact that media is a very big priority in their life, and often gets overlooked because of how desensitized people are to indulging themselves in it. In modern society today, the most prevalent form of media is the internet and television. Since the invention of the TV and internet, the world has been preoccupied with the idea of making everything a form of "entertainment".

Americans of the present day spend an average of 4 hours in front of the TV. Simply using math, one will discover that if a person does this for a period of 65 years, they will have spent a grand total of 11 uninterrupted years in front of the TV. Now, you might be saying to yourself one of two things, one: This number seems ridiculous and there is no way that that's true, or two: What if I'm not the average American and I don't spend 4 hours a day in front of the TV? My response to the people asking this question is this "You may not spend hours a day watching the television, but how much time do you spend consulting the rectangular-shaped Oracle that is generally in your back pocket?" Most people don't actually know the answer to this question, but when asked, they usually respond by giving a very conservative estimation of 1-2 hours a day (the actual number being 4-6 hours[1]). Now all you have to do is apply the same method we applied to the person who watches TV for 4 hours a day. Simply cut 11 years in half, and to their absolute horror, they will find that if they continue this for the same amount of time, 65 years, they will have spent 5.5 years just in front of their phone. Pretty scary and mind-boggling, right?

Now the real question is, if a person is spending this amount of time on an electronic device, what are they doing? What are they learning? And more importantly, what thinking patterns are they allowing to seed and take root in their mind? People watch things that will generally entertain them, whether it's the latest TV show, movie, instagram post, news, etc. Nowadays people will not watch, listen, or engage with something that does not in some way, shape, or form entertain them. Studies have shown that if something is not immediately entertaining to an individual within the first 3 seconds of interacting with it, the individual will move on to something else, resulting in the habit of "Scrolling." We are in a dangerous place if it takes a mere 3 seconds of something not being "entertaining" for someone to drop it and move on.[2] This habit is a major contrast to what people in the world were typically used to doing in the 19th century.

In 19th century America, great orators like Lincoln, Douglas, Henry Clay, and Quincy Adams were beginning to make names for themselves. It was very common for American

citizens to attend debates and expect to be there for upwards of 6 hours and listen to men debate philosophy and politics. People of that era had interest in these areas of study, and delighted in listening to things that they knew about that were related to debated topics in the country. Today's society would lose their minds just thinking about sitting at a debate for 6 hours with zero screens and doing nothing but listening.

At this point, I hope that you can see that the big problem does not lie with technology itself, but with people's modern thinking pattern. This thinking pattern, of everything always having to entertain an individual, is dangerous and, if allowed to prevail, will in fact destroy and continue to destroy human society as it has for the past 5 decades. If we look closely at this modern thinking pattern, we find that it is not only invading our society, but our bodily health, education, and ultimately religion. All the things that make us humane. If we look at how these ideas have gripped the educational world especially in colleges and universities, we can see the same thinking pattern being applied to formal learning. Students no longer stay engaged with their professors unless they are "entertaining". There is almost no desire to truly learn or participate on the part of the student unless the content entertains them. The same goes for a lot of the professors, instead of teaching the normal content, we see them having to constantly use modern celebrities as explanations and descriptions for ideas in literature, philosophy, and history. By doing this, lectures and classes become a kind of entertainment show for the student. Now, on the professors' side, they are not totally to blame for making their lectures a type of show, because many of them are adapting to meet the views of the students, but at the same time, they are consciously or unconsciously feeding the wildfire of an idea that everything must entertain the consumer. Now, as I have dedicated most of this paper to horrors that this idea of "everything must entertain" is wreaking on education, I mean to end on a positive and hopeful note, rather than a negative and depressed one.

What we do in the margins of our day-to-day lives will affect the future of humanity. If we spend the majority of our margins "entertaining ourselves," we leave zero time for the things in life that actually grow our minds and deepen our interest for other things in life. We should be able to sit with a story or a poem and not feel uncomfortable with it. Our minds should be able to not just read a story and move on, but revel in and engage the imagination. We are faced with two paths, one of which we must choose. Do we continue to go along with the world and add to this dangerous idea of "entertainment" with our knowledge, or do we choose in a way to alienate ourselves from the world of modern humanities, and begin rebuilding what was lost with Modernity? If we are to keep this already burning ship of humane education afloat, we must be willing to go out of our way to find and train up teachers who are willing to teach in the tradition and not bend to this modern idea. But most of all, we need students who are willing to truly learn and will not be easily corrupted by this modern view. Will we put our effort into fanning and nurturing the small but mighty ember of Humane education, allowing its glorious light to once more shine throughout the world, or will we join the ranks of those who continue to seek means by which to water education down

until there is nothing left? My hope is that those who are currently being taught in the tradition will, even if not called to be teachers in some capacity, continue to spread this knowledge elsewhere, building beacons of light for the lost, weary, and shipwrecked.

> "Great art can only exist where great men brood intensely on something upon which all men brood little."
>
> — James Masefield

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Rhome Smith
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Later Modern Literature, Readings in Later Modern History, Latin 2

Student Life

St. Augustine, Sermon 11

Translated by Veva Jack

Latin Text

Cum enim transierit tempus bene operandi, non restat nisi recipiendi. Nemo tibi dicturus est post resurrectionem mortuorum in regno Dei: Frange esurienti panem, quia non invenies esurientem. Nemo dicturus est: "Vesti nudum", ubi omnium tunica immortalitas erit. Nemo dicturus est: "Suscipe peregrinum", ubi omnes in patria sua vivent, nam modo sumus inde peregrini. Nemo dicet: "Visita aegrum", ubi est sanitas sempiterna. Nemo dicet: "Sepeli mortuum", ubi mors moritur. Ista omnia pietatis officia in vita aeterna necessaria non erunt, ubi sola pax erit et laetitia sempiterna. In isto autem tempore, ut noverimus quantum nobis commendat Deus opera misericordiae, etiam ipsos sanctos suos egere fecit, ut cum fiunt hic amici de mammona iniquitatis, recipiant et ipsi amicos suos in aeterna tabernacula. Id est, ut cum servi Dei pii, dum iugiter Deo vacant, aliquotiens indigent, illi qui habent mundi divitias, elemosinam largiuntur. Quomodo eos participes faciunt in terrena substantia, sic cum illis partem habere merebuntur in vita aeterna.

English Translation

For when the time for doing good has passed, there remains nothing left but to receive. No one will say to you after the resurrection of the dead in the kingdom of God: Break bread to the hungry, for you will not find one hungry. No one will say: Clothe the naked, where the garment of all will be immortality. No one will say: Receive the stranger, where all will live in their own country, for now we are strangers there. No one will say: Visit the sick, where there is everlasting health. No one will say: Bury the dead, where death dies. All these offices of piety will not be necessary in eternal life, where there will be only peace and everlasting joy. But in this time, that we may know how much God commends to us the works of mercy, He has made even His saints themselves needy, so that when they become friends here from the mammon of iniquity, they may also receive their friends into eternal dwellings. That is, just as when the pious servants of God, while constantly devoting themselves to God, are sometimes in need, those who have worldly riches bestow alms. Just as they make them sharers in earthly substance, so they will deserve to have a part with them in eternal life.

Veva Jack
Age 16
Tennessee
Later Modern Literature, Readings in Later Modern History, Latin 3, Anglo Saxon 1

Photographs

By Emma Covalt

Baby Raccoon

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Monarch Butterfly

Emma Covalt
Age 15
South Carolina
Ancient Literature, Anglo-Saxon 1

First Venture into Latin Poetry

A Pair of Elegiac Couplets

By Asher McCall

Latin Original

Da mihi vitam et O Domine omnia quae bona tu vis,
Certo necesse est sola manus tua et umquam.
Te semper laudans die nocteque vero ego et orans,
In mirabile lege tua meditabor.

English Translation

Lord, grant me life and all good things your will ordains,
For surely all I need your hand sustains.
Thus, praising you and praying night and day in awe,
I'll meditate upon your perfect law.

Asher McCall
Age 17
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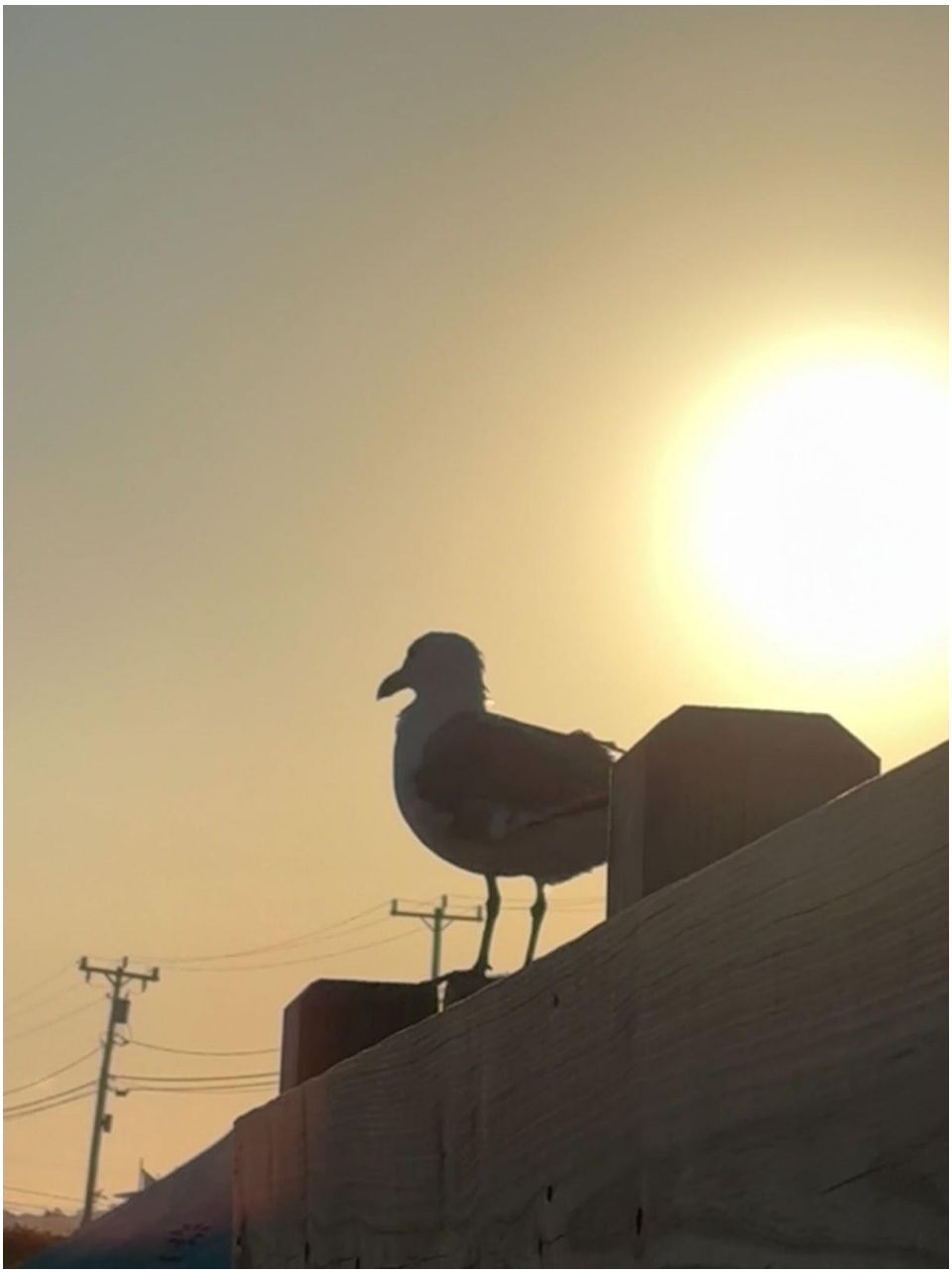
Early Modern Literature, Latin 3, Greek 1

Silhouette of a Seagull

By Clara Hansen



Clara Hansen
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Good Books, Plutarch, Latin 1, Plato's Ghost

For the Love of Root Vegetables

By Nēva Garber

I love root vegetables.

Why do I harbor such a deep love for these strange tubers? Let me begin at the beginning.

In the spring, when all danger of frost is gone and the sun warms the soil, I take out my old shovel and head to the garden patch. The bed is wild and overgrown after the long absence of a gardener, and it portrays perfectly the fallenness of our fallen world, full of weeds and briars and offering plenty of sweat and toil.

I become the fearless Prince Arthur, brandishing my mighty sword, the shovel, and clearing away all the vices that would choke my precious carrots and beets. The weeds are Duessa, often beautiful above ground, green and leafy and flowering, but I mercilessly uncover their ugly, naked roots and show them as the awful pests they are.

So far, so good. Next, to plant the seeds.

My hands, encrusted with the blood of the vanquished enemy, tenderly open the paper packets of seeds. These seeds, little wrinkled crumbs, are inexperienced in the ways of the world, and must be tended and protected carefully. Very well! I will be their Palmer, and they will be my knights. But just like Redcross, they must die and be buried before they can grow strong and upright. So I bury them, each in its own little grave, and await their resurrection.

If you have never planted seeds and watched them, after several days, come up transformed into tender green shoots, you have missed out on one of the wonders of Creation. As Jayber Crow says, "You can take a few seed peas, dry and dead, and sow them in a little furrow, and they will sprout into a row of pea vines and bear more peas - it may not be a miracle, but that is a matter of opinion." I have never grown peas, but it applies to carrots just as well. This might well be my favorite part of growing root vegetables, as it is such a beautiful portrayal of death, and rebirth into something more beautiful than the tiny seeds could ever imagine.

And so, for the next few months, I hover over my little knights, saving them from many perils in the forms of Nutsedge (Cyperus rotundus), Devil's Grass (Cynodon dactylon) and Amaranth (Amaranth sp.). All this time their roots are swelling into lovely carrots, beets, onions, and radishes. Finally the time comes to pull them up! This is the point I move from Spenser to Ancient times, and I become Hercules, pulling Theseus off the charmed stool in Hades. For the carrots, like the unfortunate Greek, are stuck fast in the underworld, and I need all my demigod's strength to pull them back into the land of the living. And too often the carrots break and leave part of themselves stuck forever in the grave, just like Theseus.

And what after I pull them up? I cut them open!

If you have ever cut an onion, you will know that it is formed of layers, starting with the shell, and then continuing in thin layers all the way to the heart of the onion.

Onions are like many of my favorite books: they have layers, and they make you cry.

When I pull up a beet and cut it open, I am always surprised by the beauty that hides inside the lumpy, hairy, and rough outside. Rich burgundy, and, best of all — what is this I see in this beet? — circles! Medieval Harmony at its earthiest level, the favorite shape of the age, the symbol of eternity and all things good. This is the inside structure not only of beets, but also of carrots, radishes, onions, and many other root vegetables. They portray two of my favorite literary devices, ring structure and layers!

And this is why I say that of all the garden plants, root vegetables are the most literary by far.

Earlier in this essay I said weeds are like Duessa, a lurking, destructive force disguised by an innocent and pretty outside. This holds true, but weeds are much deeper than that. Weeds are the result of sin in this world, as stated in Genesis 3:17-19: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, thorns and thistles also it shall bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken, dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return."

So when I kneel beside my vegetable bed and pull the weeds, wiping away the sweat of my brow with dirty hands, I am a participant in the harmony of creation, toiling in the dust which is my brother as was decreed in the beginning of time. And as I toil, I think on the things of old, of the days when no weeds grew and the dew came softly to water the plants in the Garden.

This intimate contact with the broken beauty of the world makes me long even more for the future day when the lion shall lie down with the lamb and they shall eat the grass together, and the weed shall lie down with the root vegetable and neither shall be harmed.

Nēva Garber
Age 16
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Early Modern Literature, Latin 3

Photographs

By Daniel Covalt

Front Hiding Turtle

Red Spotted Newt Side

Daniel Covalt
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Ancient Literature, Readings in Ancient History

The Florilegium

A Column by Jonathan Jecko

Talking to Trees

Now that it is the season of fall, you can't help but notice a change. Hopefully we're not too plant blind (I talked about this in my previous column) to miss this marvelous occurrence. It is one of several signs that summer is over, the growing season is ending, and rest is not too far away. Though it appears that trees are in a dormant state now, they are more alive than we think them to be. No, they don't move on their own volition, or have eyes, ears, or mouths with which to see, hear, or speak. They do have a most fascinating communication system that we are only just now discovering.

In Peter Wohlleben's book, The Hidden Life of Trees, he claims that "trees are social beings," and this is apparent in a forest because trees grow close to each other. But how do these trees communicate with one another? Humans are social beings. We live closely together, we converse with each other, or we use the internet if distance is a factor, and, believe it or not, trees have a similar system. Trees have their own form of the internet, which Wohlleben cleverly coins as the "wood wide web".

The wood wide web is a system between fungi and trees, and there is so much to unpack from this topic, but I shall try to make it simple. For a long time, people thought that trees (and other plants) competed for space, light, water, and nutrients. However, foresters are finding that this isn't the case. In a forest, a tree still wants to be the tallest, the one near a water source, and have unlimited access to nutrients, but it's not a fight.

Let's compare humans and trees once again. Just like a mother takes care of her child, trees do the same. Let's use a beech tree as an example because they are one of the most "social" of all trees to their own kind. A beech tree will drop her seed on the ground. As the seedling sprouts, grows, and produces a root system, beneficial fungi that live in the soil will grow into the living part of the root and take the sugars from the plant. In payment, the fungi gives the seedling nutrients that it has broken down, transports water to the tree, and pulls heavy metals out from around the tree, so that the roots have healthy soil to grow.

That's not even all! The fungi's mycelium will also attack and kill any bad bacteria in the soil that wants to enter the tree, and the fungi will even fight off other mycelium trying to make a partnership with its host tree through chemical warfare. The mother beech is connected to her child by this network, and through it, she cares for her young one. The

mother beech is so tall and old that she can receive a lot of sunlight and has a lot of stored up energy. With this, and using the wood wide web, the mother beech can feed her sapling, who is at the very bottom of the forest and can't receive enough light to produce enough sugars for itself. This process occurs by flowing nutrients through the mycelium and to the sapling.

This doesn't just work for mother trees and their young. All trees are connected in a forest. Some tree species are more generous in lending nutrients around, while others are not, and somehow, trees know who is family and who is just a friend. But nutrient sharing isn't the wood wide web's only function. News, alerts, and aid are all things that can be exchanged between tree species. On the contrary, Wohlleben says that a tree alone in the middle of a field has no idea or warning to what is on the way because it is not connected to a network.

If there is a drought or an insect infestation happening to a tree, it will be alerted and send out electrical waves through its entire body. Eventually, because trees are slow beings, the signals will make it to the root tips where the mycelium lie. The mycelium will pick up these signals and send the electrical waves underground through itself and to other tree root tips. The trees alerted can then prepare for the coming danger. They can also learn from these circumstances and be better prepared for the future, and put these valuable lessons into their offspring, so that they are better prepared.

Insect infestations on a tree are a little different because two amazing things happen. Firstly, when an insect or a swarm of insects land on a tree and start to munch on the leaves or bark, the tree is alerted through its nervous system (the same system that sent out the electrical signals above) and slowly spreads the signal out and all over the tree, even to the root tips, which then the mycelium pick up and move to the other trees to be alerted of the danger. As that is happening through the tree and underground, the leaves aren't going to just sit and hope to be spared. It takes far too many nutrients and energy to make leaves for them just to be eaten away. So the tree has a defense to get rid of the danger.

Secondly, the tree can tell what kind of insect is attacking it, and what the right concoction of chemicals to use for the specific insect by "reading" the chemical compounds in the insect's saliva. Depending on tree type, the tree can fight back with tannins to change the flavor of the leaves, use scents to deter the pest by making the air around it smell bad, or use scents to call for beneficial insects or animals to feast upon the pests. We can smell these distress calls. Every time the lawn is mowed and you smell that sweet scent of freshly cut grass, that is the grass yelling to nearby grasses that danger is nigh. But scents are not the most reliable means of communication for plants because they only reach about 100 yards. This is partially why trees connect underground.

Clearly, trees are living beings. They have family, friendships, and are more alive than we think them to be. Trees (and all plants) are constantly picking up signals from their surroundings, and they are constantly talking to one another. In this season of fall, if the trees haven't caught your attention already, I hope the next time you go for a nature walk, you will be amazed by the forest around you. All creation is given a language, whether it is the song of a bird, the hum of an insect, or the trees talking underground.

Jonathan Jecko
Age 17
North Carolina
Early Modern Literature, Anglo-Saxon 2

Photographs

By Lydia Ronk

Marco Views

Edge of the Sea

Lydia Ronk
Age 15
Indiana
Anglo Saxon 1

Lessons from Bach

By Beatrice Long

Music, for the performer, is a wonderful combination of artistic work and personal experience. Like a painting or a poem, music is often conceptualized by one person and enjoyed by many others. However, music employs a unique intermediary step between the composer and the audience: the performer. Music requires the active participation of the performers who personally experience it by interpreting it, bringing it to life, and sharing it with others. The performer must immerse herself in the composer's thoughts, handed down in the form of strange scribbles on a page. How the performer approaches and actualizes those scribbles makes all the difference in whether listeners find the music stunning, mediocre, or downright intolerable. As a classical musician of fourteen years, I often feel the performer's responsibility of striving to do well by the music that I play.

For many serious musicians, approaching the compositions of Baroque genius Johann Sebastian Bach is both thrilling and terrifying. His music is wonderfully ornate yet supremely clear. Many performers agree that to play Bach truly well requires both technical precision and emotional intensity at levels somehow more sophisticated than those needed to play any other music.

Bach's advanced compositions for solo instruments, such as the Six Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, are regarded as a pinnacle of musicianship and are significant milestones for the performer. They are commonly required for college music auditions. Because I plan to study violin performance in college, my violin teacher and I decided last fall that it was time to begin learning my first movement from the Sonatas and Partitas: the Allemande from the Partita No. 2 in D minor.

When I began the Allemande, I thought that I would surely have it polished within a month at most; however, its apparent simplicity had completely fooled me. As one month turned into many and I still could not play the Allemande beautifully, I grew very frustrated. I had grown up listening to the Sonatas and Partitas and had played numerous easier Bach pieces well. But somehow, I could not understand how to play the Allemande with the expressive clarity it needed. My playing seemed jerky and unmusical; I felt like a beginner again.

Yet that feeling was the beginning of something wonderful. I now believe that the secret to playing Bach well is to approach his music as a beginner. One must delve into his manuscript and learn about it from the ground up in order to make sense of his concepts and ideas. It is humbling to need to be shown, like a beginner, not just what, but how to learn. Over my time learning the Allemande, several wise teachers patiently explained to me the fascinating process of how to learn Bach - how to explore and "shape" the music for myself. To describe this in detail would far exceed the bounds of this essay, but in short, my eyes

were opened to the tremendous organizational beauty of Bach's writing. My playing improved dramatically. The Allemande finally made sense!

Spending time in the mind of Bach, experiencing his ideas and learning to communicate them well to the world, is an incredible privilege. The order, structure, and beauty that I found in his music seem just the remedy for the rush of modern chaos. To wordlessly express these intangible concepts in a manner that moves others to feel the centuries-old power of this music is an art which I am deeply grateful to learn. Though I can now play Bach's Allemande more skillfully than before, I am still a beginner at the feet of this great master composer, ready to learn all that he has to teach me, and eager to bring the light of his music into a world aching for beauty.

Beatrice Long
Age 17
Louisiana
Early Modern Literature

Bumblebee in the Shenandoah Mountains

By Grace Gerardot

Grace Gerardot
Age 18
Indiana
How to Read Literature

Photographs

By Naomi Giles

Purple Top Verbena

Cosmos

Naomi Giles
Age 14
Michigan
Good Books

Commonplace Quotes

Anabelle Fender
Age 15
Arizona
Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Plutarch

"If I cast into one side of the balance all that I have learned from the books of the library and into the other everything that I have gleaned from the 'books in the running brooks,' how surely would the latter turn the scales."
—*King Solomon's Ring*
by Konrad Z. Lorenz

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"'Look, do you see that poem?' she said suddenly, pointing.

'Where?' Jane and Diana stared, as if expecting to see Runic rhymes on the birch trees.

'There. . . down in the brook. . . that old green, mossy log with the water flowing over it in those smooth ripples that look as if they'd been combed, and that single shaft of sunshine falling right athwart it, far down into the pool. Oh, it's the most beautiful poem I ever saw.'

'I should rather call it a picture,' said Jane. 'A poem is lines and verses.'

'Oh dear me no. . . The lines and verses are only the outward garment of the poem and are no more really it than your ruffles and flounces are you, Jane. The real poem is the soul within them. . . and that beautiful bit is the soul of an unwritten poem. It is not every day one sees a soul. . . even of a poem.'"

—*Anne of Avonlea*
by L. M. Montgomery

Bethany Ward
Age 18
Tennessee
Early Modern Literature
~~~~~~

"Beauty is not caused. It is."
—Emily Dickinson

"Not all who wander are lost."
—*The Fellowship of the Ring*
by J. R. R. Tolkien

"In darkness God's light shines most clear."
—Corrie Ten Boom

"I will not say do not weep, for not all tears are evil."
—Gandalf,
The Return of the King

"There are no 'ifs' in God's kingdom."
—Corrie Ten Boom

"How strange that nature does not knock, and yet does not intrude!"
—Emily Dickinson

Lacey Patterson
Age 12
Tennessee
Latin 1

Photographs

By Silas Santos

Kerry Cliffs,
Ring of Kerry,
County Kerry, Ireland

View From Monastery Ruins,
Hill of Slane,
County Meath, Ireland

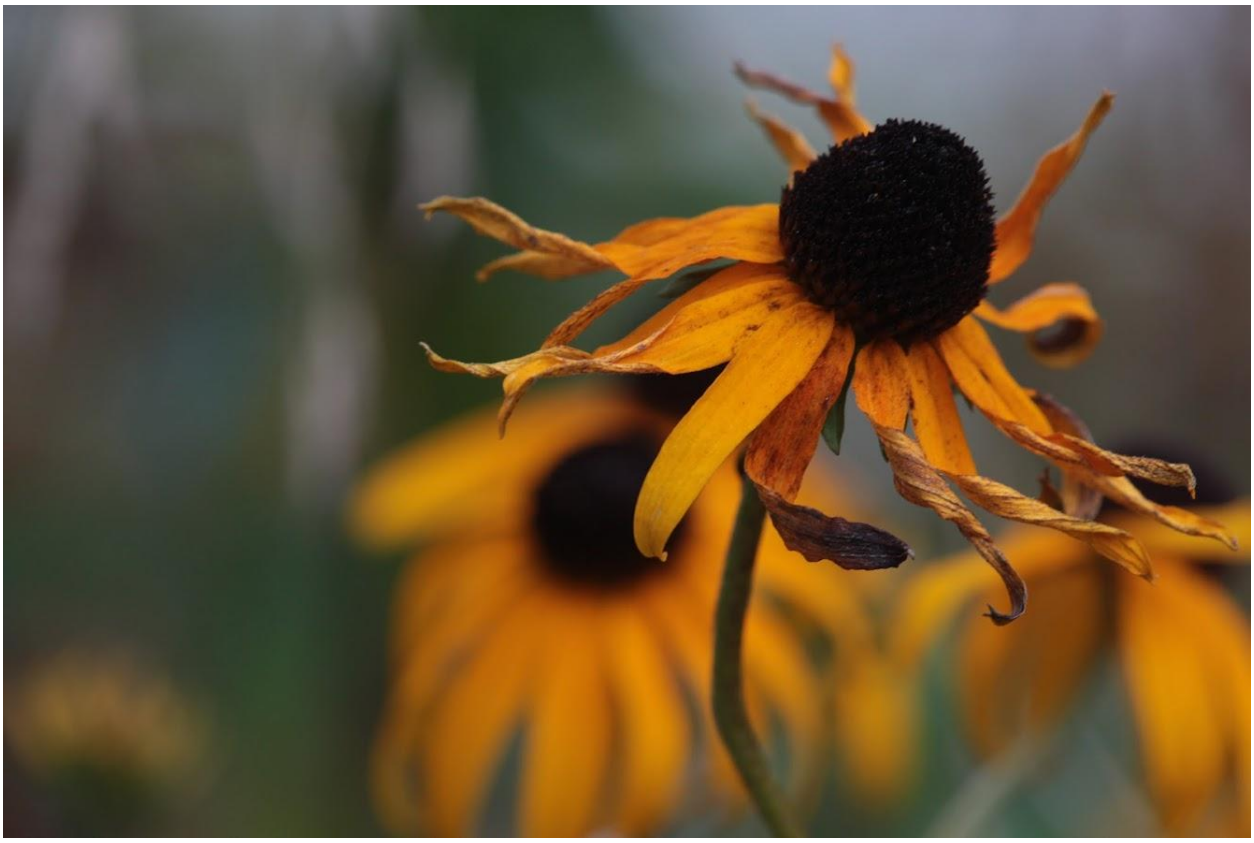
Silas Santos
Age 13
Colorado
Good Books, Plutarch, Anglo-Saxon 1

Photographs

By Emily Snyder

Glory in White

Earthly Gold



Emily Snyder
Age 16
South Carolina
How to Read Literature

Interview with Ella Hornstra

An interview with HHL speaker, teacher and former student Ella Horstra on the language of the natural world and how nature influences us.

By Natalia Testa and Sarah Jane Solomon

I will start off by asking if you've always felt drawn to nature, and if so, what are some of your earliest nature memories?

As early as I can remember, I have been drawn to nature. Some of my first childhood memories were time spent out of doors that my mom organized, and she would have us outside all of the time.

We would read outside... we would do school outside... My sister and I would watch animals and insects out of doors, and we'd come up with all of these stories for them. We always joke that our first introduction to Shakespeare was watching the squirrels play with each other in the trees because we would have these very elaborate stories based on what we were reading–about the love between the two squirrels that were messing about in the backyard and things like that. I was always very fond of insects, so I was outside probably more often than I was indoors during the day, and there were weekends when I would have a goal of spending the entire weekend out of doors, if I could, and my sister and I spent a lot of time in our imaginary world outdoors then.

We were in love with animal stories, my siblings and I, and the *Wind in the Willows*, *Mistmantle*, *Redwall*, and honestly, all of Rudyard Kipling's stories and Aesop's Fables.

So, yes, I would say from my earliest childhood, I've been attracted to it.

How would you say nature and nature stories connect to our everyday life? How does this influence us in how we think and the way we observe the world?

I agree wholeheartedly with George MacDonald when he says that fairy tales, or stories and nature, are the two things that form and feed an imagination. So I think that having the patterns and forms that are in nature and the cycles of the natural world–the way things move and live–are vital and essential to our imaginations.

I believe the stories that are built on those patterns follow the same art, because art imitates nature. Nature is the art of God, and that's the great cycle of being. I think it's very important, and those forms can live on in our minds. Thomas Carlyle uses a phrase saying that [the forms of nature] "give clothes to the thoughts of men," so they're the forms that give shape to man's thoughts.

That ties into me asking: What are some of the ways–or in literary works, how are some of the ways–that nature and the natural world are intertwined? And how can we see that coming across through literature?

I think this can happen in a few different ways. It can be from something as simple as the mention of crows and the need to know what a crow is, what it does, and what it sounds like. [This is] the connection and the tradition that a crow has taken on. The understanding of the role it has in the story because of that tradition and symbolism.

So if you don't know what a crow looks or sounds like, and you don't know that it's a kind of bird, you wouldn't know that it's connected to death in any way. You wouldn't know why crows are ominous if they show up in a story.

That's one example. I almost hate to say practically, but sometimes it is really, really practical. From practicality, in the sense of the way something physically looks and feels, or where it physically grows, there's also more that grows out of that context and understanding in the shape that it has. Shape always has some kind of symbolic significance, and that plays into the role that it has in a story or poetry or image.

Do you think the natural tradition and the literary tradition have changed drastically over time, or do you think the fundamentals of how we view nature and how nature tends to connect to all of our stories remains generally the same?

Well, nature itself has remained the same. That's one of the great things about an understanding of the natural world that it is really the common tongue between us and every culture and every age. It's a common language, just as some might say music is a common language.

We were all given the same natural world, and there are various aspects of it that are different within the region, so in that way, it hasn't changed. But in the sense of our understanding and our ability to even have the attention to watch nature and to see nature, I think we have lost that in a lot of ways in our modern world. There is a separation from nature.

The fact that to be in the natural world has become unnatural to us has led to the need for us to talk more explicitly about these things that are happening in the natural world and to actually observe them. It has become a thing that can be taught in a different way than perhaps it used to be passed on.

So, in one way, the natural world is never going anywhere, but in another way, we have lost our understanding in a lot of ways, which is why we will read these poems or read these stories, and the images don't make any sense to us. We've never seen this type of flower, or we've never even really paid that much attention to the way that a tree grows, so it doesn't make sense to us, the significance that they have.

How do you think we could regain this connection with nature that we once had?

Honestly, this is not just for some people, this is not exclusive: The way to regain this is to watch nature. I think for some people that can be a really frustrating answer, because watching and paying attention is very time consuming. The way to recover it is to slowly allow your eyes to be opened to see detail again. The detail that we've become kind of desensitized to, to be out in it and to literally feel it–because, as C.S. Lewis makes the point of saying in The Discarded Image, being out of doors gives you an absolute perspective.

You automatically know what is up above you and what is below and around you, and you can touch and you can feel it, and you're given this perspective that opens your eyes to see. So I think that the most important part is watching, and letting yourself learn to watch again, and not being frustrated when you don't [watch].

You don't pick up on everything, and it takes 15 to 20 minutes for your ear to become more sensitized to hearing the sounds of nature that are way quieter than the sounds of the modern world and the city. So out in the forest, it'll be 15 or 20 minutes of absolute silence before you actually start to hear the sounds that aren't there. They're just so much quieter than what we're used to.

In the same way that you need to soak up the stories and read them and have the forms in your mind, that's exactly what you do with the natural world in the same way.

What are your thoughts on observing nature by journaling?

Oh, nature journaling is wonderful. Charlotte Mason had many thoughts on that for exactly this reason, because it cultivates the habit of attention. And art traditionally has always been imitating nature.

Because we have natural forms that are in creation, art sees those forms and brings them down and captures them in a physical medium. It really is training your eyes to see detail and to see form, and it has very little to do with perfectionism and realism and more to do with the attention that you're giving to the world around you.

If you were to embark on a journey of helping others to see in the same way that I'm learning to see, how would you go about that?

Well, like I said, a lot of time spent observing and paying attention is absolutely necessary. I think I would never stop harping on the fact that no amount of teaching or instruction or reading is going to provide the same effect as being in the thing itself.

Because in so many ways, this was a life from the very beginning, since the Garden of Eden, when man was created to be in a garden. And there's a reason for that. And so nothing is ever going to replace that being out in it. And there's no guide or teacher needed for that side of things.

On the other hand, though, there's so much work that can be done just in trying to recover a traditional understanding, and in the traditions of images, and even language that

was rooted in the natural world. One of the things I've been fascinated with recently is the way that the Egyptian hieroglyphs are based off of natural symbols and forms in the natural world, and if we do not understand those, we are not going to be able to understand the language.

Like C.S. Lewis says in the beginning of *The Discarded Image*, "When we're going out into a landscape, we need a map, but we don't want to be walking around in the landscape with our noses always in the guidebook or we'll never see the landscape. We'll only see the guidebook."

Therefore, what we need is a map before we go out into it, to orient us so that we're also not occupied the whole time with how lost we are. Then we can fully be in the landscape. In so many ways we're so separated from the natural world now that it's almost impossible for us to literally go outside, even when we're outside, because we've become so blind to the world around us.

What are some of your favorite natural images?

I will never get over trees. This is because they have been living over me and standing over me since my earliest days. I can't stop looking at them, both in my imagination and in the real world.

I have always been captivated by luna moths because they look like flying moonlight, and I love the color and everything about them. I think they have been the most magical things to me for years and years, partly because there was this one time when I was very young and I went outside early in the morning, and there was a newly hatched luna moth hidden under a bush somewhere. I just spent the entire day watching her, and I still remember how it was just so magical to me because I had previously only read of them and hadn't gotten to see one in real life.

Eggs are also amazing. It's funny because growing up, I've had an egg allergy, so I've never actually eaten them, but I've had this great fascination with them from my earliest days. As a child, we had a treehouse, and birds would nest in there. The nests were below our eye level, even as children, which meant we could see down into the nest. I would always be watching the eggs and watching their life so I could see them grow up, and this is one of the things that first captured my heart and my imagination. The cosmic egg, that understanding, this symbolic understanding of eggs, that's another thing.

Flowers also–and flower languages. Going back deep into the roots of that understanding from the way a flower looks to the way it smells, to where it grows, to the time of a year that it grows, and the way that all of those patterns tie into the symbolic understanding of that flower... that goes up to make a great big language, which is really just part of the language of the natural world.

This has been amazing! Thank you so much, Ella, for drawing us back to our connection with nature.

Ella Hornstra
Cover Illustration
The Grammar of the Natural World,
Latin Foundations

Natalia Testa
Age 16
Texas
Early Modern Literature, Readings in Early
Modern History, Latin 3, and Anglo-Saxon 2

Sarah Jane Solomon
Age 16
Maryland
Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Latin 3
Anglo-Saxon 2

Student Announcements

For news about recent and upcoming events in the lives of HHL students.

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Second HHL Student Music Recital

Following on the success of our first recital in the summer, the Second House of Humane Letters Student Music Recital is scheduled for December 22, 2025, over Zoom. It showcases the musical talents of the HHL student body. During the program, a selection of recitals recorded by various students is presented to the audience. The deadline for submitting your recital recording is December 12. For questions and submissions, please email hhlrecital@proton.me.

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Art

Poppies in a Mason Jar

Pepper Nemetchek
Age 14
Manitoba, Canada
Early Modern Literature

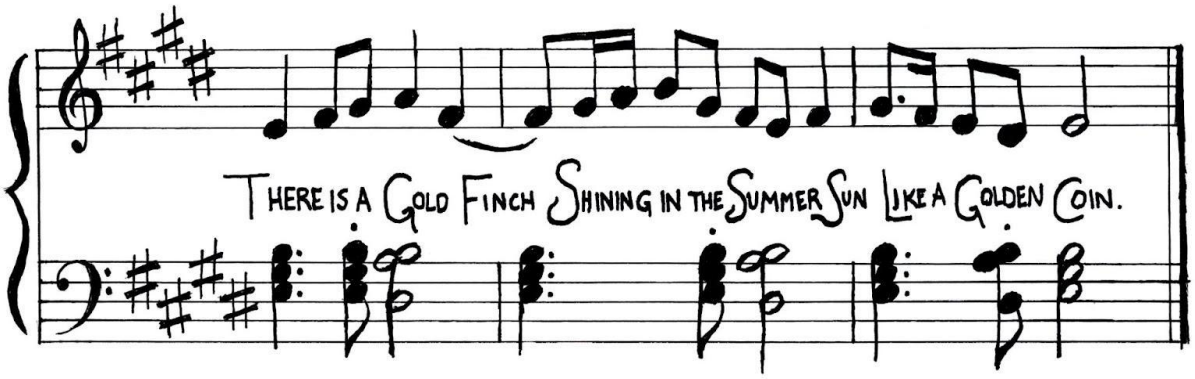
A Distinguished Gentleman

Emma Covalt
Age 15
South Carolina
Ancient Literature, Anglo-Saxon 1

Cranes

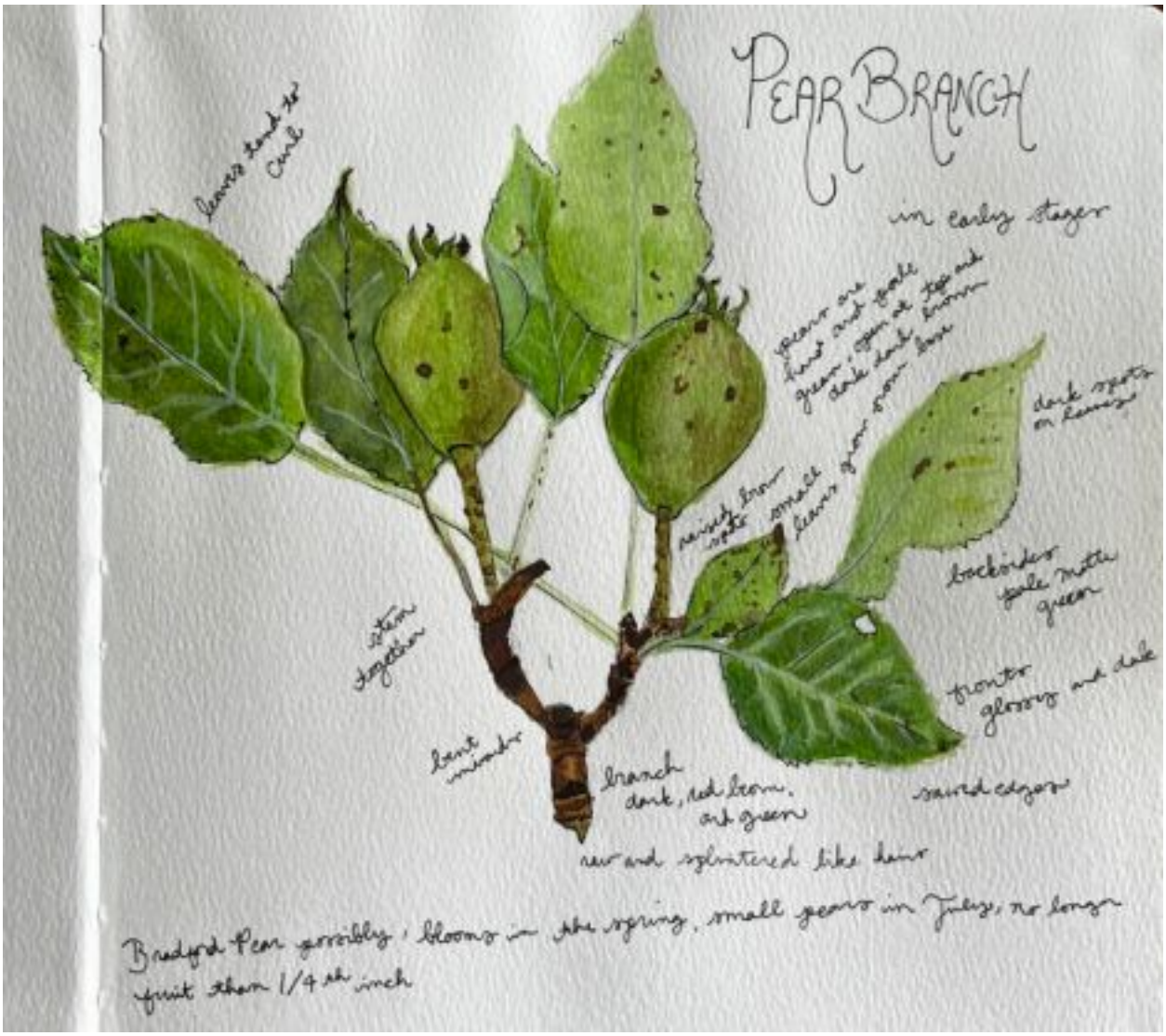
Clementine Do
Age 12
District of Columbia
Good Books

The Gold Finch



Asher McCall
Age 17
Ohio
Early Modern Literature, Latin 3, Greek 1

Pear Branch - Nature Journaling



Grace Gerardot
Age 18
Indiana
How to Read Literature

John Bauer Artist Study

Elizabeth Knight
Age 17
North Carolina
Later Modern Literature, Latin 2, Plato's Ghost

The Slumber of Smaug

Calvin Jacobson
Age 12
Florida
Good Books, Plutarch, Latin 1

Cast Drawing

Elsa Altschuler
Age 13
Maryland
Good Books, Biblical History

The Boy Who Swallowed A Star.

Janie Fender
Age 16
Arizona
Later Modern Literature

Fiction & Poetry

How Grendel Stole the Mead Benches

A Not-So-New Retelling

By Elizabeth Eusterman

Every Dane down in Heorot liked harping a lot
But Grendel, just outside of Heorot did NOT!
Grendel hated the Danes and their singing of seasons,
Please don't ask why, no one knows quite the reason.
Some say that it was his demonic mother
Some say his grandsire who murdered his brother
But I think that the most likely reason to tell
May have been he was simply, a fiend out of hell.
Whatever the reason for these monstrous pains
He sat in the moorlands hating the Danes.
Staring out from his cave with a heart tight and small
At the warm lighted windows above in their hall
For he knew every Dane, every warrior and wench
Was busy now drinking upon the mead bench.
"And the scops will be singing!" he snarled with a sneer
"Of leoman and leohte and feasts without fear!"
Then he growled, his jealous heart angrily drumming
"I MUST find some way to stop minstrels from strumming!"
For how well he knew, whether thane, maid or boy
While praising the Shaper was trembling with joy.
That's one thing he hated! The joy!
All the Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy!
Then the Danes young and old would sit down to a feast
And they'd feast! Feast! Feast! Feast!

They would feast with mead-horns, on bread and roast beast
Something that Grendel could not stand in the least!
And THEN they'd do something he liked least of all!
Every Dane up in Heorot, the tall and the small
Would sit close around, with the minstrel's harp ringing
They'd sit close and listen, and those Danes would start singing!
They'd sing! And they'd sing!
And they'd SING! SING! SING!

And the more Grendel thought of this cruel Danish sing
The more Grendel thought, “I must stop this whole thing!
Why for time out of mind I’ve put up with it now!
I MUST stop those Danes from singing! But HOW?”
Then he got an idea! An awful idea!
The fiend got a wonderful, awful idea!
“I know just what to do!” Grendel laughed in his throat
And he made a quick pouch, a dragon-skin tote.
And he chuckled and clucked, that old evil sinner
“With this marvelous pouch I will catch myself dinner!
All I need is a friend.” Grendel turned, looked around
But since he was an orc, there were none to be found.
Did that stop the fiend? No! Grendel grinned, simply said
“If I can’t find a friend, I’ll call family instead!”
So, he called his own mother, with glowing eyes red
And two awful horns on the top of her head.
THEN they slithered and oozed across the cavernous floor
And crept through the swamps of their home on the moor.
Grendel hissed, “Forwards!” and the pair started to crawl

Up the hill where the Danes lay asnooze in their hall.
All their windows were dark. Quiet breath filled the air
The Danes were all dreaming bold dreams without care
“Let us rend down the door!” the fiend from hell hissed
And he curled up his claws in one big monstrous fist.
Then he crashed through the hall, not one moment of doubt
And all of the Danes were awoke with a shout!
They froze only once, for a moment or two
The hall seemed to shrink as the pair of them grew.
Grendel’s fangs spread and grinned, he turned nice and slow
Saw a Dane- “You sir, are the first one to go!”
Then he snatched him and ate him with a smile most unpleasant
And leaping forward he grabbed every Dane present.
Elbows! And thighbones! Thanes and their chums!
Kneecaps of warriors, fingers and thumbs!
Some were stuffed in the pouch, in his magical sack
Where he’d keep them for later- an afternoon snack.
He didn’t stop there- he took the Dane’s feast!
The remnants of revelry, the bread and roast beast!

He cleared off the mead-benches as quick as a flash
Then upturned them all with an echoing crash!
As he glutted himself, the fiend saw with glee
A man still asleep- “Another for me!”
And Grendel grabbed the man as he opened his sack
When to his horror
the man
grabbed BACK!

Grendel turned around fast and saw, not a thane
But Beowulf, the hero, come to save all the Danes.
The fiend has been caught in the midst of his slaughter
And now he yearned for his dark, murky water.
Beow stared at Grendel and said, “You, orcneas, why?
Why do you ravage our mead-benches-why?”
And that old Grendel thought himself smart and so slick
So he thought up a lie and thought it up quick.
“Why my poor little man,” Grendel snarled in pain
“Do you judge all my actions just because I’m from Cain?
How cruel you are to the shunned, unloved other!
Have you no pity for my poor, single mother?”
Beowulf laughed, Grendel gulped in alarm
And with a great twist Beow ripped off his arm.
Defeated, the demon fled, moaning resigned
And his she-monster mother followed close behind.
And what happened then? Well in Heorot they say,
The world still will burn....just perhaps not today.
They cleaned out the mead-hall and set all things right,
Laid out the benches in glowing torch light.
They brought out the mead, all the food for the feast
And Beow, he himself
the hero
carved the roast beast.

Elizabeth Eusterman
Age 16
Colorado
Early Modern Literature, Readings in Early Modern History, Anglo-Saxon 2, Plato’s Ghost

Exodus

By Nēva Garber

The canyons they are beautiful, the rocks and cliffs so red
These bones of the long buried earth thrust up from the dead
This is not the look of forest green, of streams of crystal hue
This is a beauty slower seen, not easily, but true.
This desert which spreads out so far, and far, and far away
It brings my mind to wanderers, with bread and water every day.
The thirst and heat which now I feel remind me still of they,
Who, thirsty, rose in augury, and waved the Man of God away.
These rocks so hot they burn my hand, so drear, so hard, so dry as bone
What wonder that The God Who Hears should give them water of such stone!
This desert is the traveling road, the hardships that we face
That brings us, from the land of toil, to that most blessed place.
And as I gaze on desert sand, on rugged rocks above,
It is a symbol of the faith, the faith of the children of love.
For love in such a barren place is not an easy thing,
And love in the wasteland deserts of life is the sign of our Heavenly King.

Nēva Garber
Age 16
Louisiana
Early Modern Literature, Latin 3

The Unicorn

By Kylie DeBoar

Something gleamed in the forest that night.
Its horn was so bright,
It almost glowed.
But who it was, it never showed.

His mane was so pearly white
That it wasn't dark at night,
And next to him a dove so white
It also shined in the night.

O, it was such a sight!
As the dawn defeated the night,
The two creatures' light rose towards the sun
Until they blended as one.

The creature with the pearly mane
Finally told us His name.
Shining in the morning light,
A unicorn and dove sat staring at the light.

Kylie DeBoar
Age 10
Tennessee
Good Books

What is Beauty?

By Bethany Snyder

What is beauty?
What is wonder?
The flash of lightning;
The boom of thunder.
Millions of stars in a cloudless sky;
The delicate wings of a butterfly.
The vast view from a mountaintop;
The intricate detail of a flower stalk.
The sereneness of snow on a cold winter night;
A bird singing in mid-flight.
The stillness of the ocean just before the sunrise;
The knowingness and depth behind a single pair of eyes.
But above these all,
Is the love God shows us through his creatures
Great and small.

Bethany Snyder
Age 13
South Carolina
Good Books

To a Campfire

By Asher McCall

Tranquil fire of the camp,
Burning like a greater lamp,
What makes thee to burn so fair,
Lighting up around thee there?

What makes it so calm to gaze
On thy embers, in thy blaze?
What in thee so well conducts
Thoughts and fancies, strange constructs?

What made old Prometheus give
Thee to men, that they might live?
What made us to shun thy heat,
Shutting ourselves in modern seat?

What made thee to flicker so,
In thy inmost heart to grow?
What stretched out thy fingered flame?
What gave thee so dread a name?

What awoke thy hunger drive,
Causing the to always thrive?
What gave thee thy color red,
Glowing there amidst thy bed?

But what made thee a need of life?
What made thee a friend in strife?
What made thee a comfort sure
In our days, O fire pure?

Fire, fire, burning bright,
Come thou often to my sight,
And when I am far from thee
Let me e'er remember thee.

Asher McCall
Age 17
Ohio
Early Modern Literature,
Latin 3, Greek 1

Elven Nights

By Bishop Gilmore

One night I went adventuring,
Though wither I cannot well say,
Beyond the bounds of well-known paths
In woods forsaken by the day.
I walk'd by oak and stream alone,
A spirit restless and forlorn.
But then I heard, or so I thought,
The sound of flutes and pipes, and song
By more than mortal tongue pronounced,
A sound for which my soul then longed.
With careful step I ventured near
To listen well with careful ear.
A glade I saw, illumined bright
With shining lamps in boughs of trees,
Whence streamed, like liquid, faery light
To land amid what revelry
Of folk who seemed like kings of men
As never I shall see again.
The shadows played in hair of white
Or black as wing of raven dark.
Their faces pale, no blemish seen
Therein, no scar or ugly mark.
There wisdom sat on brows of white.
From marble skin shone gleams of light.
What tales they told, of days now gone,
Of battles lost and kingdoms won,
Of knights and mortals fortune-borne
As now there are for rivals none,
And elvish bards with art and skill
Sang songs that fixed all hearers still.
I sit and think close by the hearth,
"Shall mundane man hold claim to Earth?"
From God he rules with steward hands,
But woods untamed are elven lands.

Bishop Gilmore
Age 17
Alabama
Early Modern Literature

The Wedding of Terra

By George Shaw

My words are new and small, and of a vulgar untaught tongue.
They have not the broad brushed fullness of the verse the Grecians sung.
Their contour does not flow with grace through meter's measured tread,
and spills out at the edges like the Nile from its bed.
Their shapes are curious and do not fit within the ancient mold,
in which Hephaestus cast Achilles' brazen shield of old.
Yet now I sing of workmanship more lovely than that shield,
and cannot do it justice with the feeble words I wield.
Yea lesser shields than his could turn aside with ease my dart,
which I toss but unskillfully to wound the hearer's heart.
Let him then, whoe'er he be, attend without defense,
for only then can my unarmoured army make entrance.
A rich and mighty king there was who lived in ancient times,
that all the minstrels of his day did honor in their rhymes.
And yet for all his wealth and power wanted he a bride,
and so when from his window the lovely Terra he espied;
he resolved at once to wed her and to the weavers then he went,
and ordered them to fashion her a bridal habiliment.

The threads rolled gently through their hands like quickly flowing streams,
and woven hedges fledged the stitch like plumage at the seams.
Waterfalls fell from their fingers and down the fabric's face,
where crashing onto knitted rocks, the water splashed like lace.
Trees they twined with twisted fibers up a knobbled course,
and planted 'round each one an earth-bound crown of prickly gorse.
Scenes of summer first they fitted to the dresses skirt,
and hazy fields of stripling wheat upon the cloth they girt;
that rippled like a placid sea between the wooded groves,
where shadows crowded 'neath the leaves in thick sun-driven droves.
The heat of day marched o'er the plains in royal procession bright,
and like Mitas, all it touched, in golden hue was dight.
Then threaded they their needles with the autumn's auburn hue,
and plaited swirling circlets where the wilting foliage flew;

that gently slipped between the sleeping fingers of the trees,
and fell to earth to swell the flood of shifting, leafy seas.
They crumbled ‘neath the footfall of the farmers with their loads,
who brought the harvest’s bounty in on winding country roads.
Next they brought down winter over autumn's golden tomb,
like lily petals falling through the midnight's moonlit gloom.

Their needles bit the fabric like the icy cold gnaws skin,
and knit the earth with thick, white snow where verdure else had been.
The naked trees the weavers stitched in spindly, crooked thread,
and laid sheets of linen snow on them like palls upon the dead.
At last, like bedclothes laid aside, the snow was cast away.
And all the vernal world rose up to greet the dawning day.
Like sparks beat out of blackest flint, the flowers pricked the earth,
when the weavers sowed them in their place across the dresses girth.
They opened like a jeweler’s case the beauty of their loom,
to draw from it such precious stones as bring the earth to bloom.
So round the skirt was cast the comely cycle of the year,
and crowned both fields and forests, plains and rocky mountains sheer.
Day they spread across one side with layers of golden light,
and as the earth is double-faced the other bore the night.
Like tresses loosed from binding braids the moon let down her rays,
and swept the world's reposing hills and valleys with her gaze.
It was evening when they brought the dress before the king complete,
and said he then, “For my fair bride, this alone is meet.”
Then as the moon was rising, he retired to his rest,
and in his heart, for his love’s sake, all the world he blessed.
But that night as he slept, he had a strange and fearful dream,
of all earth ripped asunder on that garment's goodly seam.
Spears stood up in rows upon those hazy summer fields,
and soldiers beat like summer heat upon each other's shields.
Men fell down like autumn leaves, and blood flowed like a sea,
and grave robbers instead of farmers reaped it greedily.
In place of burial ‘neath the snow, pyres burned the dead,
and where lilies once had marked their ashes, thorns grew up instead.
All that night the nightmare raged, but at the dawn of day,
he rose up and his linen night-clothes neatly put away.

Now that morning was the Sunday on which he and Terra were to wed,
and on that day he dressed in royal purple and in red.
As were all things intended so did all things come to be,
and man and wife forever dwelt together happily.

George Shaw
Age 17
South Carolina
Medieval and Renaissance Literature,
Readings in Medieval History

The Music of the Spheres

By Elsbeth Mobley

The Muses sing the silent song
That never has been heard;
The symphony's epiphanys
That never spoke a word.
A sound which never voice begot
Before my heart appears;
The song that long our souls forgot,
The music of the spheres.

Luna

I hear your voice, oh Artemis,
I see your silver shroud;
Your magic, mournful melodies
You never spoke aloud.
Your many faces, changing phases,
Shallow as the tide
Are echoes of the fabled phrases
Silence cannot hide.

Mercury

Sly Mercury the messenger
With song as light as air,
The lyrics of his laughing voice
Are sung without a care.
Oh, merchant’s pride and thief who lied,
A trickster you may be
And yet you guide the souls that died
Unto serenity.

Venus

Oh sweetest song, oh Venus fair,
I know your sonnets well;
Your ringing voice is everywhere,
In every copper bell.
In every garden, every sea,
In every singing dove;
In every mystic melody
You sing the song of love.

Sol

Apollo's golden voice recites
The song upon his lyre,
He sings his prose to Helios
Who wears a crown of fire.
His shining rays light up the days,
He rides across the skies,
He sings a silent song of praise
And in the night he dies.

Mars

Mars's martial music sounds,
He calls his men to war;
The Romans chorus "Mars is for us,
Death is at your door."
His iron fist and iron lance
Shall keep their foes at bay,
Their vibrant victory they dance
In red and rusty ray.

Jupiter

King Jupiter with booming voice
His royal anthems sound;

His bolts of thunder tear asunder
Sky and sea and ground.
Great tree of oak, each word he spoke
A thousand voices sing;
Our souls from silent slumber woke
To hear the godly king.

Saturn

The songs of Saturn weave a pattern,
Tales as old as time;
A million mystic memories
Are writ in every rhyme.
He ruled a royal golden age
Though leaden is his hand;
The great composers shining page
Is found beneath the sand.

Stars

Beyond the sky the angels sing
In pure and perfect choir;
The sun and moon shall heed their tune
And gaze upon their fire.
Each holy voice and shining song
Shall look beyond to see,
That he who rights each tragic wrong
Has writ their harmony.

Elsbeth Mobley
Age 15
Massachusetts
How to Read Literature, Readings in Medieval History, Latin 2

A Wizard's Curse

By Anabelle Fender

Once upon a time, in a land beyond what you or I can see, there lived a King and Queen. They loved each other very much, and they took great care in making the people of their land happy. They had a child, a prince, but the Queen died from childbirth. Sorrow fell over the kingdom, hanging heavily on everyone's hearts, but most of all on the King. The King remarried, but she was not as kind nor as beautiful as his first wife. The new Queen also had a child, a boy, Prince Caelen. The two brothers were inseparable, and their friendship was one of the only things that made the King smile. One dreadful night, the first born, the heir to the throne, disappeared. The King was devastated. Brave warriors and scholars, wise enchanters and wizards, looked high and low for the Prince, but none found him. All who searched disappeared in the effort. Caelen, the Prince's brother, would not rest until his brother was found, and he continued to search for him. Queen Eris, the King's second wife, tried to convince her son to let his brother go, but he would not. She tried to make him focus on the kingdom that he would have to rule since his brother was gone, but still Caelen would not listen. The loss of a brother was a heavy burden to bear.

However, the person that we are following is not royalty. It begins with a simple girl, from nowhere in particular, searching for someone to teach her magic. In this land, magic was common. Sorcerers and Enchanters, Warlocks and Chemists, Alchemists and Witches, but Wizards were the rarest. Only a few Wizards had ever been discovered, and even fewer were alive. Each branch of magic wielders were different, but at the root of it all was one thing. Curiosity. A desire of seeing beyond what mortals see, of knowing secrets that were buried in dust. This young girl had that curiosity.

She had been to every witch, alchemist, and enchanter she could find. No one would bring her on as an apprentice.

Her last option was The Wizard. The only known wizard in the city Volundar.

As the girl weaved through the crowds, she saw shop advertisements on windows, and heard people bargaining with street vendors.

"Watches! Watches made with the highest quality alchemist's gold!"

"Healing herbs! Poisonous mushrooms!" shouted a witch at a stall. "The best money can buy!"

The city was made of a tan stone. Towers and buildings lined each street.

The girl hugged her satchel close, pushing through the worst of the crowds.

She took a deep breath as she walked up the stairs to a building, above the door was a sign. It read:

The Wizard

in carefully painted letters.

The girl gathered her courage and knocked. She waited.

"Please," she mumbled underneath her breath, and knocked again.

The door opened. In the doorway, a young man stood. He was older than her, but not by much. He seemed seventeen, which was strange, because his hair was completely white. He was tall, had piercing light blue eyes, and his face wore a frown.

"What do you want?" he asked, his voice was level, calm but forward.

"I-I," the girl swallowed, then took in a breath, "Are you bringing on any apprentices?"

The boy raised an eyebrow.

"I need someone to teach me magic," she continued, "no one else will take me on."

The boy's eyes focused steadily on her while he thought.

"No," he finally said, and moved to close the door.

"Wait! Please," the girl said, grabbing the edge of the door, "I can cook, clean, I don't need pay, just lessons."

"Still no," he said.

But just as he was about to close the door, a white cat slipped through the door and rubbed against her legs. She smiled down at it. Its amber eyes looked fixedly at the boy.

"No," he said again, but he wasn't talking to the girl. It looked like he was talking to the cat. "I'm not teaching her."

The cat sat in front of the girl and looked up at him.

He sighed, "Fine, I'll teach you."

"Really?" she said, looking up at him.

He nodded, "What's your name?"

"Lyra," she said.

He held the door open for her, and she walked inside.

The Wizard's living room and kitchen were on the first level, but upstairs, Lyra could see glimpses of a library and other closed doors.

"When do we start?" Lyra asked hopefully.

"Now," the boy opened a closet and motioned to the broom, mop, and bucket inside. He smiled amusedly.

Lyra nodded.

The cat meowed; the boy glanced at it.

He sighed from exasperation.

"Tarian," he said, holding out his hand.

Lyra shook it; his hand was stiff and cold.

"Clean here," he motioned to the room they were standing in, "and upstairs. But do not go in my study, and do not touch anything."

"How am I supposed to clean if I can't touch anything?" she asked quietly, holding in a chuckle.

The cat meowed again.

Tarian glared at it.

"If the object makes you want to touch it, don't, clear?" he turned to leave, but repeated. "Do not go in my study."

He opened the door, "Watch her," he said to the cat, and walked out.

"Is he always like that?" Lyra mused to the cat.

The cat meowed and started following Lyra as she pulled out a broom.

The shop itself made Lyra bubble with curiosity.

The walls were a deep red, and the wood floor was scratched and worn.

A table full of candles, bottles, and what looked like a skull was shoved in the corner. A bookshelf stood next to it, and Lyra hurriedly examined the titles.

"*A Wizard's Guide to Spells*, *Runes Explained*, *Wizard Pendragon: A Biography*," she read the titles out to herself.

As Lyra continued to clean, she found how much dust and grime had collected on the dark floors. They were filthy. Obviously, cleaning was not a priority in Tarian's mind.

Hours turned into days, and into what felt like years to Lyra as she cleaned every inch of the house. Tarian never talked about teaching her magic; he hadn't even given her a place to sleep. So, Lyra would place a pillow on the floor near the fire to keep warm, and when she woke, her face was dirty from the ashes.

Weeks had passed and nothing had changed, until one day she heard her name shouted, "Lyra!"

Lyra glanced up from her washing at the sound of her name.

She climbed the stairs and peeked into Tarian's study.

He was leaning on his desk, his white hair messy, his sleeves rolled up.

"Sir?" she asked. Lyra didn't really know why she had started calling him 'sir,' it was just that he seemed to demand respect, and not always in an arrogant way.

He motioned for her to come in, his eyes still focused on the jar in front of him.

As Lyra stepped closer, she looked around the room. It was the first time she'd ever been in his study. It smelled of trees and rain. The walls were lined with bookcases. Ancient-looking volumes filled the shelves, an odd bottle or candle on some of them. The walls were a deep green, the high ceiling painted with constellations. The air seemed to hum with magic.

She saw what was in the jar, a leaf.

"Focus on it," Tarian said, shifting so she could stand next to him.

"What? Why—" she began.

"You wanted to learn magic," he said, a small smile on his face.

"Yes, but—"

"Try," he said simply, motioning to the jar.

Lyra took a deep breath, then focused on the leaf.

"Focus on the texture, the size, every little detail. Memorize it, then use that to change it."

"That doesn't help."

"Imagine the leaf sitting in your hand," he said.

Lyra closed her eyes.

"Notice how it weighs no more than a feather, how you can feel the veins of the leaf. It's small, no bigger than a coin. In your mind, let it morph into something else."

Lyra gritted her teeth, then her fingers twitched.

Slowly, the leaf started to curl up, its color darkening to brown. The leaf had turned into a chrysalis, and a blue butterfly crawled out.

"Well done, that's not easy magic," Tarian said with a proud smile.

"Why are you now teaching me? Why all of a sudden act like you want to help?" The words tumbled out of Lyra's mouth, the sudden spark of magic making her emotions rise.

"I wanted to help," Tarian's eyes were sincere, "but I wasn't sure how."

"I asked you to teach me magic, you said yes, then you make me your servant!"

"Technically, you were the one who offered to clean," he said with a small smirk, which quickly turned into a frown when he saw the jar on the desk. Nothing was in the jar except ashes.

"You need to calm down," he said quietly.

Lyra held her tongue, but her anger was still kindled inside of her. She had stayed silent for weeks, letting him work her to death without giving her so much as a bed to sleep on at night.

The jar on the desk shattered.

"Lyra," Tarian said warningly.

She let out an exasperated breath and turned to leave.

"I was scared," Tarian whispered. "Magic is unpredictable, wizards most of all. And I could tell when I met you, you could be a powerful wizard."

Lyra's eyes widened. She hadn't known her magic was that powerful. She had thought chemist, maybe, but not wizard.

"I apologize for making you wait so long and making you think I went back on my word. I will help you become a wizard; I promise."

Lyra nodded; she didn't know what else to say.

"Why were you so reluctant at first?" she asked finally.

He sighed, "Because magic is unpredictable, and it can make people dangerous. I wanted to see how you would handle—"

"Slave labor?" Lyra cocked an eyebrow.

"It wasn't that bad," Tarian chuckled.

"You've never cleaned in your life; how do you know it 'wasn't that bad'?" She couldn't stop herself from smiling.

"True, I don't clean… ever."

When Lyra's emotions had calmed, a wave of exhaustion swept over her. Using magic had drained her.

"You should probably get some rest," he said, noticing her yawn. "Magic takes its toll."

Lyra nodded and walked out of the study, the soles of her shoes making no noise on the thick carpets.

She began to descend the stairs when she heard a door open.

She looked back to see that Tarian had opened a door at the end of the hall.

He gestured for Lyra to enter.

She gasped when she stepped inside.

Deep reds, yellows, and rich purples covered every inch of the room. Lamps with stained glass bulbs lit the room softly, plants hung from the ceiling by a window, and mirrors and painting adorned all the walls. But what Lyra stared at was the window. Outside was not the bustling city with shoppers going in and out of stores, but a forest. It was lush and green, the sky barely visible from the trees.

"It's simple magic, but it has always fascinated me," Tarian said, leaning against the doorway and following her gaze.

"It's beautiful," Lyra said, still amazed. She could even hear the birds chirping, the winds rustling the leaves, and a river bubbling in the distance. She hadn't seen forests like this since her childhood, when her family had been together and happy.

"Thank you," she turned to him.

He shrugged, "It's not like anyone will use this room."

Months passed, and Lyra's skill began to grow. She learned how to gather water from the air and suspend it in the air, she learned to control the wind. She even began to understand what Jenkins, the white amber-eyed cat, said. Within these months, Lyra learned that Tarian was not the beast she had thought him to be at first. Frequently, he left, but he never said where he went.

Lyra had learned that wizards, especially, could cross magics. It was more difficult than using your natural magic, but it could be done.

"What is the difference between them? Witches, alchemists, warlocks, and all of them?" Lyra asked one day while she tried to control a blaze of fire in her palm.

Tarian thought a moment, "Each branch," he said, "has its own part of the body assigned to it."

"Witches," he elaborated at Lyra's look of confusion, "are the eyes. They have the ability to see beyond the regular properties of herbs. Knowing if they can heal or destroy. Enchanters are the hands; they use them to enable objects to do the unbelievable. Sorcerers,

the mouth, they can speak into existence curses and blessings. Warlocks are the feet, because their magic is used to transport the user. Chemists, the mind, because theirs are always the keenest, their magic is more science than miracles. Alchemists are the ears, because they are the oldest. They alone listened to the traditions of their ancestors when magic started to branch."

"And what about wizards?" Lyra asked curiously.

"There's debate over what wizards are," Tarian said. "Whether they are the heart or the soul."

"What do you think they are?" Lyra asked, her hand still held in front of her, but the fire she was trying to conjure was long forgotten.

He laughed to himself, "Why can't it be both? It's one of the few questions I believe holds charm in being left unanswered."

They had become friends, Lyra thought while she crushed herbs in a mortar, at least he didn't make her clean all the time now.

"I have to leave," Tarian said, entering the room and interrupting her thoughts, "but I should be back by tonight."

"Again?" Lyra said annoyedly, "Where could you possibly be going?"

Tarian arched an eyebrow, his blue eyes amused, "So you'll miss me?"

Lyra shot him a glare, but her cheeks were warm.

"I won't be gone for a week, this time," he said, putting his coat on.

She nodded in reply as he opened the door and walked out.

The next hours rolled slowly by. Lyra finished her sleeping potion, cleaned around the house, then opened a book titled *Illusions Unmasked* and sat at the table. She lit a candle and started examining the spells. When Tarian had said the window was 'simple magic,' he had most definitely lied. It was one of the most complicated spells she had ever seen. Lyra had underestimated how powerful Tarian really was.

"Almost midnight, Jenkins," Lyra stifled a yawn and scratched behind the white cat's ears.

He meowed, licked his paw, then looked directly at her.

She squinted at the cat, then sighed and fell back in her chair. "It's too late to translate," Lyra complained.

Jenkins meowed again, and it sounded like scolding to Lyra.

She glared at him, but could've sworn his amber eyes twinkled with amusement.

"You're still up."

Lyra got up so fast the chair fell over, her hand already raised in defense, so much magic gathered to her fingers that it seemed to drip off like water.

Tarian merely glanced at the hand and brushed it away from his face.

"I-I," Lyra stuttered, "I'm sorry, you scared me."

"I know, I didn't think you would curse me under normal circumstances," Tarian said, looking over her shoulder at the illusion spell book.

"Where were you?" Lyra bit her lip. She hadn't dared ask him where he had gone before.

"Prince Caelen summoned me; asked if I could help him find his brother," Tarian sighed. "No one has seen the prince in three years; he's gone. Caelen needs to accept that."

"You don't think he should have any hope?" Lyra asked.

"I don't know," Tarian sounded tired, "maybe he shouldn't give up. But I can't help him."

They stood in silence, Lyra not knowing what to say.

Tarian took off his coat, hanging it on a hook by the door.

He glanced at the book on the table, "Trying to learn illusions?"

"They're harder than you make them sound."

"That's because they're advanced magic," he said with a small smile.

"You said they were simple!" Lyra said, mock accusingly.

Tarian brushed his white hair back, "They are, when you've been practicing magic all your life. For you, they'll be more of a challenge, but I can help you learn the theory… tomorrow."

"I'm going to stay up studying it," Lyra said, setting the chair back up from where she had knocked it over.

Tarian took a step closer to her, "You should get some rest, that will be more helpful tomorrow than memorizing the whole book."

"It's fine, I need to work more on it," Lyra mumbled.

"You're doing fine," Tarian assured her. "Get some sleep."

Lyra nodded and looked up at him.

He smiled softly, then brushed a lock of her hair behind her ear, "When will I get you to listen to me?"

She laughed softly, then bolder than any magic she could perform, she leaned up on her toes and kissed him.

That's when it all went wrong. Tarian fell to the ground. Unconscious.

"Tarian!" Lyra yelled, falling to her knees next to him.

He was breathing, but his eyes were firmly closed, like he was asleep.

Lyra watched in confusion as his white hair bled to a deep brown.

"Tarian," she said, her heart racing, "please wake up."

On the floor beside Tarian, flames appeared. They burned into the wood these words:

Sleep, dear Prince, and forget thyself
Let memory fade into dark abyss

None shall ever recognize thy face
Unless awakened by soulmate's kiss

Tarian groaned, "It's like waking up from a nightmare," he mumbled, leaning up, a hand pressed to his head.

"What happened, you just…" Lyra's voice trailed off when she saw his eyes. They were still blue, but the coldness that had haunted them before was gone.

"I need to find my brother," he said, trying to stand, but he stumbled.

Lyra grabbed his arm, her questions pouring out, "What are you talking about? And what happened to your hair? Why did you just collapse?"

Tarian looked at the words burned into the ground, "Caelen, I have to tell him."

"Caelen?" Lyra stared at Tarian, "The Prince? You really did hit your head."

"Three years," he whispered. "Three years wasted in a daze."

"What are you talking about!" Lyra couldn't keep the fear out of her voice.

Tarian met her eyes, "I'm the missing prince."

Lyra stared at him blankly, "You're insane."

"No, look," he gestured to the words on the ground, "this is the spell my stepmother used to curse me, so that my brother would be king when my father died. You have to believe me, Lyra, please."

Lyra shook her head in disbelief, and yet it made sense.

She let out a breath, "I believe you."

"Caelen shouldn't have left yet; we need to see him."

After the brothers were reunited, Tarian told him of the curse. Caelen's spirits were dampened by the news, but he was determined to confront his mother. When they returned to the palace, the King shed tears of joy at the return of his son and thanked Lyra for breaking the curse. With a heavy heart, the King sentenced the Queen to prison, and she was locked in the dungeon. The kingdom was overjoyed that Tarian had finally been found.

Ten years later, the King passed away. Tarian was crowned king, and his queen was Lyra, and they lived happily ever after.

The End.

Anabelle Fender
Age 15
Arizona
Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Plutarch

Eolande and the Dragon

By Fiona Altschuler

Eolande was leaving her father's court, for she no longer wished to live the life of a king's daughter. She was determined to take up arms and put on the helm of a knight until the day she learned the truth about life — or until the day she died.

So Eolande bound up her golden locks and approached one of the young lords of that court, one who had long wished to marry her, and she begged to borrow his spear.

"What need has a mere maiden for my spear?" the lord asked, and smiled.

Eolande said nothing, for this response angered her.

The lord, after watching her for a moment, went and fetched his spear: long it was, and sharper than any on this earth, for it was fairy-blest.

"Do you know how to wield a weapon?" he asked.

"Yes," said Eolande stoutly, for she had spent many hours watching the knights joust.

"And what do you mean to do with this spear?" asked the lord.

"I mean to learn the truth about the world," she said.

The lord gave her the spear, and it was much heavier than she had deemed.

"This spear is called, in the tongue of our people, Way Finder," he said. "I am lending it to you, Lady, so that you might find your way. Once you have found it, you must give the spear back to me. For this spear has been passed down in my family for forty generations, for it was kissed by a fairy."

Thus Eolande thanked him, and promised to return it to him, and then she left her father's court and went in search of truth.

She had journeyed not more than a day when a knight clad in black came riding toward her.

"Well met, fellow knight!" called the black knight. "I must ask you whether you have seen a dragon?"

"A dragon!" cried Eolande. "I would have remembered, I think, if I had seen a dragon!"

"This is an old dragon, and evil, and I have been seeking it out in hopes of killing it! For this dragon has killed all seven of my brothers. I see you start, lad! Well do you fear this wyrm!"

"I am not afraid of the dragon," cried Eolande, clutching the spear in her little hand.

"Are you not indeed!" said the knight. "Are you afraid of nothing, then?"

"No," said Eolande. "Are you?"

"Yes," said the black knight sternly. "I am afraid because I know, no matter how hard I look, that I shall never find the truth about the world. I am afraid because I shall reach the end of my life and know that I never fulfilled my quest for knowledge. I would fain be killed dead

by the dragon than have him ask me, ‘what does life mean?’ and be unable to respond.”

“You lie,” said Eolande. “There is truth and meaning in the world, and I shall find it!”

“I thought that once,” said the black knight. “But after years of searching, I have determined that there is no such thing as truth. In absence of truth, the meaning of life must be happiness, and so I spend my days in pursuit of enjoyment.”

“And are you happy?” asked Eolande.

The knight made no answer.

“If as you say there is no truth in the world,” said Eolande, “that is indeed terrible. You are making me afraid, now.”

“I wish you well, whoever you may be,” said the black knight at length. “But heed my advice: Rest no hope in the fulfillment of your quest. Certainty cannot be found, for there is none.”

“You do not speak the truth,” cried Eolande.

“What is truth?” said the black knight, and sighed, and shook his head, and departed.

Eolande grasped her spear, shook the tears from her eyes, and wandered on. She was sorely frightened by that which the black knight had said. For even more terrible than the idea that she would not find truth was the idea that there was no truth to be found.

Eolande was no maid to be trifled with. She had chased away many of her would-be suitors; she had quickly dismissed any idea from her father’s mind that she behave as other maidens do. Eolande, now astride a horse with her armour and her fairy-blest spear, had never doubted that she could do whatever she put her mind to.

Now, as she wandered over damp green field and fen, down twisted paths and up into rich, thick woods, Eolande decided what she would do. She would chase down that dragon, and she would kill it with the spear Way Finder, or die trying.

Eolande knew well, as all sensible folk do, that dragons live in caves. She knew also that dragons hate to face the rising sun, and that they avoid trees. The maiden knight therefore decided to look for caves that faced west and dwelt amongst rock and grass. This saddened her a little, for her father’s court was surrounded by towering trees. She felt now that she was being deprived of both the loveliness that had dwelt around her and the conviction that had dwelt within her. Eolande had left behind her home and her surety.

So she wept, just a little, as she went on. Then she reached a flat grassland, and clouds covered the sun and rain fell. The drops made noises like bells against her armour.

“Good knight, do halt a moment!” called a voice.

Eolande looked around and saw a girl clad all in white coming towards her. Although this girl looked to be more or less a human at first glance, Eolande knew at once that this was a fairy, because of the green in her eyes, and because not a hair on her was wet, despite the rain, and because her feet did not quite touch the ground as she walked.

“Good day,” Eolande said. “Why do one of the faye wish to speak to me?”

“Because I see that you are sorely distressed,” said the white fairy, “and I want to help

you."

"I know that your kind is very wise," Eolande said. "If you needs must know, I am distressed because I am on a quest for truth, and I do not know if I will ever find it. Is there such a thing as truth, wise one?"

"Yes," said the white fairy, with such a surety in her voice that Eolande felt it like a sword stroke. "Yes, there is such a thing as truth. But we cannot find it all on our own. It is given us."

"And who gives that truth to us?" Eolande asked desperately.

Then came into the white fairy's face a sadness terrible to behold.

"I do not know," she said. "I know there is truth, because there is beauty. When I see the beauty of the stars, and of running water, and of speaking flame, and of the wind that flits through the mountains and up into the sky, never to be seen again — when I see these things, I know that a world so beautiful must also be truthful. But to us fairies, beauty only is given. Not truth. And I do not know who the Giver is."

"Can I be given truth? Can I know who the giver of truth is?" Eolande cried.

"Yes," said the fairy. "Because you are human. Only men can both search and find. We fairies, we only search. And the Giver, whoever he is, only finds. Blessed be the race of man!"

Eolande bowed her head. When she raised it again, the fairy was gone. Only a whisper of "Good hunting, Eolande!" rang in her ears. Eolande laughed, for now she knew that the fairy had known the whole time that she was no knight, but only a small maiden.

Now Eolande journeyed onward through the fields. Evening was falling, turning the white daylight sky into red. Crimson light fell in a beam across the fields towards Eolande, and a cool, sweet wind struck up a tune.

As night fell, Eolande saw a cave. It was very large and faced west, and its gaping maw was filled with rock like broken teeth. Eolande approached the mouth of the cave. She swung from her house, and stood in her armour there, and in one pale hand she grasped Way Finder.

"Come out, dragon!" Eolande cried. "I am here!"

And the dragon came. It was all of red, and more monstrous than ever Eolande had imagined, with flaming eyes, and claws like spears, and a mouth large enough to swallow the whole world.

"Have you come to die, knight?" the red dragon said, and laughed.

"I am not a knight," Eolande said, and took off her helmet, and her heavy golden hair rushed down. "I am the maiden Eolande who comes in search of truth."

She cast her helmet upon the ground.

"I have not concealed who I am," she said. "Now tell me, in the name of that for which I search, who are you?"

The dragon laughed, its mouth stretched wide. "You seek for the truth, little maiden? Well, I will tell you what I am. I am the Lie. I am Untruth."

"So you admit there is a truth?" Eolande said.

"Of course there is, fool," said the red dragon. "If there was no truth, how could you feel a longing for it? If there was no truth, how could there be a lie? But naturally, you cannot trust what I say. Every word I speak is a lie, you know, silly maiden. But I am bored now. Have you ever fought a dragon before, maiden?"

"I have fought lies," she said, and clutched her spear. "Is there a difference?"

"My teeth," the red dragon snarled, "and my claws, and my scales, and the pain you will feel as you die."

"Kill me then if you can," Eolande cried, and leapt forward with her spear and tried to stab him.

But the dragon only swatted Way Finder out of the way and advanced upon Eolande.

Billowing smoke came from his nostrils and filled the air as he approached, his eyes red glowing.

"I am the Lie and the Untruth and the Death. Yield to me or perish."

"No," Eolande cried, pressing her head back against the stone and straining her eyes against the smoke.

The red dragon opened its mouth and brought its teeth down. Eolande cried out as she felt the dragon's great teeth stab her arm, and she fell to the ground, and saw the blood stream from where her armour had been rent.

"Help," she screamed.

The dragon had retreated, so as to better watch her die. His eyes were so red.

"The Lie has just killed you," he said. "What do you think of that?"

"I shall have died knowing the truth," Eolande said, and wept.

At that moment a golden figure came into the cave, so bright that Eolande had to squint to see him.

"You!" the dragon said, turning towards the figure. "You thought you could save this girl? You come too late! I have killed her!"

The dragon opened its mouth wide to laugh, and the figure drew forth his shining golden sword and stabbed it through the roof of its mouth. The red dragon shrieked and thrashed, and the gold-clad figure ran to save Eolande from the writhing wings and tail.

The golden figure lifted Eolande in his arms and carried her from the cave. She blinked up at him. She wanted to see his face clearly before she died.

Once out of the cave, the golden figure set her on the ground. He removed all her armour and touched her arm and at once the pain was gone, and she smiled.

"Who. . . who are you?" Eolande murmured, drowsy with fatigue.

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," said the figure. "Follow me and live."

He kissed her brow.

But when Eolande awoke, he was gone. She lay in a lovely garden, huddled against a tree, and she was not wearing her armour anymore, but a simple golden gown.

At once she went and fetched Way Finder, and returned to her father's court, singing all the way. All who lived at her father's court were overjoyed to see her, and moreover, surprised to see her so much more gentle and modest than she had been before she left. The young lord who had leant her his spear was the most astonished of all.

"You have only been away for three days, Lady," said the young lord. "Are you certain that you have indeed found what you were looking for?"

"Yes," said Eolande. "I have found it."

And she returned his spear to him.

"You may keep the spear, Lady," said the lord in answer, "if you will be my bride. Do you consent?"

Eolande was very pleased, both with the lord and with his spear. And so they were wed when the winter was past and gone, and the flowers were blooming. Eolande wore lilies in her hair, and a glistening white dress, and in one hand she held Way Finder.

And there was never another dragon seen in that kingdom again.

Fiona Altschuler
Age 16
Maryland
Latin 3, Greek 1