

The Lanthorn

Take Back the Night 2019

‘Speaking into Silence’

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Please note that some of these poems reference experiences of sexual assault, and may be difficult to read. Take care of yourselves, dear readers.

From the Editors:

“But people need a lift, too. People don’t get moving, they don’t soar, they don’t achieve great heights, without someone buoying them up.” – Elizabeth Wein, *Rose Under Fire*

Dear readers,

Thank you for picking up this special issue of *The Lanthorn*, one that is very near and dear to our hearts. The theme for this year’s *Take Back the Night* edition of *The Lanthorn* is *Speak Boldly*, both for survivors and for supporters. We wish to honor the voices of those who have survived and those who are healing from their experiences. We also want to recognize the voices of the supporters as a reminder that no one is alone in their recovery.

While some may never understand what it truly means to survive something like sexual assault or domestic violence, that does not mean that we cannot support those around us. Offer support to those that are hurting, advocate for those that have survived or just simply be a shoulder to lean on.

As for those of you that are recovering - please do not be afraid to reach out for help. Healing should not be done alone.

Sincerely,

Erica Durbin and the *Lanthorn* staff

“Lonesome Romantics”

Shannon Moore

We meet briefly in the crowded doorway
before being separated within.

Our own sadness,
communal sorrow,
& longing for a connection
are represented by all of these lights
that turn us into chameleons.

In the powder lines
we reintroduce ourselves as
displaced trust &
disassociated love &
together we dance to a song
we can barely decipher
before we collapse to the floor
confusing our dreams with desire.



Theresa Patnala

“I am Not Welcomed”

Theresa Patnala

I stepped into the room as
the bells rang, and
the organ sang.
I could feel the dirty looks
pricking my skin
as I wore the word
sexual assault.

The gracious smiles somehow
changed into frowned judgements,
calling me a liar and a whore.
The women refused to embrace me
while the men showed me the door.
If the house of God is too holy for
my brokenness, where else can I go?

“Dissociation”

Mary Chichester

In summer nights heat, sweaty hands explore stolen territory.
Like a rock weighing down swollen heart, the moment freezes.
The witness, never brought before a court, Weeps as the moon
lit clock ticks again.

Every second is another word, another world, Scratched onto
a fresh death certificate, signed By the self proclaimed judge
(And full time coroner) Who deemed me deserving of this prison.
Skinning me alive, alive, touch by touch, falling apart again,
again, again, again

Rough, cracked lips burn sagging shoulders, sullen from defeat.
Broken screams go unheard, disconnected mind escapes the
jail, Filling the air with empty thoughts of “why?”, Screams of
“Why?” Whispers of “Why?” Why?

In a second, it is over. The jury is in. “Evidence” is boxed up,
Filed into a room in the back of my brain.
Every day this war- torn history repeats itself.
Reliving, becoming a victim all over again.

“i no longer”

Eunjin Kwak

look into the mirror
because
i fear that
my own reflection
will also disown me.



Theresa Patnala

“every promise of a happy ending”
Eunjin Kwak

“I’m so sorry,” you say
as you watch me fall
from the impact of your aggression.
my eyes are swollen,
my heart bleeding,
but you claim to be the one that is hurt.
a sorry excuse of an apology
slips out of those deceptive lips
that violated every promise of a happy ending.
you enchain me
with the empty words:
“you know i love you, right?”
and all I can do is
say “I know...
I love you too.”

“A poem without a title”
Theresa Patnala

My father for me is,
a canvas that is blank
an ocean that is shallow
a sad song without words, and
a name without a face.

My father for my mother is
a person who abandoned
a marriage that was broken
a side of the bed empty,
and her heart, emptier.

“Silence”

Francesca Falletta

He grabbed me
He said that it was going to be okay,
No one needed to know.
It was our little secret.

I tried to tell my mom,
She asked if I was sure?

I brushed it off,
Shook my head, said that I imagined it.
How could he do it?
He watched me grow up

And yet it happened.
And then it happened again and again,
Touching me
Making me feel dirty
Like there was something wrong

I was trapped in the never-ending cycle
Then I learned to stay away.

Until my mom tells me to go see him.
How can I face him?
I decide to ignore her.

I look at his wife
I have no words for her
I watch my brother go there to play
I am frozen,
Looking on
With a fake smile that doesn't reach my eyes
Trapped in silence
The pain locked away.

As I sit and look on it silence,
Forever trapped in silence.

“Radiating” Deven Blowers

Blessed is she whose lungs are losing.
Who wheezes in bed of electric mechanics
With paneled floral on the walls
And popcorn above. Pink hues fixed,
Radiating.

She appears
Petit, like in the cradle of a Button-syndromed life.
Like the girl she was
Before me, before Mom, before marriage
Before the war to come.

But she fought a separate fire.
The flame of a yellow-belly
Who trapped her alone
Fumed, killing her youth, leaving her stuck
Before the war to come.

Now, a spotted hand holds her,
And a bond springs from that bed.
Beyond rigidity, beyond personality,
Beyond the war to come,
I’ve seen a bond of love.

Thank you for fighting the war,
For holding the flood,
For placing those blocks faithfully
On top of the burnpile
So not to compromise my castle.

Giants will fall loudly
But your breath is stable
No matter our weakness
Moving forward
Looking back.



Seth Pearson

“Recovery”

Erica Durbin

Fractures crept out
under my heels from the start
as the water rushed beneath.
Slipping was unavoidable
but still I tried
to stumble away as the ice continued to
crack.

Watching the horizon kept me focused
on something else—
anything else—
meaningless distractions but still
a welcome interruption
as I tried to escape
from the water below.
Although
ice thaws quickly.
(how easy to forget)

Looking ahead seemed simple
but recovery takes time.
The future laid out before me
far better than the past,
but not easier.

I swore I wouldn't turn back
to old habits.
But slipping was unavoidable
and still,
I tried to stumble away as the ice
continued
to
crack.

“Knocking Rocks”

Marc LeGrand

knocking rocks on
window glass
dawn had come again

there he stood a
glazing gaze
waiting for the door

half my kin and
loved as whole
I leapt for the lock

tipping toe with
bindle stick
gone before she woke

I'll meet him by the
graying gates and
hide her bottled bliss

from toddler skips
to wooden canes
and tricycles
to wrinkled pains
apart for now,
we'll knock the
knocking rocks

“Snips and Snails”

Tyger Doell

“Just kiss her,” they told me.
She was the girl who said no,
I was sixteen and didn’t know who to listen to.
We walked the streets of Paris,
But I didn’t kiss her.

“I see you’re spending your time wisely,” they said with a wink.
I sat across the table from my engaged friend
Discussing her wedding.
We spent our time wisely,
But that must’ve meant something different to them.

“Just ask her on a date,” they told me;
I was her best friend, she enjoyed my company.
We kept hanging out,
But I did not ask her on a date.

Is this what it means to be a man?
To take what you do not really want
From a person who does not want to give it?

Sure, there’s sugar and spice and everything nice,
But sometimes the cookies
Just aren’t for you.

“The Question”

Jeanelle Zabula

If you take what’s hers before she is ready to give it away,
How will she understand how much value it holds?
Even if given forever and a day,
Could you mend her broken soul?

“Nothing New”

Anna Schilke

We sit in a coffeeshop, two lattes
and the wound of your past spread out between us.

I want to say:
I’m so sorry,
But that seems trite,
and I’ve been told I apologize too much.

I want to say:
You’ll be okay,
But I can’t guarantee that.
I can hope like hell, but there is no guarantee in hope.

I want to say:
I understand,
But I don’t. I have not been stripped and discarded as you have;
I cannot feel the pain from imaginings alone.

I want to say:
This does not define you,
But who am I to chose what does or does not define you?

I want to say:
God is good,
But this would not comfort you. It does not comfort me either.



Theresa Patnala

I want to say:

You are precious and valued and loved, my dearest.

But I think you would just stare at me.

This was always true....and it should have been mentioned before.

I want to say:

He will pay,

But revenge is not in my nature, even for you,

and our justice system is too broken to do it for me.

I want to say:

This sucks,

But that is even triter than "I'm sorry," even if it is true.

I want to say a thousand things:

none of them sufficient.

Yet better than silence? I cannot tell.

So we sit. The wound gapes. The coffee grows cold.

I am reduced to praying that my eyes will

say what my mouth cannot.

That I love you. That I care. That I would weep for your pain
if I thought my tears would not be
an inconvenience.

It's a stilted sort of prayer and God does not answer.

Thank You:

We are so grateful to our writers for their sincerity and honesty for this TBTN edition of the Lanthorn.

We know it is not easy to share, and we are honored to listen.

Our gratitude is also extended to Dr. Stephen Woolsey, and Susan Peterson at Quick Print.



Theresa Patnala