

June Storm

Jordan Jeffreys

The dry breeze brushed against Eliza's ruffled blouse, rustling the bouquet of Star-of-Bethlehem flowers in her trembling hands.

"You let him play on the tracks," her husband whined, voice crackling. The pile of logs they sat on moaned with their every shifting movement.

"I didn't know where--"

"Why weren't you watching him!" he yelled, his voice echoing through the field, bouncing off the maples surrounding them.

"Why weren't you?" Eliza hissed, barely reaching a whisper.

Her husband choked back a sob into his hands, then spat into the grass, and stood.

"It's going to rain," he said without expression, examining the clouds above.

He trudged forward through the tall yellow grass, never looking back. He stopped only to stare down at the rusting railroad tracks before stepping over the rails and walking over the hill, disappearing into dusk.

Eliza stayed perched on the logs, slumping as an invisible weight collapsed onto her back.

She shook, sandwiched between her hus-

band's plaid suit jacket and their son's ashes encased in a polished walnut box.

The June wind moistened as dark clouds rushed into the navy sky. The air swirled and wailed as thunder drummed above, a whip cracking against the brittle dirt.

In one rolling movement, Eliza clutched the wooden box and hurled it at the ground, letting out her own guttural scream. The box smacked the dirt and ruptured into thick splinters, sharp thorns scattering in the grass as the cremated remains erupted

like a sack of newly opened flour, dust rising in a mushroom cloud. The impact was an earsplitting explosion compared to rhythmic rumbling above.

Eliza gasped and huffed, trying to catch her escaping breath.

Once the burning in her lungs subsided to a low smolder, her gut shriveled in her abdomen as a full-body heat prickled through her pores only to dissipate in a single wave, leaving goosebumps on her arms. She collapsed on all fours.

Eliza frantically grasped at billowing ash as it rode the wind, leaving her hands a powdery gray.

It never did rain that night.

**The air swirled and wailed
as thunder drummed above, a whip
cracking against the brittle dirt.**

Pittsburgh Flood of 1936

Jordan Jeffreys

inspired by a vintage photo of the Pittsburgh Flood

A bitter winter harbored a smothering cloak of snow, its icy remains still lingering on Saint Patrick's Day. Awakened early, folks prayed to find fields of four leaf clovers and glistening pots of gold.

Clouds burned on the horizon like hot coals, burying the rainbow map of fortune.

It was Alectona, Goddess of the Sun, who woke the town early, grabbing their heads between her clammy hands, forcing them to watch the ice thaw-watch as Khione and Zeus brawled.

People gaped as the browning liquid swelled from Alle-kiski valley. Slush rose above the curb and up onto the sidewalk, swallowing bridges, trees, and river bay homes. The sky blackened as the mortals lay limp in the hands of the gods.

Forty-six feet of rainwater reached the heavens. "Welcome home."

Then the sun set behind a roaring lake of debris, a field of wooden power poles, standing tall like crosses.

Genesis

Jordan Jeffreys

At the edge of the world,
there is only a sea
with foaming waves, wading
in and out like rows of biting teeth
that glitter in the moonlight—a milky
residue left on the shore.

Hands—those are the first to breach
the rushing waves, then the body, powerful
legs wading through the sea.

That's you,
with cream fish bones in your hair
and salt, like diamonds, in your eyes.

That's me,
with bloody knees scraped by broken shells,
scintillant sand under my nails.

That's all of us,
clawing to the surface,
breathing in the scent of fish and seaweed
for the first time.

We look up and find centaurs in the stars.
We look down and draw impressions in the sand.
We close our eyes and dream in infinite
poetry ...

Poeta Nascitur, Non Fit
The Poet is Born, Not Made.

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Intimus—our innermost thoughts, feelings, and secrets—is what we unveil in the act of creating our art, whether on a canvas or on the page. Through art and writing, we peel back layers of plastic smiles and plastered appearances. We discover our most intimate thoughts, imaginings, and desires—and like creating a collage, we connect image after image, assembling the most obscure of puzzle pieces to form our innermost beings.

The transaction that occurs between writers and readers is intimate and mysterious. The artists, too, have no way of knowing how their work is perceived, yet it is a personal revelation. The experience is nearly telepathic as words and images enter the minds of the audience.

In “Intimus,” the writers, artists, and photographers invite you into their own minds, to discover untold stories and truths, memories and perspectives. Humans are an agglomeration of ideas, experiences, beliefs, and feelings. Learning and reflecting on our inner lives helps us to better perceive the whole of the human experience. Each person brings their own essence to the greater humanity, creating a mosaic of intimi all over the globe.

This issue of Voices magazine is an ode to this rich concept. A collage in itself, “Intimus” is a mirror of the eclectic and artistic reality we belong to. Take a perilous journey through “June Storms” and walk through days of “Judgment” and “Burden”. “Master the Art of Conversation” and consult “Sightless Seers”.

The Voices staff hopes that sharing the artistic endeavors of students this year will offer a provocative experience for readers that may lead you to discovering that most important relationship—your relationship with *yourself*, your own intimus.



Jordan Jeffrey
Editor-in-Chief