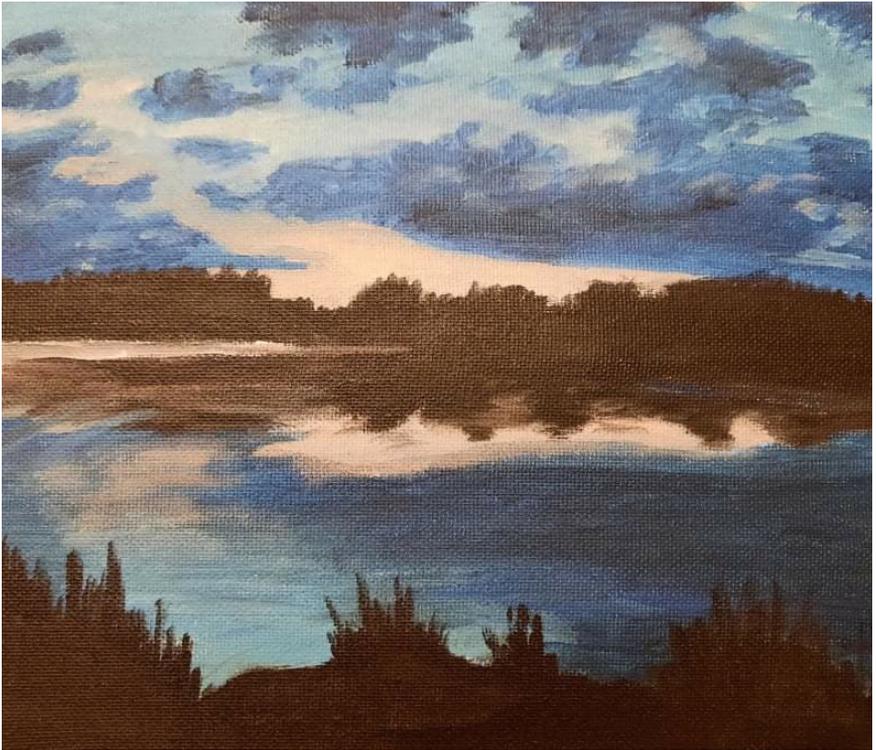


The Lanthorn

April 2021



“belonging”

The Lanthorn



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from the editors

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up the April 2021 *Lanthorn*! This *Lanthorn's* theme is “belonging.” These pages provide an opportunity to reflect on the things that belong to us—favorite books, a warm sweater, a comfortable pair of shoes—as well as those things that seem to belong to us—friends, a favorite color, or a beloved place.

These pages also provide an opportunity to consider the people, places, and things that we belong to. It can be comforting and humbling to recall that just as your sister belongs to you, you belong to her. Just as our nations, churches, and families belong to us, we belong to them. Perhaps in some sense we even belong to our favorite place to sit and think or our favorite color. Regardless, I hope that reading these pages gives you some of the delight of knowing you have something of value, and also some of the sweet comfort of knowing that you belong.

Love,
Ally and *The Lanthorn* Staff

“March 2020”
Phoebe Mullen

It has been three days
Ten hours
And two minutes
Since I touched another being.

I am alone down here.
The space spreads out around me,
yards and inches
and cubic feet massively empty.

Strangers and friends swerve to avoid me in the street:
nervous laughter and twisted faces;
sideways smiles and mumblings about the six foot rule;
fear of my very breath.

Today the sky is outrageously blue:
I long to climb the bare branches up into its depths
and breach heaven. Angels don't practice social distancing
do they?

Four days now since I left touch.
I type faster, a flurry of letters
and jumbled thoughts;
I press my hand against the screen, longing to fall through
to meet you. How physical we are!

How physical we are.
If only God, not Spirit but breathing Man,
Could come and touch me now.

“The child’s thoughts”

Johanna Florez

Inspired by the painting *Idle Hours* by J. Alden Weir.

My mama is so good to let me play
guitar. I know I have to learn
the frets and chords. My hands are big
and strong enough to strum some notes
though. So she sets me up on stacks
of pillows on the sofa. Then
she sits beside me, leaning close
to hear my music. We are dressed
in lace just like the windows, me
and Mama.

“Mums and Angels”

Elaine Starling Leeli

Inspired by the painting *Idle Hours* by J. Alden Weir.

Mums are angels, they say,
But I don't always feel like one.
Sometimes I just feel... tired.

Like when my daughter,
Spends all morning,
Strumming away on her guitar.

All morning.

She was not playing anything -
(She doesn't know how),
Just strumming loudly.

I didn't say anything,
Didn't want to put her down,
Didn't want to discourage her.

But boy...

Sometimes I wish I had some peace and quiet.

“Walking Home, Highbury”

Phoebe Mullen

As evening comes on,
I rise out of the tube station,
bustling with brief-cased men in suits
and women in stilettos.

I cross the street, waiting
for the moment when the dyke breaks
and the tide of anxious people spills into the street
with the purpose of a busy city.

We know it's safe to go five or ten seconds beforehand;
socially-acceptable jaywalking is as safe as going when the light says.
The delivery trucks wait, tense, and when the flow of people ends
they are released

but we're already gone. My friends wait
for the bus by the Little Waitrose, the tiny chichi grocery store
across from the Tesco I frequent. I glance if I'm tired, if it's cold, if it's
coming;

but I prefer to walk, heavy as my feet are, despite the chill
at my back: I pull my blue scarf closer around my head.
Up the broad sidewalk, trees bare and black, outlined by the lack of light:
the lamps come out at night.

Some days I cross the street to a cobbled walk in the shadow
of the grand rowhouses: square skylight windows,
rows of chimney pots marching across the roof.
I can watch the people, smiling grandchildren
In gilt frames on their mantelpieces, a man with styled white hair on a spot-
less couch.

I once watched a woman in a diamond necklace make dinner
under a crystal chandelier.

I walk the gated lane, twigs and leaves underfoot; beside me iron lamp
posts,
grass and budding daffodils, twisting sycamores, peeling bark.

A black dog runs past a puddle
an image flicks across the water and is gone.

Warm windows flare orange;
streetlights glow in the deepening dark.
Bits of silver prick the sky's watercolor wash,
stars just coming out,
soften the coming night.

“Walking Home”

Ally Stevick

The afternoon is blurring into evening.
I watch the sky for the line where one changes to the other
But I can't seem to make it out.

Coming home from the tube I stopped to buy a loaf of bread
And now I hold it tucked under my arm,
A newspaper in my other hand.
It is time for homecomings, for re-meetings,
For dinner, for quiet conversations.

My feet are tired in worn-down Oxford shoes,
The toes starting to scuff from escalator stairs—
I imagine myself like my father.

At the lane's end, where the park spreads to both sides of the path,
As the light catches,
I come across a choir of new-bloomed crocuses
Caroling into the air.

I stop, humbled, the gift of daily bread seeming better even than before.
I kneel without an altar anywhere in sight
And whisper the words of a new-familiar prayer.

The brick houses are lined like miniatures at the edges of the park
Cast into relief by open light from the sky
Evening is come.
With prayers still on my tongue, I start again for home.

I hurry now, past towheaded toddlers,
Past tiny dogs with tartan jackets,
Past the well-kept hedgerows—
Eagerly now:
I am going home.

“Invincible Realities”

Evan Kurtz

Inspired by *The Magnificent Story* by James Bryan Smith

Beauty: You make my heart glad and my soul jump within me. Although I might not always understand why you capture my attention, you do nevertheless. Whether I discover your welcome face in moving music, stunning art, or a magnificent sunset, you show me what my heart truly desires. Wow!

Goodness: Thank you for always having my best interests in mind. It’s so refreshing to see you look out for others, when most, are easily satisfied concerning themselves with their own world. Your simple kindness heals my broken heart. I can’t help but seek you out and smile when I find you.

Truth: Who’s more reliable than you? Have you ever let me down, or deceived me? You are absolute. You are the road I long to travel. You are reality. Yes! You provide me the building blocks for a Godly life. To be perfectly honest, your bluntness can make me uncomfortable, but I know you have the best of intentions and for that I’m grateful.

“Journeying Home”

I always thought home was something I had to hold
Only in my heart because I belong nowhere
But then I found one made for me on earth
In the company of my friends.
I miss them.

In the flowers of the garden I finally glimpse
My homesickness as the most glorious blessing
The place I have loved so completely is only a pale reflection of what
will be
I am overwhelmed with joy
Knowing what I look forward to is an infinite perfection
Of the heaven I have known among friends.

“animate kisses”

the cool breeze plays with a strand of my hair
sunshine slides its rays down the back of my dress
the scent of lavender and fresh grass overwhelms my senses
as the soft moss caresses my feet and pulls me close
it is so good to be held
and not have to hold back.

“Jane Who Is Proserpine”

Megan Brown

Inspired by the painting *Proserpine* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Once you take of the fruit,
you can't return.
They warn of physical
fruit, tangible.
the pomegranate.
This fruit I hold
while you paint me
frozen, immovable
on your canvas.
Don't eat of this fruit
because they will trap
you here.

But the fruit is
a man.
Do not partake
of one.
If you are not convinced,
look
at the hand that
grasps my wrist.
Is it mine
or his?
Who is locking me
in place?

Morris calls out, “Jane.”
as juice drips
from his lips.
But I am already
fleeing from him.
I fled to you.
You said this was heaven,
dear Dante. You
said I could be safe
here.

Your hand outstretched,
ripe for my taking.
I ate of you.
And then
you trapped me in this painting.
You called me your muse.
My name sounds sour on your tongue.
“Jane!”
I am forced to turn my head
back to face you.
You wet your brush in ochre
while I must stand.
Though I did take of the fruit,
(I took of you)
I snarl behind your canvas.

“The Cottage”
Hannah Fraser

Another sunset at the cottage,
Where baby birds trill
And the air is still.
A kayak glides
On water like ice
Leaving silk ripples behind.
A place of memories,
Where quiet minds can rest in ease,
And slow down to breathe.
Morning will come again,
And we'll dive into the day once more,
Crossing a liquid mirror on which to reflect.
With years behind and years ahead,
The sun sinks yet again,
Painting the sky with strokes of hope
And peace that never ends.
We may have left the cottage,
But we'll return. And when we do,
The lake will be waiting,
And the sun will set.

“Friend”

A.C.

My mind's a whirlwind most days
and sometimes in the fog I lose sight of me
but I always find you.

I know you tell me
I try to believe
that I'm beautiful
that you love me
that what we have won't disappear like a mirage in the sand
just when I dare to get close.

But I'm so afraid.

There's this voice in my mind.
It tells me I'm not enough for you.
It says you're better off without me.
It thinks that all I do is inconvenience you.
It lies,
but sometimes I believe it.

There's this road in my mind.
It's all the things I want to be.
It's all the places I want to go.
But it moves so fast
and there's no clear path
and I can't stop running.

I look three years ahead
you're not by my side

I panic
I turn around
I'm searching
I'm frantic
I'm alone

And then you're there.
And my heart rate slows.
And everything makes sense again.

Thank you for being my friend.

“Invited”

Ally Stevick

Girl with short hair and a red coat;
Girl who loves mountains and has many letters;
Boy with a rosary who likes spiders;
Boy who leaves his books under the couch and asks many questions;
Girl with smiling eyes whose determination never tires;
Girl whose speaking voice is low and rich, who likes to dance;
Girl with leather jackets who listens with calm attention;
Boy with warm hugs who I still don't fully understand—
By rights I was not one of them
And yet
There was always a place for me at their table.

Or, in the evenings,
When they played Aretha Franklin
And made apple pies,
Or sat clustered on the floor with tea—
There was always plenty of room for me.

“Acceptable Lethargy”

Caleb Fesmire

The acceptable lethargy from nights
spent in intimate congress of two minds--
long walks along these lamp-lit sidewalks;
longer talks on front steps in cold weather,
are sacred enough to justify loss
of rest: unconstrained euphoria of mind
and heart, feeling of raw consummation
of synapses previously withheld--
when I, exhausted the morning after,
hungover from cerebral ecstasy,
reflect on the night before and descend
into a climax of revelation:

to roll over and feel her thoughts with me,
having not fled in early light of dawn.

“When I, at twilight, wander home to you”
Johanna Florez

When I, at twilight, wander home to you
with hands hid deep in pockets full of lint,
I think of when my sweater and our love
were new, and I found out what hugging meant:

not arms (your hands could wrap my shoulders), no,
and not the way you towered (overtall,
then, cheek to cheek as you grew bolder)... Know
this: hugs are hearts to hearts. A breath, a pause.

My breath is fog. I walk alone to you,
considering the sweater that you bought
when we adventured — were adventure. Blue
has faded from this yarn — a joy forgot.

But, though our travels may be memories,
your arms are waiting there at home for me.

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