Inspire Me!
A Teen Zine

Pieces Inspired by
This Summer’s
Teen Writers’ Workshop

Santa Monica Public Library
Summer 2009
Inspire Me! A Teen Zine

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The Youth Services Department
Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library

Inspire Me! A Teen Zine is a publication of writing by participants in the Summer Teen Writers’ Workshop 2009. Please enjoy these pieces, inspired by creative writing exercises, author visits, and teen life experiences.
You don’t have to go that far outside yourself for the beginning of a story you want to tell.

-Hope Anita Smith
This Oreo Cookie
Ensemble poem by the InspireMe! Teen Writers with Sonya Sones

This little bite of heaven
this scrumptious mini-sandwich
smells like a night out with my dad.
I want to eat this Oreo cookie but Sonya says I can’t
and my heart sinks in my stomach like
a rock.
Suddenly, I feel like I’m breaking in a new pair of shoes,
my light’s being swarmed
by darkness,
like bees swarming
honey,
my stomach is dropping fast—
If only I could come up with a simile to describe
this Oreo cookie
I’d feel like the notes of my
new favorite song,
like a drink brimming
over the edge of a cup,
like dancing leaves,
like a bear with honey,
my tail would be wagging faster
than my dog’s after a 20-minute walk.
If only I could come up with a simile
to describe
this Oreo cookie
I'd feel like I was 5 years old again,
getting ready for Kindergarten—
oh, wait! I've got one! I've got lots!
I feel like I've just gotten a promotion
on my first day of work!
Check it:
this Oreo cookie sounds like dancing feet
upon the ballroom floor,
a sudden spark of sound,
this Oreo cookie explodes in my mouth
like fireworks
this Oreo cookie, oh, this king of cookies
glides on my taste buds
like an ice skater on ice
this Oreo cookie is like
me and my best friends—
a chocolate and vanilla swirl—
this Oreo cookie, oh, this Oreo cookie—
it's like having the best of both worlds!
I AM

Swift and beautiful,
Strong and independent
I am everywhere,
Working hard,
Controlling the natural world.
I am everything from desert cactuses to icy glaciers,
I am the one, the only, Mother Nature.
I DREAM

I dream...of a world so bright
That it sparkles between the dark galaxies
    Of a solar system.
    I dream...of lavish waterfalls
    Streaming down a mountain cascading
    Diamonds and riches that none have ever
    Seen before let alone thought of.
    I dream...a dream that withstands our
    Daily struggles piercing the darkness
    In it's journey and bringing it to
    Its knees never again standing before light.
    I dream...of the words that tumble
    Out of my mouth forming into something
    More than just words, into thoughts, options,
    Or even actions.
    I dream...but I don’t want to
    I want to do,
    don’t you?
Manhood

Tomorrow is the
day I graduate, the day
I will come alive

Something other than
water or juice to withstand
the heat, I'm no kid

I need a bigger
variety beer, vodka,
whiskey, it's endless
I love rain. Rain makes any place you happen to be in feel cozy, like home. It makes you feel safe, as if nothing can get you. But then I hear the gunfire, the breaking glass, and I am brutally torn back to reality from my little moment of happiness. Then I would scold myself, for there is no such thing as happiness, at least, not in this city. This city. It disgusts me. A city where the powerful pluck the money out of the good, honest people's hands, and kick them into the gutter, laughing all the while. A city so full of corruption, hate, and dread, there is no hope for this city. Rain is the deceiver.

I sit alone in the coffee shop, or so I think. I would be at the bar, but the last time I came home drunk Caroline threatened to leave me if I didn't quit. So I sit in this dilapidated coffee shop sipping a latte and waiting out the rain. I lift the mug to my lips... and a gunshot jars my concentration, causing me to drop it. The mug shatters on the ground, spraying its contents everywhere. I quickly look around the room; the gunshot had been too loud to have come from outside. I turn to see the waitress putting her hand over her mouth, staring straight at me, eyes wide with terror. I spun around to see a short, squat man wearing faded jeans and a leather jacket. A pair of tinted sunglasses hid his eyes. He was holding a smoking pistol, pointed straight at me. I look down. My shirt is soaked with blood. “ Damn,” I think, “ this is going to hurt like hell in a couple of seconds.” Right on cue, pain sears through my body. I stumble forward and manage to knock the gun out of the man's hands. It skitters across the floor, well out of reach. I make a grab for my piece as he pulls another from his jacket pocket. He's fast. I'm faster. I squeeze the trigger. To give him credit, he got off a couple of shots. None of them hit their mark. That was probably because he was falling backward. A bullet between the eyes will do that to you. This city. It brings you to your knees. No pun intended.
I sat there at the edge of the park on a cherry wood bench. I sat there watching other people’s lives pass by like scenes from movies and dramas. I’ve been doing this since I could remember, which seems to be around 10 years. It started when I was six and my father died. Leaving me alone and helpless, as I watched him get hit by oncoming traffic. It was my fault, I threw the ball knowing he would go after it, but what I didn’t know was that my desperate cry for attention would end with me losing the one thing I adored most, my father. So everyday after that one, I sat in our special place, watching everyone else, wishing, and hoping that their lives were more interesting than mine. Today someone new was here, a tall teen around my age sitting on a bench with what I supposed was his grandfather. Rings of smoke circled the boy as his grandfather took another puff at the cigarette. They were talking loudly in a language that could only be Japanese. And since I really couldn’t understand what was said, I watched the boy’s facial expressions. He seemed distressed, surprised, angry, and then really sad. With the last emotion his grandfather stood up without a word and left the boy sitting there with his face in his hands. I don’t know why I was compelled to do it, most likely because I had nothing else to do, or maybe something deeper I don’t know, but soon I found myself crouched down in front of him, my arms outstretched to cradle him. He protested slightly before he softened in my arms and cried into my shoulder, fitting there perfectly as if my body was made to accommodate him.

When he stopped, he pulled back and said some of the only words I know in Japanese, “Arigatou,” and stood up to walk away.

I grabbed his hand to pull him back and noticed what I was doing, shocked, then I dropped his hand like a hot potato and bowed saying, “Gominasai!” Then I ran away. I guess watching all those dramas and movies came in handy.

Keshia Nash

Choices

I sat there at the edge of the park on a cherry wood bench. I sat there watching other people’s lives pass by like scenes from movies and dramas. I’ve been doing this since I could remember, which seems to be around 10 years. It started when I was six and my father died. Leaving me alone and helpless, as I watched him get hit by oncoming traffic. It was my fault, I threw the ball knowing he would go after it, but what I didn’t know was that my desperate cry for attention would end with me losing the one thing I adored most, my father. So everyday after that one, I sat in our special place, watching everyone else, wishing, and hoping that their lives were more interesting than mine. Today someone new was here, a tall teen around my age sitting on a bench with what I supposed was his grandfather. Rings of smoke circled the boy as his grandfather took another puff at the cigarette. They were talking loudly in a language that could only be Japanese. And since I really couldn’t understand what was said, I watched the boy’s facial expressions. He seemed distressed, surprised, angry, and then really sad. With the last emotion his grandfather stood up without a word and left the boy sitting there with his face in his hands. I don’t know why I was compelled to do it, most likely because I had nothing else to do, or maybe something deeper I don’t know, but soon I found myself crouched down in front of him, my arms outstretched to cradle him. He protested slightly before he softened in my arms and cried into my shoulder, fitting there perfectly as if my body was made to accommodate him.

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Haiku

Monsoon, monsoon rain
Flood my field, my soil, my life
May your power rise
His Prize

Alone in her room she tries,
To find her treasure
She cries.

Nothing but emptiness she finds inside.
Running to him, he’s her gold, her prize.

She wonders what possibly he could have won?
Nothing to please him, nothing but stale fun.

Alone time is limited, no freedom begun.
In love with a boy, who’s in love with no one.

Trying to change staying the same,
Crying more tears of shame.
So tired of playing this game.

Looking for tomorrow a brighter day,
A familiar face comes her way.

Drying her tears, she’s still so afraid.
Close to her heart, wanting to break.

Assuring his love,
Assuming it’s fake.

His leap for her love,
He’s ready to take.
I always spent my breaks watching Mr. O’Brien.  
I knew his name was Warren O’Brien because I’d been his waitress a few times. He’d paid for his coffee in cash and signed the receipt in his messy scrawl: Warren E. O’Brien.

Until that Friday afternoon, I’d always thought old men were a dime a dozen: doughy and wrinkly, and smelling of Easter and hairspray. But not Mr. O’Brien; he was crusty and lanky like a tree in winter; the word doughy came to mind.

And it was as I was taking my lunch break, eating an orange and watching Mr. O’Brien, that Rina decided to join me.

“What are you doing out here?” She asked, sitting down beside me on the curb near the back door to the kitchen. “You’ve been out here forever.”

“I’m eating lunch.”

“And stalking that C.O.D.” She countered, Rina-speak for Creepy Old Dude. “What’s so great about him anyway? All he does is sit there. He doesn’t even drink his coffee.”

This was true. Mr. O’Brien would sit at the table and order a cup of the house blend, no sugar, no foam, no cream. Then he’d stay quiet, staring, it seemed, right through the ribbons of steam rising from the cup, watching a point in the distance that only he could see.

In truth, I didn’t know why I found him so interesting. Maybe it was because he never read the paper, or even a book. Maybe it was because of the way his eyes crinkled down at the corners, as if his past were tugging the skin downward. Or maybe it was because, despite the fact that he sat at a table for two, the metal chair across from him was never occupied.

“I don’t know.” I said. “Doesn’t he look sad?”

Rina looked up from a detailed inspection of her cuticles. “Huh?”

“The C.O.D.” I said. “Doesn’t he look sad?”

“I don’t know.” She said. “Maybe he wants to be alone. There are people who like being by themselves.”

After a minute, Don, the manager, threw the back door open to tell us lunch was over, and that Rina was working the front door, while I was working tables three through five.

Table three was a family of five, all with kids under the age of ten, picky eaters to boot. Particularly the youngest daughter, who hated lasagna, and all red food, on principle.
Table five was a young couple out on a date. The guy, who was clearly too young for his date, kept stealing lecherous glances at Rina every time she sped past him to seat more guests.

Table four was Mr. O’Brien.

After getting lasagna thrown at me by the Red Food Hater in table three, I was ready to sneak back to the locker room to change. As I ran past table four, though, I heard him.

“She’s coming, you know.” He said, so quickly I almost thought he hadn’t said it. “Today.”

I doubled back to face Mr. O’Brien. He was sitting up straight, and wearing his usual button-down shirt and bow tie.

“I’m sorry?”

“Audrey. She’s coming. She was going to come yesterday,” he said, fingering his coffee spoon, “but she was in a car accident. Got rear-ended, but she’s okay. Her bumper fell off, but she’s ok!”

I smiled, then excused myself, using my soiled shirt as an excuse.

As I pushed the door open to the Break/Locker room, I saw Rina, brushing her teeth in front of the bank of sinks.

“Long time, no see.” I said. I went to my locker and started spinning the dial.

Rina just laughed, then rinsed and spit.

“He’s not alone.” I said, after a minute. My words bounced off the tile walls. “He’s got a date. With a real human being.”

“Really.”

“Yes.” I said, triumphant and sounding it. “See? He’s not alone.”

But even as my shift ended, and the sky went from blue to orange to colorful shades of gray, the mysterious Audrey was nowhere to be found.

“Mr. O’Brien.” I said, approaching his table around ten, as I was getting ready to leave. “We’re closing now.”

He looked up at me, startled. “But she’s coming,” he said. “I know it. I have to stay here, otherwise she’s going to come, and she won’t find me, and then she’ll get scared and I won’t see her, you understand? I can’t leave. I just can’t…”

And suddenly he was crumpling into his paper lungs, breathing heavily.

“She’s not coming, is she?”

He shook his head adamantly. “But she promised. I know she’s coming, I know she is, Audrey wouldn’t just promise me something, she’s not like that, you see? She’s not…”

He reached into the pocket of his jacket for something. “Maybe she came in earlier, and I just missed her, she looks like this.”
He handed me a slip of paper—a photograph of a beautiful woman standing on a beach, her hair all whipped around her face in the wind. I turned it over and saw, on the other side, printed in neat script: *In Loving Memory of Audrey Lucille Lancaster O’Brien. 1943—2007.*

“I know she’s coming,” he said. “Every day she promises she’ll come. Trust me…”

I watched him dissolve into a cloud of tears, and suddenly had an idea. “Oh, hold on.” I fished my phone out of my purse. “I’m getting a call.”


I snapped my phone shut and looked at him. “That was Audrey. She’ll be here tomorrow.”

He bolted upright and looked at me. “Really? That’s great!”

Then he hugged me, his tree-branch arms reaching around my shoulders to make a fragile circle.

There’s a difference between being alone and being lonely. I knew which one Mr. O’Brien was, and which one he wanted to be. I knew that there would be more days like this one, with broken promises and fake phone calls, burying the secret we now shared but would never speak aloud. But as we sat there, laughing and talking, I wondered if he and I weren’t quite so different after all.

After a minute, I stood up, told him I’d see him tomorrow, and left. As I walked out the front door, I saw Rina, hitching her purse over her shoulder and looking at me vacantly.

“So…his date was a no-show, huh?” She said.

“She’s never going to come.”

After a moment, she understood. “Oh…well why didn’t you tell him? He’s going to find out sooner or later.”

“Better later than sooner.” I said. I tried to swallow the flashes of my own life, the broken montage running through my mind that made Mr. O’Brien’s situation so familiar to me. My sister, the giggles and the snowflakes and the cars colliding, a hail of glass crashing down on us, the moon our only witness. And then the spark escaped her eyes, all that potential suddenly as ephemeral as any random raindrop, all the promises suddenly shattered.

As I walked to my car, I decided that maybe that was why I like watching Mr. O’Brien. As if knowing he was okay could make my world a little safer, and that as long as I could give him hope, then maybe, just maybe, there was some out there left for me, too.
Sail across a stormy sea
With smoky colors in her eyes
Is that all you see in me?
The girl with the thorny branch sighs

With smoky colors in her eyes
It’s raining today, shades of green and blue
The girl with the thorny branch sighs
She asks too much of you

It’s raining today, shades of green and blue
Cover your eyes with the glowing sun
She asks too much of you
The emerald eyed, wheat haired devil will ruin your fun

Cover your eyes with the glowing sun
Nothing becomes visible, not as much as you’d enjoy
The emerald eyed, wheat haired devil will ruin your fun
This lightening struck, starry skied plan is in action; you can now deploy

Nothing becomes visible, not as much as you’d enjoy
Patriotic are the words, lilting are the sounds
This lightening struck, starry skied plan is in action; you can now deploy
Running far away won’t help; you aren’t on land and out of bounds

Patriotic are the words, lilting are the sounds
Claim to be something you aren’t like the invisible boy
Running far away won’t help; you aren’t on land and out of bounds
You are out of time to prove his existence; dissolve your newfound joy

In a boat with the power of color
Sail across a stormy sea
The world, crashing around you in colorless waves, seems duller
Is that all you see in me?
Photo Gallery

Teens with Lisa

Inspire Me!
Teens with Ron Koertge

Teens with Robin Benway
Teens with Hope Anita Smith
Remember Gazaar. Shards of ice fly into my face, slicing deep into my cheekbones and my jaw. I don’t pause to extract the shards. Remember Gazaar. More ice blows into my eyes, or what’s left of them. I quickly blink the crystals out of my eyes and keep running. I could hear the thudding footsteps behind me getting closer. Remember Gazaar. I keep running until he dives and grabs my ankles. I land face-first, driving the shards in deeper. He turns me over and lands a punch on my nose. I feel the cartilage give way under the force of his punch, pressing against my face. Before I have time to react, he wraps his stubby hands around my neck and squeezes. Spots dance before my eyes, colors flashing, and I remember Gazaar. I remember the scared, painful look in his eyes as the bullet drilled into his skull. And later, when he was lowered into the ground, his cold, dead eyes, pleading with me, pleading for me to help. I begin to flail my arms, desperate to get the flow of oxygen back to my brain. One of my fists connects with something solid, and the pressure around my neck suddenly lifts. I sit up, and see the man sprawled on the snow-covered ground. A bruise is beginning to form above his right temple. Something glints out of the corner of my eye, and I turn to see the man’s gun lying in the snow. The man sees it, too, and lunges for it. I thrust my elbow out, crushing his larynx. I grab the gun. Remember Gazaar. The man is lying on the ground, clutching his neck, gasping for air. Remember Gazaar. I press the cold, metal gun against his forehead. Remember the scared, painful eyes. I pull the trigger. Remember...
Scully wakes up suddenly from a deep sleep as the phone rings. She picks it up. “Agent Dana Scully.”
“Scully? Are you okay, Scully?” asks Mulder. “Yay,” says Scully. She is wearing pajamas. She slowly goes through the house to her front door. Scully opens the door and Mulder is there waiting in his standard suit. Then she faints in his arms.
Alarmed, Mulder lifts her up in his arms and takes Scully inside. He places her carefully onto the couch and checks her forehead. Mulder’s phone rings and he picks it up.
“Yes, it’s Mulder,” says Mulder.
A mysterious African-American man answers: “You cannot take Scully to the hospital.”
Mulder questions urgently, “How do you know she is sick?” The mysterious man hangs up.
A second later, Mulder does the same thing. He goes to Scully’s side and shakes her. “Wake up, please!” She doesn’t respond and he picks her up again. Mulder quickly carries her out of the apartment. He locks the door behind them. Mulder runs out of the building. He passes many concerned or confused passersby. Mulder reaches his car and opens the front passenger seat. He gently places Scully into the vehicle and buckles her seat belt. He goes to his side of the car, buckles up, and then starts driving. Mulder goes a few blocks before a policeman comes up next to their car.
“Sir, I’m going to have to ask you to pull over.” Mulder reluctantly pulls to the side of the road. The police car follows carefully. The policeman gets out of his car and looks through Scully’s window. “What is wrong with this woman, sir?” asks the officer.
Scully murmurs, “Mulder.”
The officer questions, “Who is Mulder?”
Mulder strokes Scully’s hair and says, “Me. This is Agent
Scully who is a dear friend of mine. I’m her FBI partner.” He
flashes his badge and continues, “Agent Scully is very sick and
I’m taking her somewhere safe.”

The police officer takes out a photo and looks at Mulder,
then back at the picture. “I’m going to have to ask you to step out
of the car, sir.” The officer reaches for Scully’s door.

Mulder reacts quickly and drives off before the officer can
open Scully’s door. They zoom away as the officer falls over.
Scully groans and shouts, “Help, Mulder!”
Mulder speaks gently. “I’m here, Scully. It’s okay.”
Scully calms down and leans on Mulder. He holds onto
her. Mulder drives for a bit before he pulls over at a dingy-
looking hotel. He gets out of the car and locks it. He goes to the
hotel office.
“I need a room that contains two beds.”
The hotelier gives him a key and says, “It will be $90 per
night. You’ll have room 104.”
Mulder forks over ninety dollars to the hotelier. The man
hands Mulder the key. Mulder stalks out of the room. He runs
toward the car and opens Scully’s door. Mulder picks Scully up,
and then kisses her head. They go to their room. Mulder maneu-
vers open the door, kicks it open.

Mulder holds Scully so her head doesn’t hit the door, and
then uses one arm to close the door. He locks the door. Mulder
places Scully on the closest bed and dials a phone number. “Bill,
I need a favor.”

Bill responds, “What?”
Mulder says, “Please come to 219 Elms Street, where
there’ll be a hotel. Bring your doctor’s equipment, but don’t tell
anybody you’re coming.” Mulder puts the phone down. Scully is now moving
around and murmuring. Mulder holds her like a brother would
do for a sister. He strokes her hair while saying, “I’m here. It’s
going to be fine.”
My Cursed Life

When the creepy old woman who had been staring at me for hours suddenly reached out and grabbed my hand from her seat across from me, I have to admit I kind of shrieked. I didn’t expect to feel the soft rasp of her wrinkled skin, and the dry wrinkles in between her meaty sausage hands. I don’t know, maybe it’s something about New York that makes it okay for strangers to touch each other but where I’m from touching is off limits. Being born into a small Utah family can have its advantages… even though right now I can’t think of any so I’ll come back to that subject sometime later if you’re still interested. But you’re probably wondering two things:

What am I doing in New York?
And what’s going on with the old woman grasping my hand in a blood-stopping, toe curling death grip?

I’ll answer number one first. Ever since I was little I’ve always wanted to be a fashion designer, you know the ones everyone talks about and have stores all over the world?! Well, I’m not that, well not yet at least. I just got an internship to one of the most demanding fashion designers in the world! Well again I’m not her intern. I’m her intern’s intern’s intern. If you don’t get it, just give up trying because I barely understand it myself. Recently graduated from high school, I am one of the youngest interns yet, or so I’ve been told. Either way I got an offer, took it, and ended up here on a train with a list of coffees to get for Alicia (the intern’s intern). And while waiting patiently on one of the dirtiest, most frightening moving metal transportation I’ve ever been on, I’m getting a broken hand from an old lady.

“Umm excuse me ma’am… can I have my hand back? I’m going to need it, to live.” I said.
“Oh, I’m sorry child. I didn’t mean anything by that. I just wanted to ask you a question,” she replied not at all easing up on her little killer grip on my now bruised hand.
“Then ask away,” I said through grimaced teeth. This old woman was gonna break the hand I would need to design and to eat, to write, to everything!

“Can I look at your hand?” she asked timidly.

I looked at her in disbelief and almost screamed, well what do you think you have in your hand right now?! My foot, what the hell?! Do you go to the store, pick out the merchandise, leave then come back to pay for it after you use it?! But I replied nicely, “Of course.”

This little lady was half my 6’1 but had the strength of a freaking elephant. I visit my grandparents a lot and I definitely know they don’t have that strength. The last time I had been there my grandpa had asked me to help him open a bag of chips. I looked down to see her checking out the lines on my hand and asked, “Are you a palm reader?”

“NO!” she cried disgusted by the very thought. “I’m a Wiccan, and I’m sorry to say but your hands are cursed.”

“What?!” This old woman must be joking!

“Your hands are cursed; whatever you do with them will bring misfortune on others or make them realize what they must do to better themselves, depending on your mood.”

This woman was psycho; she needed to be put in a nuthouse!

“There’s nothing else I can do...”
Nikan Namiri

What he took from me

Five more minutes and
then I can dismantle him
with Señor Slasher

His icy body
illumes through the gate without
Jane, "lights out, traitor"
Moon River

Moonlight was always a big part of my life. It determined when my family went to pagoda. It guided my sleep at night. Most of all, the moon represented safety. One could stare into it all night long, and just wonder what was out there. But one could never look directly into the sun. The moon’s shine was predictable, always progressing through the same cycle. The sun did not.

Every full moon would see a beautiful white light cast over the local river. In the summer, I would play with the other kids every day in that river, for we lived in a hot and humid climate that only led to cold lonely winters. But today was a beautiful fall day, and the oak in our front yard has begun to shed its leaves. The 200th full moon of my life brought secrecy and surprise; a figure stood by the river.

Sparked by curiosity, I climbed out my bedroom window and ran towards the river. To my horror, I did not see the figure ahead of me anymore, but instead an ominous shadow loomed by me. I knew the river would provide safety, so I darted off towards it, until I heard a familiar voice call my name. I turned around to see the moonlight shine upon my mother’s face.
There was a celebration in town that day. It was the day they caught the witch. All were rejoicing and rushing to the town square, where the executioner was sharpening his axe. The witch was dragged through the streets in shackles, and all of the townsfolk leaned out of their windows, jeering and throwing plates, bottles, and once even a live chicken. They would laugh as she clenched her gnarled hands into fists, contorting her shrunken and deformed face into an expression of disgust and loathing. They would laugh, because they did not know how that day would end. The witch was shoved into the center of the square, and forced down onto one knee. The executioner held his axe inches above the witch’s bald scalp. The crowd cheered. The executioner raised the axe high above his head, and brought it down in a powerful swing. The crowd screamed even louder. The blade swished through the air...only to curve at the last second, slicing the shackles off her wrists.

He leaned forward and whispered in a deep, harsh voice, “Consider this a gesture of friendship from the Executioner’s Guild to the Seven Sisters, Septima. We cannot afford not to be allies in this conflict.” The crowd began to whisper in confusion, pointing at the broken shackles on the ground. “I have brought your Kenavai knives. You will be needing them.” He reached into one of the pockets in his long, black coat and produced a pair of Kenavai knives. Each was only about two feet long, with blades that were rectangular, except one side curved off to a point like a hook. He handed the weapons to Septima, handle first. She hesitated.

“Who exactly are you?” she asked in a crackled, gravely voice.

A crooked smile appeared on the man’s thin, scarred face. “Your sister Quinta has probably mentioned me.”
Septima snatched the knives from the executioner’s hands. “So you’re this Saizyro she keeps babbling on about. Very well, we shall take this act of alliance under consideration.” They both turned toward the crowd, who had finally realized what was going on. Twenty guards rushed onto the platform and had circled the two. Saizyro swung his axe in a circle, lopping off three of the guards’ heads. Ten of the remaining guards charged at Septima. She smiled, exposing her crooked, pointed teeth, and leapt ten feet in the air, spinning and slashing with her knives. By the time she landed, the bodies were unrecognizable. The seven remaining guards dropped their weapons and fled the square.

Septima threw back her head and cackled, a screeching, high-pitched cackle. She leapt into the crowd, hacking away at the townspeople, while Saizyro quietly slipped off into the shadows. He had to report back to the Guild, plus, he did not want to witness the slaughter of the town of Nightingale.
Emily

Does his hair shine with the brilliance of a thousand stars?
Because I'm pretty sure it's dull and ugly...
Does his smile still make my heart flutter with uneasiness
and sorrow?
Or am I just having a heart attack?
Because I'm pretty sure I'm overweight and can have a heart
attack....
No seriously!
Does the want of his eyes to roam toward me make me strong?
Or does it make me weak?
Because I'm pretty sure that I'm done with waiting,
Waiting for us to get back together...
Waiting for anything and nothing...
But mostly waiting for what will never happen.
So I'll lock up my emotions in a granite steel locker and
Become Emily the stiff,
Wonder how he's gonna deal with that?
Shoes

My shoes are worn and torn and they are full of mud and crud. They are stained of tears I’ve cried over the years and the yellowish color has faded. My shoes now look white because of the light, the light of a sunny day. Often people tell me I should get new shoes, but that’s only because these shoes don’t fit them. When they look at these shoes they see the dirt and crud and filth. Only I know what these shoes really mean. These shoes are a symbol of hope. They are more than just ugly and old and faded in color. These shoes represent love, hate and peace. They represent my trials, failures, errors, but most of all successes. These shoes represent my life.
He looked at the overhanging tree branches as life slowly slipped away. The noose was tight around his neck leaving a burning imprint. He looked up at the broken branch that held his rope. This tree had cared for him all his life, from when he was a babe till when he was now an adult. He didn’t understand how it could let him down now.

“Why?” he whispered through his dry lips, wincing as they cracked open and started to bleed. “There is no reason for me to live anymore…”

“There is a reason.” A beautiful voice bellowed, startling him out of his comatose state. He quickly sat up and looked around.

“Who said that?” he asked confidently. If the person wanted to harm him, he didn’t care; he had just un unsuccessfully tried to commit suicide. What could be worse?

“Me.”

He turned in the direction of the voice and saw that it was coming from the branches of the trees. Up near the broken branch was a woman. Tall and voluptuous with long tresses of golden hair, filled with discarded leaves. She was covered with a white satin robe that resembled a chiton.

“An Angel...” he whispered in awe.

“No, not an angel, but I’m definitely not human either,” she said looking down at him with warm brown eyes, smiling, making them crinkle in a soft way.
About a Bike

It’s getting harder to push the pedals;
I’m thinking about turning back around.
The wind is telling me not to be dense,
And so the wheels keep spinning for a time.
At the top of the hill I stop to breathe
And take in the ocean view before me.
The waves crash and I reel my mind back in
Because next comes what I’ve been waiting for—
The chance to crash back down to Earth at a marvelous,
freedom filled speed!

Samantha Costanzo