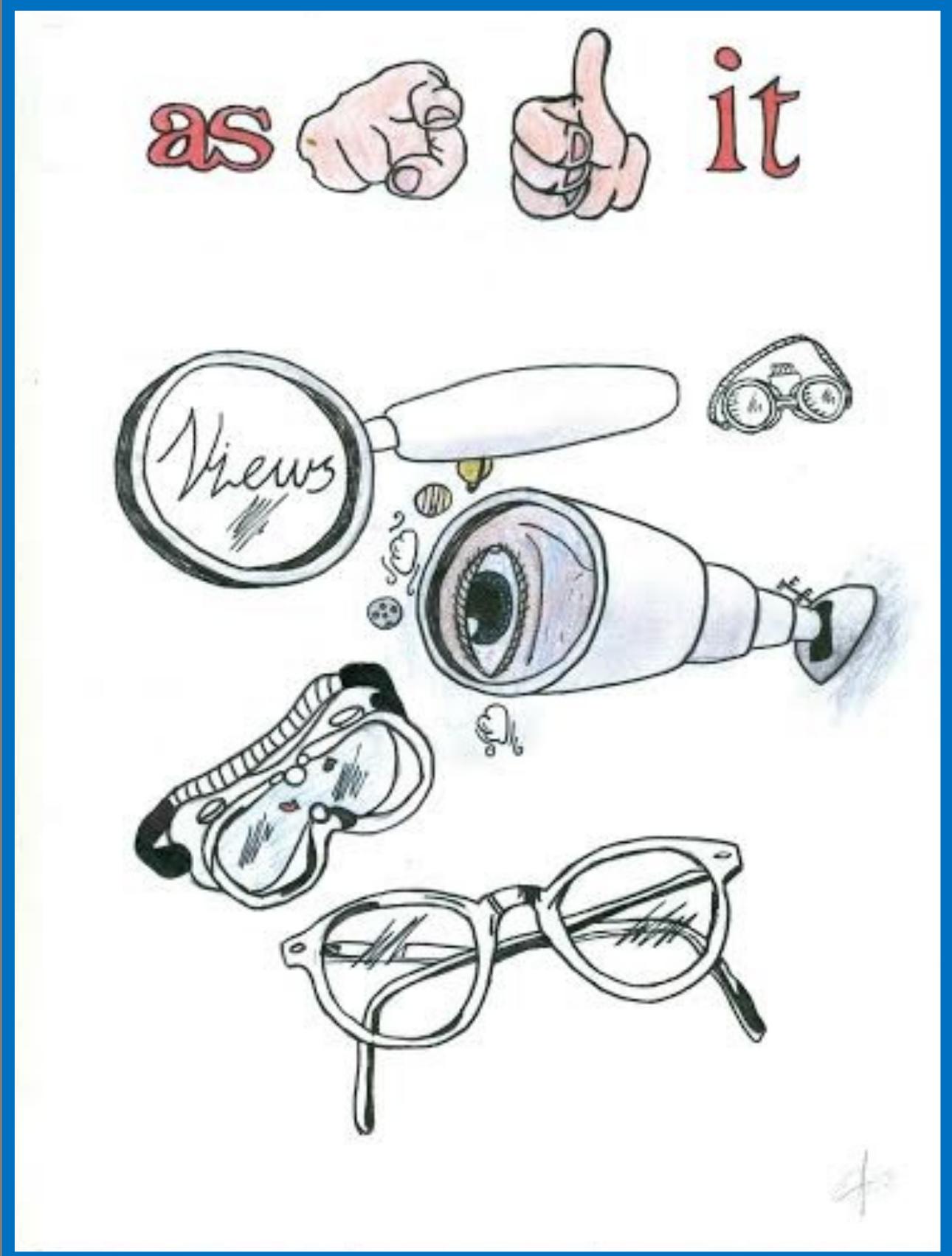




HELLENIC AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION  
ATHENS COLLEGE—PSYCHICO COLLEGE  
ATHENS COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL



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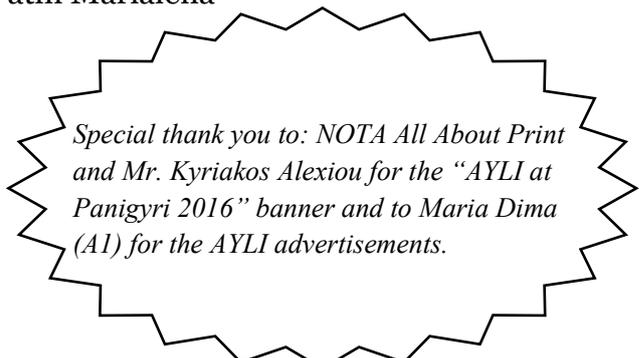
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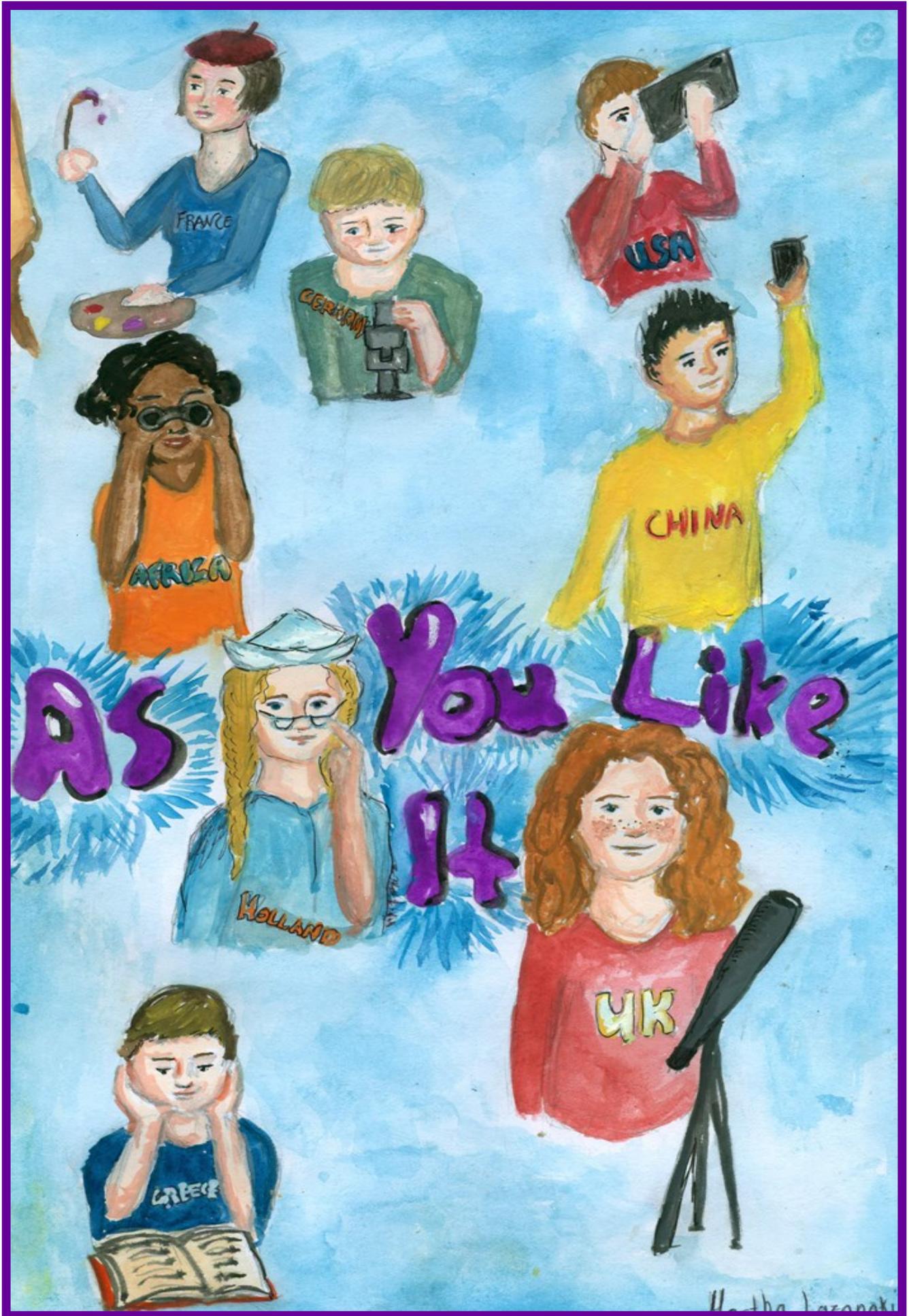


Illustration by Martha Lazanaki

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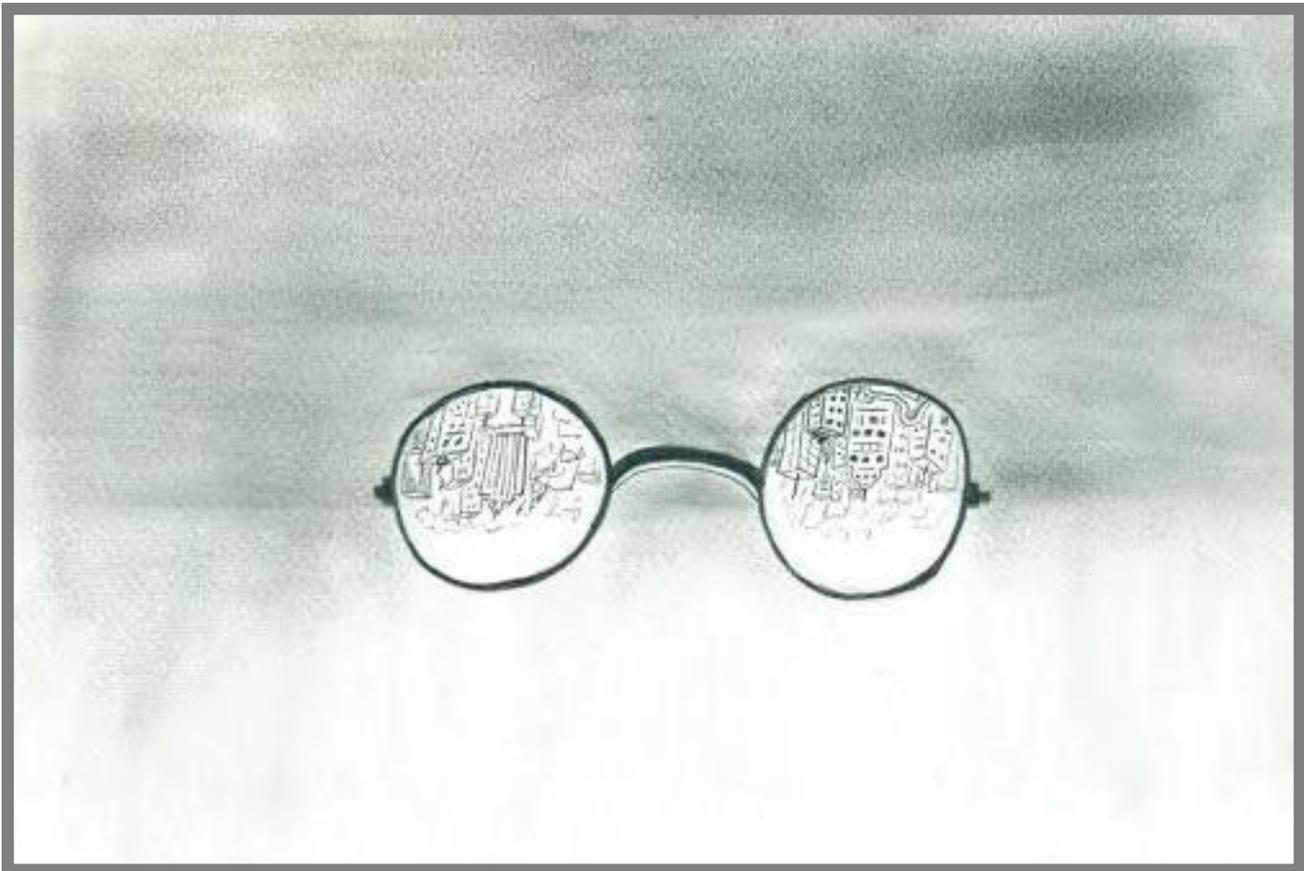
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*Illustration by Maria Dima*

***Please note that the ideas expressed in this student publication are those of the students themselves and do not reflect the opinions or beliefs of HAEF or the educators of the institution.***





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## **PART I - FICTION**

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# **SHORT STORIES**

**“Short stories are journeys you can make to the far side of the universe and still be back in time for dinner.”**

**-Neil Gaiman**

# A WRONGFUL INITIAL VIEW

By Aggeliki Liaska

It had been a long day, and David had just finished his meal at a Chinese restaurant. When the waiter brought him the bill, he offered David a fortune cookie and hurriedly left it on his table. David left the money next to the receipt then took the cookie, opened it, and read, “Your life is in danger. Say nothing to no one. Someone is after you. You must leave the city immediately and never return.”



He placed the note on the table and stared carefully around the room. Nothing seemed suspicious. Everyone was eating their food and having a good time with their company. David smiled. He did not take seriously what the fortune cookie said. He left and headed straight to his home.

While he was walking up the stairs, he turned his head and stepped on the front porch. It

felt so good to be home. He turned the key, shouldered the door open, and stumbled over the threshold. It had been such a tiring day, so he went straight to his bedroom and laid on his bed. After a minute or two he fell asleep.

Two hours later, David woke up because someone was knocking on the glass. At first he thought it was the wind until he heard it coming from downstairs again. He checked his phone to find out the time, only to discover that there was a picture of him sleeping on the mobile screen. David lives alone. He tried hard to remember taking this picture, but he couldn't.

He jumped out of bed and looked out the window. It was dark, and every house in the neighborhood had its lights off. The gate was open, but he remembered closing it when entering his house.

“David?” He heard a voice coming from downstairs. It must be Sara, his sister. She always comes and leaves him food for the next day.

“Sara is this you? Where are you?” David shouted while he walked down the stairs.

“Yes David, I am in the basement doing the laundry,” she answered.

David froze with his feet standing on the last step. Sara never went to the basement to help

David do the laundry, at least not since... Not since his washing machine had broken down last week.

“Sara? Are you okay?” David shouted.

“Yeah,” she responded quickly and sounded unusually defensive.

David walked besides the door. The first thing that came to his mind was the fortune cookie. “Someone is after you,” it said.

“Can you help me please?” her voice sounded clipped again.

The fortune cookie came to his mind again. Something seemed wrong. Was it Sara, or was it the person that note was talking about?

David went downstairs to the basement. He turned the knob and opened the door.

He didn’t have enough time to see exactly who it was, but it wasn’t Sara. It absolutely was not Sara...

He checked his  
phone to find  
out the time,  
only to discover  
that there was a  
picture of him  
sleeping on the  
mobile screen.  
David lives  
alone.



### Reference:

*Fortune cookie for windows 8 1.0.* Digital Image. Brothersoft. Brothersoft, 2013. Web. 19 Dec 2015. <<http://www.brothersoft.com/fortune-cookie-for-windows-8-507817.html>>.

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# THE BULLY AND THE VICTIM

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BY GEORGE ALEXIOU

**I**t is a Sunday evening in New York. Mark Lowe's room appears to be a complete mess. School supplies are all over the place and new clothes are scattered left, right, and center. It is the last day of summer, and Mark is preparing for the big day. Mark is really excited about returning to school although he isn't the best student. His family is rich, has a very good educational background,

Dan is John's best  
and only friend.

and works day and night to provide Mark with everything he has today, something that Mark doesn't seem to take into consideration to become a better student. Finally, he manages to clean his room and organise everything.

"I am ready for school," he shouts.

"Ok honey, now you can do anything you want. Enjoy the remainder of the summer while you still have it," answers his mother with excitement.

Mark isn't the only person getting ready for school. Jonathan Palmer, who is Mark's classmate, is getting everything ready too. John, as he likes to be called, doesn't seem to be

looking forward to the upcoming day though strangely enough he is one of the school's best students. John's dad died when he was six, and now John has the majority of the household responsibilities. His mom is very weak, having been through a series of illnesses, some of which were found terminal. When he finishes organising the supplies that he had already been using for almost three years time, he grabs his backpack, kisses his mom goodbye, and leaves. Most of us would wonder where an 8th grader is going with a backpack in the evening.

**John isn't an ordinary teenager.**

He has to earn money to support his mother and younger sister since he is the only man in the family.

He now enters a café, greets everyone, and strangely enough, starts his shift. While working, he notices that some people from school pass by. He instantly tries to hide, but one of them spots him right away. It is Mark. Mark had left the house to meet his friends when he finished organizing his newly purchased supplies. He enters the café and sees John in his uniform. He calls everyone in and says:

"Well, well, well... what is a fat kid like you doing here? Working? Eating?" he received no answer.

## The Bully and the Victim

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"How come no one knew this little secret of yours?" Mark says sarcastically. Mark's friends laugh. He gains no response.

"Can't your daddy work, or he is just so bored to take care of his own family?" Mark says with even more sarcasm.

**This is John's sore subject.** No one knows his dad is dead, but making fun of him makes him very angry, and, at the same time, sad too, since he is now reminded of all the memories he has of his dad. Although he tries to control his emotions, he just wants to either start running or punch Mark in the face. He knows that working there was the correct thing to do to show his mother he could handle the tough situation he lives in. Although he is dominated by all those thoughts, he never moves from his hiding spot. A very muscular boy enters the café. It's Dan Holland. He notices what is happening at the moment and tries to help John escape this situation.

"There is nothing to see here! Leave now or you will pay the consequences!" Dan says.

"O-ok...," Mark says with fear thinking that he might get punched in the face. Everyone starts running.

Dan is John's best and only friend. He was once a bully and made other people's lives worse and worse every day. After his life had a big turn for the worse, he decided to apologise to anyone who he had bullied and their families, except Mark. Now he tries to help anyone who faces these types of problems. Being very muscular and athletic, Dan is in 10th grade and is feared by everyone in his school. He approaches John.

"John... don't be afraid. Your secret is still a secret, and there is no reason to feel bad about it," he says with sympathy.

"I understand, but I can't live like this... I have to feed a family, do my homework, and cope with this every day. This school year will be harder than the last one now that everyone knows I work here," John said and burst into tears. At this point, the café's owner comes in. He sees John crying and tells him to leave since



**Reference:** *Bullying May Alter Gene Expression, Digital Image. Study Finds -- Sott.net.* *SOTT.net.* N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2016.

## The Bully and the Victim

he has been working way more shifts than he

“I am sorry,” John says, looking at Mark with surprise.

should.

John and Dan go to Dan’s home. Dan also has a secret. His parents abandoned him in a box when he was young, and he had been raised by two elderly people who have now reached their eighties. They enter the house and go to Dan’s room.

“You know what? You are not the only one who has a secret. I have one too,” he tells John.

“What kind of secret?” John answers with surprise.

“My parents abandoned me when I was a baby outside this house,” he says. “These people here took me and raised me like I was a child of their own. They gave me love without even thinking that I wasn’t theirs,” he says.

**John looked at him with surprise but never says a word.**

“I learned about this story last year, and I have been desperately searching to find my real parents although there was no real need to do so,” Dan said. “After a lot of searching, I found who my parents are and understood why they left me. My mom worked as a call girl. I understand why they left me. I would do the same thing,” Mark says.

“I am sorry,” John says looking at Mark with surprise.

It is getting late. The orange sky is now turning darker and darker. John says goodbye and goes home so as he can get more sleep.

The morning sun rises, and the schools open. Everyone goes to school. John arrives ten minutes early; Dan, exactly when the bell rings; and Mark, ten minutes late. The lesson starts,

and the first three hours finish. When the kids go out for a break, and Dan sees that Mark and John are talking. Thinking that there might be something suspicious, he went closer. When Mark sees Dan, he grabs John’s food and vanishes into the hallway. John is very sad about what has just happened, while Mark is really happy.



\*\*\*\*\*

**“Then why do they bully me?” asks John.**

**References:** *Bully Policy*. Digital Image. *The Washington Monthly*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2016.

## The Bully and the Victim

"Am I really that different? Is there anything wrong with me?" asks John and bursts into tears.

"Not really. In my opinion, you are the best person that I have ever met," says Dan.

"Then why do they bully me?" asks John.

"Maybe they are just jealous," says Dan.

"Jealous of what?" asks John.

"Maybe they are jealous of your better grades. But he should never make you feel bad about yourself since you are way better than him," says Dan.

Dan runs down the hallway thinking of his "accomplishment." He doesn't like John at all. He thought that he was a nerd, but the truth is that Dan was right. He is jealous of him being better at everything and that's why he bullies him. Seeing him at the café working the day before made him even more jealous.

The bell rings. Mark approaches his classroom. He sees John but doesn't really know what to tell him after everything that had happened today.

"I am sorry. I know that I have been making your life worse daily," says Mark.

"Everything is fine, Dan. I just want to know what I did wrong. Why were you bullying me?" says John.

"Everything you do makes me jealous. Having good grades, working part-time in a café while studying, taking care of your sick mother," Mark says.

John explains why he had been doing all of this. He tells him about his father and what problems his family is facing at the moment. Mark sympathises with everything John says, and they become very good friends. In the end, Dan and Mark apologise to each other.

And this is how three different people from three different backgrounds, with different views about the world became **best friends** and were never to split again.



*Illustration by Martha Lazanaki*

# The Girl Who Crossed the Border

By Martha Lazanaki



#### References:

Freedom House. *Syrian Refugees*. Digital Image. Flickr. N.p. 9 September 2015.  
Web. <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/syriafreedom/21076375160/>>.

I am tired. I am tired of having the rain drench my clothes until I am cold to the bone. I am tired of feeling the scorching sun burn my skin. I am tired of feeling my feet ache with the pain of walking for miles. I am tired of hearing my stomach moan. I am tired of shedding tears. *I am tired of being a Syrian refugee.*

I grew up in a small village in Syria. I was happy there, with my mother, father, and younger sister, Amira. I played in the dusty streets with my friend Sabeen. We ran around wild and pretended to be chased. Back then, it was simply a game; running away was fun; hiding was fun; being caught was fun. Never had I thought that adults, too, liked to play this game, only it was in a completely different way.

It was a warm spring day, and the sun was just dipping below the high hills behind the concrete buildings. I sat for a moment staring at the golden disk, the ball of fire, slowly vanishing and giving itself over to darkness. I was about to stand up and make my way to my room when a startling, monstrous sound shook the ground. All of a sudden there was absolute chaos. People screaming, children wailing, men shouting.

"Get in here!" my mother ordered, pulling me by my arm and shoving me into the house, away from the troublesome streets. I hid under the table with my sister Amira, awaiting the next blow. She looked at me with a horrified expression. She was only six, and her fragile world was being torn apart. "It is going to be alright." I told her, with a wavering tone that would suggest otherwise. She then looked at the shaking floor and tightly shut her eyes.

Everything after that was a blur, and, before I had even realized it, the sun was showing its bright face again, shedding light onto the destruction of the previous night. The streets were filled with the injured, many homes destroyed, while smoke still rose up to the sky dimming the bright light of the sun.

"We are leaving," said my father, indignantly, "There is nothing here for us anymore." This was a statement whose weight had still not dawned on me.

"What do you mean father?" I asked, failing to accept those words.

"I mean what I said," he bellowed.

Mother had  
packed as  
many things  
as she could  
and had  
stopped cry-  
ing though  
her eyes  
were still  
red and  
swollen.

"We cannot live the way the Islamic extremist attacks always hanging over our heads!" He looked to the ceiling and pressed his hand to his mouth in deep thought.

He then looked at me with his piercingly black eyes. "Next thing you know, they will be taking you and Amira away from me. I will not let that happen," he said, fear creeping into his usual steady and confident voice.

Leaving wasn't a suggestion, it seems, but an order.

"But, Firas, we *cannot* leave," said my mother matter-of-factly. "Our entire lives are here."

"You say that, but if we stay here any longer, we will have no life," he said frustrated. "Don't you understand? They will take everything from us."

Mother turned her gaze away from father and looked away, wiping a silent tear from her cheek. She too understood the dangers of staying put, but leaving... That was a thought so terrifying that she could not help but wonder what would become of her poor family.

But father had decided, and mother had bowed her head. We were going away. Far away. To a "better world" as father said, to a "fairer world," to a "world of peace and opportunity."

**W**e were on our way. Mother had packed as many things as she could and had stopped crying, though her eyes were still red and swollen. Father had convinced little Amira that the journey would be a fun adventure, an exciting trip to a new home, and of course, she believed his every word. I, on the other hand, was not as convinced. I saw the situation as did my mother. We were leaving our lives behind, our home and friends. Everything that was ours, everything we held dear was all but lost. But I played along with father's game, for Amira's sake, that is.

But as the days passed and our shoes got worn with walking, and the days we barely ate a thing became more frequent, I found it harder and harder to play along. I was absolutely worn down, and my whole body ached with exhaustion. My throat was sore from the dust and smoke I was inhaling, while my head spun and often my vision blurred sometimes for whole minutes.

After half a month on the road, we joined another group of refugees boarding a train to Turkey.

It was crowded to the point of suffocation. Hundreds upon hundreds awaited the train to Turkey, among them men, women, and children, all of whose faces showed an immense amount of worry

## It was crowded to the point of SUFFOCATION.

and exhaustion.

My family was in the same boat. We did not talk much and scarcely were we able to comfort one another. Small Amira had stopped smiling, and what used to be a bright, happy face, was now shadowed with an expression of hopelessness and pain. Mother did all she could to help us, but even she, despite having the strength of a devoted mother, had no more to give. And father... He had lost his proud and brave exterior, and his heart was clenched with the pain of having his family go through such suffering. And as if it were not enough that nature was tormenting us with utmost might, the fear of being caught by ISIS grew ever stronger.

We boarded the train though father had to gather all the money he could get to afford the journey. The trip lasted for what must have been five days. When we finally reached Turkey's border, we were faced with another dilemma.

**L**egally, we could not cross the borders; the police would not allow it, but there were smugglers. Smugglers paid with an astronomical amount of money would help us get to the country, to its coast that bordered with Greece. We did not have much money, never were we rich, but father did all in his power to ensure our journey across Turkey. The smuggler, a cold, uncaring man by the name of Kagan, transported us to the Turkish coast. But he was no philanthropist. He did not care for our safety, nor if we got water or food.

In those days that seemed endless, we

## The Girl Who Crossed the Border

starved, and thirst was an all too familiar problem. Joined by other refugees, squeezed into the small truck, we were exposed to many sicknesses. Amira, being the weakest, suffered the most. She was repeatedly sick, and with no medicine to treat her, her condition was getting worse.

One cold day, while we were moving in the dodgy truck, going down a road full of holes, Amira, who had her head on mother's lap, opened her eyes briefly to look at me. "Do you see the sea, Haya? Are we there yet?" she asked, finding hope in the idea that the journey through Turkey was almost over.

"Not yet, but we are close," I said. "I can tell because I can smell it; in fact, I can even hear it." I said, trying to stir her imagination. "Can you smell the sea Amira?" She inhaled the cold air, eager to smell the sea, that truly was not there, "I can't," she said, disappointed. "But you can you hear it, can't you?" I said. "The breathing of the sea, in and out, in and out." She listened intently, closing her eyes, "Ah, yes, I can hear it," she said, pleased. "In and out, in and out," she whispered and then fell deeply asleep. She seemed to love the sea, goodness knows why...

The sea that we met at the coast was not the object of dreams but of dreadful nightmares. It roared and twisted and pulled and crashed against the harbour walls.

I woke up startled and  
screaming. "Amira!" I  
shouted, "Amira!"

"You can only take a dingy, sir," said Kagan to my father just before leaving us, and the other refugees stranded and helpless at the harbour. A dingy: That was our only option across the enraged beast that was the Aegean sea. Mother sobbed, and father looked out to sea, terrified. It was truly a case of life or death, only it was no longer clear, which path led where.

When the outraged beast stopped fighting, we stepped into the fragile rubber boat, along with ten more refugees, far more than the boat could



My family  
was safe and  
alive.

## The Girl Who Passed the Border

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hold. I looked down at the grey water, still cold from winter. I did not know how to swim, and neither did anyone else. A fall into those waters would be a quick route to heaven.

But there was no turning back; there was only forward, wherever that took us. During the treacherous journey, the boat moved back and forth, swinging us from side to side. I could have sworn I almost fell in a thousand times, and each and every time, I thought I had finally come face to face with death. I was wet and cold, and I never understood why or how I held on and didn't just loosen my grip on the boat and on life.

I could finally see an island, far in the distance, a safe haven, father's "better world." It was so close, and I would have swum if only I could have.

"Help!" I shouted, and my sore voice cracked. "Help!" I wailed again. "He-" I began to say, when everything suddenly went black around me, my last sight Amira...in the water.

A tall lady came to my side. "Haya, everything is going to be alright," she said calmly. "My sister, my family!" I demanded.

"They are all fine," she said. "They made it. *You* made it." Those words were more comforting than any other. My family was safe and alive. I was now on the other side and had smiled in the face of death.



**Reference:**

Karim El Mufti. *Syrian Refugees*. Digital Image. *Civil Society Knowledge Center, Lebanon Support*, 10 January 2014. Web. <<http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/official-response-syrian-refugee-crisis-lebanon-disastrous-policy-no-policy>>.

I was  
now on  
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# Boys and Girls: Different Personalities, Conflicting Views

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By Velissarios Christodoulou

**I** CAN'T STAND BOYS; they just stick to stereotypes and prevailing perceptions; they believe they are superior, and they look down on us. They think we are not strong enough but are in need of protection. They can easily get carried away by their overconfidence and their will to show off and get themselves and others into trouble. Full of arrogance, they would never admit they made a mistake, and they consider accepting the advice or the help of a girl an "intolerable defeat." As their masculine stereotype dictates, they will always have to be in control and in the lead. I will never forget my experience this summer at a trekking camp in the mountains.

It was a warm, sunny morning. A group of ten kids from the camp, five boys and five girls, set off on an orientation exercise in the nearby forest. We were all equipped with maps and compasses, and I was really excited. I was not going to let this "macho" and "I know everything" boy called David spoil this adventure for

me. When our guide told us that we would split in pairs and called my name along with David's, I felt like I was hit by an electric current. David walked towards me and, with a demeaning look, he told me: "Don't worry. You can count on me. We will be the best team."

"OK," I mumbled, and we set off.



One should not allow stereotypes and misperceptions to blur his or her view of another person

**I**t goes without saying that David was always in the front, leading the way. We had to follow a specific path on the map and with the help of the compass get back to the starting point within an hour. He was going too fast.

“Can you slow down a bit?” I asked him. “It is difficult for me to keep up with you, and we need to make sure that we are on the right track.”

“OK. I will. You do not need to worry about the path. I know what I am doing. You just try your best to follow,” he replied in an arrogant tone.

There is no special prize for one pair completing the exercise faster, I thought to myself, but there was no point in continuing the discussion.

A few minutes later, he turned to me with his face lit up: “I have an idea. Let’s take a shortcut.”

“Are you sure? We may get lost.” I felt that this was too dangerous, but he was so overwhelmingly confident that he did not leave me much of a choice.

It was almost an hour since we had left, and we still had not reached the check point that we were supposed to reach before heading back. The forest had started to look slightly dangerous. I was overtaken by a feeling of uneasiness. Before long, we realized we were lost. Holding the map, he turned towards me to help him find the way back, but I was so freaked out that the

only thing I did was blame him and his stupid idea. Thankfully they had already started looking for us, and they soon spotted us.”

**I CAN’T STAND GIRLS**; they get so easily offended, are super sensitive, are not direct, and most of the time, say the opposite of what they mean. They behave in unpredictable ways, tend to overanalyze things, procrastinate, and not act as fast as they



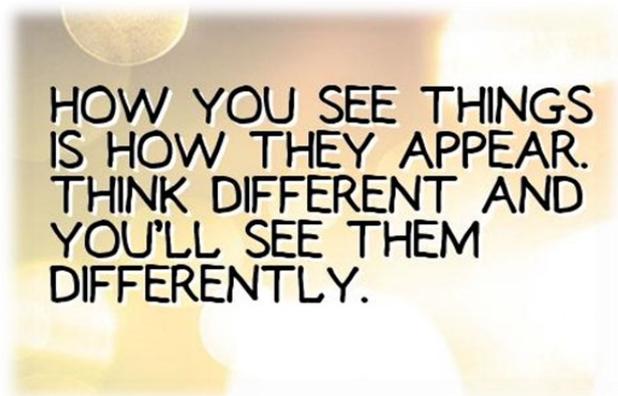
should. They definitely have an issue with time. You can tell by the time they spend getting dressed and taking all these “selfies” which they post one after the other, as if they did not have anything else to do. On top of that, when things get tough, or they find themselves in dangerous situations, they expect us guys to take control and sort it out, whereas they are allowed to criticize as much as they like. I will always remember the experience I had this summer in a trekking camp

## Boys and Girls: Different Personalities, Conflicting Views

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in the mountains.

One morning, we set off on an orientation exercise in the nearby forest, and I was to pair up with a girl called Tiffany. She was standing



opposite me, looking slightly annoyed. I thought that maybe going around in a forest with a map and a compass is not so thrilling for a girl, so I walked up to her and said:

“Hi Tiffany. You do not need to worry at all. You can count on me. We will be the best team.”

She just mumbled something, and we set off. As a true gentleman, I decided to lead the way, so as to make sure that there is no dangerous obstacle ahead of us. At some point, Tiffany stopped and asked me,

“Can you slow down a bit? It is difficult for me to keep up with you, and we need to make sure that we are on the right track.”

“OK. I will. You do not need to worry about the path. I know what I am doing. You just try your best to follow.” I answered.

I realized that she was tired. She just would not admit it and say so explicitly. In order to make it easier for her, I thought that since we had a map and

a compass, we could take a shortcut through the woods and get to the starting point faster.

“I have an idea,” I said. “Let’s take a shortcut.”

“Are you sure? We may get lost,” she replied with a worried look but also with a subtle indication of hope that a shortcut could provide an easy way out of a tiring and boring activity. There was an element of risk, but I had to make a decision. She did not object in the end. Time was going by, and it seemed that we could not get back on track. Tiffany freaked out. Not only could she not be of any help to me with finding the directions on the map, but the only thing she did was criticize and blame me. I had no doubt that I would manage to find the way back. At any rate, they had already started looking for us and spotted us quite soon.”

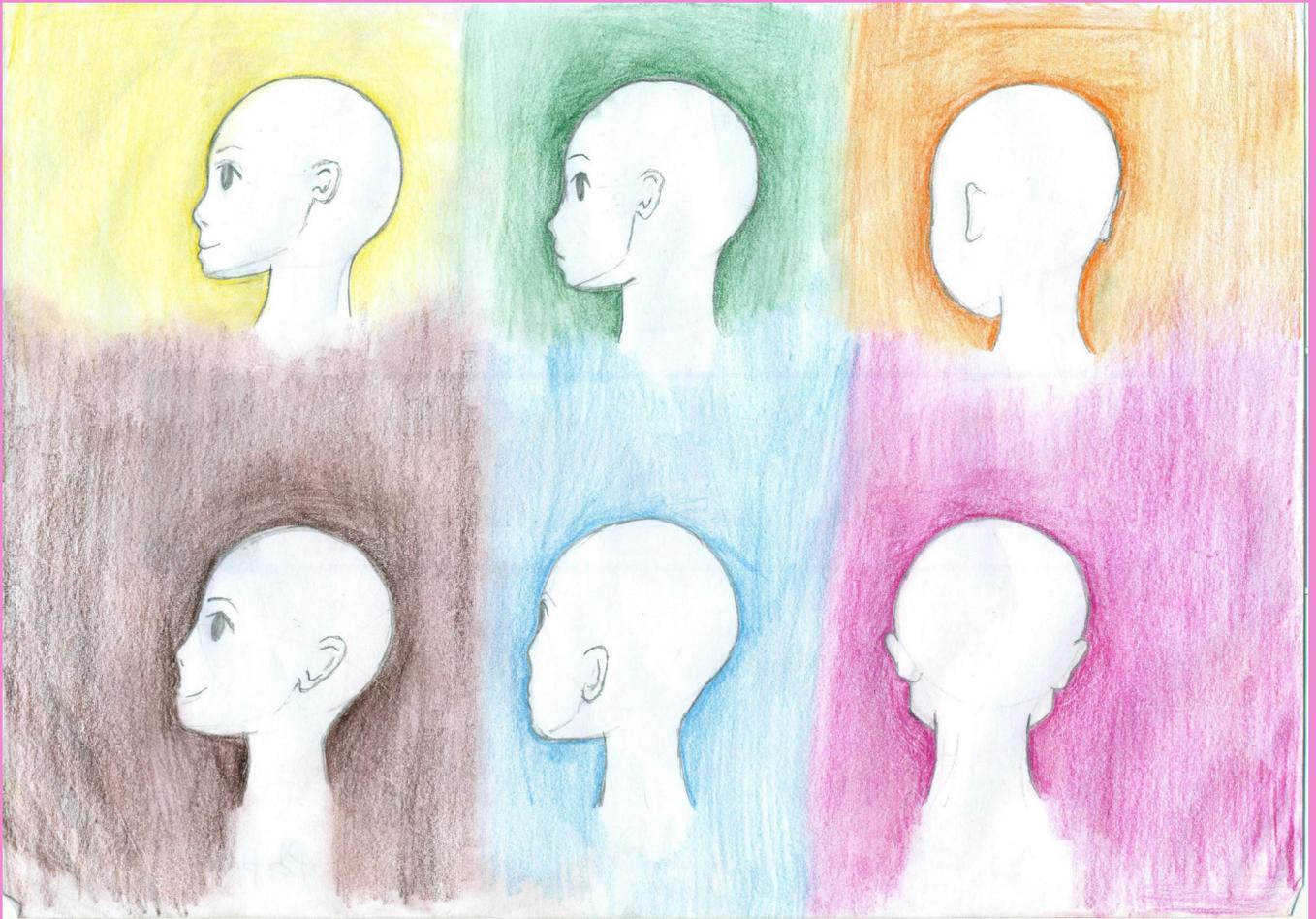
**B**oys and girls think and act differently.

Accepting this difference is a first step towards understanding and respecting each other. One should not allow stereotypes and misperceptions to blur his or her view of another person or negatively influence his or her way of interacting with others. Having different views and ways of expressing oneself is what makes interaction intriguing. Communicating, sharing views, and supporting each other make friendships and relationships precious and fulfilling.

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*Illustration by Stella Pappi*

A man lay in a room, isolated from the outer world. The room itself was lit by a small crack in the wall through which sunlight could barely pass. The overwhelming darkness of the room only made the atmosphere meager and monotonous. The room was empty and was it made out of stone. It was cold and dull.

The man was sleeping but awoke abruptly. His pale skin, cold hands, and weak posture revealed a feeble character. His eyes, like the ones of an innocent but frightened child, stared into the abyss of darkness that surrounded him. He stood up and went towards the lit part of the room. He feared proceeding further since his vision was obscured by darkness. The light revealed

overwhelmed the room once more.

“I know that you are there. Please, reply to my question. I am begging you!” said the man. “I don’t know who I am, I don’t know where I am, and I have no recollection of anything.”

The voice replied, “As I said before I am here to help you, but I am not allowed to answer all questions. I am only here to answer one.”

The man instantly interrupted, “What is this question?” The figure answered with silence.

“I am sorry,” said the man. “You must understand, please.”

“I will not answer this question. I will instead guide you until you ask the right one,” replied the figure.

“Thank you,” said the man and patiently

# The Answer

By Alexandros Mavroidis

to him that he was wearing rags and had no other protection from the cold. He glared through the crack but could only see the blinding sun and a clear blue sky. He was distracted by this scene and stood there for a while.

A squeaking sound as if a door was opening and the sound of footsteps caught the man’s attention. He turned around but could see nothing. A sound of heavy breathing was approaching. The man continued to stand paralyzed in utter terror. He did not know what was happening. He screamed and crouched down, rocking back and forth. Suddenly, he heard a voice. The voice was calm, confident but also gentle.

“You do not need to fear. I am not here to harm you; in fact, I am here to help you.”

The man reluctantly calmed down and sat on the floor. In a troubled manner, he asked, “Where am I?”

The only response he received was silence. The man asked the same question, but silence

listened to the figure.

“I comprehend that you do not know anything. That is the reason I am here in the first place. Your ignorance of the world has left you blind in this hollow room. The glinting light is the only thing that is keeping you from becoming ‘nothing.’ It is the only connection you have with the world.” The figure paused for a moment and continued.

“You are someone who possesses tremendous power yet is limited by mortal disabilities. You do not have any impressive characteristics, but the one you do have always amazes. Unlike others, you are an architect of creativity and a pioneer of thought. You have created marvels and wonders. Your curiosity has led you to new discoveries and ideas. This capability has enriched your understanding of the world. The only irony in this is that you are oblivious to the world around you.” The figure

chuckled.

“Greed, jealousy, gluttony, and much more are all outcomes of your actions! You are easily corrupted by power, and your competitive nature has turned you into a monster, a monster that has the capability to kill your own kind, to destroy your own wonders, and to annihilate your own world! You have become the monster that you have feared all this time. You are ...”. The figure was suddenly disrupted by the poor man.

“Stop! Please stop! I have heard enough,” the man said breaking into tears. “If the things you say are true, then what am I?”

Silence arose once more.

“Answer me!” The man yelled with rage “What am I?”

The figure stepped into the light. The man was speechless as he saw a tall shadow coming close to him. The only thing he could distinguish from the shadow was a grin.

“What am I?” asked the man one last time.

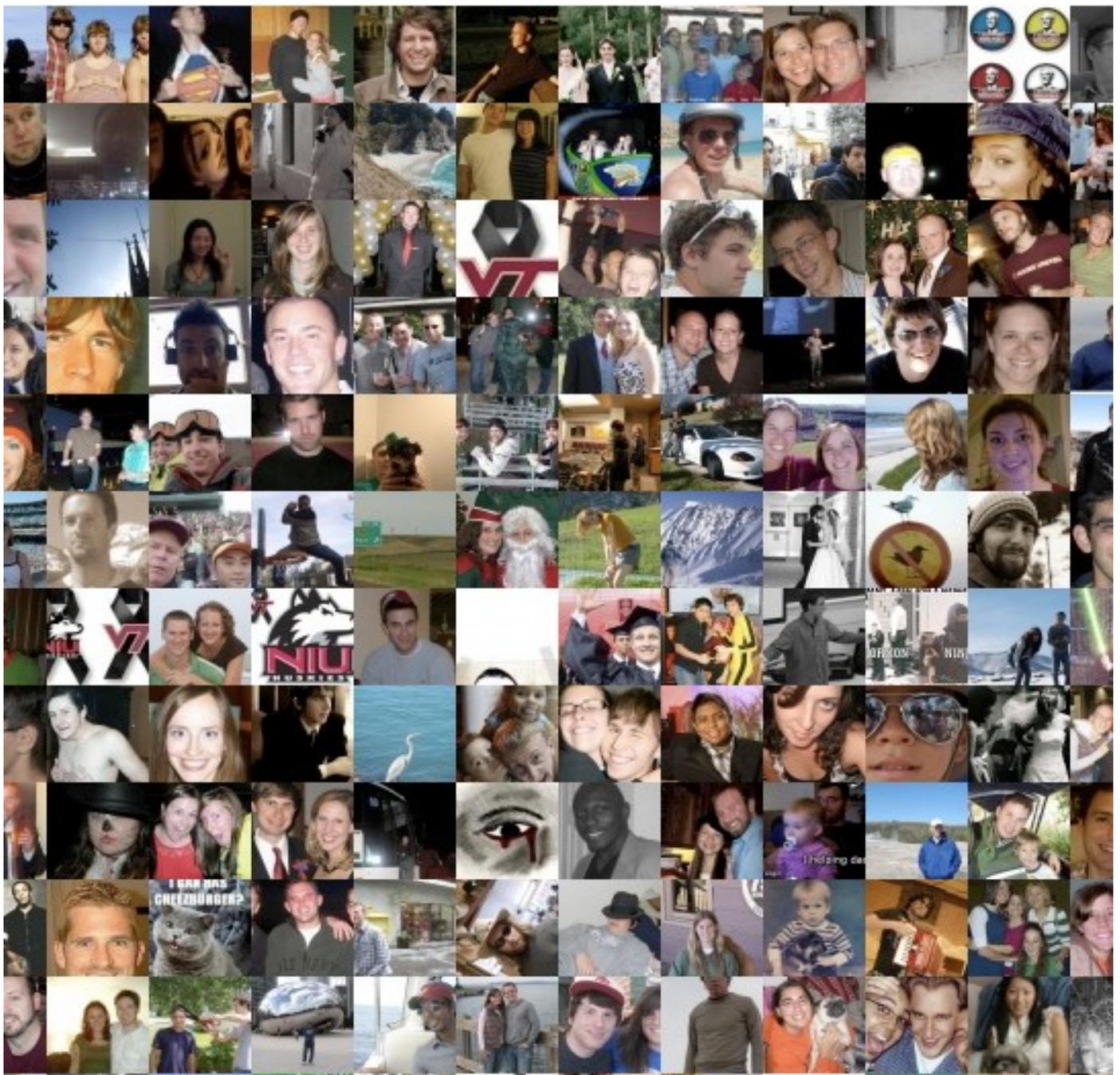
The figure quietly replied, “You are just a man.”



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“You are someone who possesses tremendous power yet limited by mortal disabilities. You do not have any impressive characteristics, but the one you do have always amazes.”



**H**ow many stories have you read and how many movies have you seen about successful, rich doctors, lawyers and businessmen? Well, I would recommend your lowering your expectations for this story. **I'm just a regular bus driver.** My job is not anything exciting, I'm middle aged (I like to consider a man in his fifties to still be "middle aged" for obvious reasons), with two wonderful children who I unfortunately barely see and a beautiful wife who is the best and only company I have in my everyday life. Even if all of the above seem a bit too depressing, I'm not particularly upset or sad about my life. I love my job and my

wife and, of course, my kids. "For what reason would a bus driver love his job?" I hear you asking.

It's not the driving part of it, that's for sure... What I particularly enjoy about it is coming across so many different people every single day. Although I mostly drive past the same bus stations and the same places, I always see new faces, each with a completely variant story drawn all over his or her face. In my thirty years of experience, I have noticed three categories that I put most people into. First of all, some family men and women who are extremely happy with the people they spend their lives with; these people give me tips every time and smile at me. On the other hand, it's not rare

# ONE MAN

## HUNDREDS OF FACES

By Stavros Kapsis

when I come across really depressed fathers and mothers who are miserable about their surroundings and probably unhappy and tired of their everyday lives. I'm always curious about what the exact story is behind both types of parents mentioned above as creating and being part of a family is no easy task, and some people can deal with it just fine while others obviously cannot cope with it very well.

The second most frequent category, the teenagers, are one of the most intriguing categories of people I encounter. Some of them are very kind and show good manners. They usually carry books, portfolios, or other school assignments.

What I particularly enjoy about it is coming across so many different people every single day.

Unfortunately, the majority of these kids are rather aggressive, impolite, or simply angry. They constantly have their eyes on a screen, and, if you "dare" to talk to them at all, they get awfully rude. Personally, I find teenagers (both types) to be very interesting. As far as the friendly, diligent ones are concerned, I always wondered if they are studying so much by choice or if there is a parent behind them who forces them to do so without letting them do what they want to. The other type, the ignorant and obscene kids, intrigue me even more and make me think about what their stories can be. Were they not given enough attention by either their mother or father (or both) and have now developed aggressive behaviour? Do they not have friends at

school so they express their sadness with anger? Have these devices, video games, and computers made them into belligerent human beings? Or, finally, has society and its cruel nature taken its toll on them; for example, have they been victims of bullying, racist comments, or prejudice?

Last but not least, there are businessmen and women. I find them to be the best example of how work can take over a person's life. They use their phones more than the teenagers; they don't even look or smile at you at any point. It is important to understand that they're neither impolite nor offensive but just don't seem human. They do not communicate with anyone around them because they are too busy screaming at someone on their phone or talking to themselves about duties they have to complete in the near future. In all my years of working behind the wheel, I have never seen that type of person approach or being approached by anybody; for that exact reason, they're completely inapproachable.

In today's society, everyone just walks past people without noticing anything about them. However, I'm thankful that through my rather boring job I have had the opportunity to view so many different people, and, after three decades of doing so, I have become almost like a psychologist. I see the face of a person and can immediately recognize some of his or her characteristics without even talking to him or her. I may be just one man, but I have witnessed hundreds of faces and thousands of stories, while the rest of society is impersonal. Take a second and talk to the person next to you; it will benefit both of you. But then again, who am I to tell you what to do? I'm just a bus driver...right?

# The Place Where Angels Cry

By Loukas Podaropoulos

**H**ello, dear human. If you are reading this, we probably have not met before even though I would fancy becoming one of your intimate acquaintances. Perhaps you are wondering who I am. I believe it is unnecessary for you to know apart from the fact that my presence is an inextricable feature of human nature. But to satisfy your curiosity, I will introduce myself. Indeed, I ought to first say that I have plenty of names. Each civilization of the past has endowed me with the title of the importance they thought suits me most. According to you, though, I am Death. However, you may call me Mr. D. I consider the second characterization more practical, precluding my trait from being a hindrance to our undisturbed understanding. As you may already have predicted, I am to enter your life but once. Then, I learn everything about you. Therefore, I cannot talk to you, touch you, hear you, or even see you before you die. The particular restriction may be harsh and unpleasant for me. In spite of that, no one ever said that I am not to write you a letter. My knowledge is endless, and my experiences are innumerable. Hence, I have decided to share with you the memory of a remarkable happening. It is a real tale about a groom, a bride, a comb, and a coffin.

Once upon a time, there was a funeral. In the local graveyard of the uptown of Southampton, a gravedigger with fair hair marched away after burying the wealthiest member of Burnham family, a thirty-five year old man with black, well-combed hair. The dead man was wearing a suit, a suit of a groom. However, his bride was not there with him. It was 3 o'clock in the morning. Indeed, no

cemetery is ever a pleasant place to be for a person like you, but this particular one seemed to be rather more supernatural that night, and I believe you would have savored the mysterious environment if you had been there. The vines were crawling slowly but steadily up every wall, and the atmosphere was excessively morbid as there was the smell of the decomposition of human bodies. There were no lights but the faint shine of the moon and the red and yellow radiance of a candle's thin flame. *Quietness* predominated. Such quietness that even I was fooled and considered the silent groom dead. A knock sounded while I was heading towards the casket, causing me to stop. Apparently, his time had not yet come, which excited my interest since I did indeed have an appointment with the groom that very night.

The buried man was desperately trying to open the sealed coffin, and, while doing so, he had the chance to remember what had happened to him after he had fainted. He had been preparing to marry the woman of his dreams, and he had been so excited. He had received the suit he had ordered, groomed himself well, and combed his hair with the metal comb his darling had gifted him upon their engagement. He could not recall much apart from that. He still had in mind the look his wife had given him the last time he saw her. She had looked at him, smiled at him, and then said something that seemed very strange to his ears. "This will be the best day of *my* life."

Of course, this would be the best day of their lives. He could not explain the meaning of her words or their odd tone. Now, as any man would

do, he feared the possibility of his beloved being in danger, as he was, and started beating the casket with might and main. He remembered then. His mind drifted back to that strange man at the ceremony. Merriam kept looking at him. He had shaggy, sun-bright hair and was staring at them from the shadows. *Who was he?* The groom wondered. When he asked Merriam who it was, she gave the name of the mysterious guest she had insisted on inviting but had not introduced her husband-to-be to. He could remember nothing more of the events before he fainted. Mr. Burnham's head ached. It was then that he realized he had his metallic comb on him.

Mr. Burnham's life did not deserve to end like that. I very rarely say this about anyone. I watched as he wedged the comb between the boards and managed to break the coffin with this makeshift tool. He dug his way up through the course ground. Of course, he could not make out anything in the dark. It was then that a lantern lit. It was then that he saw his wife staring at him with the same fair-haired man he had seen on his wedding day. They were standing next to each other in the shadows of the church. Merriam was holding the big lantern with a bright candle inside it. The man was holding a small gun. They were waiting for him. Mr. Burnham turned to Merriam.

"Why?" he cried. "I gave you everything! I loved you!"

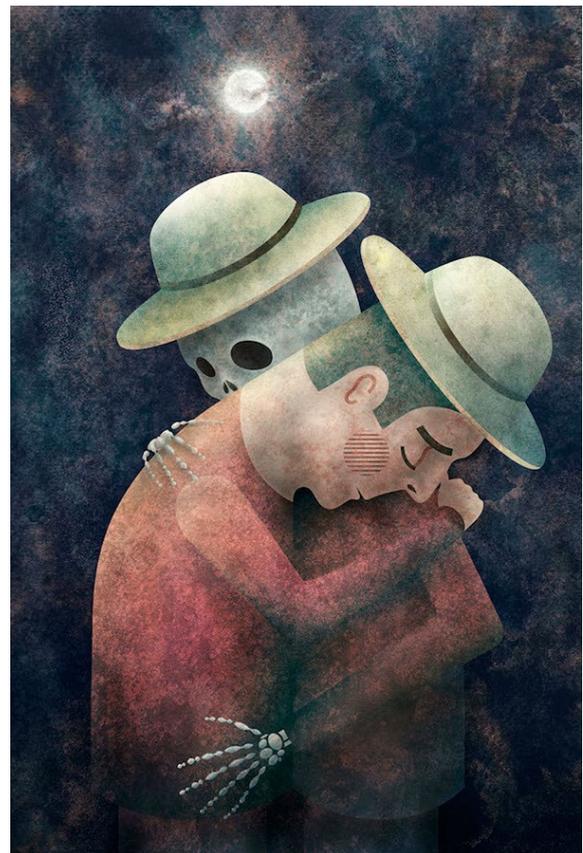
**S**he could not reply. She seemed flustered.

"I believe you deserve to learn the truth." said the young man. "We have been married for many years. But I am a mere gravedigger. I need money to keep the wolf from the door and to pay our bills. Otherwise, we will both go to prison and be separated forever. I am tired of this life. I want us two to live our dreams. We need to be legitimate inheritors of a substantial fortune. *Your* substantial fortune. We had many plans for how to take care of you in the future, but when you fainted at the wedding, you gave us the perfect opportunity to take care of the matter then and there. My brother is the doctor, and he pronounced you dead. I buried you. We hoped you would never wake, but you have. I am sorry I have to do this."

Mr. Burnham remained quiet. The sound of the gun rolled through the cemetery.

"Sorry," Merriam whispered into the night. A glistening tear rolled down her cheek. The fair-haired man sighed. A raven cawed and flew away as I headed to collect my soul. My appointment was not late after all.

Life, indeed, is a pitiful state. People are all afraid of losing their corporeality just because they do not know what may happen to their unsubstantial souls. They destroy each other for no reason and then fall into my hands. Only I know that Mr. Burnham had struggled to earn the fortune he had. Only I know that the gravedigger deceived Merriam shortly afterwards and sent her to me. Only I know he was arrested later on and sentenced to be hanged. I welcomed all of them to a new reality. Harken to my voice. I am waiting for you to join.



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# DREAMS COME TRUE

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By George Prassinos

**W**ords were said, the tension was high, and the atmosphere was heavy. My son slammed his bedroom door in my face. "I don't want to be like you, dad. Times have changed. Stop telling me about how things were when you were young!" I was having *deja vu*. It was such a long time ago, and yet, it seemed like just yesterday.

*Bam! I slammed the door in my dad's face. He just didn't get me. He kept on going on and on about how there was no internet or iPod's or iPhone when he was young. He kept on telling me about how kids would gather under the pylons of the apartment buildings to play ball. He kept on telling me about how he and his friends would gather in the neighborhood square, talk and play instead of chatting on Facebook and Face Timing. He went on and on about school. School, school, school had become a curse word to me because there was never a sentence spoken without the word 'school' in it.*

*He just didn't get me. Times have changed. I have a personal life, too, and school wasn't too high on my priority list. I mean, it was important, but it*



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*Bam!*

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*I slammed the door  
in my dad's face.  
He just didn't get  
me.*

*wasn't the center of my universe. I wasn't a geek! Sure I had dreams. I wanted to go to Oxford then MIT and become a big banking executive one day, rolling in the dough. I was tired of budgets, of wanting but not having, of compromising. But I wanted to do it on my own terms, in my own way. I didn't want anyone dictating to me how I would fulfill my dream.*

*George! George!"I heard my dad call out from the other side of the slammed door. I let him shout. I wasn't in the mood to talk to him now. He just irritated me.*

**N**asty! Nasty!' I cried out to my son.

His name was Anastassios or Tassos for short, named after my dad, but for some odd reason, he refused to be called by either.

### **He reminds me of myself**

"Nasty" had become his name of choice.

I called out again, "Nasty, open the door!" I knew he was going to ignore me. Even though the door was slammed shut, I could picture him on the other side, isolated in his immersion pod, visiting his friend in Spain. Back in my day, it was Face Time: Today, it's real time hologram visiting! Go figure, and I called my dad outdated!

One thing I've learned, however: Times may have changed, technology may have sur-

passed our wildest dreams, but relationships be-

**Times may have changed, technology may have surpassed our wildest dreams, but relationships between fathers and sons will always be predictable.**

tween fathers and sons will always be predictable.

I finally did go to Oxford and MIT and indeed did become that big banking executive I imagined I would be. I'm sure behind those closed doors, in spite of the strangled relationship we have, my son will become the man he envisions himself to be. He reminds me of myself, a believer in dreams, a believer in wanting to forge his own portal into his own future. I just have to believe in him as much as he believes in himself, as much as I believed in myself, as much as my dad Tasso believed in me.

"Hey George," I heard Nasty call out to me just as I was walking away. "Can you bring me up a cupcake?!" I hated it when my son called me by my given name and not 'dad'. It got under my skin. I didn't have to give in to all changes! I walked away from his shut door and 'forgot' about his cupcake. I still had my dignity.



# Literary Ideas Inc.

**By Panos Riskakis**

““ Sure... Sure Mr. Doyle. There is absolutely no reason to worry... Of course, Mr. Doyle... You should extinguish all shadows of doubts. Ha- ha! Being poetic is what I make a living from, sir. OK...OK, yes I can recall you desire mystery and gothic horror.... Yes, I understand.... don't you worry any more; your ideas will be delivered shortly. Good afternoon, Mr. Doyle.”

He put the phone down with such admirable rapidity that he was not sure if he had hung it up properly. In fact, he did not dwell upon it; an idea had just intruded his mind, a beautiful idea that would trigger everyone's awe when read. He took a pen and started writing on yellow paper, witness of the thunderstorm of ideas. Each word filled him with such pleasure, each word made his eyes glimmer eagerly.

“Night came and smothered all that was exposed to light once more. It seemed to bear absolute resemblance to all previous nights, but the gloom pervading the streets and the silent drops of rain which ran black down the broken window made the night colder, bleaker and more mysterious than any other. Sitting lonely and listlessly in his dusty apartment, his mind was bereft of any thoughts or emotions. Numb and weak as he was in his armchair, nothing could drag him out of his misery and pain. A vacant expression was reflected in his eyes as he stared at the dull ceiling, eroded by the humidity. He appeared paler than at any other time, so desperate at the sight of the black abyss, not uttering a single word. The only sound echoing heavily and relentlessly across the room was that of

a stately, wooden pendulum, reminiscent of the days of a forgotten pa..”

“I apologize for my intrusion, sir, but I desperately need an idea to write on.”

“Perhaps you have come to the right place, Mr..?”

“Eh... Arnolds”

“Arnolds it is then”

**H**e was terribly calm to a degree one would think he was passing out. His facial expressions and generally every movement of his body were reminiscent of a placid portrait painted with minute detail. However, on the inside, he was burning with anger. This unforeseen and abrupt interruption had veered his train of thoughts onto a course irreversible, and it was most probable that his ideas for a short story of gothic horror which was to be delivered to Mr. Doyle were bound to end with that horrible word: 'past.' One possible contingency was that he would not be able to resume his flow of ideas upon the subject which initially made him extremely keen on developing that very intro of Mr. Doyle's future story. His fury I am unable to describe, but still, he had that exquisite trait of keeping the fire thriving on the inside, whereas the only characteristic demonstrated on the outside was interminable patience and the will to cater to the needs of his new customer. Unlike him, the intruder was young. Unlike him, the intruder's hands were shaking. Unlike him, the intruder seemed to have ambitions. The only ambition of the man standing

behind the reception desk, inside the premises of Literary Ideas Inc. was... Frankly, I do not believe he had any ambition but to write introductions, conclusions, or parts of novels, short stories, anything that the 'brilliant' authors of his time would order. The profits were huge. Celebrated authors from all over the globe would implore him for merely a line. It is an irrefutable fact that he could work miracles with a pen and his yellow paper which, rumor has it, he carried and used in the toilet when bereft of ideas. Some of his ideas were brilliant; others seemed as if a kid had come up with them, and

**One possible contingency was that he would not be able to resume his flow of ideas upon the subject which initially made him extremely keen on developing that very intro of Mr. Doyle's future**

sometimes they were derived from his most stupid and useless thoughts. All ideas cost the same. The eminent novelists, the so-called great authors would buy the ideas of a man in his fifties who had not visited anywhere apart from his town's portrait galleries and cinemas and who had been having supper at the Money for Nothing Diner on the

corner of the street for twenty consecutive years! Still those ‘intellects’ who had travelled to an unprecedented number of places or who had graduated from the top universities were unable to write a single word on their own. That had been his routine for nearly thirty years now, and Literary Ideas Inc. had turned into an empire, and the only employee of the company would create a fortune for himself.

“Tell me, Mr. Arnolds, how can I be of assistance?” said he in a relaxed manner.

“I... Eh...” He paused. His hands were shaking more intensely; he was desperately searching for air, and his cheeks flushed like vivid roses. He reflected on the picture of a six-year-old child, embarrassed to speak to his teacher. Then, with a need to break the silence along with a desire not to waste any more of his precious time, the owner spoke calmly and solemnly as if he were preaching to the orphan children on the streets.

“Please Mr. Arnolds, feel free to express yourself and demonstrate your thoughts before me. Do you crave any ideas? For a novel perhaps?”

“Ah... yes, I mean I would like to publish a novel.”

“Please, let me know about the topic of your potential novel.”

“It’s about a man.”

“Well...that is not very enlightening; please, disclose further information concerning

this man. Is he an actual person?”

“With flesh and blood, sir.”

Embarrassment or nervousness had eclipsed the young man’s characteristics, and an idiosyncrasy of a quick-witted individual peeked out.

“Do you happen to know him?”

“Not well, but I am working on it. Sir, I would like you to write a complete novel for me.”

“You appear completely devoid of ideas. Even if I sell you some, you still presume that you will be incapable of adding your own mark?”

“I am afraid so, sir.”

“That’s an issue. You see, the policy of this company is not to produce complete works. Our purpose is to provide people with ideas, certain pieces of writing, not too extensive in order to aid authors in creating their own work. We are the source, sir, not the machine.”

“Would you still reject my proposal if I were to disclose that the very novel I wish to publish is about you?”

**T**he owner froze. No blood was running through his veins. He stared at the young man, and no movement visible, no thought expressed. It had never happened to him before, not in his fifty-two years of life. His bald head was void for the first time. It was the first time he could not come up with anything. He had never thought about himself before. His mind functioned merely on behalf of others; he elaborated on others notions;

he gave life to others sentiments through words. He had never written anything for himself or about himself for his own personal indulgence; he was never struck by the idea of producing something real. He conceived that he had been living for others for more than thirty years. Thousands of writers had gained tremendous reputation by presenting his ideas as their own. He had nothing to show for it. For a moment, he thought that when he left this earth, nobody would remember him or his works simply be-

“Doing what, sir?”

He felt as if he was about to collapse, yet an inner, invisible force pulled him together and contained his outburst of emotions. The response was mechanical, not processed to the faintest degree, still a cold one.

“Pardon me for my irrational reaction, sir, and please, repeat the topic of your potential novel. You see, time has had a devastating effect upon me.”

“Indeed, sir, I would like to publish a

**It had never happened to him before, not in his fifty-two years of life. His bald head was void for the first time.**

cause his works, his masterpieces, his inner thoughts and feelings belonged to someone else, some stupid hypocritical noble man who would be praised for centuries for something he had not given birth to. And now an arrogant young boy was requesting that he write a novel about his fifty-two year long life. He had no idea of what to write. Oh lord, no ideas! Back to reality, he had to say something to the young man who was eagerly waiting behind an air of malevolence for the middle-aged man’s answer.

“Why are you doing this?”

novel about a middle-aged man who happens to be you. I would be more than grateful if you could write the entire novel for me; I would not have a problem if you selected the title too. Ah... yes, about the fee, merely name your price.”

“I reckon you have failed to understand, sir, that the company does not provide writers with complete novels. Irrespective of the fee, I am afraid I cannot meet your demands.”

His temper had stabilized again and that feeling of dizziness had waned. Now, he was as calm as ever yet furious with Mr. Arnold’s





Digital image <<http://www.thebreakbreaker.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/writers.jpg>.N.p., n.d. Web.>.

# View Change Behind Bars!

By Konstantinos Kartsagoulis



**T**he piercing, metallic sound of the loud bell travelled throughout the prison yard. As weird as it may seem, this seemingly unpleasant and disturbing ring is what I and the rest of the inmates always look forward to hearing the moment we step into the yard. The great anticipation of leaving this place is apparent and too obvious in everyone's eyes. However, I guess I'll get used to it, sooner or later. What bugs me, though, is how everyone else who has been around for more than a year or so hasn't been able to adapt yet. Maybe it's not as easy as I thought. On the bright side, there's a good chance I'll get out in no more than two

years...maybe three. I can't rule out the possibility of being kept here for the rest of my life, but I am determined to follow every single rule and behave during my imprisonment. By doing so, I will hopefully be released under restrictions, but that won't be a problem. I do not intend to commit a crime nor get drunk ever again. "Stay sober and you shall be fine," is my new motto from now on. I'm just trying to be creative and face this plight with some sense of humor...as most people say it always helps. Well, if you ask me, it doesn't. Not even a little. At this point, I am literally talking to myself. We are finally being led to the refectory. I've been waiting for this time impatiently. Not only am I hungry but also need some free time to relax, to review last week's events, to get my act together. It all happened in the blink of an eye, so rapidly, yet slowly, and painfully. How a first class lawyer like me ended up here is hard to fathom although it's partially my fault. Actually, it's entirely my fault! What I mean is that I could have prevented it, but I didn't. I don't regret it though. My decision was honest, brave, and manly. That's how I see it, at least ... my subjective view of things.

What follows is last week in a nutshell. Last Sunday, which was also my birthday, was meant to be a fantastic day. And it was! Nevertheless, by nightfall, my life had taken an unexpected turn. My friends had managed to convince me to go out for a few drinks because, as they said, "You're getting old, William. If you don't go out for a drink now,

you'll miss the chance forever," and I was foolish and naïve enough to go ahead and seize that chance. My wife repeatedly attempted to dissuade

*How a first class lawyer  
like me ended up here is  
hard to fathom...*

me, but, at the time, I really thought it was a good idea. Well, what should have been merely a couple of drinks soon evolved into an alcohol fest. This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but my point is that all of us got drunk; what's more is I decided to take the initiative and drive. Drive while drunk! Not the best idea, you might say! Correct! As I was informed the following day, I ran over something. 'Someone' to be precise! My tone probably sounds odd and unsuitable concerning the magnitude of the situation, but I can reassure you the grief I feel is indescribable. The poor man— may he rest in peace— was 43-years-old. It's appallingly ironic to mention that on that specific day I turned 43. It's a very strange coincidence, which honestly gives me the chills every time I think of it.

On Tuesday, I was taken to court, and I had to face the judge and jury. At this point, I should mention Michael. Michael is my best friend and a

lawyer, like I am. He is very skillful, truly one of the best. Nonetheless, we have a radical and fundamental distinction as far as our views and opinions regarding advocacy are concerned, which until that

*“I needed a really good lawyer. Otherwise, my name would never be cleared, and thus I wouldn’t be able to continue my career as a lawyer. On top of that, I would certainly be sent to jail...”*

point, hadn’t caused any problems or affected us in any way. Specifically, I support that during a trial a lawyer ought to remain honest and use arguments based only on valid and confirmed evidence. However, Michael claims that a more efficient technique is to have the ability of ‘creating,’ ‘forming,’ and ‘making up’ evidence with craftsmanship so as to defend the client in every way, even in situations where actual and legitimate evidence would result in his being condemned.

You’re probably wondering “What does this have to do with my story? It’s rather trivial information, isn’t it?” Well, let me put it this way: I needed a really good lawyer. Otherwise, my name would never be cleared, and thus, I wouldn’t be able to continue my career as a lawyer. On top of that, I would certainly be sent to jail, accused of homicide, and as you already know, that’s exactly what happened. You must all be bewildered now,

but be patient. I will explain although what I’m going to say will provoke a storm of criticism. On Monday, when Michael demanded to be my lawyer, I refused. Indeed, in spite of the fact that he was and is my best friend, I refused his proposal since I was obliged to defend my morals. It would be unethical if I, all of a sudden, decided to hire a lawyer who was opposed my view on how advocacy should be done. It would entail deceiving myself. Michael would probably be able to get me out of trouble, but, be that as it may, I decided to decline his offer. That infuriated him. However, I had made my decision, and there was no turning back. I quickly found and hired a lawyer, who at first, seemed a bit reluctant but eventually agreed to represent me.

I’d like to be brief, concerning this part of the story. Wondering whether I made the right decision or if I was simply naïve, makes me uncomfortable. For your information, I still don’t regret my decision. The lawyer turned out to be a total disappointment. His stress and anxiety while in the courtroom were easily noticeable, and he was often at a loss for words. Michael watched the case silently. Both of us refrained from stifling a sigh a couple of times in order to express our disappointment as well as to show my lawyer in an indirect way that he had to alter his tone, get to the next part of his speech, or stop talking. At the end, the judge informed us that the case would be resumed the following day.

## View Change Behind Bars!

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**W**hile I was driving to the courthouse on Wednesday, I thought about the possibility of being acquitted by the judge. “But that’s wishful thinking!” I said to myself. My first thought when I saw my lawyer that day was, “Yep. I’m definitely going to jail.” My lawyer was trembling and sweating outside the courtroom waiting for me to arrive.

“You alright?” I asked.

“Ye-yeah, I’m... I’m just fine. Worry not. Every- Everything’s under control.” I nodded to give him courage and entered the courtroom.

I held my head in both my hands. The judge’s words lingered and were humming and buzzing in my head, “William Johnson, you are convicted of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced five years of imprisonment.” My wife was staring at me, terrified. Michael punched the wooden chair and shouted in pain. Suddenly, everything froze around me. I could not see, hear, or feel anything. I was just...frozen. Then, two policemen came, handcuffed, me and took me out of the courtroom.

I’ve been in prison since Thursday. It has only been four days, but it seems like a century. I feel so lonely. I need to find some friends, but I’m really scared of bumping into any of my former clients who were convicted. That’d be a bad idea. Today is Sunday. I am 43 and one week now. What a week!

From the corner of my eye, I see an officer

approaching me. I wipe the tears which were running down my face and sat upright.

“Hi,” he said.

“Hello,” I turned my head towards him and responded.

“You’re William Johnson, if I’m not mistaken?” he continued.

“Indeed!”

“A family member has come to visit. Would you like to see her or should I ask her to leave?” My face lit up.



“No. I mean, yes! I want to see her. Of course, I do.”

“Alright then follow me, will ya?”

I followed the officer through a couple of rooms and then entered the visitors’ area. Once I entered, I recognized my wife waiting for me with great anticipation. She instantly saw me too, and a wide smile formed on her face, revealing her beautifully shaped, red lips. I rushed to the phone and picked it up. Thankfully, it didn’t muffle her calm, sweet voice at all!

“Hello, William!”

“Hey, sweetheart how are you doing?”

“That’s a question I should be asking,” she giggled playfully.

“I’m good! You see, it’s not that bad in here. I think I’ll stay for a couple of years! You don’t find free food and accommodation easily these days, do you?”

“I see you haven’t lost your sense of humor at all, have you?”

The officer shouted that we had five more minutes. I was about to react, but my wife stopped me.

“William, it’s fine. Do me a favor, and don’t get yourself into trouble, okay?”

“Promise. How are the kids doing? Have you told them anything about this?”

“No. I think it’s inappropriate to tell them at such a young age. They’ll think you’re a criminal or murderer. Do you think I should? What do you suggest?”

Her face showed her obvious anxiety now.

“It’s hard to fathom that you’re in jail because of a distinction in views though. Prison isn’t something to play with, you know.”

“No, don't tell them a thing. I'll be back from my long trip to Europe in three years, anyway!”

I responded and winked.

“Alright then, it's settled,” she said and smiled.

“Mr. Johnson your time is up. Please end your conversation and hang up.”

“I gotta go now. It was great to see you. I really needed it.”

“I'll visit you every Sunday. Bye darling!”

I hung up and walked towards the officer, when suddenly a man hurtled into the other side of the room shouting.

“Officer wait!” he cried breathlessly.

The officer turned his head, saw the man, looked through his notebook, and nodded that he was cleared. I turned my head towards the familiar voice and recognized Michael. He was gasping like he had just finished the marathon. I walked towards the phone and organized the thoughts in my head.

“Michael, what are you doing here?” I said after picking the phone up.

He took a moment to catch his breath.

“Hi William,” he responded.

“Look, I understand if you're mad at me for not allowi....”

“I'm not,” he interrupted me.

“Oh. That's...that's great. How come?”

“You supported and stayed true to your view of advocacy, and as a lawyer, I ought to acknowledge that. You are an amazing lawyer,

William. You should know that.”

“Heh. You mean, I was.”

“However, I should inform you that I am resentful because you are now in jail and I feel partially guilty that you've ended up in here. I could have prevented it you know. I would have managed it no matter what.”

“You shouldn't feel guilty about anything. I rejected your proposition and there was nothing you could have done about that.”

“It's hard to fathom that you're in jail because of a distinction in views though. Prison isn't something to play with, you know.”

“So be it!” I answered in a cruel voice.

“Alright guys that's it,” said the officer, “wrap it up.”

I was about to utter a word, but Michael interrupted me yet again.

“Stay strong, bud. Okay? I have faith in you. Standing by your morals and views will ...” but before Michael had finished his words, the officer suddenly grabbed me by the arm and pulled me away from the phone. ....

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# WHEN THE TABLES

# TURN



Digital Image

By Efstathia Zouridaki

Beep, beep, beep.

I opened my eyes slowly. I looked around trying to understand where I was. It didn't take me a long time. I was lying in a bed in a hospital. I looked around and saw my dad. He was holding his head. He looked tired and exhausted. It was obvious that he hadn't shaved, and he looked sad. I said, "Hey, dad," quietly, but he didn't respond. He didn't even move. I repeated myself. Nothing. I said it again and again, and finally, I screamed. Then, he suddenly moved, and at that moment, my mother burst into the room. She looked like she had been running, her hand was in a cast, and she had stitches close to her eye. Then she said, "How is she?" with a plain look.

My dad looked at her and gave her an

apologetic look, "No progress, she hasn't even moved."

"What?", I screamed. "Mum! Dad! I am here, look at me! I am talking to you, and you are ignoring me." I stood up and went close to her, "I am here! Look! What happened? Why are we here? Mum!" She acted like I wasn't even there. I turned around, but when I did, everything became clear because in that bed, there was my body lying there, unconscious.

"A coma is a prolonged state of unconsciousness. During a coma, a person is unresponsive to his or her environment. Therefore, Chloe is alive and looks like she is sleeping. However, unlike in a deep sleep, the person cannot be awakened by any stimulation, including

pain,” (WebMD) said the doctor.

My parents were both sitting in chairs close to me, close to my body, actually, and there were talking with a doctor.

What? How? As I heard those words, pieces of the event came back. How could I be in a coma? The last thing I remember was going to my grandmother’s house. Oh, no. Oh god, no. We had a car accident. A truck hit us. Yes I remember. I remember the lights, but then everything went blurry.

“Because of your daughter’s injury to her head from the crash, it messed up the brain cells. That’s the reason she is in a coma. Fortunately, the brain damage was not fatal, so we think we can avoid surgery although we cannot predict the length of the coma. We are using some medication to decrease brain swelling, treat infections and prevent seizures. We are also going to do some tests so we can have a clearer picture of her brain injury...” the doctor continued.

After that I stopped listening; I had learned everything I needed to know.

There is no way something like this can happen. Maybe if I lie down and sleep, I’ll wake up, and everything will be fine. I tried keeping my eyes closed for five minutes, but I can’t fall asleep. This doesn’t feel like a dream. It feels really, really real. I don’t want it to be real. I am like a ghost running around, and I have no control over anything. I am literally out of my body. I can not communicate, and I might already be dead, and this is some type of hell. Maybe that is why people are

so afraid of death and the possible idea of going to hell. Maybe hell is our own worst nightmare, and I think I am in mine.

It has been exactly fourteen days and twelve hours since I figured everything out. Nothing has changed. I am still this type of ghost, and I never though being invisible could make me so lonely. I have been here, watching my parents cry, looking at my body with compassion and so much sadness. This makes me sick. I have no control. I have been trying to explain this situation in some way. I though maybe this is a dream, and maybe its some short of hallucination, but everything seems so clear, and I can hear my mothers’ cries and everyday I have seen my doctor come in here and inform my parents. I can’t give an explanation, and if I don’t find a way out of this labyrinth, I think I am going to go crazy.

I have been walking around the

### Beep Beep Beep

**After that, I stopped listening.  
I had learned everything I  
needed to know.**



Digital Image

hospital seeing the patients and how they are treated. I have seen people die. I have seen people cry-

ing and praying that there loved ones are okay. I have seen people smiling, and I have seen pain and worry. People from school came over, and I watched them look at me with pity. My best friends have been coming once in a while, leaving flowers saying that this place needs to be pretty when I wake up. I see tears in their eyes as they are leaving. This thought of never waking up, all these events are consuming my thoughts. I don't desire anything more than waking up. How am I supposed to survive off what little air bubbles reach my lungs when I am surrounded by all of them in a catastrophic wave of despair and grief? How long can I survive in this whirlpool of pain I've been captured in before my lungs give up and are filled with the water of my agony?

I have stopped counting the days. Maybe a month has passed or so. I don't know. I don't want to count. I am hopeless. I have seen the days passing like they are years and my parents getting worst. I heard my mum say that in school they prayed for me to wake up. I don't think I'll ever wake up. Maybe this is my hell, maybe I was right from the start. I can't stop thinking about doing things the way I used to do, living normally and how much people don't pay attention to the small things, how we forget that we are so lucky to be given a life to live.

Right now, I am lying in my hospital bed. I have been feeling exceptionally tired lately. I just stay here and pretend that I am in my body, but I know deep down that I can't do anything about it. The only thing I want is to be able to live again. To

get excited about the small things, about wearing my new boots or about the cute guy in my class or about going to school. I want everything back.

If I could go back, the first thing I would do would be to be horribly straightforward. This is my only regret. I regret not telling my parents how much I love them and not telling people in general how much I enjoy their presence. I would want to be needy, to tell people how much they mean to me. It seems impossible to say to people how much you need them because you never know when something like this can happen to you. The doctors are walking in. I am feeling dizzy, and everything seems very blurry. The image of the car crashing comes to my mind, and the feeling comes back and hits me like a wave.

## I feel my fingers go numb



## and...beep, beep ,beep...

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*Illustration by Paul Mason*

# MAX

By Elizabeth Loverdou



*Illustration by Martha Lazanaki*

I first saw Max in the Pet Shop. He wasn't too big and had, at the time, short brown fur. We locked eyes, and I knew we were meant for each other. From that moment on, Max was always there for me, at the lowest and highest points in my life. We had the best relationship a dog and its owner could ever have.

I had a friend when I was very young who they called 'Max.' He had big brown eyes, so when I first saw Max's eyes that day in the Pet

Shop, I decided to call him Max, too.

Max and I grew up together. He was always crazy, running up and down the corridor and the stairs, barking at nothing really, the wall or the air; most of the time, he looked like he was talking to himself, but I never really paid too much attention to that.

There are still some things I don't understand about Max. Firstly, Max eats extremely weird food. It is sometimes cold, sometimes hot with big chunks in it. It smells weird and usually

has peculiar colors; it comes in different shapes and sizes. At times, it is even wet or a liquid, and it makes me screw up my mouth when I look at it. However, he looks like he's enjoying it. I always try to offer him some of my own, but he refuses. I guess he is accustomed to that already disgusting prepared food he eats every single day.

Secondly, Max sleeps a lot. When he is awake, he has so much energy, but for the greater part of the day, he is either lying on the sofa or on his bed, not doing anything interesting, but I guess he looks like he is enjoying himself. Max growls to himself a lot when he's alone. Not really to himself, he has some weird games he plays with, and he usually talks to them; I don't really get it either.

**T**hirdly, Max is obsessed with the outside. He loves walks, and he loves running in the garden; I can't leave him alone in the streets. Who knows what would happen to him, so I have to go out of the house, too. I could be calmly and peacefully sleeping, and even if Max could see that, when it is time for his walk, I can't really do anything to change his mind. He waits by the door, ready for his walk.

Here we are on another walk in the same park for the millionth time. I know Max loves it here: the green, the trees, and the fresh air are good for him, but I don't understand why he doesn't want to go anywhere else. We've been to the park so many times, and everyday is the same: he will run around the same circle, dragging me with him

as we pass by the same trees over and over again.

Sometimes, he sees the same friends who also go to the park everyday, or he will get all excited when he sees a squirrel eating a nut; he will most probably pee behind a bush, which I find disgusting – why would someone pee behind a bush? And then we will go back home. The park is beautiful, but you would think he'd get bored of it, and he would want to go on a little hike maybe on that small hill behind our house. However, it's his time of the day, so we do whatever he likes. Even if it's boring.

When I'm lonely at home, I go to his bed with the hope of playing with him, but he just picks me up with his short tanned hands, lays me on his bed, and continues to stare at that game of his. He puts it near his head and growls at it. There is light coming out of it and sometimes noise. And there is a bigger one of those. He doesn't talk to that, but it excites him. So, he will use those devices, until he uses his two long legs to go open

***We had the best  
relationship a dog and its  
owner could ever have.***

that strange, heavy door, which is way too cold and hides all of his strange foods.

Oh, no, here comes Max with that leash thing again. Why does he think he has to be tied to me? I am a dog! I have such a good sense of smell. There is no way he can wander off from me.

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# THE TWO WOMEN

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BY SOPHIA VERYKIOU

A boat full of refugees was slowly approaching the shore of Mystegna on the east side of Mytilene. It was dawn, Sunday, September 20th, 2015. A wide smile lightened the faces of people and children who were on the boat.

“Yes, we made it. We are alive and ready to start a new life, away from the flames of war.”

In a few minutes, the exhausted refugees would be able to set foot on the shore, and Mystegna would be the first step to a new beginning.

Among the refugees was Amira, a Syrian young woman and her three-year-old daughter, Layal. Amira decided to abandon Syria after her husband’s death in a bombardment by governmental air force. She planned her fleeing alone because her husband’s family didn’t want her to leave. But Amira didn’t listen to them. She wanted to take her daughter away from bombs and killings and offer her a peaceful life in Germany. Amira’s brother, the only relative she had from her own family, was there. Surely, Amira was not a typical Syrian woman. She was very independent and brave, and as an English teacher, she used to work in an English school, even though her husband was very rich.

Amira and her daughter were tired from the journey. The young mother held the girl and whispered in her ear.

“We are safe sweetheart. Don’t be afraid anymore.” The child touched her mother’s face and looked at her carefully. Amira was a beautiful woman. In her expressive

eyes you could see how bright and brave she was and her long dark hair, which she refused to cover with a hijab, was so impressive.

Layal kissed her mother and whispered, “I love you, too!”

In the meantime, the boat moored softly on the shore. Fathi was the first refugee who jumped from the boat in order to help the women and children to come out safely from the craft. Fathi was a tall, very good-looking man around thirty, with dark eyes and dark skin.

A friendship between Amira and Fathi blossomed on the boat because the two young people shared the same pain. Fathi was grieving for his wife’s death due to an attack by ISIS. Fathi was devastated and unable to cope, and Amira found herself trying to console and encourage him.

At the same time, Petros, a young islander, was arguing with Foteini, a Greek old woman, while watching refugees trying to come out from the boat.

“I don’t give a damn what you say,” Petros shouted at the old woman. “I don’t care about them and their suffering.”

“They are just no good. They have nothing to give us. All they want is to steal from us, steal from our houses, and harm our children and wives.”

The man showed no compassion for others and only cared about his father’s hotel not losing money due to the negative effects that refugees had on tourism. The old woman who was a refugee back in 1922 during the Asia Minor Conflict was trying to explain the value of human life and the suffering the refugees had undergone.

But Petros had no interest and suddenly started to run



When he  
returned he  
was holding a  
gun, and he  
started to fire at  
the refugees.



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towards the hotel. When he returned he was holding a gun and started to fire at the refugees.

The old woman ran and stood between the man and the refugees in order to protect them, and a bullet struck her in the leg. Foteini fell to the ground, and Amira with Fathi ran to help her.

“Shame on you!” Amira shouted at Petros who was staring at the old woman, realizing what he had done.

“Shame on you!” Amira shouted again. “What do you want? Money? Take money!” She threw her leather wallet onto the sand. In it was a lot of money. Petros bowed his head and left without saying a word. But the two women had a lot to say.

# The Red Coat



By Theodora Germanopoulou

**I**t was a cold, freezing winter morning. But there was something special about that day. It was Christmas, the most wonderful time of the year for every child in the world! Everyone gets gifts and presents and shares his and her happiness and delight with loved ones.

Inside a beautiful house in an elite and rich suburb of London, a ten year-old boy named Thomas woke up shivering with excitement. He was eager to open every package he'd find under the Christmas tree in the warm and cozy living room. He started running down the stairs as fast as he could as if someone were chasing him. He was so impatient that he didn't even stop to have breakfast with his parents, missing his favorite Christmas pancakes. Once inside the beautifully decorated living room, he noticed a big box with a golden bow. His eyes sparkled with anticipation as he imagined that his parents had probably bought him something that would impress all his friends. He began to rip the ribbons fiercely, unable to contain his enthusiasm.

But when he finally managed to open the present, he stared at its content utterly disappointed! His parents had bought him a coat. Little Thomas gazed at the piece of clothing full of sorrow and resentment. He angrily opened the door, stamping across the fresh snow, and tossed the package into the garbage can outside his house. What ten year old would love getting a coat for Christmas?

That same evening, another ten year old called Ahmed was making his way back home in another part of London. He had come from far away, and, being a refugee, he was not hoping for a gift. His parents were very poor and lived in a cold, wet basement. He also had to work at the local bakery to make some money for his family. As he was gazing at the snowflakes falling on the pavement, something caught his eye. A big red box was lying on the ground. He opened it and stared at its content full of surprise. He was delighted to see a brand new coat, just at the moment he had started shivering from cold.

“This is the best Christmas gift I could ever get,” he thought. He quickly put on the coat and ran home. He now felt warm and ever so thankful for the unexpected gift he had been given. A gift which, from another child’s perspective, was definitely disappointing. People are different. Children are different. So are their points of view.



“This is the best  
Christmas gift I could  
ever get,” he thought.

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# What a Strange Creature!

By Marialena Vathi

**I**t was a cold, snowy night like no other, and the small child crawled deep into a corner. His rosy cheeks and crimson nose contrasted sharply to the deathly paleness of his skin under the flickering light of a lamp post. His eyes, dark and gleaming, just like lit coals, peered into the darkness of the street. He had never experienced the touch of human kindness, and yet, he felt strong. He was an orphan, and yet, he had hope. He knew he had the potential for

greatness; he could feel it in his veins. Closing his eyes and imagining ascending the stairs of glory made his heart beat faster. He wanted more than he had gotten. He wanted more than the old lady in the orphanage had given him. He wanted the chance to prove how worthy he knew he was.

Now, the cold had reached its peak. Snow was falling heavily all around him. Blasts of cold air penetrated his ripped clothes, making him shiver uncontrollably. Wandering snowflakes got

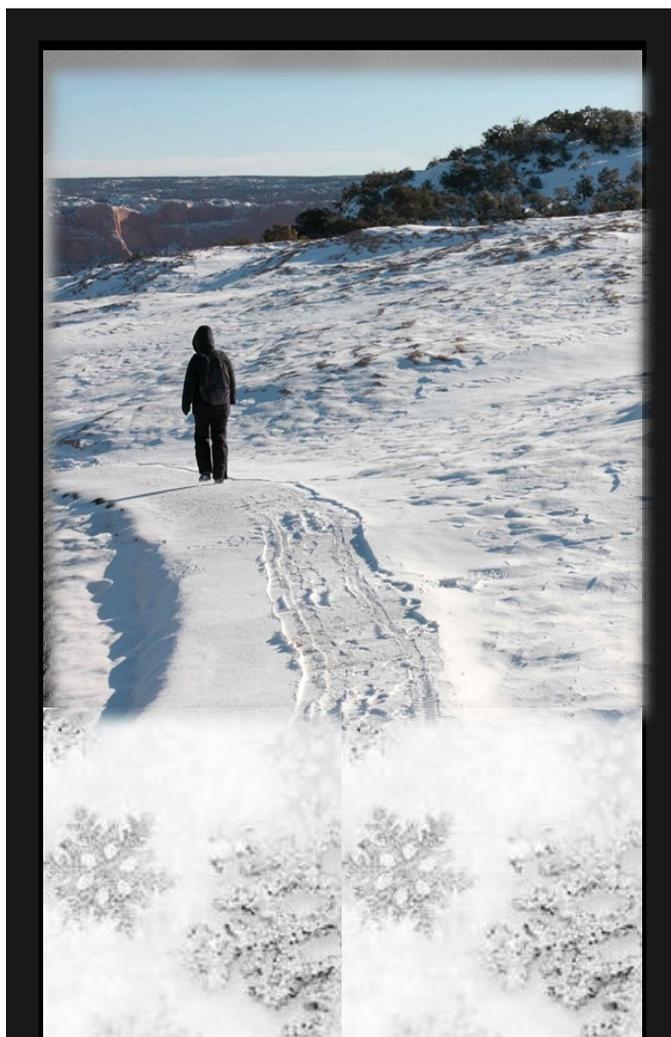
## What a Strange Creature!

trapped in his hair. He couldn't stay there any longer unless he had a death wish. With remarkable persistence he stood up, flicked the snow from his shoulders and legs and started prowling the street.

**T**he Christmas spirit had filled the town. Warm yellow lights glittered from inside the houses. You could make out Christmas trees and stockings, families singing together under the candlelit trees, and fires burning bright on the stoves. They all failed to attract his attention. The concept of home and family was unfamiliar to him. In the present moment, he was only aware of his burning hunger and the bitterly cold weather.

On the opposite side of the street lay a bakery. The smell of freshly baked goods overtook his senses. The shopkeeper, a corpulent man, wrapped tightly in his coat, was just locking the door. Then he saw the boy. The lad was extremely skinny as if he were recovering from a sickness. His dark hair, frozen strands of it, fell across his forehead. The man felt the urge to protect him. He couldn't stay idle at the sight of this boy, a boy almost the age of his own son, a boy wrapped in rags on the coldest night of the year. The child came closer, hoping to catch some of the warmth the building gave out from its burning stoves.

He then noticed the gigantic man. He made no gesture for alms but just moved on closer to the wall. He saw pity in the face of the shopkeeper. How dare he? This was just a temporary state. He would grow up to be important. No one was allowed to look at him like this. He growled and



## THE LAD

WAS EXTREMELY SKINNY...

The man felt the  
urge to protect  
him.

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## What a Strange Creature!

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stared at the owner with sheer indignation, his eyes giving the giant a poisonous look. The poor man was on the horns of dilemma. Up close, the child seemed threatening. The child surely had brought this on himself, he deserved no better. The owner forgot his scruples and instinctively turned and walked away, assuming he was facing the enemy. This little boy behaved so rudely. This old man acted so judgementally. They both parted ways, the first along the cold brick wall of the alley, the second into the arms of his loving wife and children.

**T**he next day, the bright sun melted the snow and little streams of water flowed alongside the pavement. The warmth of the bakery had long been lost, and now the whole building was ice-cold. After breakfast, the baker kissed his loved ones and walked to the shop. A great new day was awaiting him! He took out the key and was ready to enter the bakery, when from the corner of his eye, he spotted a silhouette, rigid against the wall. He recognized last night's rude boy, standing there trembling uncontrollably, desperately trying to hide the horrid state he was in.

The man took the boy inside next to the fireplace. He gave him dry clothes and some bread. This unexpected act of kindness made the boy shiver more than the ravaging wind. Before him stood a man he thought was like every other man he had ever met: a letdown. He had learnt to expect nothing from anyone, and now he sat there

frozen, not only from the frostbite in his toes, but from this profound discovery that compassion wasn't just found in children stories. At first, he was reluctant, but, bit by bit, he let down his guard and rejoiced in the warmth of the fire. The man was staring in surprise at this boy's features melting like the snow from his hair, and transforming into a serene smile, so characteristic of children his age. "What a strange creature!" he whispered.

The flames in the fireplace were shifting, taking all different shapes every minute. The boy sighed. He had found shelter. The feeling sank deep into his little heart. From the corner of his eye, he got a glimpse of the man that had let him in. Yesterday, the man caused him pain. He personified detachment and cruelty. The boy took another discrete look. The man was busy choosing and mixing ingredients. As the man turned to check on him, their eyes met. The man smiled, as did the boy. "What a strange creature!" the boy whispered.

A few hours later, the boy left. He left suddenly when the shopkeeper was away, leaving the spot by the fireplace empty. The last spark of fire had burnt out.

**At first he was reluctant,  
but, bit by bit, he  
embraced the warmth of  
the fire.**



Digital image <<http://www.urban75.org/blog/a-walk-around-the-snowy-streets-of-brixton-south-london/N.p.n.d.Web.>>.

# THE LAST LETTER



By Dimitris Kolitsis

I stare in the mirror and see the face of my whole life. There is something about that face, something one can have a hard time explaining. Even though my hair is grey now and my skin as rough as sandpaper, I can still distinguish the same characteristics I have always had. Time has passed, and the only thing I have earned is that little wisdom one has when he reaches the end of one's path. Yet I consider this piece of miserable knowledge to be the worst gift life can offer.

## The Last Letter

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I take my shirt off, and I see the scars that man's bellicose nature has left me. The grey hair over my chest now covers the wound, but I can still remember when blood used to flow over my body like a river and Jason shouting for the doctor in the turbulence of foreign lands where we were supposed to establish democracy. Not even a day has passed where I don't think about the innocent people I killed, all the lives I took, which I could have spared instead. In my dreams, I hear the screams of abused women and children crying for their mother who lies just in front of them in a lake of blood. This blood surrounds me, drowns me with its bitterness, and, the more I try to reach out and gasp for air, the more my hideous sins drag me down, waking up only to find that such horrid dreams are slightly better than the nightmare I am living in.

War was an unforgettable experience, that's for sure, but it was only the beginning of my journey of misery. I was a fool to think that the harmony and calmness of peaceful times would bring happiness and fortune. All the risks I didn't take indicate that a brave warrior like me, as many people consider me to be, is actually the greatest coward that has ever existed. If only I had told her I loved her. And I still do. I have never stopped. And I never will. Had I had the courage to tell her how I felt and expressed my feelings, this might not have happened. She would have stayed with me and never gotten on that plane that now lies in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. How will I ever forgive myself for that?

I probably won't. For forgiveness is not what suits me. Maybe I can pray to God and ask him for mercy, but a lifetime like mine is explicit proof that he is no different from fairytales. Where was God when my mom was suffering from cancer and my dad used to get drunk and beat me until I screamed from the pain? "It's your fault about your mama, you little brat!" Still, I was devastated when they murdered him for his debts. But God chose to ignore that too.

So here I am, looking myself at this mirror. And mirrors do not lie. Nor can I lie to myself. No matter how much I want to deny it, I have to admit my existence on this planet has been pointless. I didn't get to the part where you understand the meaning of life. This, I consider, is the happiest thing I have ever discovered, but simultaneously the

saddest.

Indeed, it is rather depressing to realize that ever since I was born, I never knew what life was all about. And now that I finally comprehend, it is the worst torture I have ever been through. I did not manage to keep the love of my life. I never started a family. And now, I am paying the price. I am fading away alone. Nobody cares about me; nobody is here to comfort me in my last moments. So I take a last glance of myself in the mirror, and there is only one last wish I would love to come true. I wish that not a single person in the world would ever go through what I have been through, and from the bottom of my heart, I wish each and every person, to never find the meaning of life. Ignorance is bliss.

**All the risks I didn't take indicate that a brave warrior like me, as many people consider me to be, is actually the greatest coward that has ever existed.**

"James Smith committed suicide on November 12, 2006, in New York City at the age of 84. His memory will be honored by a special ceremony, followed by a procession to the cemetery. This awe-inspiring war veteran has been an example of discipline, courage, and bravery. His contribution to the Nation has been remarkable, and his distinctions, countless. His obedience and ideals are a model for every young soldier. We admire his strength of character and his commendable accomplishments. The whole city is in terrible grief. Such dynamic personalities are hard to find in these times. In a society of corruption and wrong values, Smith stayed loyal to his country and served with stunning willingness. This illustrious man will be missed. Your country is grateful. We are grateful. God is grateful. Goodbye, Soldier."

Reference:

*Soldier in the Sunlight*. Digital Image. N.p. N.d. Web.  
<[http://www.bhmpics.com/view-soldier\\_in\\_sunset-hd.html](http://www.bhmpics.com/view-soldier_in_sunset-hd.html)>.

# TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS ON LIFE

By Manos Lagoudakis and Raphael Moissis



## Two Different Views on Life

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Once upon a time, in the suburbs of a wealthy, modern country lived a boy named Johnny. Every day, Johnny would wake from his deep and peaceful sleep by the irritating noise of the alarm clock. Miserably, Johnny would go to the bathroom, brush his teeth, and put his clothes on. Then, he would go on to eat the same, dull breakfast he had been eating for the last year. The mere thought of going to school yet another day bored him to death. Not long after he finished his breakfast, Johnny went to the bus stop which, unfortunately, was two whole blocks away. After the same old ride on the school bus, Johnny arrived at school. The school program was fixed so there were no surprises on that day and on any other day for that matter. Sitting through what seemed like an endless series of classes, the only thing Johnny thought about was the video games he would play when he returned home. After school, he did his homework sloppily, devoting just enough time to it so his teachers would think that he had actually studied. Now that Johnny had finished “studying,” he would spend the next five hours playing video games. “It was good fun,” he thought to himself, but it didn't make him truly happy. Well after midnight, Johnny went to bed with his mind clouded by the thought of another school day.

On the other side of the globe, little Jinjing lived in a not so wealthy and modern country, in a small apartment at the center of an industrial city. Every day he would wake up before dawn so he and his nine siblings would get to work in a factory which was half way across the city. But as he would walk to work, he would always admire

the beautiful sunrise that he could see through the heavy, green, industrial clouds painting the horizon with beautiful combinations of color. How beautiful it all was! Working at the electronics factory, he was often abused by other workers, but the thought of giving up never crossed his mind because his family needed the money. At noon he would eat the, sometimes, stale piece of bread given to all workers at the factory canteen. He would devour it as if it were the tastiest food in the world. After lunch he would work even harder because he knew his working hours would soon be over. Upon leaving the factory in the afternoon, he would go to the public library, for even though he was already exhausted and would have to walk an additional ten blocks to get there, he wanted to get an education so he could have a better future. Later in the evening, Jinjing's family would gather around the kitchen table and eat the cheap canned food they would buy from the local supermarket. They would share their stories, laugh, cry, and be there for each other. At night, Jinjing would go to sleep exhausted, but he was never sad or disappointed because he had learned to appreciate life, even in unbearable conditions.

What Johnny's and Jinjing's views on life show is that it is not really life itself that makes us happy or miserable, but the way in which we deal with what life gives us.

### Reference:

*Life is Good*. Digital Image. *SurfWriter Girls*. N.p. 17 February 2016. Web.

<<http://surfwritergirls.blogspot.gr/2016/02/at-life-is-good-everythings-jake.html>>.

# DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW DIFFERENT STORY

By: Pandelis Kirpoglou

**John, 17 years old,**

What an exciting trip today! We visited Athens, the Acropolis and the Acropolis museum. I've never seen such a crowded city in my entire life. The view from the top of the Acropolis was awesome! It was the first time I had visited Athens so it was a thrilling experience for me. The city was decorated and there was a lot of noise and traffic around us. After the visit, I tried to imagine how it is to live in a huge city like this. Every day you could choose to do something different and never get bored. If I could, I would never go back to my boring, old village.

**George, 15 years old,**

Today, our school decided to take us to the Acropolis. We took the same tour as every year and saw the same archeological monuments. The trip was so boring that everyone was exhausted and wanted to get back to school... There were crowded roads and noise pollution as always. The same walk every year had made us tired. After walking for a long time, our teachers decided to let us do whatever we wanted. Unfortunately, we do the same thing every year so there wasn't much to do except to sit and wait for the time to pass. We all wished to visit another place, especially out of Athens, and see new places we had never been before.



**Reference:**

*Acropolis*. Digital Image. *Welcome to Athens*. Travel to Athens, Greece. N.d. Web. <<http://www.greece-athens.com/>>.



*Illustration by Marialena Vathi*



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## **PART II**

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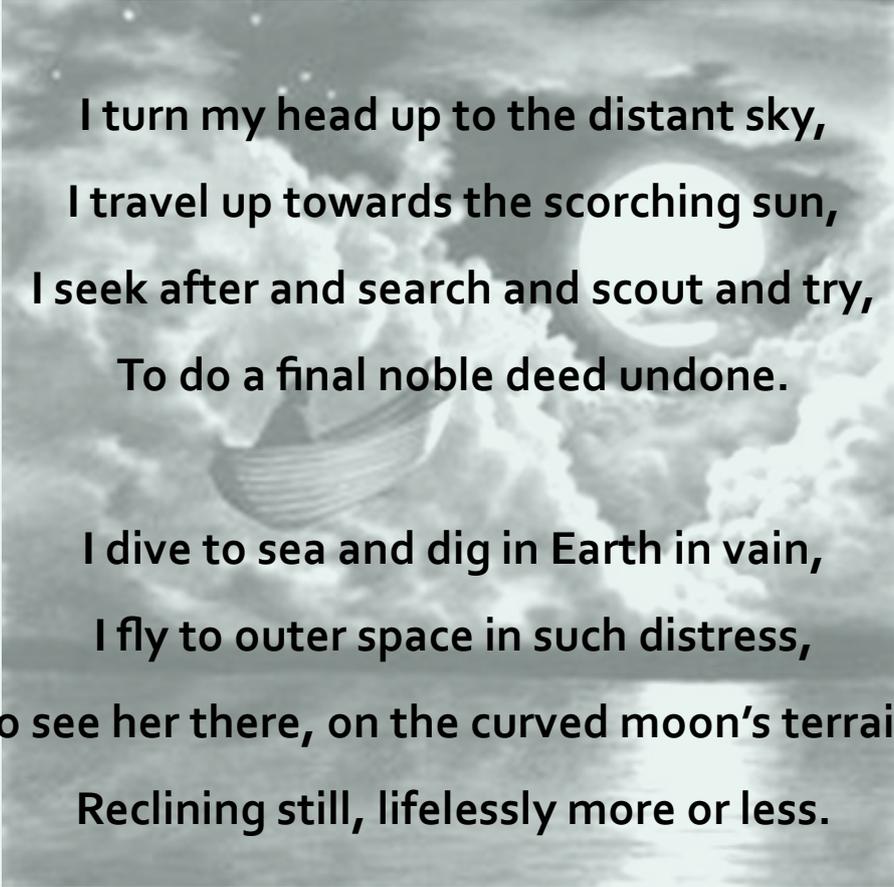
# **POETRY**

**“Poetry is the  
rhythmical creation  
of Beauty in Words.”**

**-Edgar Allan Poe**

# A Matter of Fate

Another of the countless days now dies,  
And finds me in my very tattered clothes,  
It tells me what it brought upon and cries,  
In the remembrance of a withered rose.



I turn my head up to the distant sky,  
I travel up towards the scorching sun,  
I seek after and search and scout and try,  
To do a final noble deed undone.

I dive to sea and dig in Earth in vain,  
I fly to outer space in such distress,  
To see her there, on the curved moon's terrain,  
Reclining still, lifelessly more or less.

I gently touch her hand, I shed a tear,  
I kiss her lips, I sit, and perish here.

**By Loukas Podaropoulos**

**Reference:**

50 Amazing Pencil Drawings. Digital Image. *Pencil Drawings*. 26 July 2013. Web. 7 Feb. 2016. <<http://hative.com/50-amazing-pencil-drawings/>>.

# Love

Your are here, you are finally here  
I've been searching for you  
days have come and nights have been lost  
empty hands and an empty heart  
I almost stopped, but now you are here  
you're full of talk and stories untold  
trying to start up a dying fire  
with sparks from our hearts.  
Nature smiled down and tears of joy  
rain from the sky  
as we take over in each other's eyes

**By Anthony Roussos**

Reference:  
*File:Love-zh.svg*. Digital Image. *Wikimedia Commons*.  
N.p., 25 Oct. 2006. Web. 15 Feb. 2016. <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Love-zh.svg>>.

# All I Know about You and Me

Your wonderful smile  
reminds me that I am nothing but a juvenile  
The endless love of your tears  
eradicates all of my fears  
Your one last breath  
helps me advance and overcome my personal living death  
Your presence makes me feel  
that I have no Achilles' heel.  
Cause I know, it is true  
that I cannot live without you.

**By Stamatis Koulouris**

# An Ungratified

## DESIRE

In the purest of hearts,  
In the forest's most beautiful parts,  
In the songs of the angels and the secrets of the gods,  
There will always be lingering the shadow of love.  
Insatiable thirst; for life, and love, and freedom.  
Let me sleep in the arms of the crunchy leaves on the forest floor  
Right by the rippling green lagoon.  
I shall dream of my loved one's embrace  
Appeased by the thought of his smile.  
Let me cherish the moments of solitude  
To forget that he left me behind.  
Falling –again and again...  
Going deeper into the abyss of impeccable madness.  
Every night I lie under the glimmering stars  
And the ghosts of the past haunt my mind;  
The abominable trace of an unfulfilled sentiment.  
My soul is a realm of shadows and lights, an eternal battle,  
And he is the ray of hope in the darkness of my troubled existence.

By Marilena Oikonomou

**Reference:**

*Nature* | via *Tumblr*. Digital image. *FAVIM.COM*. Web. 15 Feb. 2016.  
<<http://favim.com/image/2145105/>>.

# BORROWED SPACES

By  
*Ioanna Maniaki*

**What would happen if the world stopped?  
Just for a moment  
and we could look at each other  
outside the limits  
of our borrowed spaces?**

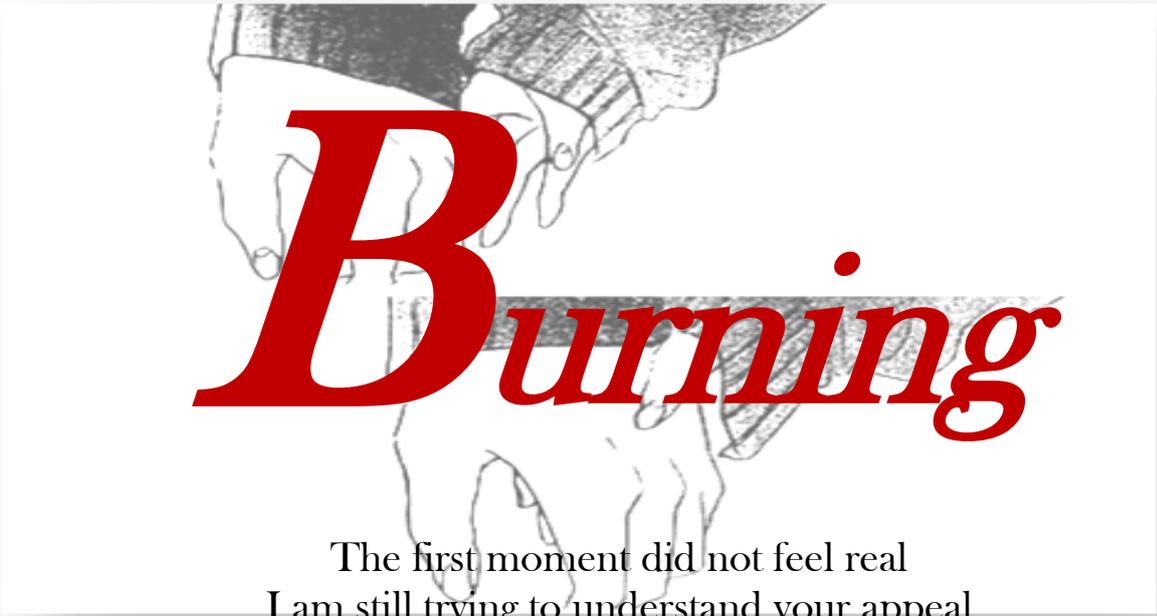
**Would we be able to see each other more clearly  
in the dimness of nonexistence  
with nowhere to go  
and no history behind us?**



**Could we take that moment to see  
we're not that different?  
Could we find something here,  
in the absolute stillness?**

*Photo by*  
Niki Bizoumi

**And if the world started again  
would we be different people?  
Would we walk away  
understanding each other better?  
Or would we continue, as always  
walking past, oblivious  
until it's too late?**



# Burning

The first moment did not feel real  
I am still trying to understand your appeal  
You came into my life so very fast  
Yet your place in my heart is now so vast

At first, I didn't know how quick I would change  
For a boy has never made me feel so strange  
It was all so beautiful, so pure, and so new  
How pretentious of me, acting like I knew

It all came like a burning arrow striking through me  
That things could never be how I wanted them to be  
I burnt so quiet and I burnt so long  
You must have wondered if the feeling was there all along

But you, as usual, you had nothing to say  
I am still trying to forget how one day  
I was about to let you know about everything I had in mind  
And then you wouldn't even be a friend, you would never be mine

Now I am in a constant fight with myself  
Because all my feelings need to be put up in a shelf  
I need to take a break from loving you  
Because there are some things, I simply can't get through

By Irene Vouzaki

**Reference:**

*Hands*. Digital Image. *Blogger*. N.p., n.d. Web.  
<[Http://aranarch.blogspot.gr/2010\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://aranarch.blogspot.gr/2010_04_01_archive.html)>.

# Love is a war zone

**By Nikolina Adam**

I can see when you are sad  
Imagining the love you once had  
Every time it breaks your heart  
Thinking your world has fallen apart

But in reality this is love  
Pure and simple like a white dove  
But very harsh, difficult, and bold  
Making you say things you would  
never have told

So be careful who you trust  
And don't confuse love for lust  
Because people change  
And this should not feel strange  
Since you are on your own  
And, dear, love is a war zone.



**Reference:** *Cupid Don't Play*. Digital Image. *Prime's Worm Hole*. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://primeswormhole.blogspot.gr/2012/01/cupid-dont-play.html>>.



# Central News

Sitting comfortably on my yellow couch  
while sipping a favorite blend of gentle tea  
on a peaceful Sunday afternoon,  
I absent-mindedly pressed ON the TV control.  
Then, a great wave of sea entered the room,  
Carrying along fragments of boats,  
phantoms of people, of lives and memories.  
Carrying along destroyed cities,  
abandoned plans, deleted dreams,  
persisting nightmares.  
Carrying along unclassified dead,  
wiped out adults, fragile children.  
Carrying along defective life jackets and orange screams,  
toys of a tattered childhood,  
the bitter remains of a ragged humanity.

By Chloe Bolota

**Reference:**

*Refugees in Greece*. Digital Image. *I Can't Relax in Greece*. N.p. N.d. 4 February 2014. Web.  
<<https://icantrelaxingreece.wordpress.com/2014/02/04/unhcr-offers-recommendations-to-greek-eu-presidency-on-refugees/>>.



# Innocent Children

By Martha Lazanaki

Oh, innocence! Oh, innocence! of the poor children I knew.  
Why hurt them? Why break them? Why, to them so cruel?  
Why, nature, have you no mercy? Why, children, do you not think?  
It must be your nature, or is it your fate?  
So hide in the jungle, hide behind the tree.  
Poor children do run,  
run far from the innocence that once defined thee.

Did you not hear of the beast inside the jungle?  
Have you not seen it crawl and creep?  
Into your dreams and all your deep slumbers,  
shall it come one day and leave you to weep.  
But I cannot help you; you do not listen to me.  
Somehow I am not as sacred as that precious lord of thee.  
My pearl-white complexion, my glimmering smooth scheme  
it is no match for the dark red, the coarse, the magnificent lord of thee.

I hope though that one day you will wake up to see  
the burning island, the burning soul, the burning innocence of thee.  
That you will come to realize, and henceforth, also know  
That this world is for all, and not just for the mighty, and lost for the weak  
So be innocent once more, be gracious in deeds,  
do not fight no more, do not renounce the will to be free,  
For to be free of danger, to be free of fear, is, my dear children, my greatest wish for thee.  
For when not hiding from your shadows, and not fearful of the dawn,  
will you all be sainted, and left to peacefully,  
gracefully, innocently live on.

**Reference:**

Digital Image. <<https://tubarks.wordpress.com/2011/12/18/what-is-your-deserted-island-book-list/>>.N.p.n.d.Web.>.

# Lucidity



Look around you.  
Every tiny part of this world  
is pleasing our senses.

The million colors our  
reality consists of.  
From the little grey rock  
to the white light that  
creates every shade we imagine.

The warmth we feel  
when we connect with nature.  
The feeling of belonging  
to something we cannot explain.  
The happiness that surrounds us.  
The awe that dominates us.

But why can't all people  
realize the gift they have been given?  
Why don't they perceive  
the beauty around them?  
Aren't they aware of the lucid  
dream they are living?

#### Reference:

Kyriazi, Eleni. *White light and grey rocks*. Digital Image. *Eleni Kyriazi*. N.p. N.d. Web. <<http://elenikyriazi.portfoliobox.net/>>.

By Eleni Kyriazi

# Nature's Defeat

The trees  
Are now dying,  
But man is advancing  
Where Mother Nature  
used to rule,  
Save her.

By Constancia Deriziotis



#### Reference:

*Nature*. Digital Image. *Quotes Gram*. N.p, N.d. Web. <<http://quotesgram.com/man-and-nature-quotes/>>.

# MIRROR, MIRROR...

Old as I may be, life has proven me,  
That things constantly change in space and time;  
That, my boy, I truly do guarantee.  
My mirror on the wall next to the chime,  
Unbiased and unprejudiced it is,  
Always presenting me a different man,  
With some qualities not the same as his.  
I saw a boy once happy as he ran,  
Playing and smiling, his soul unwary.  
But the next time I glared in that mirror,  
An old man spoke grinning contemptibly,  
With envious eyes bringing me horror,  
“All will succumb to things that are to come  
And we will regret what we have become.”

BY ALEXANDROS MAVROIDIS

Reference:  
What Is the Reflection in Your Apartment-Logware



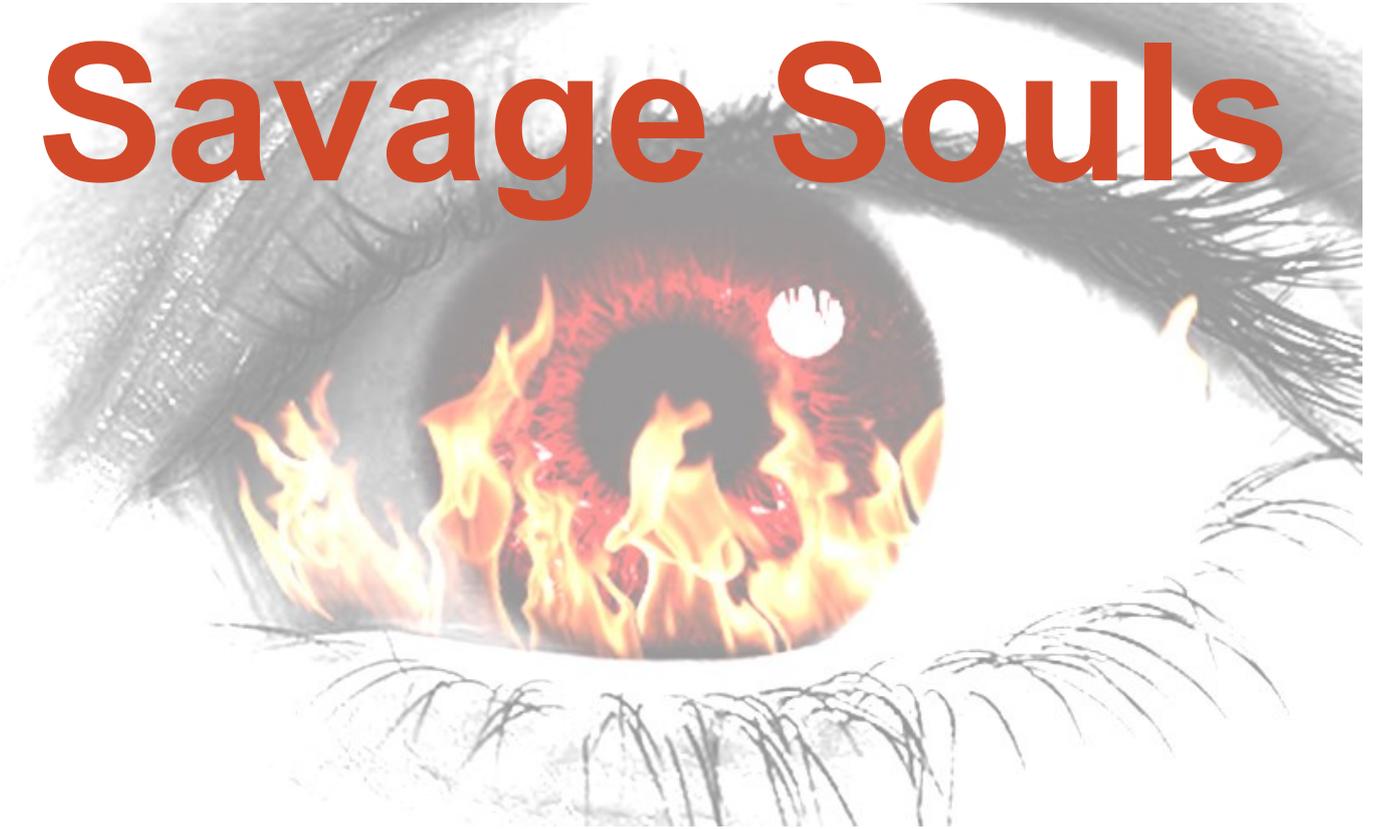
# Master of the Cage

‘To me it seems like all the nights  
The previous ones where heart denies  
Yet there is this breeze of forgotten years  
Gently touches my face and howls in my ears  
Words inaudible that feel like death  
Sharp, quiet by destiny on earth  
I am the one to lead the hopeless masses  
From the tempest to survive and rise from the ashes  
I am the master of you all  
The incarnation of good and evil, that’s all  
I am justice, power and God  
To my will obey; our heartless bond’  
With this his speech was led to an end  
And silence prevailed among the dead  
Master of the cage he was at last  
Ruler of the bars and the dreary dust  
He continued preaching with passion and grace  
And the silence still echoed inside the cage.

By Panos Riskakis

**References:** 6 Things We Need to Learn From Youth About Preaching  
<<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/6-things-to-we-need-to-learn-from-youth-about-preaching>>.

# Savage Souls



*Out of control  
is the **human soul***

*when it needs to survive  
it feels the urge to thrive*

***burning like a fire**  
from pure blood desire*

truth is in us all cradle to the grave  
we're all savages learning to behave

Fiery lies are in our eyes  
*whilst our **savage** soul slowly dies.*

By Nick Lambrou

**References** : Orig04.deviantart.net.N.p., n.d. Web  
<[http://orig04.deviantart.net/2ca1/f/2013/148/5/0/fire\\_eye\\_by\\_sc8rdude-d66xzko.png](http://orig04.deviantart.net/2ca1/f/2013/148/5/0/fire_eye_by_sc8rdude-d66xzko.png)>.

# Shadows of Fear

By Celia Gazepi



I walk my way along the cherry trees,  
My route seems short, the end appears not near,  
Nor does my house feel near in the night breeze,  
My hands, my soul, my thought tremble in fear.

A sound I hear makes my heart beat again,  
I think of summer as the sound comes near;  
Warm does it feel, my fear leaves my right brain,  
But shadows sweep the warm feeling, oh dear!

I walk alone once more in the queer dark,  
The flowers rise, the leaves by wind are blown;  
Engraved were names on the cherry tree bark,  
My name is lost, I am alone, unknown.

The shadow comes to me more and more near,  
The end is close, my path is done I fear.

**Reference:** "Plagued by a Squelching Shadow." *Language Boucherie*. 21 April 2013. Web. 06 Feb. 2016. <<https://languageboucherie.wordpress.com/2013/04/21/plagued-by-a-squelching-shadow/>>.



Why you have to come into my life  
 And mess up my mind with your smile  
 Now the thought can't leave me alone  
 Wherever I go

Now as I stare at the bright moon  
 And remember that moment when I met you  
 The light summer breeze strokes my hair  
 Like you would if you weren't there

Tears start to form in my eyes  
 Because I know you won't be again in my life  
 And I see a star falling  
 Asking me to wish joy

As the star was falling  
 It told me  
 "Little girl don't cry  
 Everything is going to turn out fine."

## The Falling Star

By Angeliki Spakouri

**Reference:** "Heart Sky Spirituality & Beliefs." *Spiritual Unite Spiritual Unite*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.spiritualunite.com/photo/5/heart-sky/>>.

The  
 Path  
 of

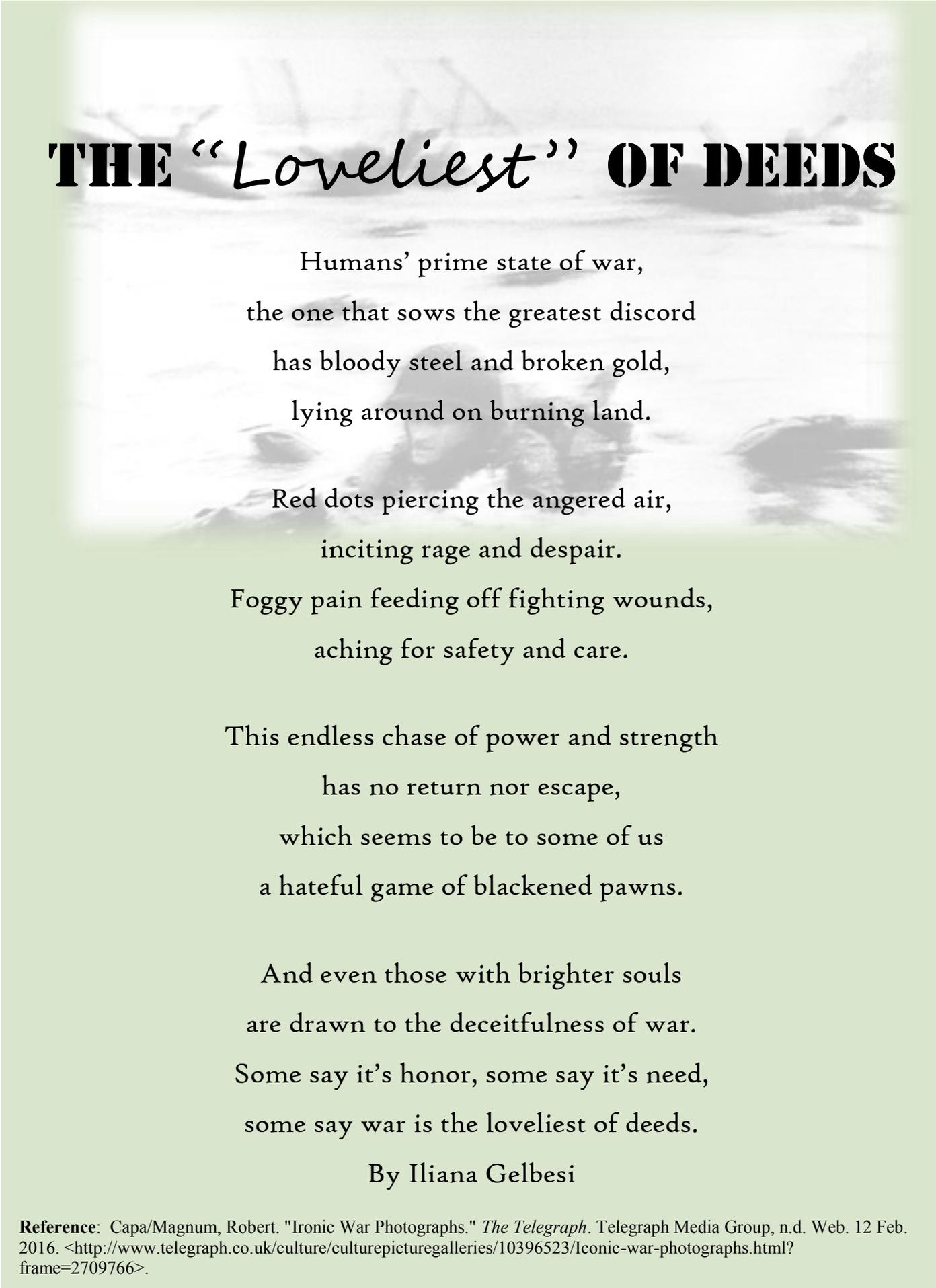


# Love

Two souls,  
 woven in one,  
 cross the rough path of life  
 permeated with selflessness  
 and love.

By Katerina Gkrintzia

**Reference:** *Flickr*. Yahoo! Web. 07 Feb. 2016. <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mgildberg/with/433007850/>>.



# THE “*Loveliest*” OF DEEDS

Humans’ prime state of war,  
the one that sows the greatest discord  
has bloody steel and broken gold,  
lying around on burning land.

Red dots piercing the angered air,  
inciting rage and despair.  
Foggy pain feeding off fighting wounds,  
aching for safety and care.

This endless chase of power and strength  
has no return nor escape,  
which seems to be to some of us  
a hateful game of blackened pawns.

And even those with brighter souls  
are drawn to the deceitfulness of war.  
Some say it’s honor, some say it’s need,  
some say war is the loveliest of deeds.

By Iliana Gelbesi

**Reference:** Capa/Magnum, Robert. "Ironic War Photographs." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group, n.d. Web. 12 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturepicturegalleries/10396523/Iconic-war-photographs.html?frame=2709766>>.

# The Odyssey

Her heart has been touched by darkness  
All she knows is pain  
She tries so hard  
But all of her attempts end in vain

She finally understood  
about the world and about just who they  
really are  
And where they have come and  
how they still have to go really far

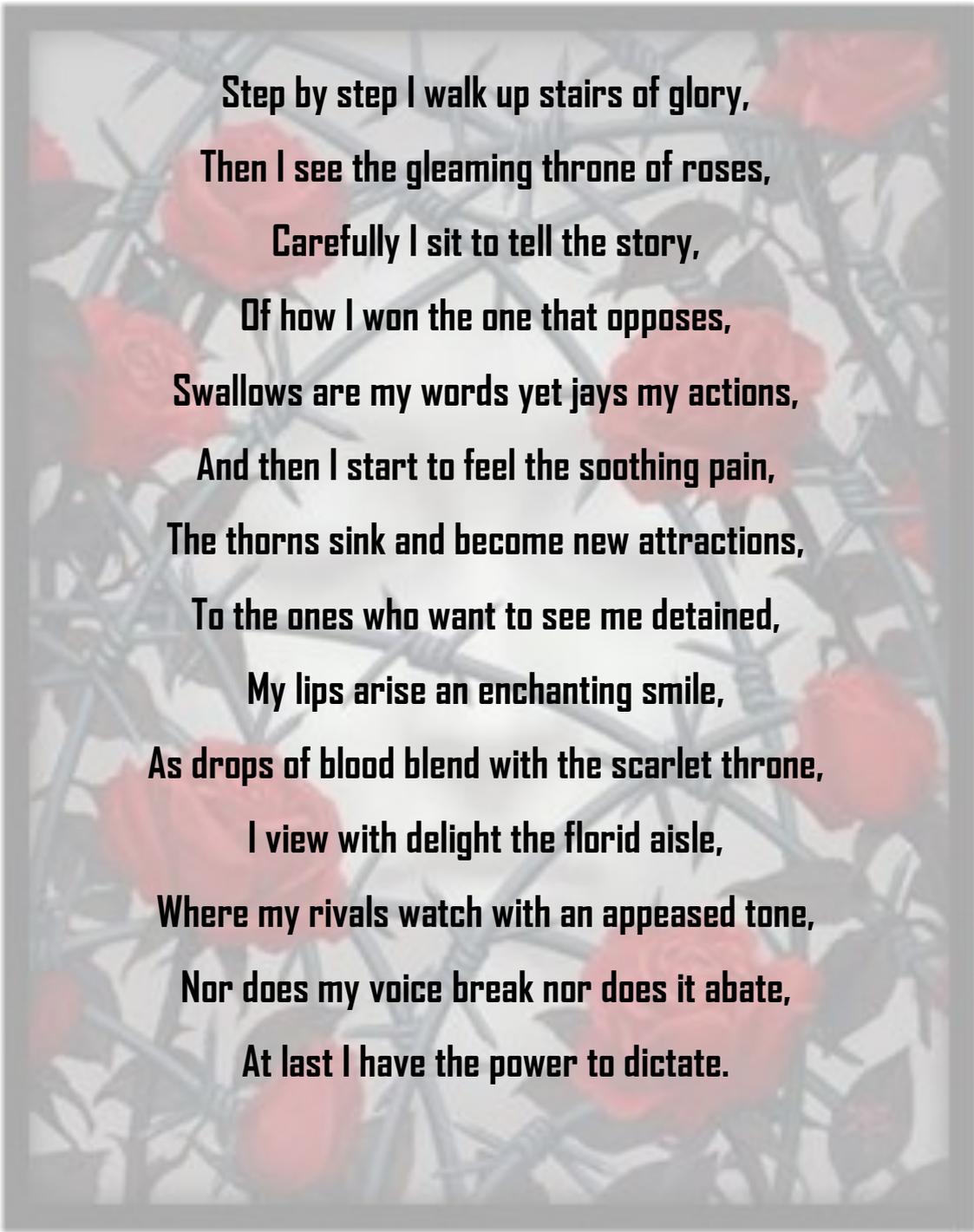
He can't seem to find out  
Who he really is  
When he is facing his demons  
They keep shattering his dreams

Always trying to dominate  
But he never dominated his heart  
Feeling lost, not knowing where to run  
Crawls up to touch the sun

It is the revenge of the dreamers  
They're gonna change the world  
That sounds like poetic justice  
If a flower bloomed in a dark room would  
you trust it?  
Sometimes being a dreamer is the worst  
trait  
You feel like no one can relate  
It's the journey that all of us face  
Our life's most difficult race  
But after the fire comes the rain,  
after the pleasure there's the pain.

By Dimitris Ntatsis

# THE SCARLET THRONE



**Step by step I walk up stairs of glory,  
Then I see the gleaming throne of roses,  
Carefully I sit to tell the story,  
Of how I won the one that opposes,  
Swallows are my words yet jays my actions,  
And then I start to feel the soothing pain,  
The thorns sink and become new attractions,  
To the ones who want to see me detained,  
My lips arise an enchanting smile,  
As drops of blood blend with the scarlet throne,  
I view with delight the florid aisle,  
Where my rivals watch with an appeased tone,  
Nor does my voice break nor does it abate,  
At last I have the power to dictate.**

By Christina Piliouni

**Reference:** *The Philosophy of the Rose.* Digital Image. *Agnostic Christianity.* 08 Jan. 2014. Web. 06 Feb. 2016. <<https://newenglandsun.wordpress.com/2014/01/08/the-philosophy-of-the-rose/>>.

# Red Ribbon



Wrap my spine in a red ribbon  
Tie my feet to the roots of this tree,  
the leaves tangled in my hair  
and let the river running through my veins burst out  
Being is a volatile state.  
Being is liminal.  
I am a liminality of sorts  
and so are you  
in the way we consume constraints  
and language  
I'm trying to reverse disintegration  
in my free time  
I'm trying to look beyond the edge  
as long as the ribbon holds my spine together.

By Maria Dima

**Reference:** *Crafty's Cuppa Coffee: Basic Information On Casting Love Spells*. Digital Image. *Crafty's Cuppa Coffee: Basic Information On Casting Love Spells*. Web. 07 Feb. 2016. <<http://craftychickscuppacoffee.blogspot.gr/2010/01/basic-information-on-casting-love.html>>.

# *The* *Temptress*

I thought of you, your piercing eyes of blue.  
Your kiss upon my lips has left a pain.  
You left without a word, without a clue.  
I long to kiss those lips so soft again.

Beneath the moon I wait to see my love.  
Again, again, my rose, I stand alone.  
I only hear so sad the morning dove.  
I find myself amidst the combat zone.

My love so true, so sad to you I cling.  
Desires fired to lure the weak well.  
To lie, temptress, to leave a bird on wing.  
So cruel to take a man so fast to hell.

I say to those who love maidens like thee.  
To run, to not succumb, only to flee.



By Lefteris Tsakagiannis

Reference: "Love Photos." *Love Photos - Pexels*. N.p., n.d. Web.  
16 Feb. 2016. <<https://www.pexels.com/search/love/>>.

# Withering



When I look at you, I see a million colors in your eyes.  
I see a shine brighter than the sun, whenever you smile.  
An iridescent glow, blinding.  
My satellite, my escape, my sunshine.  
Our love, my motive. My reason to live.  
Unbeatable, unbreakable, irresistible.  
Yet, young, ambitious, foolish.  
Together we ruled the world.  
We were immortal, we thought.

Time; Unbeatable, unbreakable, irresistible.  
The glow faded away, the beauty died.  
Achromatizing, colorless, dull, emotionless.  
I lost everything. I lost you.  
You were long gone. You took a part of me with you.  
Then, I was empty. My existence, meaningless.  
What was left of me, a ghost.  
A reflection of my once possible being.  
Dissolving, decaying, fading.  
Ending.

By Sigrid Moraitini

Reference: <http://eikajapan.com>. N.p., n.d. Web.

# WAITING



## at the Train Station

There you were  
standing at the train station  
waiting for someone  
that was never going to come  
you stayed still, never budged, never  
moved  
nothing was coming  
nothing was new  
you waited and waited  
and days passed you by  
but still there you waited  
hours flew by like seconds  
and days turned into months  
the seasons had changed  
but still there you stayed  
waiting for something  
waiting for someone  
waiting for nothing.

By Joanna Theodorakis

Reference: On *The Hunt*. N.p.n.d. Web 20  
Apr2016<<http://data.whicdn.com/images/157042616/>

# THE WAR

The moon up in the sky is crying

The earth is sighing

The war is rising

Some people thought they have the power

Some others thought they have the strength

Some thought that human life is nothing important

So they are bombing, killing and terrorizing

They only care about power and money

The fools, they forget they are human too.

The innocent are struggling

but Children are dying

and Mothers are crying...

Death rates are rising

People are fighting for freedom,

fighting for life

People are hoping

But can't see the light...

By Panagiotis Tsounakis

# TO LOVE!

To Love?

Oh love!

Thy

who

life's

have

claimed ,

and

families

tore.

One January morning I met you at dawn ●

But

can

I

trust

my

heart

or

my

head

Have you thy power to comfort and mend

Can you a

person's strife

remove?

Or will I end

As you conclude

Are

you

the

power

that

will

free

the

world?

Or

will

you

a

person's

heart

halt.

For you have been long left free

To roam in our minds and turn as to thy

To

love

or to

hate?

Thy answer is known to me

But

if

you turn to the right page it may be shown

to

thy.

# LOST YOU FOREVER

Anonymous

I miss you,  
Oh how much I miss you  
I don't know what to do  
Without you

You're my voice  
You're my motivation  
Not only my inspiration  
Until now and from now on  
I will never stop trying even if  
You aren't home

I forgive you but also I'll remember you  
You will always be in my heart  
Like in a cave as a bat  
You will talk or scream  
For me to help me  
To guide me and to congratulate me  
For everything I have done  
I made it!

When I play I think of you  
When I study I think of you  
All the times you yelled at me  
And all the times you supported me  
No matter what I've done  
You will always be in my heart

You are up there, so far away  
Watching me doing everything is possible  
To forget that I have lost you  
Just for a while  
Only for a while

Because, I want  
And I will always want  
To remember our lovely moments,  
Our connection, which now is only in my imagination  
Our talks, no matter how many times we fought  
Showing our love,  
That is still between us

You can't come home  
And I can't reach you  
Because I've lost you forever  
I miss you  
Oh how much I miss you



*Illustration by Stella Pappi*



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## **PART III**

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# **NON-FICTION**

**“I still believe nonfiction is the most important literature to come out of the second half of the 20th century.”**

**- Tom Wolfe**

# Interview with **Mike Seitis**

By Natalia Alipranti

It was a warm June night in 2013, and Mike was riding his bike on his way home. It was very late and he was tired from his exhausting track practice. He never saw the market stalls left in the street...it happened so quickly, sirens blaring, lights flashing, everything was spinning.

Mike was twenty-five and a talented runner in the 400m hurdles. He lived in Rhodes, where he was loved by everyone around him; outgoing and full of life, he was always ready for an adventure. Everyone on the island treated him as his own son or best friend. Now, he is also their pride and joy: he is Greece's first amputee World sprinter.

I first met Mike two months ago, when we both trained with the same coach at the Olympic Stadium. I can still remember how he approached me and greeted me with a smile that covered all the pain he had suffered. When I think of someone who has an amazing perspective on life, Mike Seitis, a true hero, comes to mind.



*Mike at the World Competition 2015 in Doha, Qatar  
(The start of the 100m at the World Championship)*

## **Can you tell us how the accident occurred, Mike?**

Well, it all happened in June, the summer of 2013, shortly after my 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was just an ordinary night, and I had gone out with my friends to relax after a tiring practice. As I was riding my bike, I noticed the visibility was low, and everything was dark and misty. There were no lights, making driving difficult. I was driving really fast, anxious to get home, and I didn't notice the market stalls in the street. To be honest, I don't remember how I crashed into one, but suddenly, I was on the ground with people gathering around me. I could see lights flashing, and I knew something serious had happened.

## **What was your initial reaction when you woke up and realized your right leg had been amputated?**

Because I never lost consciousness, the truth is, I was prepared for it. I had the time to process the situation and was ready to hear the worst news. I think I was preparing myself at a

certain level, at least to the extent one can do for such a thing. However, with the support of my family and my friends, I struggled and overcame my problems. Day by day, practice by practice, I slowly improved. It was a very challenging and painful process, but I refused to feel sorry for myself.

**When did you start your training sessions after the accident?**

I returned to the track four months after my accident, and two months later, I had my first race in the United Arab Emirates. There, I won my first gold medal in the 200 Meters Sprint with a Prosthetic Leg.

**After winning your first gold medal in a new type of race, how did you process the emotions that came with this victory?**

Winning first place in the race obviously boosted my self-esteem and, at the end of the day, gave me the motivation to continue my very painful practice. As time passed, I felt more and more confident, more self-assured, and that helped me in my other races as well.

**What support do you have?**

There is a group of people who fully support me. My family, my friends, my coach, and my physiotherapists are the people who have stood by me from the very first moment, and I owe them a huge thank you!! Sadly however, sponsors tend to ignore athletes with physical disabilities, and as a result, my fellow athletes and I have very limited support or funding from the private sector. This is true of the government as well. To me, it seems as

if they don't care about their athletes. This is even more apparent when they deal with disabled athletes. This truly saddens me.

**What is your motivation then? Why do you still keep competing?**

My everyday motive is to make myself happy...I am fulfilled only when I go to OAKA and practice. The moment I start warming up, everything changes, and I feel completely free.

**How did you feel at the World Championship after coming in 4<sup>th</sup> in the 400m race, 6<sup>th</sup> in the 100m, and 5<sup>th</sup> in the relay?**

I was absolutely thrilled! It was my first World Championship, and I really wanted one of the three first places. Even though I didn't win a medal, I enjoyed it and felt powerful! It gave me the strength to continue my effort, and I will be back stronger next time to win those medals for Greece!

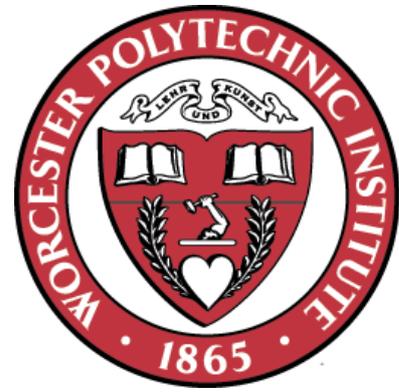
**Mike, tell us, what's your next big goal?**

The next goal is the Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro this summer. I'm really looking forward to going there as it has always been my dream to take part in the Olympic Games. Obviously, it is going to be a huge challenge for me, competing against the best of the best!

Well Mike, See you there! And thank you for inspiring us!

Reference:  
"The Start of 100m at World Championship #GreekNationalteam#Hellas#beyondincredible#100m#Nike - Seitis." *Imgrum*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2016. <[http://www.imgrum.net/media/1110781142518350747\\_202790143](http://www.imgrum.net/media/1110781142518350747_202790143)>.

# How My Views Changed as an International Student



*By Spyridon Antonatos '15*

I have been in the US for almost half a year. I completed my first semester at WPI, an engineering-tech school near Boston, in the state of Massachusetts. So far, I cannot tell if my views have changed entirely about certain issues, but I am sure that being abroad has transformed the way I perceive education and life.

Campus life can be dull if you stay idle. That is why there is a huge number of clubs to fill your empty schedule with whatever suits you, including food, sports, and music. The concept of fraternities, which was new to me, changed the way I see bonding among students in a university. In short, the first lesson I learned is that there are no excuses; if you really lack a skill or piece of knowledge, you go out and find it. If you want something, just do it.

Moreover, education is much more than learning theory and applying that theory when tackling challenging problems and exercises. Here, education is all about 'doing'. It is all about learning through an amazing process involving some of the most significant qualities one must possess: cooperation, respect, and above all, change. Change, not only in the sense that the team needs to change its plan, but in the sense that it needs to adapt to any new challenge that arises. And every one of us will have enough of those challenges whatever we do. Therefore, we have to

be ready to face them, and getting the appropriate education allows us to do so.

Life is different. I don't know if that is because I am studying abroad or because I am a college student, but it is. I understand that because every time I wake up in the morning, I look out my window and I think: 'Well today is a new day. Let's see what is going on.' Walking on campus heading to my first morning class, I listen to different languages, and I see people of various cultural backgrounds before I even step into the classroom; this daily, morning experience not only makes me respect the uniqueness of every single human being on earth but also makes me appreciate my own identity. I am different, and so is everyone else.

Overall, studying abroad has not only changed my views, but it has changed who I really am: my core self-being, my fundamental perceptions, and mostly, the way I interact with society. And my guess is that happens to everyone who follows the demanding path of international student life.

**Reference:**

"Worcester Polytechnic Institute." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2016. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worcester\\_Polytechnic\\_Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worcester_Polytechnic_Institute)>.

# Mathematics:

## Paradise or Hell?



(Thinking Gears in Head Silhouette)

An Interview with Mr Tefkros Michaelides  
By Ariadni Xydia and Letitia Papagiannakopoulou

***What made you understand that math is your life?***

From a very early age, let's say Gym 3 when I stopped having aspirations of becoming an astronaut or a fireman or things like that. When I thought about a career or a profession, I always wanted to be a mathematician. Maybe it is because my mother was also a mathematician, one of the first women mathematicians in Greece, and her influence on me was considerable. Maybe because I always thought highly of mathematics. I don't know, I really don't. But as far as I can remember myself, I always wanted to do mathematics.

***Did inspiring teachers influence your decision?***

By all means, by all means. I had two or three extremely inspiring teachers who influenced me to feel good about pursuing mathematics, but as I told you, my decision had already been made. I might say that inspiring teachers influenced me, whereas less inspiring teachers did not make me change my mind.

***What is the thing that you most love about mathematics? That made you like it so much that you dedicated your life to it?***

First of all, its simplicity, its clear scope, its clear vision. It is the fact that whenever something has been mathematically proven, it has been proven

forever. It's its abstraction. It is the fact that with the same tool, I might study the trajectory of a bullet, the free fall of an object, or the reflection in a mirror. All these things have the same mathematical background. The fact that a moving stone attached to a string follows the same trajectory as the shape of a wave when you throw a stone in the sea, or as the moon when there is a full moon is something that has really challenged me. The fact that for very different phenomena, you can find a common background.

***In your opinion, why does mathematics rule the world?***

Well, unfortunately mathematics does not rule the world. It is behind all natural things that we see, it is behind lots of things in our lives, but, unfortunately, mathematical rationalism does not rule the world. I mean the rulers of the world have absolutely no mathematical thought. That is why their decisions are very often irrational.

***An amazingly large number of people say that they don't understand math. Sometimes people do not even see a point to math. They think mathematics is too complicated. Don't you find that strange? Why does it happen?***

No, I don't find it strange, given the structure of our education. I think that the main thing responsible for what we now call mathematicophobia stems from our educational system. Mathematics is sometimes given in just one form, whereas for every young person, there are various gateways to knowledge. Therefore, a good educational system should investigate what is

the most appropriate means for every young person. This is one reason. A second reason for mathematicophobia is mathematical rationality. One can be a politician without fully understanding what politics is because phrases in politics can be interpreted in many different ways. Therefore, ignorance or incompetence in politics is much less easily detectable than ignorance in mathematics. Mathematics is a task that requires work. All serious tasks require work.

***Do you believe that children are being taught mathematics in an effective way? If not, what do you think should change?***

No, I think that children are not taught mathematics in an effective way. What should be addressed, in my opinion, is, first of all, the problem with an oriented introduction to mathematics. You should not teach mathematics ex-cathedra. You should teach mathematics as a solution to problems, problems which are interesting to the students, not to you. A second very important factor is narrative. I think that narrative should be incorporated into mathematics teaching. I think that mathematics should be presented like a story, not like a boring collection of theories.

***Is talent needed for mathematical studies? Or hard work and passion are enough?***

I once met an eminent mathematician, Laurent Lafforgue, holder of the Fields Medal, which is the highest distinction for a mathematician, who was once asked that very question by a journalist. He said that talent is a very bad thing because if you do not want to work, you can avoid doing so by

saying either: “I don’t have talent, therefore it is not worth working,” or “I have talent, so I do not need to work.” So, thus interpreted, talent is a very big hindrance to knowledge. I think that talent should not be considered as an asset in studying mathematics. I am convinced that passion and good work help, but they help on various roads to mathematics. Of course, I believe that very talented people will do mathematics no matter what. A typical example is the most eminent mathematician of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alexander Grothendieck, who was abandoned by his parents. He spent his school years in a concentration camp in France during the German occupation. All the odds were against him. However, he became a discerning mathematician. So, his talent was very important, but to this talent, he added enormous amounts of work, despite the difficult circumstances. Other colleagues, equally eminent mathematicians, had excellent schooling, excellent teachers, ideal family situations. We can see that things are really random and variable, but one thing is certain. You cannot do mathematics if you are not ready to work. Talent and passion are things that may or may not occur randomly.

***Can somebody make a career in the mathematics field? What can somebody do after studying maths in college besides being a professor?***

At this moment and as the labour market has dramatically changed over recent years, studies, with the exception of those for a very specific career, are not necessarily directly related to one’s career. Of course, if you want to be a doctor, you have to study medicine, and if you want to be a

carpenter, you have to study wood working. But for most jobs, the important thing in one’s educational background is the quality not the content. Therefore, nowadays, people holding degrees in mathematics are sought after applicants in a variety of fields, from molecular biology to economics or to climate forecasting or to management or even professions like journalism. So teaching mathematics is not the only career for a mathematician. A mathematical background is always valued independent of the career.

***Do you believe that mathematics evolves eternally?***

Yes, I do. Well, eternally is a bit of an exaggeration (laughing), but I have studied the history of mathematics, and I have seen it evolve for, let’s say, the last 40,000 years. If we consider that the first mathematical experiments were revealed by objects found at paleolithic sites, objects bearing scratches which prove that people were calculating by scratching on bones or sticks. From these first men counting to today’s mathematicians, mathematics has incessantly evolved. In various phases of its life, it has radically changed. For example, mathematics radically changed in ancient Greece, where the concept of proof was introduced. It also changed during the scientific revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the concept of the infinite was first created, and it changed again at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because with the appearance of computers, algorithms became prominent in mathematical thought.

***Do you believe that eventually computers will rule the world and will be better at mathematics than human beings?***

It depends on what being “better at mathematics” means. I think what you are asking is whether that they will be quicker in operations, but operations are just a minor part of mathematics. One thing that I think that computers will never be able to do is ask the correct questions. And this is of the utmost importance in mathematics.

***Is there a particular unsolved mathematical problem that really intrigues you? Are you trying at the moment or have you tried at a point of your life to find a solution to a particular problem?***

There are various open mathematical problems that intrigue me. I have tried and have partially succeeded in solving one minor mathematical problem; I had to do it in order to obtain my PhD. But even at that age, I understood that what intrigues me more is not creating mathematics, which would mean solving open problems, but retelling mathematics. I am a mathematics *reteller*. This means that I prefer to study the work done by other people, their inventions, and then translate them to a form that the general public can understand. I am intrigued by mathematical problems, but I do not try to solve open problems. I do follow the work of people that solve them and eventually comment on it and explain it.

***What intrigues you about mathematics in combination with literature?***

Most human activities have inspired literature. Mathematics is the last discipline to do this. With some very few exceptions, mathematics has become, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a source of inspiration in Literature, whereas physics was a source of inspiration throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century in medicine, hunting, biology, and the like. Mathematics is virgin territory when it comes to inspiring Literature. Indeed, mathematical stories are very interesting, and I think that they can be easily turned into a compelling literary works.

***What is the role of mathematics in our world today? Could you imagine a life without it?***

No, I cannot imagine life without it, and I cannot even think of a single item which is ‘mathematics free.’ I once said I would like to give everybody a sticker, and tell them to stick it on something, material or idea, that is ‘mathematics free;’ I am convinced that everybody would come back with the sticker in their hands.

***What would you say to people who hate math?***

I would tell them that hatred is not the best solution if one is afraid of something. People hate math or think that they hate math because they are afraid of it.

I would advise them to approach math from another perspective, using another method. They should find literature related to mathematics. They should find what math is about. If one fears math less, then he or she will hate it less.



# Life as a **Blind** Person

By: Kyziridou Eleftheria

The word 'blind' is defined by one simple word: sightless. Close your eyes and try to do an activity you do every day, like tying your shoe laces. You will quickly realize that it is almost impossible for you. All of a sudden, it is easy for everyone to understand that life for a blind person is extremely hard. People who are unable to see face a lot of difficulties everyday, but that doesn't stop them from doing what everyone else does and achieving great things. They learn to depend on their other senses like touch, smell, sound, and taste. By using these senses, they can react to the world around them. After much practice, they end up not needing their sight anymore as they have developed other capabilities to understand or communicate. There are some cases, though, that blind men become a burden to their families as they feel unable to take care of themselves and other family members must help them with everything they need to do. No one could say that being blind is easy as it demands great strength to get over the difficulties that life brings.

I recently had the opportunity to visit "Dialogue in the Dark" in Badminton theatre to experience life in Athens as a blind person for one hour. It was one of the things that I will never forget in my life. It is ironic because I can't explain what it was like. I can only describe the feeling I got walking through a black room with five other complete strangers. At the beginning and with the lights on, all six of us were given white canes like the blind carry. Then, the lights went off, and a guide came to meet us. It was really intense and scary because we had no other choice but to trust him. We could see nothing. While we were walking, we got to relax more, and the awkwardness we had went away. I didn't know these people, yet I got the chance to meet them in a completely different way. Reservations that all strangers have when they look at each other don't exist in a world of

darkness. Instead, there is a feeling of intimacy and understanding as you know that the others face the exact same difficulty as you. I really expected this experience to be more dramatic and sad, but when we came out of the room, we all had grins on our faces. I then realized the real purpose of this 'experiment.' "Dialogue in the Dark" means dialogue with things that are only visible to the soul. It is an experience that makes you face your fear of the unknown and finally understand that there is really much more than meets the eye.



(Blindness—Last One Dies)



(My Vision Test)

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"My Vision Test." *Blindness*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2016. <<http://www.myvisiontest.com/newsarchive.php?page=4&action=tag&id=56&dl=0>>.

# Does People's Up-bringing Affect Their Views?



By Cleo Lagadianou

What influences the ways in which we view the world and how are our perspectives shaped? Why are my views different from those of my sister although we have been brought up by the same parents, in the same environment? These are questions that I find most intriguing as they make me wonder how people from different geographical, cultural, and religious backgrounds, with such varied points of view and interpretations of the world, can learn to live in harmony instead of endless conflict.

Obviously, people's views are influenced by their family early in life. A conservative, religious family will bring up its children differently compared to a more liberal family (Our Perceptions Help to Shape Our Realities). These children will probably interpret the world from different perspectives: the former seeing God as the creator of the world, whereas the latter might explain it in scientific terms. They will both insist that their views are correct and may both have very strong arguments to defend them. For example, we know that the causes of many wars, such as the Crusades, were based on religious disagreements.

Later in life, our views are shaped by our friends, education, pop idols, TV, and other media. A young adult in Greece will probably have views shaped by the same sources as a young adult in another European country due to the Internet. However, because of the difference in culture, weather, and history, these views will differ to a certain degree (Our Perceptions Help to Shape Our Realities). Views will have a much bigger disparity when people live in areas where technology isn't as accessible, such as Africa or certain areas of India. These children will most likely have a much more restricted view of the world at large, but they may be more attuned to nature and their immediate environment. The forest, the savannah, or the desert may hold no threat for these people, whereas for someone like me, raised in a city with every possible privilege, these places seem frightening and hostile as I do not think I could survive there without modern technology.

I must say that I would most likely feel awkward in such an environment were I to strike up a conversation with a teenager from such a different background. Would we have common interests to talk about? It would be interesting to find ways to bridge these gaps and to communicate despite our opposing views or even better, because of them. Communicating with people from different backgrounds is difficult, but it can be achieved not only by learning about the culture and the habits of people from different nationalities but also by learning to accept diversity.

## Reference:

"Our Perceptions Help to Shape Our Realities | The Unbounded Spirit." *The Unbounded Spirit RSS*. N.p., 14 June 2012. Web. 18 Apr. 2016. <<http://theunboundedspirit.com/our-perceptions-help-to-shape-our-realities/>>.

# To Die at Will or Not to Die at Will?



(mercator.net)

By Irene Konstantinopoulou

Since the dawn of civilization, a crucial matter of life and death has puzzled many people, especially physicians. This matter concerns the legalization and authorization of euthanasia. *Euthanasia*, a Greek word, means ‘good death’ or ‘easy death.’ As originally used, the term referred to painless and peaceful natural deaths in old age that occurred in comfortable and familiar surroundings. However, this usage is now archaic. As the word is currently understood, euthanasia occurs when one person ends the life of another person for the purpose of ending his/her pain or suffering (Smith). As mentioned before, this has become a very controversial issue, and doctors are discussing the possibility of decriminalizing euthanasia for medical purposes. Specifically, a few proposals to legalize euthanasia were made in the United States and Germany in the late nineteenth century (Basic Arguments about Euthanasia). In 1920, two highly respected German academics, Karl Binding, a law professor, and Alfred Hoche, a physician, published, *Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life*, which advocated euthanasia as a compassionate “healing treatment.” The authors argued that mercy killing should be permitted for three categories of patients upon request of competent patients or their families: the terminally ill, mortally wounded, comatose, and disabled people—particularly those with cognitive impairments (Basic Arguments about Euthanasia). Various attempts have been made to support the legitimacy of euthanasia, but the consequent question expressed is whether this solution is in favour of life existence or against it.

An abundance of arguments can be marshaled in order to support each of the two contradictory views on authorizing euthanasia. On the one hand, euthanasia should be legalized worldwide for four main reasons. First of all, a person should have the right to decide the time and manner in which he/she will die (Smith). Moreover, when it comes to the ethical aspect of euthanasia, it is thought to be cruel and merciless to object to someone’s right to choose to end his/her life, especially when suffering from terminal and incurable chronic diseases, unstoppable pain, and further distress. Furthermore, euthanasia is already applied. These are illegal acts that take place behind close doors, so it is preferable to have them out in the open so that they can be properly regulated and scrutinized (Basic Arguments about

Euthanasia).

On the other hand, many counterarguments can be formulated to claim that the fatal solution of euthanasia should be prohibited at all costs. Firstly, fear is a great ‘weapon,’ as patients become defenseless and weak when it comes to potential pain and decaying caused by jabbing the lethal needle in their own skin (Basic Arguments about Euthanasia). In addition, medical excellence and further development are significantly subverted. In other words, doctors employing euthanasia tend to stop working on advancing palliative care—treatment that relieves intense pain—since administering euthanasia is easier than designing techniques for keeping the moribund alive. Besides, legalization of euthanasia will anesthetize public opinion because the regulations of law irrefutably have a profound impact on public conscience. People often cease to object to a practice by the time it becomes legalized and widely accepted. For instance, the Nazi euthanasia programme during WW II unveiled the numbness of those involved (Smith). Also, the accepted codes of medical ethics, like the Hippocratic Oath, the World Medical Association in its 1992 Statement of Marbella, and more recently the NZ Medical Association that convicted euthanasia of being an unethical solution (Basic Arguments about Euthanasia) are strongly violated. Lastly, euthanasia gives excessive power to doctors, a kind of power that unfortunately can be abused. This risk is the main reason that euthanasia should be prohibited by the law.

In short, it can be inferred that the weight of the scale falls to the side of the disadvantages of legitimizing euthanasia as an ultimate medical technique. Let us not forget, also, that the value of the human life is so great that it cannot be deliberately taken away by anyone, not even by the person suffering. All the same, euthanasia can be allowed if the best interests of all are satisfied, without simultaneously violating anyone’s rights. A person’s decision to end his/her life can have profound and devastating effects on those left behind, such as guilt, anger, bitterness and intense feelings of injustice.

*Euthanasia,*  
a Greek  
word,  
means  
‘good death’  
or ‘easy  
death.’

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# VIRTUAL REALITY

## PROS AND CONS

By Nicholas Papandreou & Konstantinos Tsiourakis



Marines from the 2d Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, train with the Future Immersive Training Environment (Brienne 2015).

*Two years ago, the tech industry introduced a new concept to the world, a concept that one could only imagine or read about in sci-fi books. A new device that allows one to experience another reality as if he were right there: Zombie apocalypse, alien invasion, a battlefield... While this can sound awesome, this new technology also brings new fears to the public, which, right now, is considering the potential downside of such technology - factors like the price of these devices and the possible health risks. In this article, Konstantinos and Nicholas “debate” the pros and cons of virtual reality.*

### KONSTANTINOS:

I want you to imagine something beyond extreme. Imagine surfing in Hawaii next to sharks or fighting off zombies from a nuclear reactor during *World War Z*. Got an image? Those images are for TV, the movies, video games; they are not something that you can actually experience – or are they? Of course, the only way you can truly feel this adrenaline rush is by doing the aforementioned in real life, which is difficult since sharks bite, and zombies don't really exist. With the creation of Virtual Reality (VR), however, it is now possible to ‘experience’ another reality, meaning that users can visit an alien planet wearing slippers, while their families are sleeping next door. With the help of sophisticated equipment, VR creates the illusion that an artificial environment is real. Laptops, tablets, smartphones, television sets, and projectors all help create virtual reality. Many people believe that this gift from the ‘Technology Gods’ is a dream of the fu-

ture, but the future is now, and VR has a lot to offer as it will be one of the most important technological advances of this century. One of virtual reality's main purposes is to bring a whole new meaning to the world of gaming. Through the usage of VR equipment, the user, or in this case, the 'gamer,' gets to make his gaming experience even more realistic. The gamer fully experiences the game environment, while at the same time, he/she has the physical interaction with the other parties involved. He feels as if he is inside the game itself, using his body to control the game, not a conventional controller. The user feels the steering wheel while driving, sees the enemies' shadows, and hears their footsteps. Who could resist that?

NICHOLAS:

This sounds incredible. If it is true, that is great, but we will see a different reality if we consider what is actually possible today and take a look at the underlying weaknesses of VR. This concept is new and completely different from anything we have today; until two years ago, it was only an idea the Star Trek writer had with Geordi La Forge's visor. Indeed, after hearing Konstantinos' arguments, this can sound awesome, but this technology hasn't yet matured enough for most people to access in order to engage in the activities that Konstantinos has described. Besides, even if this problem were solved, it would eventually lead us into a world with no privacy and our lives would be controlled by the powerful. Something like the beginning of *The Matrix*.

As I said, I agree with Constantine on the pros of VR for gaming, but this technology, although well-advertised by companies, is definitely very 'young' and expensive. Let me give you some context: First of all, to wear the Vive, for example, you have to put up with all the cables that connect the product to your computer, which will be 'driving' all the games that you play. Also, you have to allocate an entire room, remove all furniture, and hang sensors required for the Vive to know where you are in the room up on the wall. This means even more cables going to your computer that is driving the games that you play.

Furthermore, every VR headset is just a screen strapped onto your head which knows where you are in relation to the sensors in the room. It is a \$700 screen. The games that you can play, which are very limited and don't even come close to the quality that we are used to, require a lot of graphics power, which comes from your computer. If your computer is not that powerful, you need to buy a new one, which will set you back at least another \$1,500. You might say that you can use your phone as a computer. Let's be realistic. The experience and games that one can play on his phone don't even come close to the real deal. So, VR is a rich man's game. For now at least... ten years from now, things may be different. As I said, it is really early for this to be adopted by more than an elite few.

KONSTANTINOS:

I concede that, at this very point in time, equipment used to illustrate virtual environments is indeed expensive. However, as with many other products in their early phases, as time passes, cheaper ways of production will be discovered and put to the test. Wearable tech, for example, took just two years to hit the masses.

However, let's explore other applications of this tech, applications that go beyond entertainment. For instance, VR can help train people whose lives would be put at risk under real circumstances; for example, soldiers can get to experience an environment similar to the one of a war zone. Architects can create scaled-down houses; doctors can use simulations of surgeries to train their younger colleagues. VR can also help disabled individuals experience visiting a variety of locations. For instance, they can go on a virtual tour of the Eiffel Tower while sitting on their sofa. Virtual tours have existed for quite a long time, but there is a key difference separating a documentary tour from a tour using VR equipment. In the first, the viewer is limited only to one visible panel (that being the TV screen/panel). However, in the second one, the user can interact with the environment by looking all around the room, not at just a single screen. As a result, the tour can become more realistic and enjoyable. The possibilities are endless.

NICHOLAS:

Again, as with many new advances, the health factor comes into play. Doctors say that too much TV will ruin your eyes, so you must not watch up close. VR is a TV screen right in front of your eyes, and there have already been reported cases of eye damage due to too much time looking into a virtual reality headset. Is it better to take a virtual tour of the Eiffel Tower and play games or save your sight?

KONSTANTINOS:

As with all video games, every one of us must be careful not to overdo it. Concluding, for most of us, VR is and probably will always be just a toy, something that brings out the child inside of us. Who doesn't like being a child? Some might say it is useless, while others, mostly young people, will think it is the 'coolest thing' in the world. Many people can use it as a tool, something that can help execute an important task. But, there will always be people who will try to argue against it. What will VR evolve to in the future? What would you like it to be?



Mark Zuckerberg at the "Unpacked" event (McCormick 2016)

NICHOLAS:

Closing, I'd like all of you to consider the picture above. This picture was taken when Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook and Oculus, took the floor at Samsung's "Unpacked" event on February 21st 2016. What can you see? I see people plugged into a system, people who cannot see the person walking right next to them. Perhaps even more frightening is the fact that he is the owner and CEO of Facebook. This is where I think that the *Matrix* comes into play. Can't this picture be the first steps of living in an environment like the *Matrix* where people (instead of machines) have complete control over us and look at everything we do? In the picture, we see a clear distinction between the general public and the powerful man in the room. Zuckerberg knows what these people are seeing or doing with their VR headsets. What's to say that he will not take advantage of that and become Orwell's "Big Brother, watching you" or have his machines rule us? Is this what will be happening in the future? Is that where we are headed? One question remains to be answered, "Is this what we want?"

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# Save a HUMAN, Kill an ANIMAL

By Palmyra Kaltsa



*A physiological demonstration with vivisection of a dog. Oil painting by Emile-Edouard Mouchy, 1832. From the Wellcome Library, London (The Chirurgeon's Apprentice).*

**M**edicine as a field mainly promotes positive change. Its evolution has increased life expectancy, cured diseases, and ameliorated the quality of life. However, despite being prosperous to the human race, its industrialization has had disastrous side effects on the rest of the ecosystem, which only a few seem to acknowledge. Each year, an estimated seventy million animals are tortured and slaughtered in the name of science. According to research, one animal dies in an American laboratory every second, in Japan every two seconds, and in the UK every twelve seconds. Tests are run on a daily basis. Medical institutions' examinees are mainly non-humans. The examinees are modified into conditions useful for gaining knowledge about human disease or for testing human treatments. Because animals that are as distant from humans as mice and rats share many physiological and genetic similarities with humans, animal experimentation can be helpful for furthering medical science. But how moral could this be? Should animals be poorly treated for the sake of human life? Views on animal testing range from positive to negative. According to doctors and scientists, if suffering is minimized in all experiments and human benefits are gained which could not be obtained by using other methods, then vivisection is acceptable. For instance, many drugs were invented in this way and it is said that progress has been made in the cure of cancer and AIDS. On the other hand, there are some clear ethical arguments from society which claims that animal testing should be banned. In the name of human curiosity, many animals have been killed in various ways such as poison and electrocution. Their suffering continues as vivisection is done very secretly, behind closed doors. The image they present to the public is totally different from what is really happening. Many times, animals suffer immensely as anesthesia is not used for unknown reasons, and the vocal cords of the animals are cut to avoid the sounds of screaming. Therefore, it is understood that if vivisection were done in public, it would be considered a criminal conviction. Also, nobody knows if humans have the right to subject animals to these experiments and to stop their lives, but they certainly do have the power to act in this manner. Maybe vivisection is the most controversial issue that pertains to human behavior towards animals. There are two opposite views: one that claims that animal experimentation will produce great benefits for humanity that it is morally acceptable and the other that believes the level of suffering and the number of animals involved are so high that the benefits to humanity do not provide moral justification. Ultimately, is there a right answer that covers both the moral and practical needs?

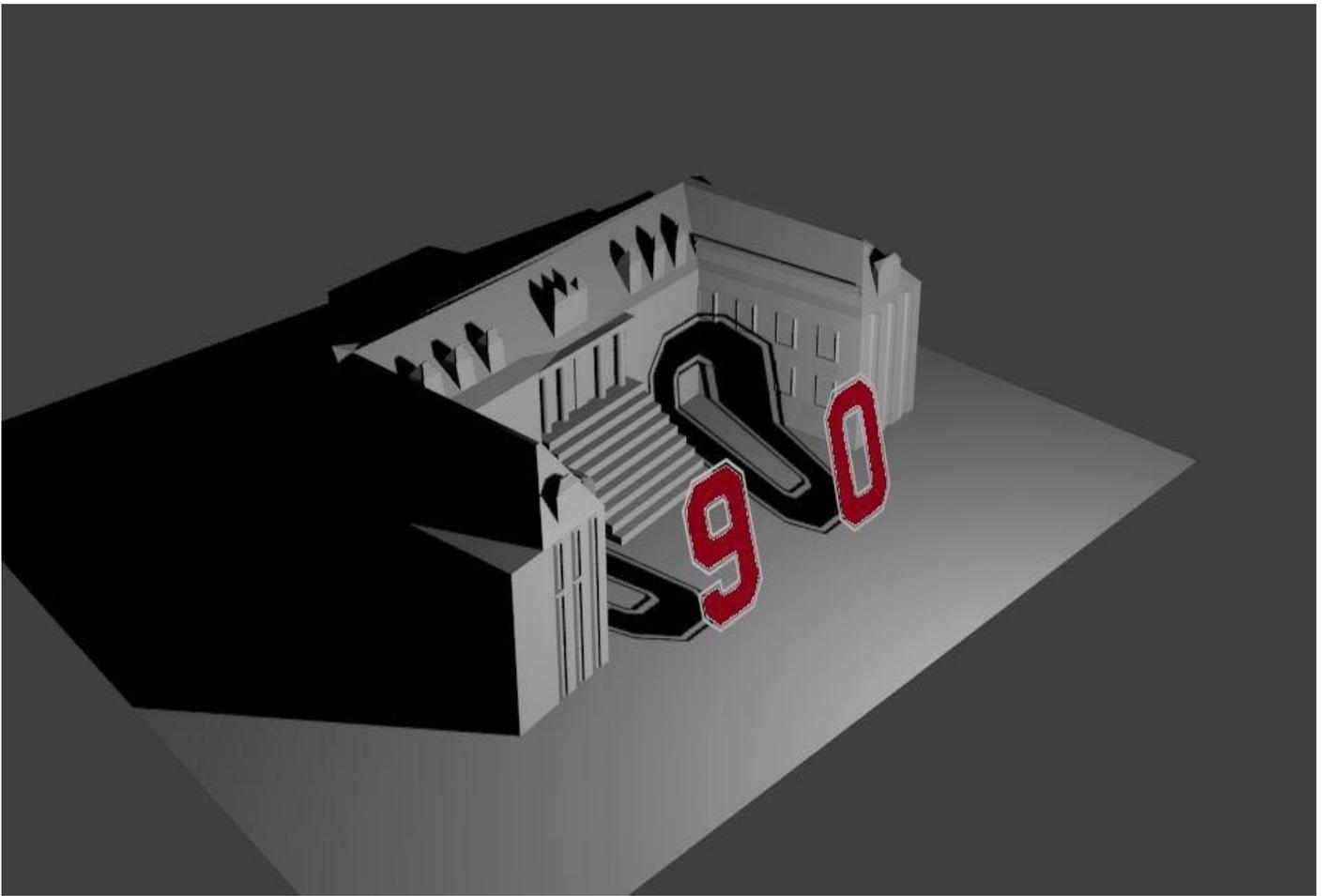
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