



NEVERMORE

Franklin Pierce's Literary Journal
Fall 2019

Cover Art By Lisa Muscedere

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Franklin Pierce's Literary Journal

Editor-In-Chief

Kimberly DiLorenzo

Editorial Board

Kyana Brizuela

Desiree West

Elizabeth Coughlin

Editor's Letter

My name is Kimberly DiLorenzo and I'm the Editor-in-Chief of the Fall 2019 edition of *Nevermore*. I'm currently in my Senior year here at Franklin Pierce University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing. Since a young age I've had a strong desire to write and an even stronger desire to encourage those who also love to write to share their voice and their story with others. *Nevermore* is the perfect place to do that and I'm incredibly excited to be a part of it. There is something remarkable about seeing your own words printed on a page in fine black ink, especially when those words have a high chance of impacting someone else and I believe that is something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime.

Nevermore is a student-run literary journal produced every semester. It showcases Franklin Pierce University students' poems, short stories, photography, and drawings. A new editor is selected every semester. The editor chooses their editorial board, sets deadline dates for submissions, creates the final journal, and brings it to press.

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Look to the Light

Lisa Muscedere



I'm Scared

Jessica Strassburg

I'm scared.

I'm scared to teach our youth,
How to have passion and a purpose.
To help them understand their worth,
And how to stand up for themselves.

I'm scared to walk beyond that zone.
The school zone where we learn and we educate,
About acceptance, passion, empathy and kindness;
And we teach that no matter who you are, you are important and loved.

I'm scared of the bullets, of the malicious massacres.
The unknown who are plotting, waiting, targeting.
The guns meant to protect becoming the antagonist,
Tearing families, schools and hopeful thoughts apart.

I'm scared that one day, I too will be a victim,
Not of death but of the trauma and unheard voices.
The teachers and students before us who have risen up
Are silenced with thoughts and prayers.

I'm scared because
Columbine
Sandy hook
Marjory Stoneman Douglas
And now, Santa Fe

I'm scared because
122 people were killed
187,000 were exposed to gun violence
In schools since 1999

Now, we rise.
If the voices won't be heard and schools won't be safe
It is our job to fix what's broken
It is our job to break the pattern that has become a norm.

I'm done being scared.
Enough is enough.

Keene in the Rain

Kimberly DiLorenzo



Yellow

Kyana Brizuela

Paint me in a bright yellow
and pretend that I'm fun and radiant.
Paint me with the biggest smile,
as if my days are spent happy.
Paint me joyous in a crowd,
full of friends I wish I had.

Just paint me in anything
but the truth.

Why I Write

Kimberly DiLorenzo

I write because it's my favorite distraction. I write to forget my troubles. I write when I'm so desperate to be understood, I forget to be understanding. I write to hide my feelings. I write to paint colorful images in people's minds with words of black and white. I write because I want to create. I write to remember the old times which brings a certain sadness that I cannot let go of. I write to share my secrets. I write when I can't stop swallowing my words. I write in the absence of those I love. I write when I'm homesick for arms that don't want to hold me. I write to the characters that I am not. I write when I'm sad because I know I won't say a word. I write early in the morning before the sun begins to shine. I write at night when my mind is alive with the events of the day. I write to kill painful memories. I write to remember my roots. I write to take me somewhere sunny and 80. I write to escape the winter blues. I write when I want to hold on but need to let go. I write to take a look at the world from a different angle. I write when I begin to let my fear decide my fate. I write to explore the what-ifs and the could have been's. I write to put my mind at ease.

Latte Love

Kimberly DiLorenzo



Different

Betsy Coughlin

Feels different this time
Like the pit in your stomach
Turned to cement and
The parts of you
That once were permanent
Grew their legs
And left

Left you alone
To guess if you
Were better off
Without.

There is no other choice
There is doubt
No point in wondering
Why you are the way
You are now.

Maureen and Me

Betsy Coughlin

I was barely listening to her, so I only heard the end of Maureen's rant. There was too much on my mind to let her usual riot into my brain.

"It's tha fuckin' people" she flicked her cigarette to the side "none ah this shit was happening before, somethin changed with the people."

My father's mother sat on our porch every night before she walked the two blocks back to her one floor apartment. I know some kids call their grandparents some kind of pet name, but Maureen has always been more cut and dry than that.

Sometimes Maureen didn't like when you talked after she did, so I waited, letting the brisk night air past my own hot breath. I wondered if she felt cold, but she didn't shiver.

"We had guns, and we had politicians we had all this shit, but no one thought they needed tha fuckin machine guns in a house with your kids, no one had a billion dollars to buy their fourth air-o-plane."

"What do you think changed?"

She looks to the left again, looking at the burning cigarette paper, watching it go to its final orange fizzle.

"Maybe the earth started turning the other way, like it used to go to the left and now it swings to the right." I laugh, Maureen always made me laugh, even when she wasn't trying to be funny. I think she felt the same with me. After my parents went back into their own offices of isolation, Maureen and I sat together most nights, and laugh and talk until our stomachs hurt.

“Maybe.” I say. “Maybe you changed too.”

She picks the square package out of her pocket with a swift motion. Muscle memory. She puts the tobacco in front of her lips, lights end, and takes a long drag.

She looks more tired than usual then, as I catch her in the yellow light under our old screened in porch.

“People don’t change.” She says knowingly. Dad and Maureen don’t talk much, but he said she had a whole big life before she lived in her apartment off of Ferry street. When dad was in the army, he said he got a package every week with all kinds of things he didn’t know he would miss from his hometown. A comic book he liked in fifth grade, a little bit of sand from the beach they would walk next to quietly on the way to school. Maureen never liked to drive, so their lives were lived within walking distance. He said there was never any letters in the packages, but he knew they were from her.

“Sometimes they do.” The eye rolls come quickly towards me. “Like if you eat a cheeseburger every day, and then decide to go vegan, and you never touch meat again, wouldn’t you have changed? Wouldn’t you be different now?”

“But listen here, even after all the time in the world passes, and you eat your carrots and your kale for forever, and you look at your life the love tha lord gave you, You have liven the life that your supposed to, and you look back and you know totally, that you should have just enjoyed the damn hamburger. There is no point in regrettin nothin’”

We were quiet again. I didn’t know if there was more to the tirade.

After a while, I realized there was nothing left in her.

“I think you’re wrong. People have to change. They have to be able to change things about themselves. If people don’t change they will be the same thing forever, and I can’t just be the same way forever. People have to change.”

Her laugh comes again with a rough cackle. Even when her lungs aren’t filled with smoke you could hear it brewing in her. If you cracked her open I imagined a bowl of ash would sit in her stomach.

“You can think any way you want to.”

And I could. The feeling that sat low in my stomach came up, and I thought of Joseph’s curly hair. I thought of the way that I liked his hand brushing by my hand when we were walking to physics last week.

I thought that even though I wanted to like Marie, and take her to the dance, I didn’t. Maybe Maureen was right, and I couldn’t change. People don’t change.

I didn’t think about the words before I spoke them, they just came out naturally to Maureen.

“Maureen, I’m gay.” A steady laugh erupted into a coughing fit from her side.

She lets it pass and giggles flowed out again.

Maureen was young once too. When I see her wrinkles bunched up like that I notice them as laugh lines instead of their regular resting position.

“I could say I love you and all that old shit, but you already know that.”

And I did.

Maureen stood up, taking her old large body out the door, she flicked out the end of her cigarette off of our steps, and looked back to me. Something shifted when the screen door opened, the wind hit me harder. Maureen's laugh did not fill the room how it had before."

"The world is changin kid, tha guns and the people. What once was one way was now another, people don't change, everything else does. If you remember who you are, no one is going to fuck with you, you got that kid?"

Some other grandmothers would say to always be yourself, but Maureen wasn't like that. Some might cry that their kids kid likes to think about boys, when he should want a girl, but Maureen didn't care.

I went back inside to my parents home. All of the lights were off except for the overhead in the kitchen to guide me back to my room. I heard my father's typing through his office door as I pass, I see my mothers light off in the room across.

I wonder if happy people get made, or if they just decide to be one day.

I guess Maureen answered that for me.

I wander to bed finally as I do most nights after Maureen walks her way home.

I thought about curls before I let myself fall asleep. I thought of my fingers going through them, and finally, for the first time I didn't want to change. I wanted to be the same kid Maureen had liked all along.

The one that she knew.

Camellia

Kyana Brizuela



Landfill

Betsy Coughlin

I can't find the right words to tell them
That everything will change.
The bed you used to sleep in
Is sitting in the dump somewhere
Next to that test you studied a week for
But can't seem to remember what class
You were taking,
Not with all those years left behind.
How could you remember with
You and your new face
In your new mirror
All new clothes in
your different world,
Still looking at the same old self,
Feeling like maybe you
Are the one who
Belongs in the landfill.

Self Portrait

Desiree West

I like to think my lungs

Still have some of that dusty air

From the day we took dirt roads to the lake

And ate ice cream in the grass.

Dad raced me to the water.

I don't remember who won.

I like to think my heart still beats

To the rhythm of that old Chevy I drove

Until I could afford a nicer car.

The motor thudding every few seconds

As I drove along a highway that never ends

And doesn't lead anywhere.

I like to think my legs remember

The miles I pedaled on the day

My mom and I biked to the nearest town.

For seven miles we rode

Stopping only for water

Until we reached our destination

I like to think every molecule remembers

What I am made out of.

That person on a path

Always pushing ahead

Whether the end was in sight or not.

Finding Joy

Kimberly DiLorenzo

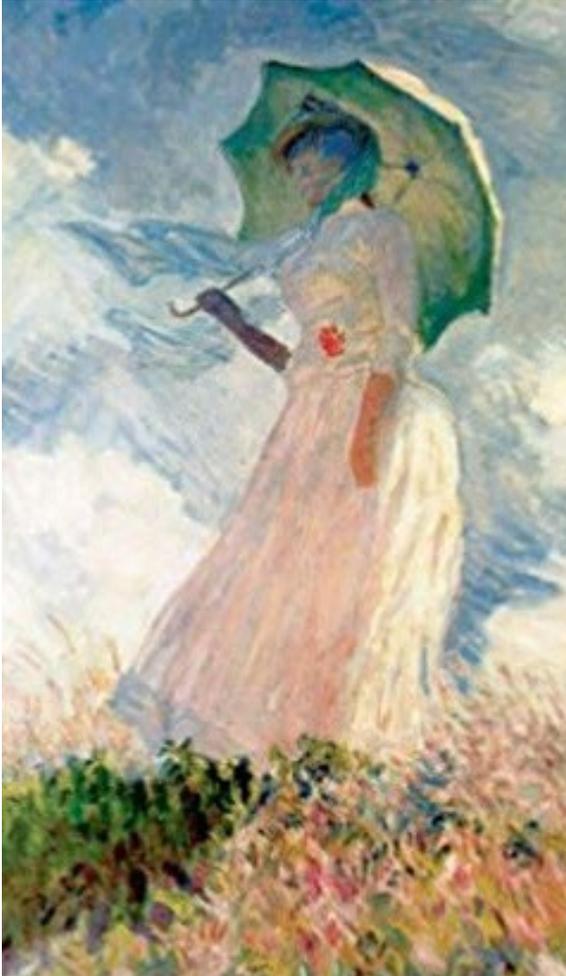


Iconic
Kimberly DiLorenzo



Study of a Figure Outdoors

Jessica Strassburg



Study of a Figure Outdoors: Woman with a Parasol, facing left, 1886. Claude Monet

A woman deep in thought,
Grounded through her touch of the grass.

She reflects on a longing idea,
And searches for a calming answer.

The woman is alone,
but not lonely.

She is in conversation with herself,
Letting thoughts flow through her like the wind.

The smell of the fresh early afternoon grass
accompanies her thoughts.

Her thoughts are whirling like the breeze,
Not even realizing the grass is greener where she stands.

Does she need a reminder?

Someone to reassure her that everything will be okay?
Reflecting on the past can make you feel old pain,
There is importance in looking around your physical self.

Woman, I pray you'll let down your umbrella,
Let down your hair.

Feel the ease of the breeze
And the sun's warm rays on your skin.

For only then will your painful reflections be accompanied
By feelings that embrace your every inch.

Blending

Kyana Brizuela

To blend with the crowd is a simple matter. Follow what they do. You know exactly who. Don't even pretend. Step by step. Don't fall out of line. Hide the real you. It's what has to be. No one likes someone who speaks for herself. Follow suit. "Different" is synonymous with "trouble." So blend in. No one wants trouble. No one wants different. Lose yourself in the crowd. You know what's acceptable. And what's now. It's been decided long ago. So why fight it?

Become lost.

Lost within the shroud of similar faces.

No one.

This Time

Desiree West

This time I'll get it right

When you ask me

If I'll ever love you.

This time I'll take a picture

Of you every day

So when I'm looking back

I'll be able to see

Exactly when you changed.

This time I'll forget myself

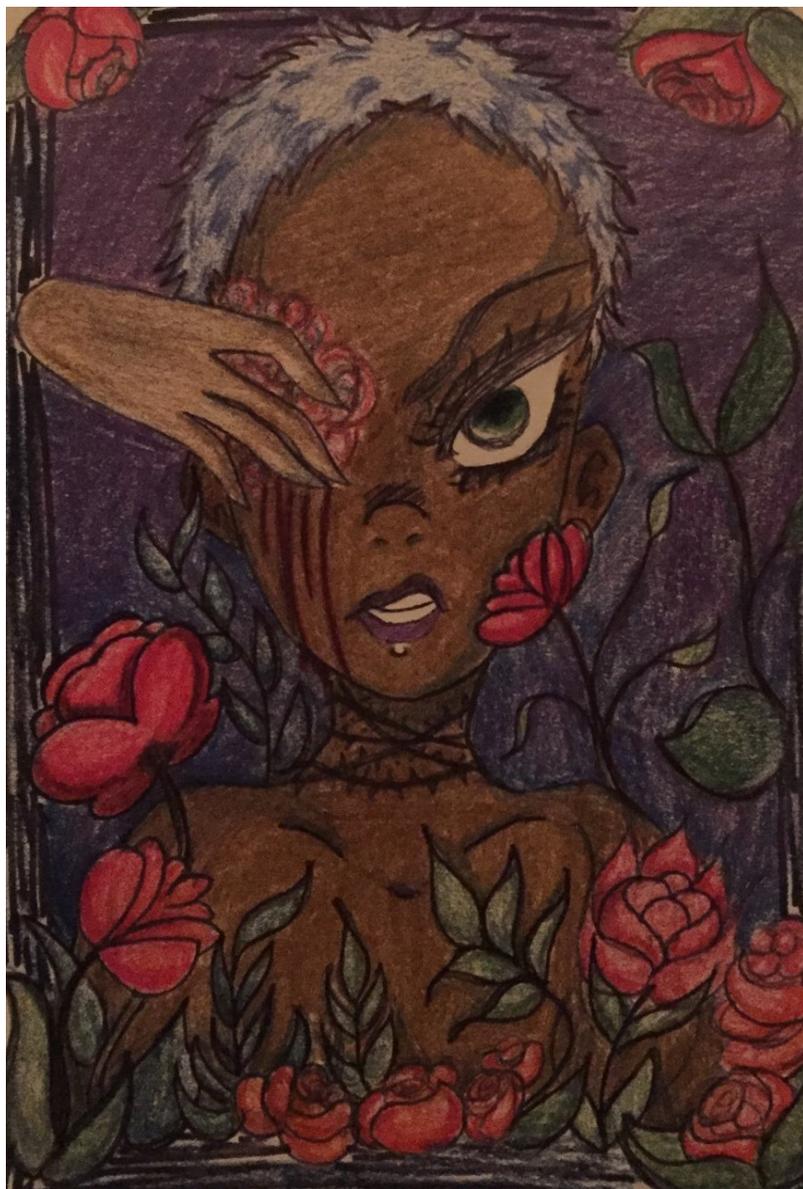
And focus on you.

Maybe then I'll be able to see

That you were gone long before you left.

Fake Flowers

Kyana Brizuela



Bottles Behind the Dresser
Betsy Coughlin

I bet you never thought

I could tell a story

Like this.

Your vodka dripped voice

Left to dry out.

Side of the road serpent,

Who would ever think

To look at roadkill twice

Except to see the carnage

That they left behind.

Absolut
Kimberly DiLorenzo

a young woman
stares as the evergreens
pass swiftly by
just as time does
all the while
her stomach churns
her throat burns

her palms become damp with sweat
her breathing escalates
just as her doubts do
which are deep enough to drown her
soft enough to free her
powerful enough to save her

except she does not listen

rather her mind is overtaken
her soul now borrowed and used
on the outside
she is just a young woman

yet she continues to repress the urge
that builds like a fire

consuming,
burning deep within her

ultimately, she reaches
her shaky fingers
grasping the bottle
concealed between her thighs
she takes a swig
suppressing her scream
she tastes the Absolut

absolute agony,
absolute anguish

Last Name Coughlin
Betsy Coughlin

We pass down names
For a reason.
I read your chicken scrawl
Over the back
Of the record
I have had my eye on
Since your Christmas collection
Emerged from the
Noisy basement
With its bikes and trains.

I hung it over my wall today
Hiding the small
C you inscribed
On its back side

Your name Coughlin
Declaring it yours
Was stuck on it
In your usual
Serious black blot

But that is my
Name now too
And you are
No longer here
To tell me
To put it on so

The only thing I can do
Is keep it with someone
Who's name is still written
On the back

Who won't forget
That once, forever ago
It was your music that once
Filled a room
Your broad shoulders
That took up space
Your laugh that
Made others start too.

To remember that you
Were here once
To remember why
You wrote your name
On anything
In the first place.

Back When

Kyana Brizuela

An expanse of green grass stretches out before me. Trees curl out their branches towards a clear sky, not giving a care in the world. The leaves begin shifting; something is going on. Birds are building their nests, chattering all the way. Squirrels leap and bounce, causing their normal ruckus. A little ways away, a small stream of water can be heard. Gentle splashes on the rocks sound their way through the clean air.

Oh, but there is another sound. Laughter can be heard. Kids are out playing. It is their time to forget the long school days.

And remember.

To just be children.

Gathered Thoughts

Kimberly DiLorenzo



Darkness

Betsy Coughlin

There is darkness everywhere
I don't know how many hours we laid there
the TV has played the same movie
At least three times over
And pretty soon
The drugs in my mother's system
Wear off
And again
We sit in silence reserved
For times such as these.

I try to make the noise in my throat
Rise up
But I have trouble
Telling her that it will be alright

Because it won't be.

There is no blanket this can cover
No wall that can block
That we are all more alone than we were before
No more masks
No disguises
The pretend world we live in is gone
And in its place are the parts we ignored
The pain and anger that boiled under the surface

I sit with my mother in the dark
And we don't realize that the sun has gone down
We don't realize it is midnight now
And the next day has arrived
Making room for more darkness
More rented caskets
More chaos.

We don't realize why
Until a little later
Until we are all together
Making lives worth living.
Going the places we want to go
Being the people we want to be
Without the anger
That used to consume us
This is not permission for his actions
This is not forgiveness for the pain
But is moving
It is creating something new
Where there was nothing before
This is about life after death
And how to pick up
The shattered glass off the floor
How to write and rewrite the same poem
Because there are no words
When you have to start new

Only fresh paint
And ember
Only darkness
Only the things you can't remember.

Snow White

Kyana Brizuela

She wants me dead.
Though, I do not blame her.
For so long, she was the
fairest;
admired by all for her beauty.
But now
that wretched title is forced upon me.
It is I who has to be their precious maiden
with lips red as a rose,
hair black as ebony,
and snow white skin
over this horrible skeleton.

Townspiece, is this the image you desire?
A girl young and fair
deprived of the next meal?
As long as you think I'm beautiful
it's fine to waste away.

No, I do not blame her
for wanting me dead.
I blame what society has made her.

A poor woman
who is not allowed to age
and foolishly think her time is done
for she is “too old,”
and I young.

If only she realized
I, too, will be hated
once I reach that age
where beauty supposedly fades.
And, perhaps, I will become this
evil queen,
fearful of the next young maiden
to take my place.

No; that is not how this
tale ends.
Rather, the final page draws near.
She awaits me
baring something like freedom in her hands,
glistening the most brilliant red.

I want to cry for her.
But most of all, I want to
help her.
And I can.
All it will take
is a single
bite.

Control
Kimberly DiLorenzo

It doesn't hurt
that running
reminds me of my mom.

She taught me
not to be a heel-striker
and I loved to race
from my first step.

She used to say
that I would have slept
with my running sneakers,
the same way
one would snuggle
a stuffed animal.

Losing her
made me realize
that not everything
that happens in life
can be controlled.

Running
however
has always been
the one thing
that I could control.

Not whether
I win or lose a race
That's out of my hands.

But how fast I run
And the effort I put in

Leave Me in Ignorance

Kyana Brizuela

This heart will never mend,
forever trapped in this sorrow brought on by
love.

Still, it cannot help but whisper for its defense.
Even sinking deeper in this sorrow,
being bound by false truths and plastic smiles,
now never again to see the day's light.

All because I thought you were worthwhile.

But even now I cannot say you are vile.

So I bid farewell to the world I leave behind,
for there is nothing else on which my heart will
set.

Farewell to the you who will never be mine,
even if my presence you will forget.

And farewell to what is left of my sense,
for I wish to fade in sweet ignorance.

Dreamer
Kyana Brizuela



Sink or Swim

Kyana Brizuela

Leaving is not difficult.
At least, that is what people say.
The type of people who know
when it's time to go.
Before the ocean turns their skin to prunes,
or the sun burns too harsh.

I know
when to start swimming back to the shore.
I know
that the tides will soon rise.
I know
the price is to be captured.
I know.

But why waste today
for it may not come again.
Why go back to reality
when you can live in tranquility?

It is time to go.
Skin begins to soak up
all that is ocean.
It is time to go.
The tide gently rises,
taking hold.
It is time to go.
The shore becomes nothing
but a dot in the distance.
It is time to go.

But I do not want to go.

Contributor Biographies

Desiree West is a junior at Franklin Pierce University, studying English. She is originally from a small town in South Dakota. When she is not working, going to class, or doing school work, she spends her free time reading and writing. She enjoys art and music. She is also a member of Sigma Tau Delta.

Kyana Brizuela is a senior majoring in Creative Writing with minors in Visual Arts and Sociology. She spends her free time drawing and thinking up new ideas for novels.

Betsy Coughlin is a Junior English major who has had a lifelong passion for writing and story telling. She is on both the editorial boards for the *Nevermore* and also Frankly Health, an online health magazine organized by students. This is her second time featured in the *Nevermore* and she looks forward to another year of writing for it.

Jessica Strassburg is going into her senior year at Franklin Pierce University to complete her two degrees in Secondary Education and English. She was a four year member of the Franklin Pierce University Field Hockey Team and two year co-captain. She's also president and founder of Operation Can Tab (a community service club on campus) that benefits Shriners Hospital. She is a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) and a Co-Chair for the Honors Publications Committee.

Kimberly DiLorenzo is a senior at Franklin Pierce University studying Creative Writing. She's a member of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. After she graduates she hopes to find a career in editing or creative advertising. In her free time she often reads a novel from her favorite author, Elin Hilderbrand, and enjoys a cup of tea.

Lisa Muscedere is a senior Biology major at Franklin Pierce with your classic coffee addiction. When she isn't studying for her crazy classes, she enjoys cooking, singing and painting. She enjoys trying new things and stepping outside her comfort zone and *Nevermore* was the perfect opportunity for her!

Submission Guidelines

Nevermore accepts up to three poems per person (one per page), up to 2,000 words of prose (fiction, non-fiction, essay). Photographs and drawings must be sent in as a .png file.

Please email all submissions to:
nevermore@franklinpierce.edu

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SIGMA TAU DELTA
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY



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