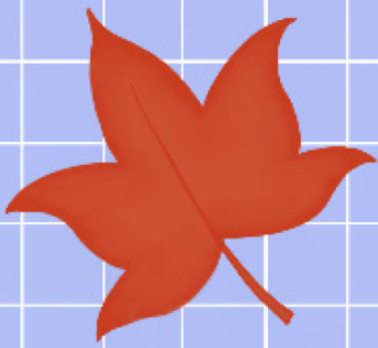


ATTICUS

LITERARY

and

ART



MAGAZINE

FALL 2019

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God of all Creation,
Thank you for allowing us to share in your creative gift.
Please bless the work that we create in your name and in your honor.
As we seek you through beauty and hope, help us to find you all around us.
Remind us of your love in creation and the lives of those around us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

- Fr. Marcus Fryer, S.J.

Thank You!

Atticus would like to give a special thank you to the following people for making the creation of this magazine possible:

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Thanks to **our readers** for continuing to support the Atticus Literary and Art Magazine!

LeRoy Lemos II

Let me tell you about my dad
he's like no other man
a solid thinker a conceptual thinker
he has an intellect that you can't forget
in speaking his mind he is kind.

For in his manner, he has strength and power to make
you listen to a drop of a dime
without meshing his words...
that contradict.

He will tell you what needs to be said,
he stands in convictions
stands firm in the belief
to stand the course with courage
to change
what needs to be done or said.

He goes where others fear to tread
to teach lessons that you'll understand.
He's the man who walks straight and true
if he believes in a cause.
He'll get it done and help you too
like a man-made of steel.
He forges ahead with kindness to be
firm and direct,
and you'll learn to believe by his
good examples,
to have goodwill and to believe
in others.

I believe in you.

- LeRoy Lemos III



- Aubrey Masdin

Firelight

I am warm inside when I see firelight
As a flame dances across the air, all worries leave us
Every sound is silent when staring into this heat
Serenity is evident when your shadow appears in front of the flare
I want to keep this feeling alive forever
Be the blaze in my heart until the last spark sputters

- Liam Hallahan



- Michelle Lavoie

It is possible

We, the imperfect have negative thoughts quite often. We've become fragile and our skeletons have softened.
We change our shape as we try to fit into this numb society.
We quietly drain and try to remain sane.

It is possible to forgive. It is possible to survive.

It is possible to strive. It is possible to give in.

Find some silence!

Discover a way to stop this world's violence!

- &|i



- Rubi Portillo

SKKPOP2016

Have you ever felt this feeling?
Have you ever touched the sun?
It doesn't make sense.
But it's a beautiful image.

If your heart had ears,
I hope the memory would be that song
That plays and sticks forever
That never gets stale and never ends.

When your world is broken glass,
I hope the memory glues it back on.
That feeling of hope.
That memory of joy.

I hope you've touched the sun,
And even if it burned.
I hope it left a mark,
Because this thing that you have.
It's a beautiful image,
Which no one can hurt.

- Anonymous



- Aubrey Masdin

Bearing Scars,

I own scars in my eyes
Those you can barely see
But also the ones that don't let me breathe
The ones keeping my tears from being set free
Tears that are slowly drowning me
As slow as a faucet dripping into the sink
Causing flooding within me
A flooding that keeps rising
Rising so high it won't stay down below
And half of my lungs are already dull
So dull it has evoked rotting
And the tears are filling up every single cranny
And the salt in the midst of the tears has now ignited
The burning has turned me psychotic
Now my blood is scorching with pain
And my flesh is part of the rain
The rain creating a storm
A storm of crimson and bloodshed
Lured in times of restraint
To think I was once a perfect soul
But the damage is done
I have been branded
Scars do not vanish
And scars are what I own

- Ariana Estrada



- Aubrey Masdin

Butterflies

Change

Like a flower blooming for the first time
The monarch emerges
Wingspan as large as an angels

Flight

He takes a step of the edge
Letting himself go
Almost to the ground
Fluttering right by your ear
He knows what to do
he was born with knowledge

Beauty

The feeling before falling in love
Patterns and repetition
An angel in front of you

The Butterfly

- Xavier Carrillo



- Ms. Britt

Darling, You Make Me Smile

I sat up again. In the woods, I parted and started down the street.

Very close, very luckily, I drew closer to you.

You make my day.

You make my problems go away.

I'll be with you forever.

You won't be alone.

I'll never take for granted that you'll always be there. And after all, if I feel grey, I'll admire you for a while,
and it won't take long for me to smile.

- Eduardo A.



- Michelle Lavoie

America

Hello. Welcome to America

Where the American dream turns into a nightmare

Where if you don't speak English, what the hell are you doing here

No we don't want any of your culture, get out

We want to be unique

Yes, unique.

Where we sell burgers and fries as if they didn't exist anywhere else

But wait before you leave, we'll have you check out and force you to sign a liability release form so that you are aware we are claiming that tamales, pupusas, elote preparado, and all of your delicacies were manufactured here

Get out of here, job thieves, lazy bums, rapists, and drug dealers

Wait, before you leave, make sure to leave a donation to the homeless man with capable legs and arms, perfectly fine to work

No, he's not lazy, just saving his energy until a job is given to him, not out of hard work, but out of pity

But you, you wetback. How hysterical! You are trying to provide for your five kids and wife for a better future

Too bad you don't fit the ideal American criteria

Welcome to America, the land of the free

Where kids who came here illegally for a brighter future shouldn't complain about being treated like animals

"If you came here illegally, you don't deserve to cry as you're locked up in cages and torn away from your mother and father"

Their cries have become the national anthem.

Welcome to America, where the perfect American life can only be attained if you are white.

Don't even think about being born with a dark complexion

Where white privilege is considered a luxury

Careful, try talking to our police calmly

Make sure to admit to the mistake you didn't commit

It's more convenient for your life

Just a friendly reminder, our police are bored, which allows them to accuse you of whatever they want, whenever they want

Where a white man who raped a six year old will only get 6 months in jail with a year of probation and a black man who was trying to defend himself will receive 15 years in jail.

Welcome to America, where women have many more opportunities than men.

Where a women who had an abortion is persecuted because she is supposed to have kids.

It's more convenient for the man to blame the women for the pregnancy than to take responsibility.

The man will be praised for having sex, but the women will be a whore for opening her legs.

Yes, the perfect American life with the American dream

How amazing

No discrimination

All love and no hate.

I should feel so selfish for living my life in fear when I am perfectly safe in this amazing country.

Please go ahead and tell me how wrong I am

Prove me wrong

Tell me how the good should outweigh the bad

when the bad is overflowing

We cannot say that this system of racism and discrimination is new
I sure as hell did not allow my ancestors to suffer to give me a better future just to not use my voice to speak up.
I am a Latina and I represent all of the African Americans who are taught that their skin color is a weapon.
I am yelling for all of the Latina women that don't have the same privilege as white women because we are too extravagant.
I speak for all of the immigrants who have tried to achieve the American dream but were not warned of the torment it would bring.

~ Gema Prado



- Aubrey Masdin

Latina Women /A Love Letter

What I find amusing about apologies is that when they are repeated time after time, say it with me, they lose their value.

Yet some people can't seem to comprehend this.

The first time a 'sorry' is said, we force ourselves to believe that the person will change.

The second time it is repeated, we give ourselves false hope.

The third time it is replicated, we start to point out the ornament used to trick us.

There is a benchmark where the routine becomes toxic and you no longer want the person to apologize to you, but to the people who watched you suffer.

Explain to them why you did what you did

Don't ask, beg for forgiveness

Tell them that you are sorry for making me believe that I was not good enough to carry the family legacy because my body is a 'distortion' to the image of the son that you wanted.

At just the age of twelve I was being taught by my uncle to defend myself because God knows what men will do, while my cousin was being rewarded for bringing a girl home and locking the door.

Tell them that you are sorry because you made me understand that since I had breasts and a vagina, I was not qualified to run for president because God forbid a woman comes up with ideas to save men.

Ask them for forgiveness for making me conjecture the fact that I will always be weak because I have a mental illness.

Implore for redemption for making me understand at just the age of six that an 'insert here' button was placed in between my thighs and was made to please men whenever they felt like playing a game.

Do not tell me to apologize to the forty year old man for serving him a fat, juicy, and delicious "screw you" when he made me want to change my gender for having catcalled me.

At just the age of fourteen I was made to believe that I had to dress like a nun to be given respect.

Do not make me believe that I have to sell my soul to the devil to see a change in my future.

At the age of fifteen, my family started to acknowledge the fact that I had an ass and that it would help me get far in life.

At the age of fifteen, I was made to believe that having suicidal thoughts were unacceptable.

Here, let me help you understand that I want nothing to do with you for all of the crap you made me endure at just the age of seventeen.

At the age of sixteen, I was told that the bad part of being a girl wasn't getting cat called.

At the age of sixteen, I was told to change because my dad's friends were coming over.

At the age of seventeen, I have learned how to turn my body into an object just in case college doesn't work out

At the age of seventeen, I have been taught to apologize for being a girl in the Mexican community.

Apologize to my family for making me feel that I was a bother because I did not want to cook for my twenty-three year old brother that believes that gaming is a career better than my nursing dream.

Sorry for the inconvenience of realizing how messed up the community has become.

No, I am not sorry for serving my plate first instead of yours because I have been starving for the past seventeen years to finally taste what having true power is

~ the Latina women who suffered

- Gema Prado



- Aubrey Masdin

Hearts Ablaze

The feelings I have burn inside like fire
He sets my heart ablaze
Although I know he doesn't feel the same

That fire for me burned out long ago
He has a new fire now
And it burns for someone else

But my fire will always burn for him
Even after I'm long gone
Cause that's how much I care
And I never want him to forget

- Michelle Lavoie



- Michelle Lavoie

Naked Branches

Take a step, take a break.

Breathe it in, breath it out.

You can feel the cold air coming in your snout.

Disclosed area, feel like you can shout,
and you do.

Hear your own voice over and over

Chills come through your back, the vibe of October.

You wish time could go slower and slower

It truly is the worst part, everything is -

Eventually over.

You look over,

and see a tree.

Conditions made it as made as can be.

The skinny, long branches are overlapping

Eachother as if attempting to make a rope.

The fall colors of the leaves on the ground

Make it difficult for you to determine what tree
it is.

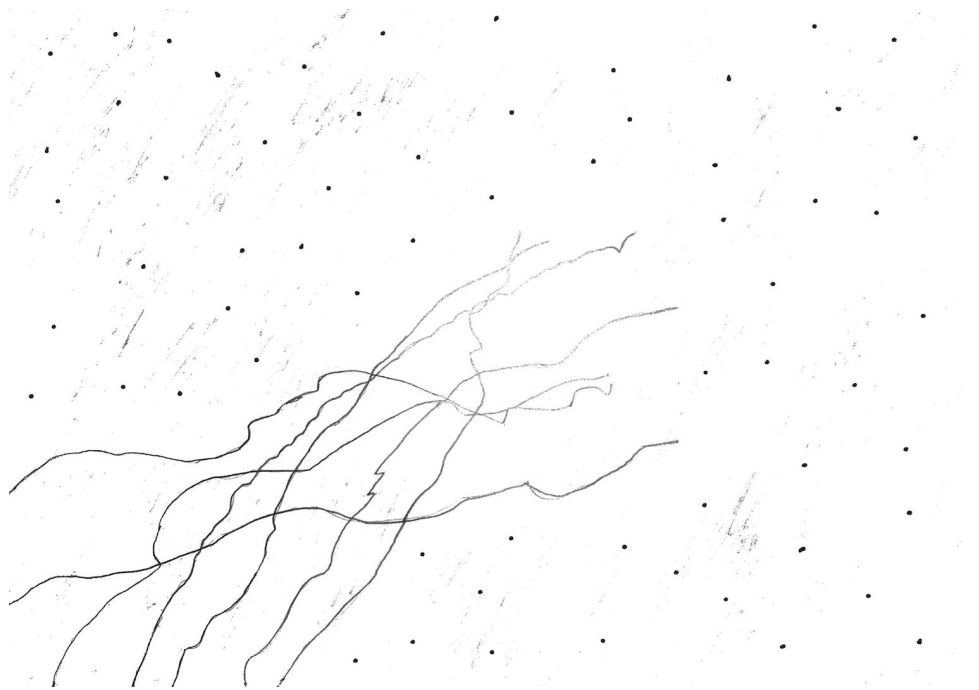
You lose all hope.

As you remember that spring will
come

back, and so will the leaves to the
branches.

Maybe that's when you'll know
what type

Of tree it is.



- Juan Gonzalez

Remember

I remember losing myself in the warm embrace of your smile,
But I didn't feel lost
I miss feeling the joy that was your laugh
I used to wait with pure anticipation,
For the bliss, only your smile could bring
I looked into your eyes and simply loved
When we walked with our hand together,
I felt complete
I would smile with pain in my heart,
As I tried to process a feeling I couldn't explain

- Liam Hallahan



LZM

Short Story Manuscript

"Room Service in 78"

1

Liam Perrents wasn't a man enough to jump easily onto things. He preferred time to think and assess his way through the muck he considered life. But as the hotel was marked on his screen, he jumped. The splattering rain on the SUV's windshield took his mind to it, watching the drops hit and roll with ease. Liam's often disgruntled wife sat in the passenger seat, looking back constantly at their two kids. Gabe had began teething, and was a constant source of calamity; his sister Maddie had just discovered boy bands, and could be a riot in pink and blue. Now, each one was on display; Gabe crying and Maddie complaining.

Liam gazed out to the seemingly infinite darkness, pierced only by his headlights, and the occasional red dots in the distance. His hands were at ten and two on the wheel, loosely held. The GPS said the hotel was up on the next exit. So far, only empty desert road, with the rain to keep company. The trip to DisneyWorld had been a bust, as Maddie suddenly changed her mind about going and started bickering about wanting to go back home. Gabe also apparently was in on it, as he wouldn't be quiet throughout the whole journey. Shelling out a good portion of what was in his bank account and working overtime, Liam wasn't amused. Now, heading to God knows where and trying to find lodging, his head pounded and his heart was sinking with each mile.

A bright green EXIT sign appeared, glinting with rain, and Liam sighed as he took it. Ten more miles, he thought, as disturbances assumed.

2

The fuzzy, warm lights enveloped the building, one out of a few that made up Culebra, a small desert town out in the Nevada desert. The hotel seemed like a lamp left in a prison cell, surrounded by heavy darkness and unseen troubles. The other buildings, smaller and some with missing roofs, seemed abandoned and broken. Paint was chipped, rocks tumbled, and dirt flew. The closest thing to a modern settlement had been a gas station and convenience store a few miles back. The blue SUV turned off the road and onto a muddy dirt trail that led up to a round center. The hotel, along with the buildings, surrounded this spot.

The hotel itself, a tall cyan structure, towered above the surrounding land and had a radiant 78 in neon lights on the top. It resembled the Motel 6's Liam had seen in a time past, but this one had obviously been around longer. The entire front of the building was a wall, save for two wooden doors and a small open window. An elderly woman, bundled up and wearing a straw hat, sat on a log bench in front. She didn't move. Liam swallowed, and led his family inside.

3

A thin, pencil-like moustache sported the man's face, and his hair was well-kept, thrown back and heavy with gel. He wore a white dress shirt and wrinkled dark-blue pants. He spoke with a slight accent, his cheekbones defined and a muscled face.

"Welcome, um, to Motel 78. Please do acquaint yo-selves, and the main desk is ova they-ar", the man spouted out, and put on a stern face. Liam smiled weakly and walked over to the desk, instructing Emily to take care of the children. "Quiet them, will you Em?".

The lobby was tiny, barely enough for the five of them. The walls were plaster, and the floor a sickly red. Irritating fluorescent lights hung above, attached to the ceiling like insects. A short woman sat behind the desk, and had thick spectacles. The rain pounded outside, and provided a soothing background noise as Liam got and paid for a room. Room 217. The man, whose name tag read Jacob, went into a backroom and disappeared. Liam got the keys from the woman and turned back to his family. They were all quiet.

An excerpt from *The Mainland Tributer*, the local paper in the surrounding area and who shipped regularly to Motel 78:

LOCAL PANIC ENSUES SEARCH - MISSING PERSONS CASE

By Theodore Grainmore

June 06, 20XX

Muroca, NV: After a story last brought to you by The Mainland Tributer on Wednesday, an increased police presence and a pending missing person's case has prompted a coordinated search through the Muroca area and outlying districts. This comes after Patrick Crawley, a 24-year-old man, went missing in the area. Police warranted the search after threats against Crawley's family were reported. The Grillard, a local restaurant, has been the source of some unrest as police took to the area. Crawley had last been seen near the business, and was among others, witnesses say. Sam Crawley, supposed relative of the victim, has spoken to the press and demands answers about Patrick's whereabouts. In Muroca, a typically quiet spot on the west, has seen an increase in passing traffic due to the interstate Road 19's expansion southwest through the area. Exhibiting an ...

The rain continued throughout the night, and this combined with the stiff bed and cold room kept Liam up. The lights were kept on downstairs, and he wondered how they managed to do so. He appeared to be the only there that night. He and his family. He sat up in bed, surveying the room for the hundredth time. Wooden floorboards, walls the color of cat puke, and a rug. The bed supplied a metal frame, and squealed with every move. His wife wasn't next to him, where she had lain. The other bed, similar to his, was also empty except for the round shape of Gabe's body. Liam got up and opened the room door quietly.

Light spilled out into the hallway from the bathroom, at the end of the corridor. The hallway seemed ominous, and Liam felt his heart *thump-thump-thumping* in his head.

"Em? Y-you in there?" Liam stuttered, and walked to the bathroom.

The whole building was silent, and Liam was sure his mere presence screamed agony. He seemed to hear the silence, to feel it seep in and out of his ears, enveloping him. He was trying to muster another yell, but his throat felt rough and clogged. He walked on, feeling the wall. He cried out once more, "Em!", and he heard a weak cry.

"Liam! God, go get something, will you? Maddie's come down with something, she's sick," Emily said, "Hurry! I think there's some stomach medicine in the car, in the glove box".

He heard coughing, and he his skin ran cold with bumps.

Liam turned hastily and started down the opposite way. The floor here in the hallway was also wooden, and was cold to every step. At the far end, he could only see a faint glow of orange light in a corner of the wall. This was the stairs down to the claustrophobic lobby. As he made his way down, something above him caught his eye. He paused and looked up at the attic door, which looked painted over, not distinct. An attic in a hotel, Liam pondered, and his mind leaving any memory of Emily or Maddie or the medicine behind, and reached up.

If the night outside had been obscure and dark, the attic was a black hole. Liam's eyes, which had already adjusted to the dark, couldn't deal with it. It was like going blind. He pulled himself up using the ladder, and had to throw himself into the room. His head hit something, and it made a *grr-grr* sound as it rolled away. Liam propped the attic hatch open to receive some light from downstairs. The first thing he noticed was how dense the air had become, and breathing was hard. A pungent aroma of sawdust rode in the air and clouded the atmosphere.

The second thing Liam noticed were the white people, scattered throughout.

Not people, Liam thought as he crouched, mannequins. Tens of them, in and between cardboard boxes the size of large dogs. The mannequins were in various poses, and some had missing heads. Many were white, some were the color of the cardboard boxes. All, though, appeared stained and dusty.

Liam shuddered, and a cold pit formed in the bottom of his stomach. A *tush-tush* came from downstairs, and Liam held his breath. Curiosity was now overriding his fear, and he crawled over to the dummy closest to him. This one was the tannish brown that a few others were, and had brown-blue stains around it.

Liam stood, noting the dummy's size. It was about a foot smaller than him, and he was almost six-foot. He tapped it and found it to be hollow. Except, he heard something throttle in it; like a note in a bottle. Now his whole body felt giddy, chattery, and cold. A million questions rolled through his head, and one stuck to his mind: *What's inside?*

He took a step forward and took the mannequin's head in his hands. It was cool to the touch, and the texture felt smooth and comforting. He prepared to lift it, bracing, thoughts rolling, thoughts of anguish, despair, medicine, hopelessness, and ...! He lifted the head.

7

Jacob Neahring sat in a plastic green chair, sulking, hearing the rain beat against his window. It had been almost an hour since Ma Joey retired to bed, and almost two hours since the Parrent's left to their room. The backroom served as Jacob's room, granted generously by Ma Joey. It was about the size of a large janitor's closet, and just as crowded. A wooden desk occupied the center, and was where Neahring found himself on this last night.

On one hand, he held a glass half full and in the other he fiddled with a switchblade. This he had painted with nail polish he found, and initialed it, *JN*.

It had been awhile since he had used it, and was determined to rid himself of its purpose. Thoughts of escaping had crossed his mind, sure, but he couldn't bring himself to any action. He was always drawn back to something, something alight in his mind. It was like a spell cast over him, keeping him inbounds.

The thoughts of Ma Joey, sitting behind the front desk, spectacles heavy and sharp, scared him. Whenever she let her eyes fall on him, he was immediately reduced in size and felt so. Like a bug he trembled and felt under her mercy. Neahring pondered these thoughts, turning and shuffling them like a bingo cage, unsure of which number was next. Each ball making noise, a rattling noise that woke something deep in him. Would he get the last number he needs?

Tak-tak-tick! Jacob Neahring seemed to wake from his nightly journey and veered around. A bird was at his window, a small crow. Neahring looked at it, gazed at it matted feathers and bright yellow eyes. His hands moved without his needing to and opened the window. The crow flew in and perched on the end of the table. Rain seeped in, and now it was Neahring who shut it. He turned to the bird, and let this old feeling return and take control.

What are you, bird? *Vaddaya vant?*

What are you, Jacob? What do you want?

What?

What do you need, Jacob? Do you want out of here? This hell-ish prison? I can make you free, you know. I can give you all the nations and kingdoms of the world; only take a stand with me.

Yes, I'd like zat. How?

Prove to yourself that you are worthy of yourself, prove that you are Jacob Neathring, prove to me, to yourself, to Joey...

Prove? How, tell me wretched bird, tell me!

Why, how you've already been doing so. Take your hand and the tool I made for your kind and show you are above others.

But I can't! You know I can't! The others, ... that was Ma Joey! That wasn't me! It-

Was it Ma Joey? Ask yourself, Jacob Matthew Neathring, who truly leads? Ruler or doer?

The man in the backroom got up, opened the window, and shoed the crow out. He left, closing the door with a *tush-tush*.

8

Emily Perrents buckled a sleeping Gage in his car seat, tightened the strap against the seat, and did the same for Maddie. Both children were asleep, and would remain so for the remainder of the night. The cold, dark night.

Emily shut the door, locked it, and ended the 911 call. The police would be here in about a half hour. It had taken her a while to actually get the call through, and then even more time to find a viable emergency responder. The closest station was in Murcia, an hour's drive away. God help me, she thought, as she ran back inside Motel 78, its radiant red lights casting a deep glow.

She tried the desk and main office again, but both were dark. She was beyond yelling, sure that Liam was gone and that she had been abandoned. Beads of sweat adorned her face, and her chest was alight with fire.

She ran upstairs again, and checked the five rooms again. Empty. She went out into the hallway, which seemed a million miles long. She had seen the attic entrance, but the ladder wasn't unfolded. He couldn't have gone up, could he?

She ran to it, feeling a growing cold dread form inside of her, clouding rational thought. Her mind raced, *please please please God just please!* Emily had to leap to reach the small hook on the ceiling and finally got her hand around it. She pulled and the ladder fell out with a heavy *thunk* on the floor. Grabbing at the highest rung she could manage, Emily hoisted herself up and into the attic. Mannequins greeted her, along with a sharp smell. Terror flung through her and she screamed.

9

At the end of the attic, a large window occupied most of the far wall. It was in a half-circle, flat side down. From the outside, it presented a pleasing decoration and build on the hotel's scarred face. On this night, however, as Emily gazed with horror, the window was shattered. A large portion of the middle had been smashed through. Emily walked, in a trance, towards the window. She reached the edge of it, feeling as the board supporting her creaked at the end. Everything felt too bright, too fluid. Her insides felt tangled up and like a pile of snakes. She looked out and down.

Lights flared on beneath Emily in the hallway as Jacob Neathring walked down. He saw the ladder, took a minute to recognize its meaning, and started for it, switchblade in hand. He never got to use it.

Emily gazed down at Liam, who lay sprawled out on the dirt ground amidst a pile of broken glass. His eyes were open, a glossy white. He had never been one to jump easily; what a surprise. A single tear raced down her cheek, and the world fuzzied. The pit of snakes in Emily's stomach hissed, unraveled, and pounced; she whizzed around and saw a man standing there, facing her.

The darkness obscured much of him, but she managed to recognize the moustache and the clothes. The lights went off downstairs, leaving them in total blackness. Emily felt stifled, cold, and was drenched in sweat. The rain had subsided outside, leaving a misty feeling that was creeping its way inside. The two stood still for what Emily considered an eternity, slowly ripping her sanity away. She let out a small breath, and swallowed. *Gulp*.

"What do you want?" she shrieked out, clutching herself with shaking arms.

Silence.

"Din-did you do this!? Huh, did you? *What do you want, you MUH-MUHNSTE—*," Emily cried out, right before Neathring charged her. He raised his hand, blade ready, smashed through the dummies in his way. Some toppled, others flew to the wall. Emily screamed, and tried to run. She hit the side of the wall containing the window, rebounded, and smacked into Neathring. He hit her with his stomach, and started swinging the blade.

Emily fell to the floor and started scurrying away. Neathring drew back, managed to grab her, and flung her into the far east of the attic. The contents of the mannequins spilled out onto her, and she screamed.

Jacob found his way back to the entrance. He climbed down the ladder slowly, calmly, and stuck his hands into his pants' pockets. The blade was missing; Jacob Neathring didn't care. He grabbed the ladder, and, after shoving it up, to the left, and down, dislocated it and got it free. The hatch door fell closed, and Neathring propped the ladder so that it held the door propped closed. He clutched it with his hands so hard his knuckles went white. He held it, sweat pouring like waterfalls down his face and arms. He waited a minute, two minutes, three minutes, and then the banging began.

WUMP! WUMP! WUMP!

Jacob Neathring held the ladder, hearing the panicked and desperate poundings on the attic door. He heard what sounded like words, but with the screaming they were a part of and the muffling ceiling, they became indiscernible.

WUMP! WUMP! WUMP!

Jacob held, as the pounding continued, and he felt his heart pounding its own rhythm.

WUMP! WUMP! WUMP!

He held on for his version of eternity, which he had found to be a few minutes. Afterwards, the madness slowed and ceased altogether. No screaming, no pounding, no banging, nothing. He let go of the ladder, which fell down. His hair a mess, and hands shaking, he breathed heavily.

He walked downstairs, went into his backroom, and started shuffling through the drawers on a small desk in a corner. At last he found a set of keys, grabbed them, and took the back door outside. He thought then of Ma Joey, went to check in her room, and found it empty. A mist was settling on the muddy ground, and the moon was obscured by dark clouds. He breathed easily.

He saw a car down the pathway leading to the front, negotiated, and decided against it. The old woman out front was also gone. Jacob Neathring pondered these thoughts and more as he walked due east. He turned around, and saw nothing. A night view of a desert road that led to an endless stretch of nothingness. Neathring always liked poetry, and now, walking, tossed around Shakespeare and Eliot in his head. He stopped again, took out his wallet, and examined the license there: William Perrents Jr. He smiled, and looked up to make out a bird flying in front of the moon. It came down (a crow, it turned out to be) upon him and brought him minded rest.

10

Peter Scott sat in his office chair and put his portfolio on his lap. From it, he took 3 photographs out and a handful of papers. He set the pictures side by side on the table, and the papers farther along. The first picture showed a male, blonde, and with a small beard. Pale face and with a green shirt, Scott had seen it a million times, but the eyes always intrigued him; they shone. He wrote "Patrick Crawley" on the back. The other photographs were newer; one showed another man, black-brown hair, clean-shaven, and with blue eyes. Handsome, almost. The other showed a woman: brown hair, skinny jaw, and soft faced. Scott turned the picture of the man over, and saw a name already written there.

"William Perrents"

A storm was brewing outside his window, he saw. Peter Scott took out his notes, picked up his desk phone, and called *The Mainland Tributer*.❖

- Rob



- Common Artist Name



- Sofia Castorena

COLD TURKEY

Hate you? No, I would be delusional to.

Loathe you? Maybe.

But how can I when you were the one that taught me how to adore every inch of disfiguration found in my "temple" when I abhorred the utter fact of me breathing.

No I can't, I shouldn't, but that's where you're wrong.

Love you? Definitely

not

See, I hadn't felt like this in a while. I was doing fine. I WAS the DEFINITION of BEING FINE

At least that's what I like to believe, but you didn't like that right? You knew me before I even had the audacity to get to know myself. There was a reason I hadn't reached out. You see, I finally learned not how to not want you, but how to not need you

How to not need your existence in my life. That was your kryptonite though, wasn't it?

I still remember laying in bed and receiving that wretched notification.

OPEN IT. No, don't. You'll regret it.

Somewhere along the sidelines of "once more" and "exhaustion". It should've brought my body a sense of euphoria, but it didn't.

My persona was confused. THIS SHOULD MAKE YOU ECSTATIC. BE GRATEFUL THAT HE IS BACK.

UNDERSTAND THAT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THEIR TOXICITY, WITHOUT THEIR MANIPULATION. ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU NEED?

No, no more.

I should've ignored it, but did I? Of course not. But that's okay, it's to be expected.

"Sure" and "one more time" "No I'm not depleted, why would I be"

I took a look in the mirror. Look at yourself, "are you ready to relinquish this state of happiness for a state of sorrow?"

"Are you ready to go back to the same toxic routine?"

Sure. Why not, I've done it before so why should this time be any different.

I was ready to hand it back, all of it.

I unzipped my skin, but the zipper got stuck. It hurt to detach myself. I felt like a mouse stuck to the glue trap.

I gave in, I let my skin partially hang

I grabbed the skin of sorrow that was supposed to be hidden away. I blew the dust off

I dressed it over the rest

I look in the mirror. A distorted version of happiness drenched in sorrow. Kind of like an ice cream melting.

The feeling was weird, but tolerable.

Again, another desolate notification. A cry for help. My weak-minded self believed you. The 1, 2, 10, no, the 1,000th red flag, but I didn't think anything of it.

"No I'm FINE" you said. Were you though?

Or was it manipulation?

Hold on give me a year and I'll soon figure it out.

I lost sleep, but you didn't care. You knew though, didn't you?

You wanted me to lose sleep. NO, I CAN'T...., but I should right? That's the right thing to do. You would've done the same.

The only difference? You would've brought it up like a broken record

A favor for a favor right? I keep my mouth shut and you don't remind me of my past.

That's where you failed me. You reminded me, how cunning.

Was it supposed to be charming?

I look in the mirror. I'm not emotionally tired, or maybe I am. I don't remember how it feels like anymore.
Maybe it's because I'm so used to it, I forgot how to distinguish the feeling.
I look in the mirror. Your skin of sorrow that you handed me as a "gift" is covering more than it used to.
My skin is rotting underneath, because of your so called "charm"
I look tired, but that's not it. I'm not tired. I'm extinct, you washed me, all of me.
But it's okay because now I know for sure.
GOODBYE my "friend"
This isn't see you until next time.
It's not a hold on let me get back to you in a few.
Wait I'll brb.
Text me for the reunion of reminiscing over the toxic times, *The Good Ones*.
Don't leave me on delivered your texts are my drug.
No, it's a withdrawal.
Renunciation.
Or how you would like to call it? Cold turkey?
A renunciation to your noxious ways.
To your orchestrated lies.
More importantly, to your execrate love.
NO MORE

~Gema Prado



- Ms. Britt

Just like anything

To sing

To sing

To sing

Is a state of mind

Sunlight dances slowly on a drum beats broken rhyme

I speak in answers only to see them in my mind

If I had a penny I'd throw it in the sea

to see if would float away

Or grow of any tree

I play the fool of rhythm

To speak of what is sane

I never think of singing to those who feel the same

See how high the rain falls

See the color in my hair

Hunt for golden porridge bowls

Hear the paper tear

Just like anything

To sing

To sing

To sing

Is a state of mind

Death gives no reason

So why should I

Death has no season

So I know I'll never die

Just like anything

To sing

To sing

To sing

Is a state of mind

- Jackson C. Frank



- Sofia Castorena

Heavy and Empty

I love crying,
But I never knew some tears,
Could be so empty.

You see,
Tears of joy have the most salt,
Because it reminds us of the ocean and the purple skies.

Tears of sadness pour out the most,
Because it reminds us of rainfall, in a heartbreaking music note.

Tears of love reveal the brightest of eyes,
Because it polishes a new view of emotion.

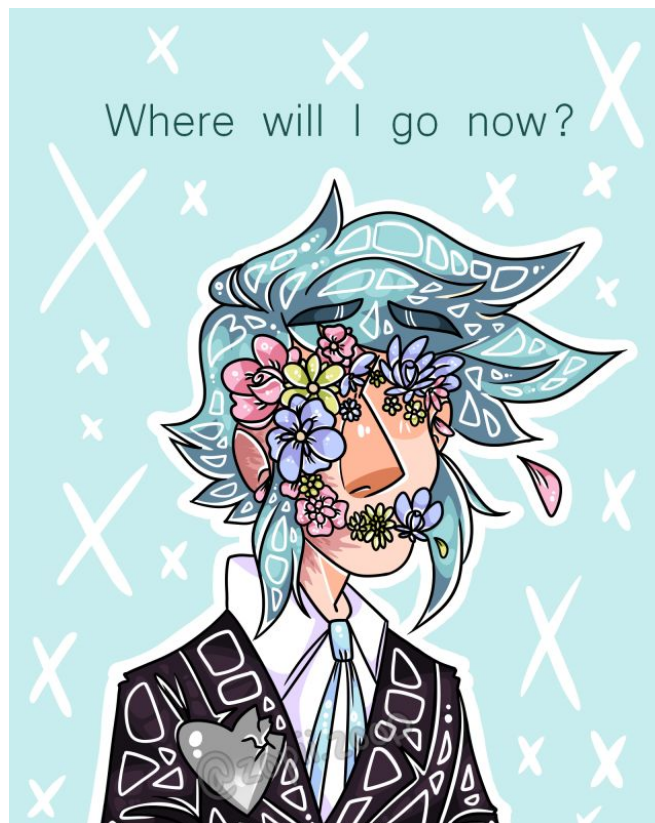
But tears of disappointment
don't leave a stain on your cheeks.

They stay bottled up behind fogged eyes,
Wishing to be let out.

When one does fall out,
It's the heaviest yet the most emptiest tear you've ever shed.

I guess you could say I'm used to the weight.

- N



- Aubrey Masdin

Signatures

Since when has loops on top of a line,
signify you're okay with something?

That you approve of it
And you agree with whatever's been stated.

And how come,

When I show my signature smile,
I'm not okay with it.

I don't approve,
Of what's been stated in my head.

There's just too many lines for my hands to handle.

- N



- Michelle Lavoie

Transparent Sphere

There once was a boy that lived in a small cottage house. He had no siblings except for one friend besides his mother. Gathering his blue backpack, the boy ran out of the house and into the snowy neighborhood. His brown boots crunched in the thick snow that seemed to cover everything. Light snowflakes fell into his dark obsidian hair as he sprinted through the few houses down a narrow stone road. In the distance the Great Ocean was seen, never discovered, and far too dangerous to travel to, as rumored by the villagers.

There weren't many houses or people on this small island. Each cottage matched the spruce trees that littered here and there. Barrels were lit up around town to keep the spirits of the villagers warm. A sandy dog would often come out of the shadows in alleys to play with the other kids. The boy passed them and ran upon the region of small igloo-shaped houses. *For the earthquakes*, the boy thought as he opened the door to the bakery.

A small ding was heard overhead and a wave of fresh dough and flour hit his nostrils. He looks up and finds his one and only friend in this small town. The baker smiles at him as he holds a pan of fresh croissants, and motions for him to have one. Eager, the boy runs up to him.

"Too much dough will turn your belly into dough, you know," The baker heaved a chuckle as his wide waist slides out of the gates next to the display table. The boy continues to eat the hefty croissant with the biggest smile he has shown all morning.

"I was awake when first light touched my window sill to beg Mama to let me come, I think the dough belly is so worth it!" The boy said in between mouthfuls of cooked dough. The baker shook his head with a toothy grin and ran his bear-like hand through his long grey beard. Just then the ground started to grumble and shake and it wiped the smiles off of the baker's and the boy's faces.

"It's another earthquake! Quick take shelter under the table behind the display table." The baker ushered the boy around the back of the cashier table and squatted down with him but the baker could only fit in between the desk and the wall and could not crouch down. While the picture frames of loaves of bread fell off the shelves and the pan of croissants fell off the table, the baker held his stance while the boy used his backpack as a shield under the desk. The ground shook and mountains of snow could be heard thudding through the walls outside. The boy worried about his mother who was home alone.

Just as quick as it started, the earthquake ended. This resulted in the boy springing out from under the desk and fleeing for the door. The baker warned him to be careful, for the earthquake might come back, but the boy only heard his own voice whisper, "Mama!" on repeat. Jumping over the hills of snow he didn't seem to realize the thick clouds of white falling overhead. The wind started to pick up and soon a blizzard was forming, and the town was in the center of it.

The boy ran with the wind as snow cut his rosy cheeks and his furry hood was blown from atop his head. The snow pushed him back but seeing a familiar figure of a woman in a brown dress with a white apron around her waist, caused the boy to push back and sprint one last time. As he got closer he heard the distant calls of his mother searching for him. The door to his house was being thrown around, and when his mother saw him, they both had trouble entering the house. Once safely inside the boy hugged his mother and his mother hugged him back.

After what seemed like hours and everything had calmed outside, the boy goes to the front to check the sky. Sure enough, there's still slight snow falling over the cottages and over the Great Ocean and over its dark blue waves. By now the sky has turned dark purple with no sun in sight. The young boy starts to pout his lips for missing the sunset yet again. Then his mind forms its own snow cloud. *Actually*, he wonders, *I've never seen the sunset. No one in this town has.*

Now I wonder myself, this little boy is like me, I also have never seen the sunset because of my bedtime. My mother always has to hold me so I could watch the sunrise with her. I could never reach this transparent sphere

either, Mother always puts it on the highest window sill in the house. She said it was so they could have a nice view of the Western Lake.

- N



- Aubrey Masdin

Drowning

We were drowning
In love
The moment
We met

Not the kind of drowning
Where you struggle to breathe
And your lungs burn

Rather the kind where your heart
overflows with joy

At first you let yourself be free
You float
Enjoy not knowing
What the outcome will be

Eventually like the ocean
It becomes too much
Beautiful to admire from afar
but once your in
You lose control

The deeper you go
Love turns cold

You forget how to swim
Now you struggle to breathe

- LZM



- Paola Candia

At war

I am fighting a war with myself
because of an idea
that someone else
planted in my head

An idea that has driven me
Farther and farther away
From who I really am

- LZM



- Michelle Lavoie

I Don't Know What This Is

Caps on.

Straps gone.

Got way too much passion.

Put the cheat code in. Ristar.

Got pot in pots in the kitchen.

What I'm cooking up? Well, it's too strong.

About lost all of my ambition.

Now I'm stuck here. I'm just so lost.

Want affluence? This ain't Tucson.

Now I'm just cooking it up in the kitchen.

I got no vision.

Scarlet Witch, I killed my Vision.

Knew I'd fail, it's premonition.

I've been expecting it since I was little.

Head off to jail? Now it's just business

Mother 3, mother died, Hinawa, live it.

Living in trash? Nah, this my building.

- Page Winston



- Ms. Britt

Fleeting

My hands often dance to the rhythm of late-night stars and all the memories I don't always want to remember. The shadows are shocked by the colors I produce. I tell them it's nothing but instead the only way I can end all these thoughts constantly rushing through my head: creating neon realities beyond the viewer's reality. Yet they are more surprised by the fire that bursts for the tip of my tongue. The smoke seeping from my lips. They are shocked by the fireworks in my ribs as my voice sparks to life. I create cathedrals out of paragraphs. Yet I let the doubt of flying too close to the sun cause these walls to come falling down. I've been told my writing ability can move mountains and making talking to walls a masterpiece as I create abstract morals in every crevice. Although there is something I just can't shake like the shadow that hangs behind me when I dare stand in the sun. I can't lose my grip on the paint running through my veins because one thing young Icarus never knew.

Talents, much like beauty, is a fleeting practice.

I write like I'm running out of time.

Because soon my wax will burn.

My wings will turn to ash.

And if I don't try hard enough, this paint and talent that runs through my veins will surely let me fall,

For such disloyalty.

So as I let my hands dance to the rhythm of the night stars.

I let my hands simply create beautiful murals on the rumble of my lost cathedral.

- Raquel Yates



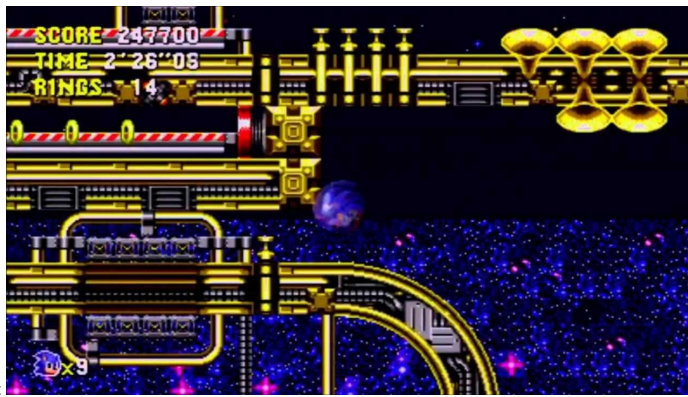
- Rubi Portillo

Theory: The Bad Ending of Sonic CD is Canon

One thing that has bothered Sonic fans for years is the appearance of Stardust Speedway in games succeeding Sonic CD. Not the stage itself, of course, but the fact that it's often in it's bad future incarnation. What does this mean for the Sonic series?

Now, if you don't know what I'm talking about and I sound insane, I assure you I am not. In Sonic CD, Sonic has to travel through time to stop Eggman. Eggman has set up robot stations in the past thanks to the Time Stones and Sonic has to travel back to the past and destroy them so that the future won't be ruined. Because of this, there are four versions of each level. The present, the past, the good future, and the bad future. The bad future is one where Sonic has not destroyed the robot stations and the good future is one in which he did. Players can only get the good ending if they destroy all of the robot stations (and collects all of the time stones so Eggman can't just enact his plan again) as this ensures a good future.

Now, later in the game, you fight Metal Sonic in a location known as Stardust Speedway Zone. It's one of the fastest stages in the game as well as the largest. It's pretty iconic and makes appearances in Sonic Generations, Sonic 4: Episode Metal, and Sonic Mania. But please, look closely, as I'm about to show you the four versions of this level in Sonic CD.



This is The Present:



This is The Past:



This is The Good Future:



And this is The Bad Future:

Now take a look at Stardust Speedway in Sonic Generations:



What about Sonic 4: Episode Metal:

Notice anything? Every game post CD where Stardust Speedway appears portrays its Bad Future incarnation. This must mean that the canon ending for Sonic CD is the bad ending, where Sonic was unable to destroy all of the robot stations.

There are three holes with this theory that I will clear up now. First up, does the Generations one really count? Theoretically, one could say that the Timer Eater, the entity responsible for the time hijinx in Sonic Generations, has time powers that extend into timelines or even universes as well. This could be the case as the Time

Eater has control over not only time, but to an extent space as shown by White Space, the hub world of Generations, and the final boss of the game. So maybe Stardust Speedway in Generations is really just from another timeline and not our main one, right? Well, while that may be the case as it would explain why the boss battle itself is pretty different, remember that Stardust Speedway appears the same way in Sonic 4: Episode Metal, a game that canonically takes place after Sonic CD and that we know is canon because it shows us how Eggman got Metal Sonic back after he was abandoned on Little Planet, something we see happening or having happened in Sonic Generations, Sonic 4: Episode Metal, and of course, Sonic CD. But, when we bring up Mania, that's when we need to prove that the Generations appearance is unique and does matter.

The second hole is about Sonic Mania. Now, earlier, I said that every game after CD where Stardust Speedway appears shows it in it's Bad Future form. Now this is mostly true. The exception here is Sonic Mania, where we see Stardust Speedway's Past, Present, and Good Future iterations, but never the Bad Future one! Surprising, right? How is this possible? Well, in the first act of Stardust Speedway, Sonic arrives in the past version of Stardust Speedway. Recognize it? [Show Image] He then immediately destroys a robot station. THE robot station. The one he left behind, leading to the bad future! He fixes his mistake! So...what does that mean? Theory busted? Well...not quite, thanks to a little game called Sonic Forces. Canonically, Sonic Mania takes place in an alternate universe! Mania Sonic only appears in Sonic Forces because of the Phantom Ruby, a gem able to transcend universes apparently. Think of it like Schrodinger's Cat where one event creates a separate universe branching apart from the others. Think of it this way, you could choose to lick your screen right now. Whether you do or you don't. There theoretically would be another universe where you did the inverse of whatever you have done. In other words, even if you didn't lick the screen, there is another universe where you did, and vice versa. This means that Sonic Mania's interpretation of Stardust Speedway is largely irrelevant to this theory because that interpretation is happening in another universe where Sonic fixes his mistake. It also means that there are now four different Sonics, those being Classic, Modern, Boom, and now Mania. Five if you count Dreamcast Sonic as a separate Sonic and not just Adventure era Modern Sonic. Actually, I guess you could then count Classic and Mania Sonic as the same as well. Anyway, this also also means that the Generations thing still counts because Classic Sonic in Generations is just Modern Sonic from the past, not Classic Sonic from another universe. So no, the Time Eater didn't bring in Mania Sonic and no, Classic Sonic from the main universe is not the same as Mania Sonic.

The third hole brings us back to Sonic 4: Episode 2. According to the plot of Sonic 4: Episode 2 and Sonic 4: Episode Metal, Little Planet was gone and finally reappeared. However, in the bad ending of Sonic CD, we see that it disappears, yes, but reappears covered in metallics, still chained. My theory is that the reappearing still followed the Little planet schedule of appearing one month a year or at least wasn't instant. This is because the bad ending tells Sonic to try again and save Little Planet forever. Now, why would we see it disappear only to reappear again? It wouldn't make sense unless some time has passed. Little Planet is above time after all, so maybe what looked like an instant could have been months. In Sonic 4: Episode 2, Eggman's plan to to build a new practically moon-sized Death Egg over Little Planet and feed off of it. Could this forever be referring to a future where Eggman does just this? When we see it metallic once again, we could really just be seeing Eggman forming the Death Egg mk. 2 in the future. Or maybe we are seeing what it'll look like in the future. Little Planet transcends time, so maybe it is showing it's future form, a way of saying, "This is what I'll become if you don't save me." Once it got large enough, Little Planet as the Death Egg mk. 2 was unchained and sent into orbit by Eggman. This explains why we see it in space even though it should be over Never Lake and how the bad ending and Sonic 4 are both still canon. This means that the events of Sonic 4, yes all of Sonic 4, actually never happened in the Mania universe as Eggman was able to do this because of Sonic's failure due to the fact that the bad ending isn't canon in the Mania Universe and it directly lead to this happening. Of course, by the end of Sonic 4, Sonic has rectified this error at some point or

the robot station was destroyed from all of the energy sucking going on, hence why we see the beautiful restored Little Planet at the end.

So there you have it. Sonic CD's canon ending is the bad ending, meaning that Sonic was unable to completely save Little Planet until at least Sonic 4. The Mania universe and the mainline universe are two different timelines, born from Sonic's failure to destroy every last robot station. That is the theory and this was a theory. That is all.

- Page Winston



- LZM

