



THE DOGWOOD

an art & literature zine

Parker Memorial Library, Dracut MA

Issue 1 | October 2022

Table of Contents

<i>photo</i>	Emma Spence	3
<i>Teen Summer Reading Photo Contest Winner</i>		
<i>photo</i>	Jocelyn Dery	4
<i>Adult Summer Reading Photo Contest Winner</i>		
<i>Hollow</i>	Kelsey Bergeron	5
<i>Teen Summer Reading Story Contest Winner</i>		
<i>photo</i>	Joan Powers	7
<i>photo</i>	Alexis Femia	8
<i>photo</i>	Linda	9
<i>the sun i lost</i>	Linda M. Crate	10
<i>photo</i>	Sokhadalyce Nissay	11
<i>photo</i>	Zoe Provencher	12
<i>photo</i>	Lynne Gumbris	13
<i>photo</i>	Lori Provencher	14
<i>Mind Watchers</i>	Reese Lesage	15
<i>photo</i>	Rhema Nissay	20
<i>photo</i>	Kim Cody	21
<i>lillypad</i>	Alex Sullivan	22
<i>photo</i>	Danielle O'Shea	23
<i>Bermuda Blues</i>	TP	24
<i>Crooked Toes</i>	Lynne Gumbris	25

Table of Contents (cont.)

<i>photo</i>	Donald Provencher	27
<i>photo</i>	Kelsey Bergeron	28
<i>photo</i>	Jordan Ricciardi	29
<i>photo</i>	Karen Herbaugh	30
<i>Horror Game Night</i>	A. D.	31
<i>photo</i>	Chloe Cadieux	33



Emma Spence

Teen Summer Reading Photo Contest Winner



Jocelyn Dery

Adult Summer Reading Photo Contest Winner

Hollow

No matter how much I try, nothing can fix this. Nothing can save them. Nothing can rescue me. I'm hollow. No heart, no worries. Nothing can save any of us. Nothing...

...And it's all my fault...

...

I was walking down the hall, when my little brother walked up to me. "What did you do?"

Confused, I asked, "What do you mean?" He asks, "Who was in your room?"

I stare blankly at him.

I said, "You're crazy."

And I push past him. He was crazy... or so I thought. I walk into my room, and jump. Someone was on bed. "Dude, don't scare me like that! There is nothing to worry about!"

The figure turns. Okay, that's NOT my brother. I just stare. I must be looking in a mirror, but my mirror is next to me. Sitting on my bed, in my clothes, staring at me, is myself. "CoMe. PLAy WiTh mE."

I hear a scream behind me. I raced down the hall where my brother was. He's not there. I run to my parents room, and they're there, staring out the window. "Mom?"

She turns around, and I scream. Her and my dad's eyes are black, and their faces pale. I turn to run, but the girl is at the doorway. "tHeRe'S nOwHeRe tO rUn NoW! i JuSt WaNt tO pLaY!!" Her laugh is cold and mind numbing. She makes me want to run. Far away from her. But I noticed something. My brother's hat was in her hands. "i JuSt WaNtEd tO pLaY wItH hIm!! bUt hE pUsHeD mE aWaY aNd RaN!!!"

The girl was crying. But it wasn't normal crying. Black ooze was running down her face from her red eyes. "i JuSt WaNtEd tO pLaY!!"

I didn't know what to do, so I yelled, "Who are you?!"

"tHiS iS aLl YoU'rE fAuLt!! i aM yOu!! YoU cAn'T eCaPe mE!!!"

I stared at the girl. There is no way that girl was me!! But the more I looked at her, the more we looked alike. She had the same hair, the same eyes, and the same clothes! But one thing wasn't the same. Her twisted, nasty smile. A hole was in the place of where he heart should've been. "There is no way that you are me! I would never hurt my family!!"

"bUt YoU dId. LoOk."

I look down, and see that there was a black eye on my hand. I scream. This eye looks exactly like my mother's eyes. The hole was now on me. "sEe?! iT wAs YoU!! i ToLd YoU!!! i ToLd YoU!!! iT's YoUr FaUIT!!! yOuR fAuLt!!"

Her laugh rang in my ears, piercing my brain. I felt sick. Cold. Scared. Dead. "bYeByE!!!"

She hit a button, and the entire house exploded.

...

No matter how hard I try, nothing will fix this. Nothing will save them. Nothing can rescue me. Nothing. I'm hollow. No heart, no worries. Nothing can save any of us. Nothing...

...And it's all my fault...

Kelsey Bergeron

Teen Summer Reading Story Contest Winner



Joan Powers



Alexis Femia



Linda

the sun i lost

i am a moon:
fierce and feral
mercurial and moody,

and she was a sun:
full of light and warmth
sometimes cold yet
always radiant;

if loving her was wrong
then i am afraid i will never
be right—

she was the faerie who stole
my heart away when i wasn't
intending or even looking to
lose myself but hearts are funny
creatures and they fall so easily
for the people who carry our scars
and our winds with grace and mercy,

she was the one that taught me
that my scars were beautiful and
helped define me as someone who
fought and survived;

when i felt the magic in me had died
she revived it again—

my gran upon recalling her said:
"she was quite a character"
and perhaps that is why my heart
fell for her because she was so vibrant,
so full of life, so full of something new.

Linda M. Crate



Sokhadalyce Nissay



Zoe Provencher



Lynne Gumbris



Lori Provencher

Mind Watchers

I couldn't tell if I was alone, was there people around me, or was I being watched? I was staring at my meal, steak with rice, but I wasn't hungry. I could hear talking in the distance, or was it just in my head.

"Jack! Snap out of it!" My Mother shouted.

I yanked my head up, my whole family looking at me like I was a stranger sitting at their dining room table. "Sorry." I said, slowly beginning to eat the steak and peas.

"Why does he do that Mommy?" Maria asked, my five-year old sister.

"I don't know, ask him." My Mother said.

I quickly looked at my sister and said, "I'm fine, don't worry." I smiled at her, even though it was fake she smiled back.

I finished off the rest of my plate, and handed it over to the maid, she took it and I started to walk towards my room when my Father stopped me.

"Are you going to go out with your friends?" He asked, holding onto my shoulder while he was sitting in his seat.

"Yeah. we'll be back by nine" I responded, looking down at my father.

"Okay, but you have to be back by nine, any later and you're grounded, you hear?" He told me sternly, taking his hand off my shoulder.

I continued my walk towards my room, the hallway getting darker as the sun set. As I walked, I saw my shadow become oddly shaped because of the setting sun and the angle of the windows. I can't explain what I saw in my shadow, but I wish I would've remembered it, because it might've made what came next a lot less . . . terrifying.

"So, where do you guys want to go first?" Caleb asked.

"Let's just walk around for a bit." I said, glancing at whoever passed us.

"Why're you so on edge Jack? Relax, just have fun!" He said, starting to run.

"Wait up!" I yelled after him, starting to run after him.

The street we were on wasn't busy, but there was still a decent number of people there. My friends and I often came here because of that fact, but there was a reason why nobody wanted to come to this side of the city, and on this block specifically. There was a reported number of twenty-four people to have gone missing on this block. A lot of people think it was a satanic cult that captured people for rituals. But the people who lived here knew it was probably a creep taking them and the best they could do is hope that the police find everyone and the culprit as soon as possible.

After about an hour of Caleb and me running into different stores and throwing glass bottles at a wall in the alleyway, we decided to head home. We went through alleyways to eventually get to a patch of woods that was a shortcut back to Caleb's house, and since it was getting a little too late, I thought I started to see things in the dark. When Caleb and I were jumping a fence in an alleyway to get to the other, I thought I saw a shadow creature lurking beneath the fence, but it was just garbage stacked in an odd way. We had eventually made it to the woods, but I was reluctant to go in at first. This was because I thought I saw someone, or something, staring at me from the side of a tree. I had eventually shaken out of it, but Caleb was mocking me because of it.

“Haha! You thought you saw someone?! Why would anybody want to hide in the woods and stare at you!?”

“Oh shut up! Just forget about it!”

“Whatever you say, Mister Worrier.”

“What D’ya just call me?!” I asked, annoyed.

“Oh nothing.” Caleb answered quickly.

It was a pretty long walk from the woods to Caleb’s house, but it was quicker this way than the way they came from. But Jack never really wanted to go through the woods, but everytime Caleb forced him to do so. Saying things like, “Come on! It’s quicker!”, and, “Think of it as a way to get over your fear of the dark!”, and when he said that, I always denied that I have, or ever had, a fear of the dark. But Caleb never believed me. We were about halfway through the forest when something odd happened, the usual path we took home wasn’t there. After a while of searching for it, Caleb and I both started to panic.

“It’s usually right here! Where could it have gone? Are we lost?!” Caleb asked, pacing and searching for the path.

I didn’t answer, since I was the one that was panicking the most. I was darting all over the place, trying to find the path to Caleb’s house. The path was nowhere in sight, and after what felt like thirty minutes of searching turned out to be nearly an hour and a half of searching, I needed to lie down and recover. Since I was so panicked, I started to see even more things, or feel even more things. At one point I thought there was something watching me from above, but there was nothing above me but leaves and the

starry night sky. Another time, I thought I heard indistinguishable voices from a distance away, but there was no one there, only me, and Caleb.

“Caleb, what are we going to do?!” I asked, grabbing both his shoulders.

He shrugged my hands off and said, “My parents are going to kill me once I get home...”

“Caleb! We are lost in the woods and you’re worried about your parents! Caleb, **WE. ARE. LOST!**”

“I understand that! So let’s try to find the path back to my house.” He said, turning away and starting the search again.

“Really? You know, I never thought of doing that. You really are a genius Caleb!” I shouted behind him.

“Shut up and help me find the path!” Caleb shouted back.

We kept the search up, and these “sightings” of mine kept getting worse and worse. I kept seeing or feeling people or things watching me, following me. I really couldn’t explain what or who they were, I couldn’t even tell if it was in my head or not! But none of these “sightings” were going to slow me down, Caleb and I needed to find a way out of the woods! Unfortunately though. After another few hours of searching, we were forced to stop and lay down to sleep.

The sun was just starting to rise, and I awoke alone in the woods. I panicked and stood up immediately, shouting and looking for Caleb, “**CALEB! WHERE ARE YOU?!**”

I raced around, searching for him, but there was no sign

that he was ever even there. I must've looked for almost an hour, the whole time wondering why he would've just left me here. Then it hit me, what if he never left me here in the first place. What if he was taken from the place we were sleeping. I turned around to turn back to the area we slept at, but I noticed that I didn't recognize the place I came from. I was lost.

I started to tear up, scared beyond belief, after about five minutes of me trying to hold back tears, I heard it, the gurgle. It was faint at first, but then it started to get louder and louder. It eventually got to a point that it sounded like the gurgling noise was right next to me. And then, silence, it was so quiet that I could hear my own heartbeat. My eyes were darting all over the place, looking for something, anything! I looked down at some point, and noticed it, my shadow. My shadow didn't look like me, it looked like something I couldn't even imagine. My shadow looked as if it were hunched over, licking its long fingers, and its head was indescribably misshapen.

I ran backward in terror, in disbelief at what I had seen, or felt, I couldn't tell! It went silent again as I forced my back into a tree, and I stood there, frozen, as shadowy, long hands grabbed my head from behind and pulled me backwards.

"So. If you don't mind me asking. Did something similar end you up in the same situation that we're now in?"

Reese Lesage

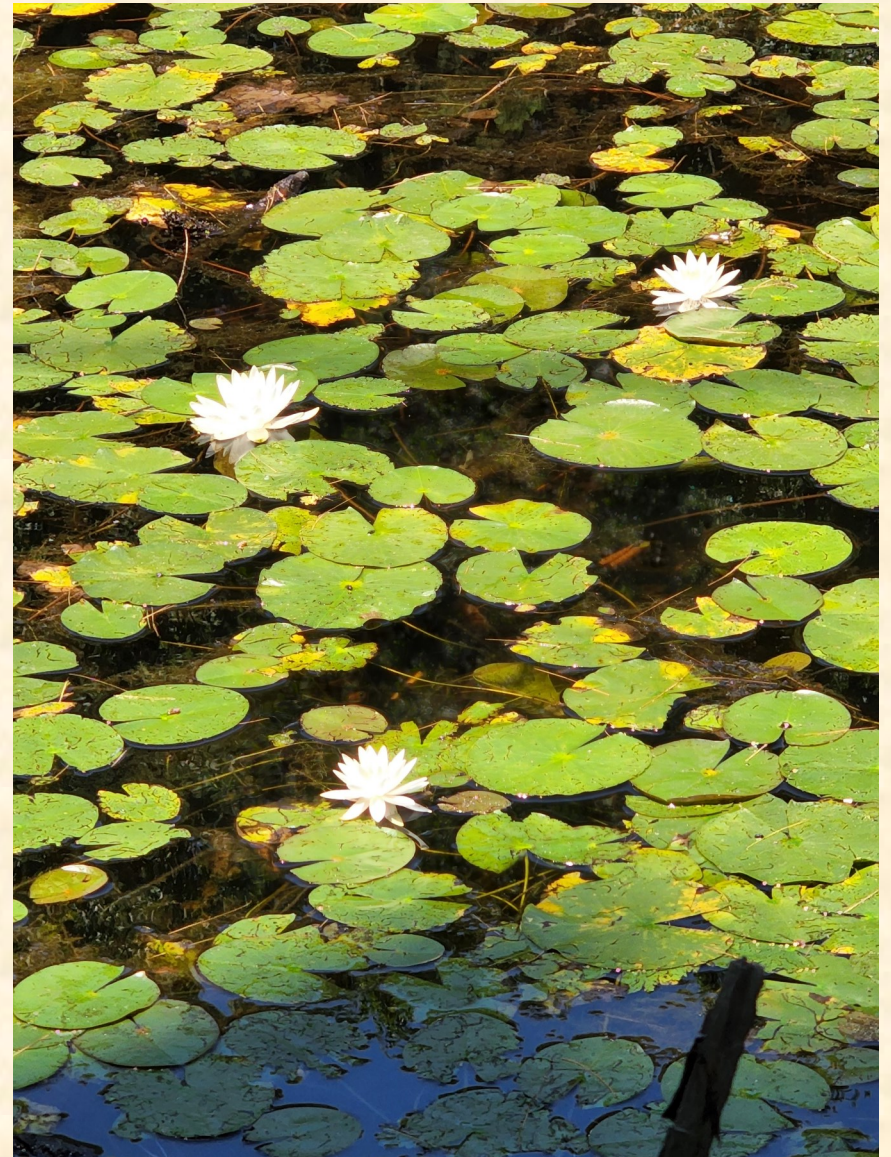


Rhema Nissay



Kim Cody

lillypad

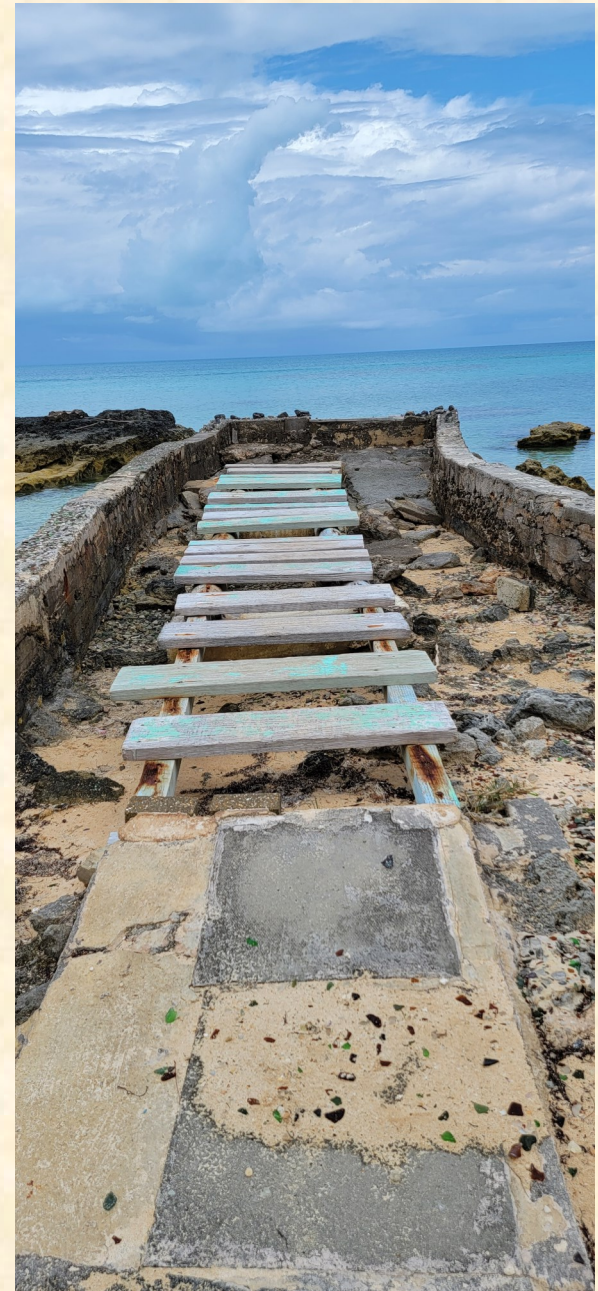


Alex Sullivan



Danielle O'Shea

Bermuda Blues



TP

Crooked Toes

I can never remember a time in my life when I wasn't self-conscious about the toes on my left foot. They're ill-shaped, crooked, if you will, and have been the cause of great angst to me throughout the years. Even to this day, I dislike being barefooted and thoroughly despise shopping for sandals. I always look for the ones that strategically cover up as much of my toes as possible. No easy task, considering a sandal is your basic open shoe concept. I even sleep with socks on. God forbid the house starts on fire during the night, and I have to run out into the street in my bare feet. I can't risk the neighbors or firemen seeing my crooked toes! And, pedicures are strictly out of the question.

I broke my ankle when I was younger, and felt totally mortified because a really cute doctor was going to put a cast on my leg, and he'd have to see my toes. "It had to be that stupid left foot," I remember fuming, wishing so hard that I had broken the ankle attached to my other 'normal' foot instead. The day I had the cast removed, I think I was more humiliated by having the doctor see my toes again than by having him check out all the hair on my leg which had grown exponentially while the cast was in place. The podiatrist is yet another example of high anxiety. I don't think I suffered half as much from the actual treatment of plantar warts as I did from the trauma of having to turn my foot over to the perusal of the doctor's eye. Now, there's a guy who's pretty much seen everything, and yet it was still unsettling watching him examine my foot up front and personal. I almost couldn't stand the torture of it. My mother always told me that there wasn't any need to feel self-conscious or embarrassed in front of a doctor because they were medical professionals and viewed the human body in a different way. Sure, she could be cool, calm, and collected, she wasn't walking around with my toes.

Another painful experience suffered in my teenage years occurred when the first true love of my life invited me to spend a day with him at the beach. I was delighted at first, then a horrible thought

came to mind. How is he going to react when he sees - the toes? I really worried myself sick over it. When we arrived at the beach, he wanted to take a walk along the water's edge. Me, I just wanted to sit on the blanket and hide my foot in the sand. We did, however, go for a walk. I figured I'd just keep quiet and he wouldn't notice. But he did, and he laughed, and my self-esteem went below the zero mark. I decided right then and there that he wasn't the one for me. I believed if I could find a guy who wouldn't laugh at my little irregularity, he would be the right soul mate for me. That would be the test, if he passed it, he was in.

Even now as an adult, I feel very uneasy about exposing my toes in public. I know it sounds ridiculously immature, but I can't help it. And, inasmuch as I've enjoyed spending time boating with close friends, I still find myself overly concerned about being barefoot on board. Even when I go to the spa for a body massage, I instantly tense up the minute my toes are in full sight of the therapist; I just can't seem to totally relax. I wonder what thoughts run through their minds while they're massaging someone. They must see it all, I muse; I'm sure they've seen worse imperfections than mine. And, I suppose in the whole scheme of things, my crooked toes are really no big deal. Still, I imagine after massaging people all day what they might talk about when they get home. I envision the conversation at the dinner table going something like this - "Oh honey, I saw the funniest toes on this woman today, I had all I could do not to laugh out loud! It's too bad, really, because she has such a pretty face."

Oh, the agony of it all.

Lynne Gumbis



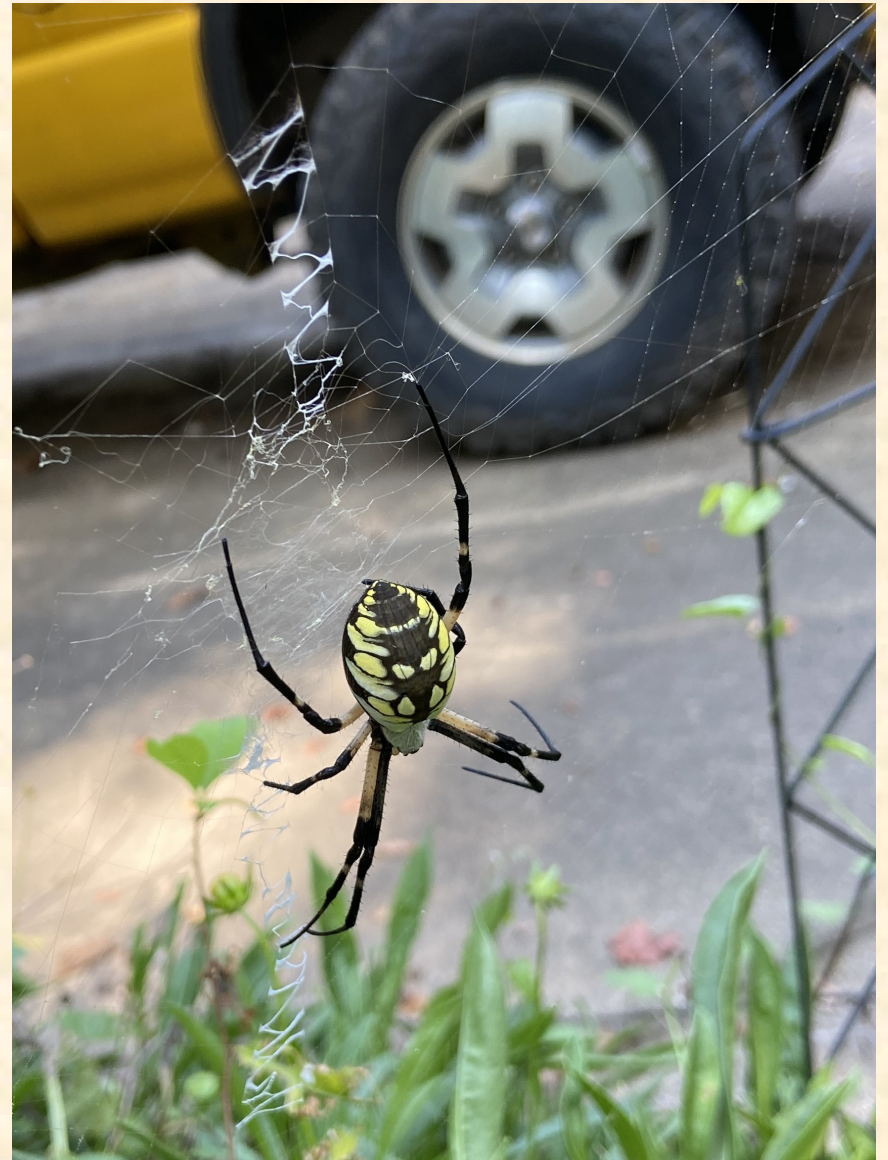
Donald Provencher



Kelsey Bergeron



Jordan Ricciardi



Karen Herbaugh

Horror Game Night

Once on a night just like this night
The wind blew cold; the moon shone bright
Five friends stayed in to play a game
But not a one went out the same

The pizza ordered, french fries hot
Amelia poured herself a shot
As Brendan shuffled all the cards
And Cal set up mini graveyards

The game had zombies, vampires too
Contained by fencing like a zoo
But vampires as bats can fly
And zoms will try and try and try

So here begins our tale of woes
A war betwixt two deadly foes
Daniella's face a perfect mask
As she sips juice from a hip flask

And what of Evan, the fifth friend?
He eats no pizza in the end
For he's pretentious with his bowl
Of vegan quinoa casserole

A roll of dice sets our tale in
Motion; the five good friends begin
To play the game that seals their fate
By the first card it is too late

Brendan draws first; his card's a Mist
Rising, the players' ankles kissed
By chilling fog inside the room
Amelia draws and plays a Gloom

Dimming lights illumine Cal
As they put down the card Morale
Shots all around and laughter clear
Then Evan spills Daniella's beer

It fills the graves, turns board to mud
In the dim light, it looks like blood
The next card played is Full Blackout
The lights go out and three friends shout

Amelia draws the Pocket Knife
But she's too late to save Cal's life
Brendan slams down the Flashlight card
A Candle flares in the graveyard

Cal lies there slumped upon the board
In Evan's hand there is the Sword
But blood drips from Daniella's lips
As one small "oops" between them slips

Amelia screams, which gives no aid
It seems the friends have been betrayed
By a vampire in their midst
Forgetting sword, Ev throws his fist

Brendan flips wildly through the deck
For Stake or Bullet that will wreck
Whatever Dani still has planned
Looks up with Garlic in his hand

To find Daniella is no more
Vampiric threat reduced to gore
The upper hand Evan did gain
By gnawing on Daniella's brain

A. D.



Chloe Cadieux



Issue 1 | October 2022

Thank you to all who submitted pieces to this issue of The Dogwood. If you would like to see your art, be it photography, poetry, short story, digital painting, short essay, collage—anything that you'd call art—in our next issue, head to dracutlibrary.org/the-dogwood to learn more and submit your pieces.