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TINERETULUI ȘI SPORTULUI
UNIVERSITATEA „VASILE ALECSANDRI”
DIN BACĂU



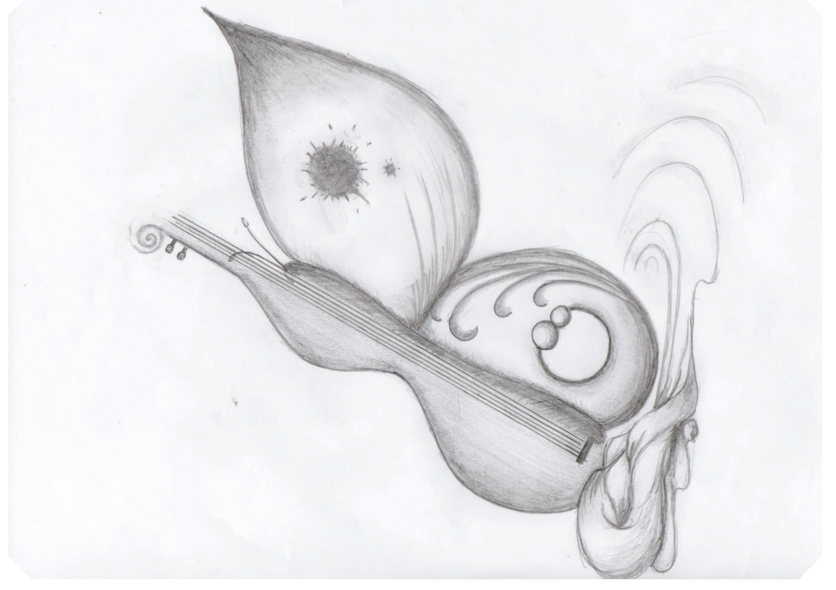
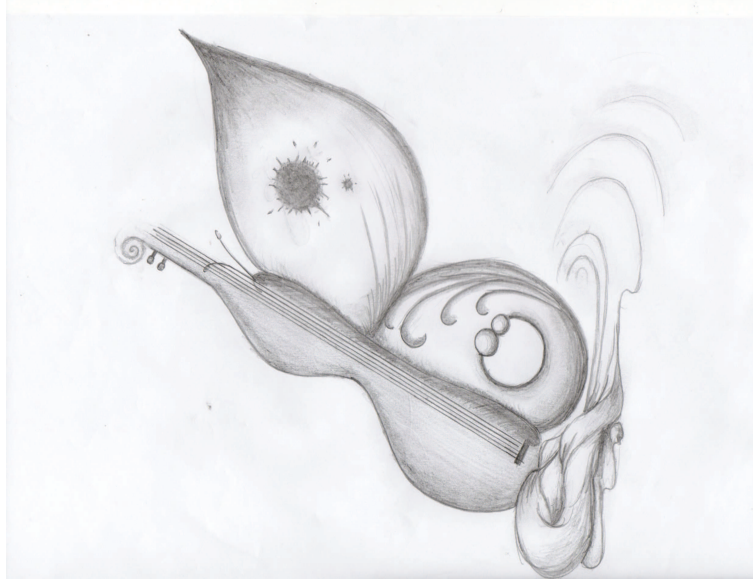
FACULTATEA DE LITERE

Str. Spiru Haret, nr. 8, Bacău, 600114

Tel./ fax ++40-234-588884

www.ub.ro; e-mail: litere@ub.ro

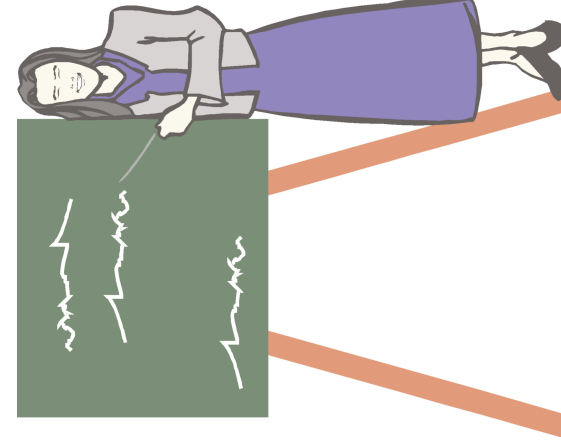
STUDENTS' LITERARY SUPPLEMENT



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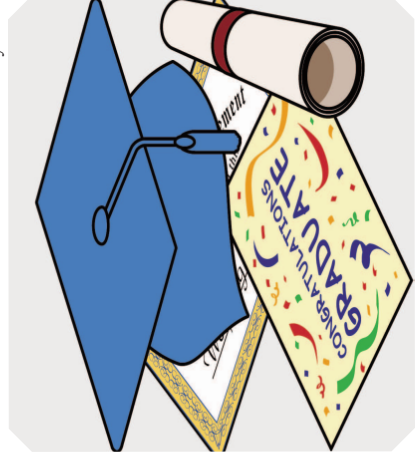
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There is life after university...



Centuries ago, I graduated at "Vasile Alecsandri" University. Actually, it wasn't quite centuries ago, it was last summer. After a very short summer, I realized that the fun was over and that I needed to find a job... I had no more excuses when my neighbors asked me what my profession was or how much I earned. I would normally answer: "Well, you see, I'm a student, so I don't really have time to work... My parents are helping me with some money", but the translation would have been: "I love my student life and since my parents are helping me, I don't intend to change a thing." Now that I graduated, I wish I could go back to those wonderful three years at the university over and over.

As time goes by, I find myself in front of something new which is called "real life". I have passed my exams and I am a teacher now. I was thrilled when I earned my first money, but then responsibilities started to appear. You know, a teacher's life is not as easy as you think, or as I used to think when I was a student. I waste all of my free



time correcting test papers and making lesson plans. Not to mention that some of my students stare at me as if I were an alien. Sometimes I wonder: "Is there something wrong with me or with them?" I have now become the "enemy" or a witch who has the evil power to decide their future... or maybe just their marks. I try to get on well with them and, so far, things have been great.

I wonder now, what makes a good teacher? Am I fair with all my students? How can I make them understand better? Millions of questions... I try to choose an example to follow in this new career, perhaps one of my teachers from the university, or from high school... Seeing things from a teacher's point of view, I understand now why they were always so annoying: "You have to study if you want to succeed!" Now I say it to my students all the time.

So, my dear friends, even though nothing compares to the student life, THERE IS LIFE AFTER UNIVERSITY and you will have to be prepared because, when the third year is over, you will have to face "real life". And my advice for the ones studying philology is: enjoy being a student, because it is the best time of your life, but at the same time, try to pay attention to the courses. You will really need the information later. Good luck and have fun!

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Lion tamer back in business

Eventually, after all those fruitless attempts and endeavours, these little lions and lionesses proved to be ambitious and restless. Why restless? Because we reached a point in our discussion when they tried to recuperate all the things they had lost at the beginning. I was quite impressed by their reaction to my "opening monologue", as they managed to continue and keep up the good work.

So when you, lion tamer, have the opportunity to meet your disciples, be the greatest dictator ever. Don't let them fool you, and make them respect you, as the best king you have ever been! Have a nice practice of it!



Welcome back! Have you ever asked yourself how it feels to be a lion tamer (of course, for those who didn't have the opportunity to practise)? Well, I finally came to experience that and it wasn't bad at all (taking into account my former opinion about lions in general). When I first entered the cage it seemed quite unusual (I, being used to some other types of cages) because of the big number of lions and lionesses hungry for knowledge and, of course, anxious to expose their shiny freshly-combed fur. When you are the tamer, you need to forget about any restrictions, as you are "the great dictator".

Well, after the door of the cage was closed, and all lions and lionesses took their positions, I started to grumble about something that was totally unknown to them (given the fact that it was a revision and they were going to have a contest the following day). When I saw that they hadn't even opened the jungle book, a lightning flashed in my eyes, and a roar of disapproval gushed from my mouth. A few moments later they were scared to death, hardly managing to hold their tears.

One curly brown furred lioness had the guts to tackle the supreme lioness when answering that my question was not related to the topic they had had to prepare for that day. That was the straw that broke the camel. I asked them to open their books in order to make that little smart lioness see that the one standing at the teacher's desk is always right!

While I was trying to calm down, one of them tried to mutter something in order to make me change my attitude, and he did it. I was impressed at that moment because out of 20 lions, only he managed to break the ice. Then all of them managed to regain the courage they had lost and constructively participate into the taming.



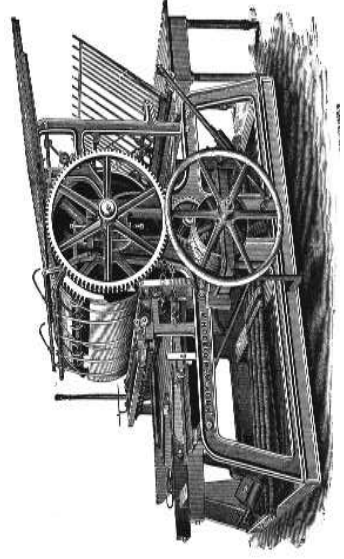
At the beginning of this academic year, 3rd year students in the English sections were asked if they believed literature was a necessary thing in a human being's life. One of the answers given then constitutes now our editorial, since it is an expression of one of the basic principles underlying our present literary endeavour:

Literature isn't necessary for human life because one can live physically and socially quite well without it. But my personal opinion is that no human life can be complete if one doesn't try to read and understand at least one novel, poem or play in his or her entire life. We can live without literature, because it isn't one of our basic needs such as eating, sleeping or the need of shelter and protection. Yet, living without the knowledge that literature gives to a person is like living the average life with no desire to improve oneself, with no chance of transcending one's own pitiful condition....

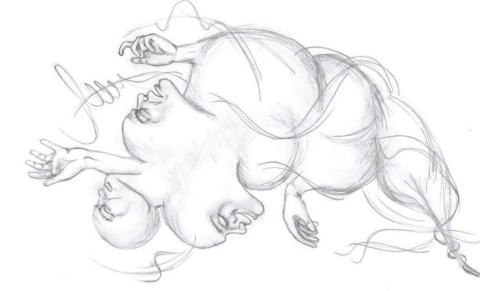
Roxana Popa, R-E, III



Andreea Pârvu, E-R, III



Depression for sale



dumb as a log.

You will become so alienated from the rest of the world that even the most normal, logical, basic connections will disappear from your mind, making you believe that the impossible is possible, while the smallest things are insurmountable obstacles.

You will start to look suspiciously at your friends and loved ones, as if they were strangers. You will start to look at the people around you like the prostitutes in the Red neighborhood in Amsterdam: behind a glass, coldly calculating the time that will pass before they leave you alone. (I have always wondered: is it really the men who are studying those girls? Or is it the girls who are actually studying them?) You will find yourself so emotionally drained, that you won't be able to feel anything else but this grey sensation that everyday is the same. You will start to confuse love with hate and respond in consequence. Joy will be only a memory; you will laugh because you remember that that's what you have to do in a certain situation, and you will cry because you are usually on crying mode.

You are bound to loneliness, because, after sitting like a plant in a pot on the window sill, you will have lost every social ability you've ever had, and the notion of friendship will be very alien to you. You might begin to ask yourself silly questions like: how exactly do we make friends? Why was it so easy to befriend someone when we were little?

**Now,
how much do you think
this lovely depression would be
worth?**

**We can, of course,
negotiate...**

Depression is becoming the modern migraine. That was the very popular headache among snobby aristocrats in the 20th century. I don't want anything to do with snobbery, and I certainly have nothing to do with aristocracy, so I have decided to sell my depression on the Internet, because it has been bothering me for quite a while now. And it's been fun while it lasted, but enough is enough.

How could I describe it? It's like an annoying little black dog which I keep kicking and it keeps coming back. I hear its howl during the nights when I'm trying to shake off a day's work, and it keeps me awake until it makes me howl as well. I would have never believed that I could cry for three hours without stopping and then start again with fresh forces.

Buy my depression with confidence! It will never disappoint you. It will be there by your side early in the morning, whispering sweet words of evanescence in your ears. It will be there in the coffee cup, making it more bitter the more sugar you pour in. It will be sitting on top of your chest when you have to take a shower, pushing you back and telling you that you don't have enough strength for something like that.

You will be so drained of resources that not even an idea will cross the shiny smooth surface of your brain, for fear that it might die of loneliness. You will be so exhausted, that you will often find yourself blankly staring ahead and seeing nothing. You will be able to keep quiet for hours, because you really can't find anything to say. Yes, sometimes, you'll feel as

Mirrors

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
 Whatever I see I swallow immediately
 Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
 I am not cruel, only truthful,
 The eye of a little god, four cornered.

(Sylvia Plath, *Mirror*)

I looked into it blankly trying to see my soul, I looked into it, my face radiant with a smile, and I looked into it with tears running down my cheeks, I looked into it vainly, I looked into it humbly, yet none of my reflections seemed to match my perception of myself. I left disappointed as the mirror didn't show the blood pulsing through my veins, the ideas and emotions swarming in my brain. I never saw the circuits of my mind in the mirror, no matter as hard as I'd look.

Then, I looked into people's eyes, I saw my face distorted, just a big head with big eyes, and I said to myself: people's eyes are the worst mirror. Their prejudices, their individual misconceptions, their feelings towards one another made their eyes into blurry mirrors in which too many had tried to catch a glimpse of themselves.

I walked the streets with a heavy heart, thoughts boiling inside my head, wondering where I could find the essence of myself, how I could see the depths of what I am... While walking in the street, I turned my face to the windows of shops, but the image they threw back was transparent. Beneath my reflection there lied an endless number of strangers and I started wondering whether the visual layer of myself could take in all the people on the planet.

When I was a child I used to stop in front of every mirror, every glass window, in front of every kid and every puddle, making faces at myself, showing them my tongue, pretending to either laugh or cry, putting on my mother's make-up and clothes, mocking my reflection with an easiness and shallowness characteristic of all children.

I have scorned my image so long that it is now mocking me, showing me how, gradually, my childish

"A citizen of this planet who loves Bucovina and who is still haunted by the regret of having been exiled from Romania by the shrew called History" – this is how Eugenia Vodă characterized Norman Manea, a Romanian writer of Jewish origin who now lives in America, where he is a "writer in residence" at Bard College, New York. Although unknown to many of us, he is the most famous Romanian contemporary writer abroad. His work has been translated in 20 languages and consists of more than 60 volumes.

He felt obliged to leave Romania in 1986 because he had been discredited as a writer over the years, and particularly because one of his novels had been censored. In 2010, Norman Manea honoured the invitation he received from Polirom Publishing House to come to Romania and participate to a number of cultural events. One of these events was constituted by the launching of the translation of his most recent novel, *Întoarcerea huliganului* (*The Hooligan's Return*). The purpose of the book, as he declares, is to "follow a biographical path and to tell the truth about various circumstances I experienced".

His fiction and essays concentrate on some of the darkest experiences of humanity – the Holocaust, daily life in a totalitarian communist state and exile. His main interest is always in the inner life of the individual, in one's solitude and problematic solidarity with others, one's doubts, hopes and integrity in the struggle not only against outer circumstances, but also against oneself. His characters lead intense lives and lucidly keep questioning its meaning to the end.

Norman Manea has been awarded some major international prizes, among them the 1992 Guggenheim Grant and the 1992 MacArthur Prize (which is also called the "American Nobel"), the 1993 Literary Lion Medal by the New York National Library, the 2002 Nonino International Literary Prize for Opera Omnia, the 2006 Prix Médicis Étranger, and is considered one of the most important contemporary writers.

Polirom Publishing House has also published other translations of his books: *Întoarcerea huliganului* (1st edition: 2003, 2nd edition: 2006), *Despre Clovni: Dictatorul și Artistul* (2005), *Anii de ucenicie ai lui August Proștal* (2nd edition, 2005), *Plicul negru* (5th edition 2010), *Sertarele exilului. Dialog cu Leon Volovici* (2008), *Înaintea despărțirii. Convorbire cu Saul Bellow* (2008), *Vorbind pietrele* (2008), *Atrium* (2nd edition, 2008), *Variante la un autoportret* (2008), *Vizuirea* (2009) and *Curierul de Est. Dialog cu Edward Kanterian* (2010).

Norman Manea in Romania



"I am nowhere at home..."



On the tight rope of identity

Nothing is as you expect it to be. Your road in life is made of ups and downs and you have to come across each of them to truly discover who you really are. By overcoming different obstacles in your life you shape your own identity, the thing that makes you feel unique, the only thing that truly makes you stand up in a room full of people.

But what if we don't succeed in creating our own distinctive mark? And we remain anonymously trapped in a world full of people, where each individual looks alike? What happens when we feel as if we were losing ground and were caught in a sort of a rollercoaster ride from which we can never get down, to truly feel the essence of existence? These are all questions that wander through my mind like a swarm of bees. I keep hearing the noise made by their flickering wings like a whispering chant that haunts every inch of my mind.

Even if nowadays we live in a world that is full of opportunities, I seem not to find my true and real identity in life. We have to stick to some rules, we have many things to do in such little time and the world seems to swallow itself into a void, thus leaving behind a never-ending emptiness that empties the hourglass of our life of its sand. We will never get to know for sure who we truly are. Each hour that passes adds to the moments that we live in true ignorance. Why does an individual feel the urge to know where he/she belongs? Why, suddenly, do we feel the need to shape our own identity? Well, because we need to know who we really are.

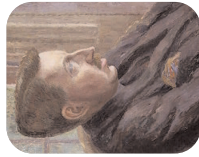
I have created thousands of alter-egos in my head, and in virtual worlds on the internet, but none of them seems to fully answer my question: what makes me really stand up among other silhouettes, among other individuals? How many of you have created your own virtual self? How many of you know what an avatar is? These are simple questions that can be easily answered by all of you. But can you answer this question: have you discovered your true identity?

We can try to shape our real identity in the same way in which we shape the appearance of our avatars. We can improve our virtual personality, but can we thereby change our real one? Can virtual selves help improve our real self? Many people say that they feel more comfortable when hiding behind their avatar, but I think that this refusal to confront the real world diminishes your own personality as a real human being, thus lowering your chances to discover who you really are.

Shaping one's identity must be the hardest thing to do, especially when you are caught between different worlds (be they real, or virtual). We can say that each of them builds upon the other, virtual identity builds upon your real identity, while real identity is also built upon virtual identity, but when one of them collapses there is no doubt that the other one is also affected by this. There is a mutual influence here we cannot and shouldn't ignore.

Everything depends on how much involved we choose to be in this game of identity. If you walk on this tight rope and do not know how to set your boundaries, you might be caught in an identity crisis.

Elenys Știucă,
MA student, LEPC, I



Edward Morgan Forster
(1 January 1879 –
7 June 1970)

George Bacovia (1881-1967)



George Bacovia was born in September 1881, in Bacău. He is now considered one of the major Romanian poets, although during his lifetime his discreet and solitary personality prevented many of his contemporary critics and writers from appreciating his great art. He also wrote prose, but his masterpiece is the volume of poems published in 1916, entitled *Plumb/Lead*. Bacovia's poetry is characterized by a dark symbolism, its themes and motives being deeply connected to an atmosphere of solitude, melancholy, spleen, mystery, neurosis, depressing love or suffocation.

Alexandra Lăiu, R-E, III



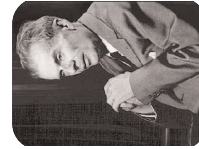
**David Herbert
Richards Lawrence**
(11 September 1885 –
2 March 1930)



Thomas Stearns Eliot
(September 26, 1888 –
January 4, 1965)



Sir William Gerald Golding
(19 September 1911 –
19 June 1993)



Aldous Leonard Huxley
(26 July 1894 –
22 November 1963)

Due to normality exposure

We bear so little hope inside our hearts,
Merely players in a game that starts
A little too soon for us to learn
Its rules. It is not our concern
To read the script before taking the pills.
Can *you* imagine how this feels?

They act like rats into the hands
Of some mad scientist who stands
There watching his experiments come to a closure.
"They died due to normality exposure."

How dare thou stain the walls with blood?

Convictions -- mine...
Reluctance...
Life.

(Freedom has turned to chains, don't you think?)

Beliefs no longer there...
Deliverance...
Faith.

(These chains are strangling even more.)

Sedition of the soul...
Aims...
Weep.
(Miracles no longer happen.)

Abandonment of self...
Inflicted...
Rise.
(The ashes have been swept away by the wind.)



Stand still, you would say,
And count the seconds between two blinks of an eye.
I've stood still, I would answer,
But I've lost the number a couple of times and gave up.

I've never seen a shooting star, I could say,
Even though I've wandered and travelled the sky.
You didn't look deep enough, you could answer,
Or you might close your eyes and listen to one drop.

I could say thousands of dreams to which you could answer...
You would respond to each and every sound.
I could say I'm an artist, an actor, or a dancer,
You would care none the less – stars are not to be bound.

Eileen



Lacustră

*De-atâtea nopți aud plouând,
Aud materia plângând...
Sunt singur, și mă duce un gând
Spre locuințele lacustre.*

*Și parcă dorm pe scânduri ude,
În spate mă izbește-un val --
Tresar prin somn și mi se pare
Că n-am tras podul de la mal.*

*Un gol istoric se întinde,
Pe-aceleași vremuri mă găsec...
Și simt cum de atâtea ploaie
Piloții grei se prăbușesc.*

*De-atâtea nopți aud plouând,
Tot tresărind, tot așteptând...
Sunt singur, și mă duce-un gând
Spre locuințele lacustre.*

Lacustrine

So many nights I've heard the rain,
I have heard matter as it wailed...
I am alone, and one thought
Carries me now to the lake dwellings.

It feels like sleeping on wet boards,
And from behind a wave is striking --
I start from sleep, begin to wonder
If I pulled back the bridge from shore.

A void in history extends,
I find myself in the same era...
I sense, because of so much rain,
The solid piles sinking down.

So many nights I've heard the rain,
I have been startling, have been waiting...
I am alone, and one thought
Carries me now to the lake dwellings.

Plumb

*Dormeau adânc sîeriile de plumb,
Și flori de plumb și funerar vestimînt --
Sunt singur în cavou... și era vînt...
Și scărțiau coroarele de plumb.*

*Dormea întors amorul meu de plumb
Pe flori de plumb, și-am început să-l strig -
Sunt singur lângă mort... și era frig...
Și-i atârneau aripile de plumb.*

Plumb

Profoundly sleeping were the coffins of lead,
And flowers of lead and the funeral gown --
I stood all alone in the vault... it was windy...
The leaden garlands were creaking.

Turned in his sleep, my leaden love lay
On flowers of lead, and I started to call him
By the corpse all alone I stood... I was cold...
And his wings of lead hanging loosely.

Translation by... Ariel



My favourite...

This year, 52 students from the E-R, E-F and R-E sections, from all years of study, participated to our inquiry. Their preferences in terms of authors and books are quite similar to those expressed by the students for last year's literary supplement. The only thing that is different is that the Brontë sisters went up to the first place, while William Shakespeare went down to the second. When it comes to favourite books, students definitely expressed their great love for *Jane Eyre*, which won the majority of the 'votes'. *Wuthering Heights* came close behind, while *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Pamela* occupied the third position, having got an equal number of 'votes'. Other authors who were given at least two 'votes' were: Edgar Allan Poe, Daniel Defoe, and Charles Dickens. As for the books, except for those already mentioned, there was no other title that was mentioned more than once.

FAVOURITE AUTHORS:



William Shakespeare

2



The Brontë sisters

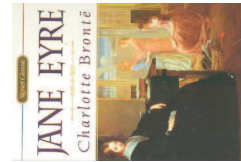
1



D. H. Lawrence

3

FAVOURITE BOOKS:



1



2



3



3

A unicorn¹

A unicorn stumbled over my eyelashes,
He struggled and then,
He remained captured.
And as he cried,
He said: don't write!
He bit my confused eyelid,
And then, he cried:
Your fingers are deaf!
Be careful!
They scratch the pages
Using their knowledge!



Crooked glance

Crooked glance,
You inserted your liquid
In the corner of the glass eye.
Now, why did you stick
On my shoe sole?
To beg without any shame
For the contact lens
Lost through the woofs?

Diana (Ghiuș) Mirică,
MA student, LEPC, I

1. The Romanian versions of these poems were published in *Convorbiri Literare* in 2002.

The beast

I see it dancing in the shadows,
At night grinning at my windows,
With sharp claws of "maybe" and "perhaps".
My mind feels numb and full of gaps.

Bright glowing eyes of "can I?"
Cornering me with its "could I?" size
Feeding voraciously on my "will I?"

I feel its hunger, hear its roar
I hear it craving more and more
Tormenting me as I stay awake or sleep
I feel my weakness growing deep
My blood no longer fills my veins
I toss and turn: "don't leave me, brains!"

And then,

It's all one silence, I hear Duncan's bell
No creature left, no one to yell
The beast is gone, and I'm awake
My mind is clear, as crystal as a lake.

A sweet insanity of words
that come to me as **lambs** to **slaughter**
never to be seen again
i see my **darkness** and embrace it
as shadows in the mist
when i expect it least

BECAUSE inSanity **forever shall be my friend**
FOREVER my brain **I let it** **be** **me**
as I would my **brother**

Cristian Bărgăoanu,
MA student, LEPC, I

Why?

Tears were streaming down her both cheeks from her beautifully sparkling brown eyes. The pain of a child's heart never disappears. But why? Why was she suffering so much? No way, no chance, no hope could be seen in her eyes. She wasn't able to utter a word, not a single one. No sound could be heard, not even a desperate one, not even a painful one. Everything was dark for her. Maybe it was because of all the years of not having a beautiful childhood, maybe it was the solitude, maybe . . .

Her eyes can still see things, and people say that seeing is believing. Yet for her this isn't entirely true. She can smell the rain before it drops, but she can't see it fall. She can feel the sun on her face, but she can't see it rise or set. Still she isn't blind at all. She just doesn't want to see, even if her only wish is to see the world just like everyone else does.

And I am still wondering: why is she acting like that? Maybe, in her own way, she takes advantage of all the beautiful things that surround her. But her heart doesn't seem to connect to any of this



She seemed to have been abandoned suddenly in a world that was not hers. She couldn't find a place of her own. Her heart was kind, but cut into pieces. She was so young and innocent, still she seemed to have lived a hundred painful years. So many scars could be seen in her heart, but only when she cried. When the tears were gone she wasn't that sensitive girl anymore. She wore a mask. I guess the mask she was wearing in front of everyone was because of the fear of not being hurt anymore. She needed a reason to smile, a reason to regain her hope, her self-confidence. But there was no sign of such a reason. No sign of a single hope lived inside her.

Is she ever going to let her pain die? Is she ever going to get rid of all those bad memories imprisoning her mind?

happiness and beauty. My only hope is that she will someday see what truly matters!

And why do I feel that she is the woman in me?

Silvia Buga, E-R, III

INAKI

To all those who lost their way or identity at some point in their lives, but had the strength to become what they were in the first place and even more...

She woke up terrified in a strange world. Nothing around her was familiar, not even the noises, the intensity of the light or that unusual smell that floated heavily in the air. A naked mountain peak, an undecided autumn breeze, some dark, unclear shadows that surrounded her, dancing a frightening ritual dance, and, from time to time, a blood-curdling roar that pierced her brain like a sharp knife?

Darla Scott, a modern girl from West Beverly Hill, dressed in fashion, driving a bright red convertible Ferrari, who went to all mundane parties, couldn't recognize herself as she stood there, dressed in a strange white robe, scared, with her hair hanging wet and entangled on her shoulders, with her wrists and ankles tied up with thick ropes.

"It's a nightmare", she thought.

"I have to wake up."

"Wake up, wake up!" she said to herself repeatedly.

She pinched herself and she felt the pain, but she couldn't wake up, because she was awake.

"What's happening" she kept repeating.

"Hey! Is anyone here?"

Nothing. Just a sound of broken twigs, a slight wind murmur and far away, a woodpecker. All of a sudden, Darla had the feeling that she was being watched. And, indeed, forcing her eyes into the pitch-black night she saw a lot of faint little lights around her. The lights moved closer and closer and the sound of crushed dry leaves announced her that something or somebody was approaching.

"How are you, Inaki? A little voice asked from behind a bush.

"I'm not Inaki. My name is Darla. Who are you? Let me go! My father is rich enough to pay whatever it takes. Please, don't hurt me! Who are you?"

"She's gone mad!" dozens of little voices whispered.

"You're Inaki, our princess. You're the daughter of mighty king Voo-Dar, the Master of Magic. Unfortunately he was wounded in battle and his

enemy, Hornadall, is keeping you prisoner and wants to kill you at dawn!"

"There must be a mistake! I don't know why I'm here, in the middle of nowhere, and what's with these clothes, why am I tied to this pole? And how come I can understand you?"

Suddenly she realized that she wasn't talking to people, but to a badger, a group of squirrels, two rabbits and some foxes with their cubs which were sniffing her and tickled her with their whiskers while blowing air on her face to keep her warm.

This could not be real. She was trying to get a grip on her thoughts and feelings, waiting to wake up any moment now. Darla closed her eyes tight and then opened them quickly, being sure that this time she will be in her room, on her large and comfortable bed, safe and warm.

But no!

When she opened her eyes terror caught her for real. She was in the same place, only now she saw more animals, mice, hedgehogs, wolves, deer, all sorts of birds and even flying insects, moving around her, like in some sort of magic ritual. She heard again that terrifying roar, only closer this time. The animals panicked.

"He's coming to kill you! He wants to feed you to his fierce gavoona, they all cried.

"You must help us! Focus! Focus! Put your mind to work! You must break the ropes. You can do this, Inaki!"

And suddenly it didn't matter who she really was. Darla or Inaki, she had to fight for her life. She gathered all her energies and concentrated until it hurt. Only one thought was in her mind: break the ropes! She felt the power of all the little animals helping her, concentrating with her. And the ropes dropped like ribbons to her feet.

"Let's run! Quickly! Hornadall is coming closer. His poisoned breath will soon kill us all."

Darla started running, feeling that her life depended on that. She didn't know where she ran. But the animals surrounded her, guided her, gave her courage and protected her. The branches of the trees snapped her face, her arms, all her body was

Alien on the roof

Here in my loneliness
I'm talking to the night
Dreams and flying saucers
Are always on my side.

And I see you, human creatures,
Lost in thoughts and endless dreams,
In your tiny little world
Nothing's ever what it seems.

Little cages trap your souls
Always looking to unfold,
Ticking clocks around your neck,
All this nonsense makes me sick.

You are aliens to me,
Through your eyes I barely see,
Who's your God and where is he?
And "to be", what does it mean?

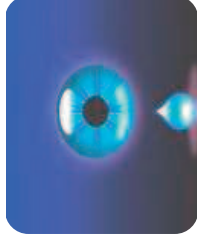
And I saw the universe?
I can tell there's nothing worse
Than not knowing what love is
And not looking up beyond.

If you ever need some help,
Find the power in yourself.
All you have to do is clear:
Live your happiness forever.

I'll be far away from you
But I know you'll miss me, too.
I'll be flying night and day
Sprinkling stardust on my way.

Stardust...
My way...

Dragoş Lungociu, E-R, II



AMI ?

A glimpse of the moonlight eye,
A shadow in the sky,
The light of the sun,
The feeling in your heart...
Am I?

The music in your ear,
The joy of the year,
The dance of Cassiopeia
Which covers all the area...
Am I?

The storm of thoughts
The silk of words,
The scent of letters
Put on papers...
I am!!!

Alina Ulian, E-R, III

Two is too much in a mirror

Once upon a time there was a traveller, who was wandering the world on seven seas. The only thing he was carrying with him was a mirror. A huge one. Many people used to come and admire themselves in the mirror. And they had to pay. A coin.

The first person who came to admire herself in the mirror was Helen of Troy. She was beautiful. She was satisfied with her looks. And she paid. A coin. And a wooden horse. Then she left. Then Christopher Columbus came and saw himself in the mirror. Tall, handsome, powerful. He was totally impressed by the image in the mirror. And he paid. A coin. And a ship, one of his four ships. The last person who admired his own image in the mirror was Lawrence of Arabia. He was riding a wonderful camel but the mirror did not reflect the camel, only himself. Disappointed by the image, he said, "Two is too much. That is why the mirror reflected only me." He paid me a coin and he left. The camel remained with me. Many people came after that, but it was too late and the wanderer had to leave...

Here I am today, running my own business, an old curiosity shop. It is covered with mirrors on the outside and whenever people stop by, they admire themselves in it. The only difference now is that they don't have to pay for it. You know, I sell many things in my shop: camels, ships, beauty, wisdom, knowledge. The only thing I cannot sell is mirrors. They only reflect. And we never know what it is: illusion or reality.

Mihaela Strat, E-R, III



Dangerous mind



I am alone in a world full of darkness. Emptiness, obscurity... My soul struggles in the darkness, looking for a glimpse of light. Friends? No, it is too much said. But... what does a real friend mean?

What I am, what I seem to be, what the others think about me, all these complete one another so well... but still I am asking myself: Who am I? I haven't found an answer yet. I am the same... an anonymous "I".

Is there anything left of me? No, there is nothing left. My heart is empty. There is nothing inside. But maybe I am wrong, and there is something... What about Him? Does He love me? Does He remember me? I do not feel His presence in my life anymore. He abandoned me... Does He know He created me? Every moment I am waiting for Him to cut down the root of the tree grown inside me. When? When will it happen?

The dark demon pounces on me. He confuses my mind. Slowly, very slowly he gets to my soul. I feel that I am yielding. I am screaming for help, but who can hear me? I am alone in a dark world... I have no strength to go on... The demonic claw clutches my heart slowly, but irreversibly. Paradise? It does not exist for me... Not any more. It is inaccessible, something that once I used to dream of. Frightening black wings are the only thing I can see. They come closer and closer; they are here, right beside me. I am lost. Nobody can save me. Hope does not exist anymore. The black wings are touching me... the demonic claw has entrapped me, it lured me. I am in a bleak world. I am taking my last breath of air. I have fallen into Death's World.

Here there are no more words...

Alina Ulian, E-R, III

scratched and bruised. The wood was thicker and the night darker. She felt the presence of the horrible creature behind her and even caught a glimpse of some dark tentacles, some claws and a big mouth trying to catch her, but the animals distracted the monster; Darla saw some of them flying in the air, hit by the monster, but they stood up again and continued running in a live circle around their princess, keeping the monster from coming closer to her.

Darla felt she could not run anymore. She was certain that she was going to fall and be killed soon. All her luxury life passed like a film in front of her eyes in a split second. She was expecting any step to be the last.

Right at the moment when she was ready to give up, a familiar image appeared in front of her eyes: a large valley and the bright lights of a big city, and down the hill, a large road with cars running both ways with their head-lights lit brightly. She looked over her shoulder: no animals there! Only the black, threatening forest behind her, which seemed to be so quiet, as if nothing had happened. She slipped on the wet leaves and rolled down painfully, hitting rocks and branches. Her head hurt so badly, her nose was bleeding, she was losing conscience... She landed with a thump in the middle of the road. The last thing she heard was a terrible screeching of brakes and a crush.

Then... silence, warm light and a comfortable peace... and from very far away her father's voice:

"How long has she been like this?"

"Five days. She doesn't have very serious wounds but she has some strange marks on her body. And this dress... I've never seen something like this before."

The doctors took good care of her until she recovered completely. But Darla changed, she was never the same again. She seemed to understand more about everything, especially about animals. And, sometimes, deep inside her mind, she liked to call herself Inaki...

Mariana Umbrărescu,
MA student, LEPC, II



My real self as seen by my virtual self



I am Maia's virtual self (namely, AiAm). The more I think of her virtual self, the more upset I become, because, at least in some circumstances, I have been undervalued. I remember she made me say things that were not true to unknown people on Yahoo Messenger. Oh, and the most important of all, she created me as a *boy*, although she is a girl; annoying and spoilt, but still a *girl*.

And yet, she was my source of inspiration; I live through her, a thing that should make me be grateful. But my heart breaks when I remember that there were moments when she denied me; when she ran out of lies perhaps, she forgot about me and focused only on her real self.

Oh, but there is a funny thing I remember as related to the fact that I was a boy once. Oh, God, she's so naive! The other person, to whom she had told she was a boy, noticed that she was playing and decided to get into her game: he told her he was a *girl* (even though he was not). And now the fun begins: Maia's real self, not me, believed him. Yeah... I was so amused to see that... and do you know what she did? She asked him for a date, thinking that *she* was entrapping him (or *her*). But things went totally differently because Maia thought that she was going to meet a girl, and she found a boy instead.

Well, don't blame me! I would have said something but, you see, I live through her thoughts and, in this case, how could I do something that was not in her thoughts?

As for the end of the story, well, if you interpret it from Maia's point of view, you may say it was a happy one, because, you see, they realized that they had fallen into each other's trap and eventually remained friends. On the other hand, for me it was not

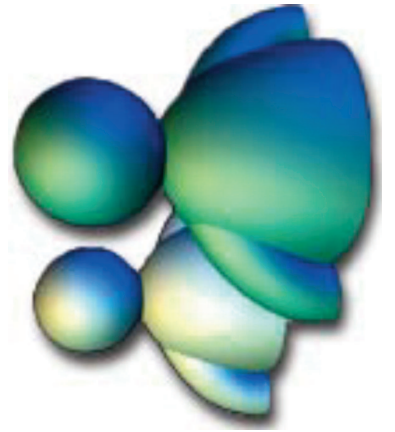
a happy-ending story. And tears run down my face when I remember that she... killed me... She decided that the most suitable version for her would be a *girl*... She replaced me with a girl! Oh... and when I think I was nearly falling in love with her... Yeah... All those happy and... amm... wonderful moments we have spent together... But she killed this potential great love when she killed me... You see, sometimes life is cruel, it brings you to nothingness. Well, I was not turned into nothingness, but I was turned into something that was totally different from what I used to be. And that hurts; I can say that a part of me is dead...

Now, if I judge it better, I think I should get revenge. I shall profit from the fact that, in the real world, human beings that change their sex are not well seen by the society. Therefore, I might ask for some moral amends, as she never asked me whether I wished to do that or not. For I also consider myself some sort of *being*; and the facts were committed against my will. I'll talk to some virtual viruses and maybe we'll dream something up. We'll see...

Goodbye, now! I have important things to do. And I hope to see you soon with further information about my story.

P.S.: It is funny, you know, because real persons need risky plastic surgeries to change their sex, while I only needed some extra-letters - 'f' and 'e' attached to 'male' - and a mouse-click to do that...

Carmina-Alina Benchea, E-R, III



Thunderbird

There were hundreds of car models lying on the shelves, all of them left unfinished. They were piled on top of each other, and covered with dust. Some were partially painted. Some had been broken - smashed, some were cut, with wheels on, or without them. On the desk, there were many small pots of paint, a few of them left open, several brushes, and the parts of a new car model, barely taken out of the box. The girl went to the desk, and picked up the body of the car; she didn't know what car it was, but by looking at the box she thought it should end up painted metallic blue. She could imagine it would only end up on the shelf, just like the other ones.

'I can't make them perfect...' He was behind her, and as she turned, she saw him shrugging, and tucking his hands down his pockets. 'I just got that one, it's a Thunderbird, and I have others just like it, there on the shelves.'

'I see... so you like convertibles?' She didn't really know what to say, she had never been interested in cars, and she thought car models, and train models and tiny figures grown men spent so much time carefully painting were silly, just as silly as grown women collecting dolls.

He took the car from her hand without answering the question, and then asked her if she wanted a drink. She nodded, and he went into the kitchen. She heard the door of the fridge open, and a beer bottle in each hand.

'I didn't ask if you wanted a glass... should I bring one?' he asked.

'No, it's fine, I can drink from the bottle' she answered, taking one bottle he had just opened. 'Why do you not finish them?' and she looked towards the shelves.

'I don't know, it's just that I always get something wrong, and then each time I look at them, I see the mistake and I can't work on them anymore... I sometimes break them, but not because I want to... and he looked at his hand holding the beer. She had noticed his hands, they were really large, with thick fingers and fleshy palms. She imagined them good for throwing fists, handling large, heavy objects, not small car models.

'I think you should finish them, it's not good to just leave them like that...' She actually thought it was odd to have hundreds of cars left unfinished, stacked on shelves. She thought Jim was odd even before seeing the cars, and she wondered if she should accept

his invitation, and before that, whether she should go on a date with him, but he had been so polite and gentle, and he had asked her out so shyly, that she found it hard to refuse him. And when he invited her over, after a few dates, she knew how the evening might end, and she wondered whether she really could go through with it, or whether she would have to invent a reason to suddenly leave if she felt uneasy.

Jim was generally liked by his coworkers, though he wasn't as popular as Mark, or as funny as Doug. He pretty much kept to himself, and when the guys talked and joked around, he just listened and laughed when laughing was due, and rarely added more than a couple of words, if anything at all. But he was a good team-worker, dependable and really looking out for his mates when they were on duty. He never got drunk when they managed to drag him over to Mickey's for a few rounds, and he never lost his temper or got into a bar brawl.

He had met Sarah at Mickey's. He had seen her one evening when the guys convinced him to join them for drinks, and after that, he had joined them every time they went there, hoping to see her again. When he finally went over to talk to her, he though she was so small, he could probably lift her in his arms without an effort, and he imagined himself carrying her away, through the crowd, like a hero claiming his prize.

Now, she was in his flat, looking fine, smelling good - he could almost taste her smell - and he just wanted to feel her warm body next to his. He thought that if she could see into his mind, she'd probably run as fast as she could, because he had seen that at times she was uncomfortable with him and the things he said. He wanted to touch her hair, but she kept talking about those damned cars, slightly moving away each time he tried to get closer. For a second there, he almost got angry with her for acting like he repulsed her, but he remembered how his stature and build often made those around him feel threatened, even large men.

Sarah had noticed him frown when she had moved away from him the last time, and she knew that it was time for her to make up her mind. She took his bottle from his hand and took both of them to the kitchen, putting them on the counter. Quickly looking around, she noticed the body of the new Thunderbird, all broken, in the bin.

Noemi Neonesnic,
MA student, C.L.A., I