

Dog Eat Crow
Magazine



Dog Eat Crow Magazine



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Edited by Tres Crow

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Table of Contents

Letter From the Editor by Tres Crow	4
2 Poems	5
Climatic by Andrea Bustillo	
Planet Park by Emily Witt	
Bell of Hell by Chriscile Lindor	6
Courage by Briyanna Brinson	7

Letter From the Editor

Dear Kindly Readers,

Happy New Year! We proud that you've stuck with us through the growing pains of the last year and we're proud to bring you the first batch of new poetry and fiction for 2014. This is our third volume of *Dog Eat Crow magazine*, and we think this could be our best issue yet. It's a little shorter than normal, but the 3 poems and 1 piece of fiction that we have on offer are powerful pieces.

This issue of *DECM* is loosely organized around the idea of courage. As has often been said before, true courage is not borne of being unafraid, but in facing your fears and still doing what is necessary. Each of these pieces show a face of courage that is not often discussed.

As always, I'm extremely proud to show these works to the world. Thank you for coming by. I hope you enjoy these pieces as much as I have.

Sincerely,
Tres Crow
Editor
Dog Eat Crow Magazine

2 Poems

Climatic

By Andrea Bustillo

I lay in bed,
cuddled with you
expired scent.
Beneath layers of
tasteless winter wear,
your name was
stitched on the left
of my chest.

I squinted at the once—purple
lively lilac bundle
you gave me
last spring. You told me
“These represent our
youth and innocence.”
Then I glanced at
the heathers and
heard your voice again
“These heard embody my
admiration for you.”

The hibiscus absorbed
all the life I carried

and on this wet pillow
where I planted my head.

Andrea Bustillo is a student in Miami.

Planet Park

By Emily Witt

Swimming through space
touching the glistening stars
watching a meteor dawdle
past my face
I reach the moon
dance in the craters
observe each striking color
on each planet
slide around the rings
of Saturn
soak up the sun’s warmth
in my skin
pass through the ice caps
of Mars
swipe dust from Pluto
I fly by earth to inhale a bit
of oxygen
then back to space I return

Emily Witt is an American writer. This is her first piece published in Dog Eat Crow Magazine.

Bell of Hell

By Chriscile Lindor

Ring the bell of hell,
for it will be your signal...
to fight.

You have arrived,
to the pits of Hell.

But mercy will not,
show you Heaven's light.

I will battle,
to escape this fiery hole.

I will not weep,
those wanted tears.

And my ears
will not bleed,
from the Bell of Death.

Close the doors,
of Hell if you must.

But Heaven
will forgive my soul.

While others spend eternity burning,
I will vanquish all of my fears.

I will stir in my prison,
pray every night till heaven hears.

I will win every battle of hell,
because each victory is a step to Heaven.

So please,
ring the bell of hell.
Don't hesitate, just one ring will do.

But know that,
the bell of hell is my signal to escape...
because I am Lucifer.

I have Sinned

I am a Goddess,
And I have sinned.

My soul is the purest,

and I have sinned.

I was warned of the consequences,
but yet I have sinned,

A crime worth all death punishments,
my thin wrist imprisoned in golden chains...
I have sinned.

My large young wings are transforming,
from a blazing white to midnight black,
because I have sinned.

Innocence stripped from my lean curved body,
leaving me naked and bare for the Underworld.
I have sinned.

A devious smirk,
comes across my chapped rosy lips,
knowing what I did was beyond wrong.

I made love to a handsome mortal man,
And bore him a half blood daughter.

In all ways, I broke the forbidden law...and
I have sinned.

I took the oath of the River Styx,
along with the other gods,
who vowed to never have a half blood child.
Completely, I have sinned.

But it's all alright,
because what I did were my intentions,
to speak the truth,
even an immortal god sins

***Chriscile Lindor** is a tenth grader at Miami Arts Charter. She is a major in Creative Writing and Theater. She enjoys writing fantasy and paranormal stories, along with anything that has to do with the supernatural. In theater, she loves to perform on stage and do improvise games with her fellow classmates. Not only does she love writing her favorite genres, she also adores reading young adult fantasy novels. Although she prefers to hold a book to read, she appreciates reading e-books.*

Courage

By Bryanna Brinson

Courage: (n) mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

The daughter felt an unspoken rule that she was to stay out of sight. She ignored the screaming. She ignored the yelling. There was nothing but the ignorance that, even as a small child, she knew wasn't her place to break through just yet. She never remembered what she did to occupy herself, only that she had something in her small hands that she blissfully allowed to grip her attention. She stayed anchored in the narrow space between two hotel-room beds for a time. It may have been short, but the screaming she heard seemed to go on for hours.

After a while she got to her knees and, edging to the end of the narrow space, looked over the bed and saw her "daddy's" arm jerk back and launch forward as he pushed down the screaming one, who she knew was her mother. The table rocked violently, threatening to fall on top of them both. She saw but a glimpse of the scene, but the force of the hits and the screaming were enough to push her daring-self back into the safety of the space between, out of sight. His angry yells seemed to shake the earth under her.

After some time, the screaming suddenly halted and torturous wails quickly moved to take their place. Had it been minutes? Hours? As she peeked over the covers she saw her father's shirtless figure throw open the door and rush out onto the sidewalk in anger. She knew that the wailing coming from the floor by the door was Mother. Daughter was afraid to move. Silence peeked its head out from under the beds and nightstands, as if it were afraid that it might be rebuked again. She sat there between the silence and the beds, contemplating whether or not she should go to her as she listened to the wailing die down to a whimpering. She wondered if Mother would yell at her if she did, as it would be disobeying the unspoken rule.

But as silence left its hiding place, so did Daughter and she began to walk over to Mother, cuddling the now forgotten object. Her small, aching heart fluttered against her chest as she neared closer and closer to her. The consequences of this action did sprints through her mind, the stern talking-to she might receive, or maybe even a slap on her arm. Regret walked alongside her, its grip disquieting her head.

Still, Daughter pushed herself along, little feet shuffling against the forest green carpeted floor. She kept her eyes fixated on the empty space between the air conditioner and the bed, knowing that was where her mother lay. She expected no specific image or certain fear of what she might find. Mother's whimpering and Daughter's hesitant steps

seemed to stroll hand-in-hand together in the air, echoing off the walls and falling back on her ears. When she came to the front of the hotel room, the wall in the air broke leaving the flailing whimpers with nothing to catch them.

Blood. It rolled across the carpet, and Daughter held her breath. Mother's hair was washed in it. It spotted her pale face and arms and hands as if it were a disease. The white t-shirt her mother wore was stained with bright red on the chest, and she wondered in a sudden panic if "daddy" had stabbed her. She pictured him in his sudden rage plunging a knife into her as she sat by helplessly.

The mother's hands were thrown about, like tree limbs after a hurricane. One hand lay limply by her head, and the other rested on her stomach. Her eyebrows came together as she took ragged breaths. Her whimpers seemed to come from such a deep place that her very heartbeat caused her pain.

Daughter fiddled with the object in her coffee-colored hands sheepishly, waiting for her mother to scold her.

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in heaven. Psalm 68:5

"Hey, baby." The mother said softly, her voice trembling. The daughter saw it. She looked at her mother, and a quiet, sad disappointment sat in her Mother's eyes. *She saw.*

"Hi mommy," and the last word was distorted, as if Daughter had swallowed cotton balls.

"No, no. Don't cry," she weakly protested, her voice tinged with the intimation that she *did* want her daughter to cry with her, to see more than just her own tears run as a result of her husband's wrath.

Daughter wanted to cry anyway. She wanted to yell and scream and throw her fists in an angry fit on the green carpet. She wanted to collapse, not caring if the mother got angry, just wanting to feel nothing but the wonderful release of screams leaving her throat. *Her* throat.

But her tears strangely would not come, and so Daughter stood there by the door, Mother on the floor. She remembered very distinctly the sound of the breaths her mother took as struggled to get up. They pawed at the air, as if she was persuading herself that if she swallowed enough it would heal the wounds "daddy" left on her body. A question tugged at Daughter's ears, and whispered its possibilities. She silently swatted it away as Mother lifted herself by holding onto the bed, slowly rising to her feet. Whimpers and tears followed alongside as she walked across the room to the sinks and mirror.

Courage

A dull throb of pride beat in Daughter's chest. While the reality of the world proclaimed that her mother would sometime have to get up, she had thought and accepted altogether that her mother would be there forever, lying in a pool of her own blood on the floor. And Daughter accepted that she herself would stand there forever, watching her, holding on to the forgotten object.

The mother started to wash the blood off her face, and the splotches hungrily pulled away into the white towel. Daughter did not move, but only slightly turned toward her as Mother smiled weakly at her through the mirror. The question hung in the daughter's throat, and deciding to be brave, she dared her lips to begin to form the question.

"Mommy?" She called. Mother looked up at her through the mirror, holding a towel to her head, the water running. Daughter hesitated.

"Are you going to die?"

Mother's face contorted as she held back a new rush of tears. She took a deep breath.

"No, sweetie, I'm not going to die." her voice shook, as if she were convincing herself too. Daughter turned away. Her mother went into the bathroom and took a shower for a long time.

Daughter doesn't remember when "daddy" came home. She doesn't remember what he said, if he said anything to her, or what she said to him. She doesn't know how many hours passed before he came home, but she does remember later that night sitting on the floor and watching television, seeing her mother on her knees scrubbing her own blood out of the forest-green carpet.

A few nights later "daddy" and the mother had another argument. She doesn't remember what it was about, only seeing her mother slink away in fear as he leered over her. He sauntered through their hotel room bare-chested, ordering around Mother and Daughter as if he had all the authority in the world.

A crisp thought burned in Daughter's mind, and it was with a shock that she accepted it. Though someone inside of her protested against its harshness, against its lack of ignorance, they were quickly burned away in its promise. She held it close with vicious certainty. Daughter's eyes would not hold the same bitter devotion to "daddy" as her mothers. She remembers very distinctly the hot rush that drowned her, her head beginning to spin, her small hands twitching.

"I hate him."

**

I sat on the roof last night. My whispered prayers spun off into the sky, desperately searching for a place to land and an ear to hear it. I watched the pale blue porch light run across the dry grass in the yard, and fall over the faded green concrete with a gentle sheen. The light stayed close to the house, as if it was a child afraid that might disappear completely if it ventured too far out into the darkness alone. I was hidden in the branches of the gum tree. Its branches stretched luxuriously across the tiles and folded in around me. The cool night air cuddled my cheeks in its gentle hands. I pulled my knees in closer and sat with my hands affectionately on the branches, petting them and twirling the leaves in my fingers like the tree was a dear old friend that I badly missed. The sounds of the city at night curled in delicate tendrils around my ears, and were waved gently by the wind. I breathed.

When you threw open the back door and stalked onto the yard, my heart froze over and my breath sat in my throat. I slunk into the embrace of the branches and sat completely still. Fear slid down my ribcage like ice. I was afraid to close my eyes, as if doing so would be a confession of my fear, a sign of surrender, and ultimately ending in the discovery of my hiding place. As you began your search, I almost called out to you, afraid that I might lose this game I devised myself and end with you circling the bottom of the tree until I came down. If you found me tonight, there would be nowhere left for me to run when I needed an escape. I opened my mouth, but the wind placed a finger to my lips.

You walked with heavy, powerful movements, your bulging arm muscles rolling across your dark body like waves with every motion. Prowling the yard, your head moved desperately in circular motions and your eyes burned into the night. You scoured the yard, looking behind bushes and into the tool sheds. You even walked right below me once, but you did not look up. If you had you would've barely seen me staring at you with wide eyes, body hiding under my "North Carolina" sweatshirt, clinging to tree branches for dear life.

Leaving the touch of the porch light, you disappeared behind the house into the darkness. Your heavy footsteps crushed the grass and wildflowers with every step, heading to the garden at the front of the house to hunt for me. My head spun wildly, and I felt my heartbeat in my temples. My head raced with what I might say if you caught me. Would I smile and act as if I were playing a game with you, like I wanted to be found all along, so you would calm down and not lash out at me? Would I come down?

I couldn't answer myself, because when you ventured back

Courage

out into the gleam of the porch light from scouring the garden, it hurt my head to think about it. You passed me multiple times, even looking behind the part of the roof where I hid. I thought you saw as you headed straight toward me, but you turned away and I knew that I was safe. You scoured the perimeter once more, your heavy thick lips pursed in frustration and your dark eyes burning with anger. Stomping up the stairs in defeat, I could see the wheels in your head turning as you thought of places I could be.

There was the slam of the metal screen door, then silence. A house far away played loud music, and wisps of it ran delicately across my ears. The events of the past few minutes sat in my senses like cotton balls, muffling the world as my heart slowed and the ache in my head started to fade. It was a long moment before I breathed again, but even then the air reluctantly sat in my chest. I blinked. Another breath.

I don't know what made me climb down. Perhaps it was the thought that you would make a point of asking the rest of my family where I was, forcing their voices to crack open the air as they called my name. I made my way reluctantly across the yard and thought of an explanation I would give you. My palms were damp, my eyes aching with soon-to-come tears. A rock in my chest.

I opened the door and stepped into the house. You were standing in the hallway.

"Where were you?" You asked gruffly, your voice lined with fear. Looming over me your eyes were viscously relieved, as if I might have slipped from your grip forever.

"Outside," I whispered my throat dry and aching. I turned away, wanting to escape your presence, to be anywhere, *anywhere*, that was away from you. Your very being seemed to reach out its curled claws at me and drag me in, and I struggled inside myself with disgust.

"I looked all around outside," you stated pointedly, your voice tinged with frustration.

"Well, I was out there." I let my hostility show.

"I didn't see you."

A tidal wave of emotions swept through me, flooding every part of me as I stood face to face with you, my father. I wondered painfully why God would give me the face of a murderer, of a toxic hypocrite. I wanted to pry my flesh from my skull right then, rip each and every muscle from its bed, and throw it back in your face as if to say, "*Here! Take it all back! I never wanted to come from you!*"

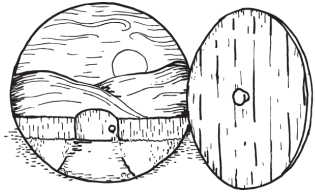
But I also acknowledged the hurt. The hurt that snuck up on me, knocking on my head and waiting in vain for a welcome. I refused to accept all the nights I cried myself to sleep, torn by the storms of this life, longing for my "father's" arms. I shook my head, and my voice rose in anger at the man who left my life without looking back, and who stood before me as if nothing has happened.

"Well, I saw you." And that was the end of it. I found my way into the light of the dining room, longing to be in the safe vision of my other family members.

I held onto God last night. As I lay in my bed, my sister fast asleep across the room, I replaced your role of "father" in my life with him. My prayers seemed to beat at the ceiling, screaming and sobbing to be heard, to be acknowledged.

I looked for arms last night. I hugged my pillow to my chest and pretended that I was hugging Jesus. I pressed my face into the pillow as it thirstily soaked up my tears, and I pretended I was crying into his cloak. My skin burned and my fingers twitched at the longing to scratch my nails into my skin until all that was left of me was bones. There would be no blood to tie me to the man who was the cause of so many haunting memories, of my restless nights. I struggled to breathe. I continuously screamed words with no meaning into my pillow. I imagined Jesus wrapping his strong, carpenter arms around me, and I sobbed in frustration as the word "father" became distorted in my mind.

***Briyanna Brinson** currently lives in Miami, FL and attends Miami Arts Charter School where she studies creative writing. In 2010 she won a critic's choice award for her first play "Encore", and from 2011 to 2013 won numerous silver keys in playwriting, creative non-fiction, and fantasy in the Scholastic Art and Writing awards, as well as an honorable mention in poetry. She enjoys writing music and collecting feathers, and hopes to be an activist someday.*



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