Legacy Fall 2017

Southern Adventist University

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The Legacy
Fall 2017 Issue
Hello all,

It is a privilege to edit the Legacy literary magazine for the 2017-2018 school year and I would like to thank everyone who submitted to our Fall semester issue. In past years, the magazine was strictly published in the Spring semester, but we wanted to see if offering opportunity to publish twice in the school year would generate a wider variety of student work.

This semester’s theme was vulnerability. When discussing themes, we came up with a lot of themes, but vulnerability seemed to stick out to us most because it’s something that we as a community collectively struggle with. To be vulnerable, we have to prepare ourselves for the possibility of being hurt and sometimes that is the only outcome we experience. But in other cases vulnerability can offer us newfound strength that we would have never acquired had we not stepped out of our comfort zone. Vulnerability leaves us exposed to the attacks of others, but also to the opportunity of unconditional love from others. Being vulnerable, in my opinion, is worth the chance of being broken further than we already are because it is through brokenness that we are offered the opportunity to rebuild and rebirth. That’s beautiful to me.

Thanks again for exposing yourselves to my team and to the readers of this magazine. I hope you found peace in writing these pieces.

Please look out for announcements about next semester’s theme and writing contest for a chance to have your work published in our literary magazine!

Sierra Emilaire, Editor
Clarise Nixon, Writer’s Club Sponsor
Contents

Poetry

Love Me Three Times - Helen Faulk................................................................. 5
Am I A Person? - Gelissa Leveille ................................................................. 6
Through the Archway - Able Sankovik ....................................................... 6
Where Does the River Flow - Gelissa Leveille ........................................ 7
The Child Inside - Jacklyn Ruth................................................................. 7

Short Stories

The Knock at the Door - Yasmin Phillip.................................................... 10
The Silent Guitar - Cynthia Salinas.......................................................... 13
Vulnerability - Megan Manuel................................................................. 16
No Room for Tears - Yasmin Phillip.......................................................... 17
Poetry
Love Me Three Times

Helen Faulk

1. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   Is the cry
   Of all people
   mountain to mountain
   sea to sea.

2. The cry
   of a generation
   a thousand times interconnected
   stitched together through the web,
   yet so
   utterly alone.

3. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   Is the cry
   of the Elder
   abandoned in a home.
   Left with only
   yellowed memories
   of bright, once
   familiar faces
   full of laughter
   and the
   trained smiles
   of the nursing staff.

4. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   Is the cry
   of the middle-aged women
   warring with beautiful ideals
   of body and character.
   No mortal creature of blood
   can fulfill.
   The creams,
   the clothes,
   the correct display
   of all that is desired.
   Satisfying neither herself,
   or the eyes of viewing world.

5. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   Is the cry
   of the middle-aged man
   whose peek of glory
   is now past.
   Who tries to fix
   only to pay
   another to clean up
   the mess he made worse.
   Feeling empty
   in his pockets
   and everywhere else.

6. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   times three.

7. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   Is the cry
   of the young man
   who must walk
   upright as a Man
   and the head of his house,
   since his own father
   has fallen away
   to another household.
   Full stature though
   is not gained in a day,
   nor can he fill shoes other than his
   own.

8. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   Is the cry
   of the young woman
   whose gifts
   are praised and blessed,
   but whose soul

9. Love me!
   Love me!
   Love me!
   of the teenager
   with body
   and soul stretched
   to breaking.
   Who must as an adult
   with a child’s mind
   meet all the demands
   and perceptions of this age
   that family and society require.
   Who forget,
   they too were once
   one of these.

10. Love me!
    Love me!
    Love me,
    Times three.

11. Love me!
    Love me!
    Love me!
    Is the cry
    of the child
    with old eyes
    who finds freedom
    only in solitude.
    Parents off in the other room
    being consumed by

   Love Me cont. on next page
by their conflict,
forgetting their gift,
so dearly blessed with.
Letting their treasure grow
stony in their neglect.

12. Love me!
Love me!
Love me!
Is the cry
of the toddler
whose parent feed him
and put a roof
over his head,
but he knows
the hearts of cartoon characters
more than
Mom and Dad.
A bright TV screen,
but no bright smiles.

13. Love me!
Love me!
Love me!
Is the cry
of the infant
left abandoned
in the hospital room.
The product
of a passion
that ended a marriage
and destroyed a reputation.
A life almost
eradicated
before its first breath
under the sun.
14. Love me!
Love me!
Love me,
times three.
And so,
The soul of Man
cries out
the anthem
that is
The Achilles heel
and
Winning Ace
of our nature.

15. And Three Voices
answer the cry of Man:

16. The First:
The one with a face of glory,
but a heart of obsidian.
I love you.
(I love your misery)
I love you.
(I love your spiral into confusion)
I love you.
(I love your resignation from the
good fight)

17. The Second:
The blood of Man
answering its own.
I love you.
(because the law demands its)
I love you.
(because your stability affects my
life’s security)
I love you.
(because I treasure your heart as
mine own)
18. The Last:
The One who crafted
Love and the other voices able to
speak freely.
I love you
for I knew you before your birth.
I love you
for I permanently etched our wed-
ding vows into both palms.
I love you
for you are my child, my bride, my
soul’s greatest desire.

19. Love me!
Love me!
Love me!
This is the cry
of all people
mountain to mountain
sea to sea.

20. And the Soul
cries out,
Your soul
Cries out,
Love me!
Love me!
Love me,
times three.
Am I A Person?
_Gelissa Leveille_

Am I a person too?
Henceforth know me as ‘no one’
Wrapped up in illusions of personhood
Am I not allowed to feel?
Shadows haunt this person too.
Yet I thought a ‘no one’ was not real.
Burns prickle my skin
Salved with ‘no one’ tears of blue
But it’s all right
Only persons can feel wounds.

Where Does the River Flow
_Gelissa Leveille_

from whence cometh my help
when grey fills my mind
when my eyes lose sight
of what is, what could be.
for who is listening
to the distance which calls
out, it’s a voice not unlike my own, who was, who could have been.
i seek a homecoming
drifting ever farther
into the grey. who
is out there
which might offer rest to
a soul walking on aching feet?
from which hill
dost flow the river styx?

Through the Archway
_Able Sankovik_

There is the door.
It’s always so dark.
I wince as I pass under the archway.
I always felt as though with a slight breeze it would fall,
   Crushing anyone
   underneath.
The light above flickers.
Inside is the usual.
   A bare stone floor.
   Another dim light.
   A table and a chair
I’ve only seen as I’ve passed by the doorway.
I’ve gotten this far I should continue.
I lay my gloves on the table.
   Then.
I stoop down and untie my shoes.
The laces come undone easily,
   But the boots are hard to pull off
What if I just go in barefoot?
No, you promised.
With my shoes off I sit down in the chair.
I unfasten the buckles from my sabatons.
They clatter to the floor and I start to work on my breastplate.
The buckles are tight and rusted
It’s amazing how easy it was putting all of this on, I muse.
After the longest time,
I lay the breastplate on the ground beside the table
I should have taken this off first
I snicker to myself as I set my helmet on the table.
It’s quite a smart helmet
   With gold trim
   A red feather
   And a grilled visor.
My arm guards aren’t so bad after the work with the breastplate.
I stand barefoot to the cold stone floor.
The hall past the small room looks dimmer than the outside
I walk cautiously,
Starting at every sound,
   Every plink of a water drop,
   Or scurry of a rat.
At the far, far end is another door.
A door of silver,
   With silver gold,
   And a bright red lock.

_Archway cont. on next page_
The Child Inside

Jacklyn Ruth

It’s what we build thick walls to hide; we wake up every day and put on our armor.

It’s the small child inside us.

It’s that feeling you get when the power goes out and all you have is a flashlight.

We are our own body guard

Our own vault

Trying to stash away what others could use against us.

But

That’s no way to live…Is it?
To live is to take chances

To make mistakes

To get a little messy

And sometimes, let people get to that soft spot, that child

Because not everyone is out there to hurt you

Because some people are worth the risk.

~ End Poetry ~
Short Stories
The Knock at the Door

Yasmin Phillip

The pounding at the front door only grows louder with each passing second. My younger sister groans, leaning her messy bun of frizzy brown curls against the wall and glaring at the ceiling. “I don’t understand, Mickie. Why can’t we go downstairs and open the door again?”

I sigh. “Elie. It’s…it’s complicated.”

The sky is a perfect shade of cotton candy blue. I can see it through the upper half of my bedroom window as Elie and I sit near the hallway stairs, our backs up against the wall and our legs scrunched up tight near our chests. We were planning to roll out our unused, cobwebbed bikes for a rare weekend ride along the flat yet winding streets of our large neighborhood. But we’re trapped here, as if under siege. By the knocking. By the fear.

Or at least I’m fearful. My bottom lip is starting to taste like iron, my caramel-colored skin turning clammy and blue as I wrap my shivering arms around my knees. I want to tear my eyes away from my phone, but I can’t. It sits in the doorway to my bedroom, alight with the blinking of an incoming phone call and a contact picture in which everyone in the photo is cropped out except my father, who is smiling. We were at a family dinner, the day that picture was taken. Everyone was there, except for my mom. It was clear by the numerous ‘elephants in the room’ that she was not invited.

I dart a glance across the walkway towards the room that, for eighteen years, used to be my parents’. Now it’s only my mom who slips out of the large king bed and draws in the rich, burgundy curtains every morning, letting the cloudy light permeate the unbalanced, sparsely furnished room. My dad is almost finished with his three-week process of unpacking his new apartment, which sits in a gated community across town. Did he accidentally forget something crucial, like his laptop, or one of his hundred dollar suits? Is that why he’s here?

“Mom,” I hiss loudly, trying to make my voice somehow echo across the walkway. My head is spinning with a plethora of questions, and all I received when I called for her a few minutes ago was a whispered, “Stay there or else he’ll see you - and do not answer any of his calls or messages.” Her skin was drawn, the bags under her terror-ridden brown eyes more pronounced as she peeked through the doorway. This time, all I can glean from her room is a muffled sob.

I close my eyes – and then open them again. Thud, thud, thud. The knocking is getting louder, faster, like that of King Kong about to break down the door and wreak havoc. My lungs suddenly cave in at the thought of red and blue lights and wailing sirens having to pull up into our driveway, in the middle of the day, with our cul-de-sac neighbors – those with whom we had potlucks, game nights, holiday gatherings – watching wide-eyed.

My phone lights up again. “Can I just answer?” my sister huffs suddenly, holding up her phone. “Eight missed calls from ‘Daddy,’” blinks the message on her home-screen. I glance back at my mom’s bedroom, confusion hammering against my brain. “I…I don’t know, Elie. Mom told us not to respond to him at all.”

“But this has been going on for, like, ten minutes,” she grumbles, rubbing her eyes with chipped, pink nail-polished fingers. “It’s annoying.”

Annoying. The word choice makes sense, coming from one whom I tried to keep from realizing the severity of the months of observations and snippets of conversation that now go around, and around, and around in my mind. I picture how my mother always looked when with my father in public. A wan smile would slightly crease her lips and deep brown eyes, as though she was happy but only through a hidden, painful amount
of determination. My mind jumps back to those midnight hours when I’d stumble upon a sliver of light under my father’s office door, catching shards of phone conversation in which he’d share how he was “done trying to work things out with my wife’s stupidity.” Embedded in what I’ve seen and heard is not annoyance, but pure fear.

Flinching as my father’s pounding raises a decibel, I crawl across the shaggy carpet and gingerly scoop up my phone. Ten missed calls have turned into thirteen. My hand begins to quiver. Maybe I should just turn the phone off.

“Oh, great, now he’s sending texts,” Elie purses her lips and holds up her phone for me to read. OPEN UP THE DOOR, my dad’s message is ordering in all-caps. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OK. JUST OPEN THE DOOR.

“Maybe just call him so we can have at least some sort of clue as to what’s happening?” Elie suggests, throwing me a you’re-the-older-sister-so-why-not-do-something-already look. “I mean, it must be something important, and mom’s not helping us at all.”

“I just don’t know…” I murmur.

Suddenly, a text in all-caps bursts onto my screen. I NEVER HIT YOUR MOTHER, AND I’M NOT PLANNING TO NOW. JUST OPEN THE DOOR.

Something drops inside of me. My heart thuds against my chest, the hallway blurring slightly as his statement replays dizzyingly in my mind. As his caller, ID shows up for the fourteenth time, my thumb swipes the ‘answer’ icon. I need an answer. I need some type of explanation. “H-hello?” my voice squeaks.

“Hi, love.” My father’s voice tumbles in through the phone, slightly breathless at first but then smooth like butter. Disturbingly calm. “I’m so glad you picked up. How are you?”

My stomach churns. “What’s going on, Dad? What’s this about you never hitting Mom? What’s this whole thing about?”

“Everything will be OK,” he responds quickly, too eagerly. “Your mother and I are having a disagreement, but nothing bad is going to happen. The ‘hitting mom’ statement was just to let you know that, especially since she’s probably saying things that aren’t true. Once again – nothing bad has ever happened or will happen. I just need to talk to her.”

“Can you maybe resolve some of this disagreement before you come in?”

“If your mother would cooperate, then sure.” He stops – and then concludes hastily, “But she’s choosing not to. Can you open the door, please?”

“Why?”

“Why? What do you mean, why?” My father’s voice hits my ears like a slap to my face. I can almost see his brown eyes darkening into tight slits, his square jaw clenched as his mask of pleasantry finally disappears.
“I have a right to come in, that’s why. I still own this house, that’s why. Just because I don’t live here anymore doesn’t mean I can’t come in and see you and your mother and Elie. Go ahead and listen to your mother’s lies all you want - but I am your father, and you will open this door, Michaela.”

Elie is lingering by my door, shifting back and forth on her feet with her eyes locked on me. Her fingers press against the doorframe, seemingly itching to turn the front doorknob downstairs and let our dad in. What’s he saying? She mouths. Distracted, I shake my head, my ears craning for the slightest sound from my mother’s room – another sob, a shout, something to suggest to me what state she’s in now. My father’s claim, I never hit your mother, replays nightmarishly in my mind. Once again, I yearn to slip over the walkway and into wherever she’s hiding in her room -- but my father’s face must still be plastered to the foyer windows, for suddenly he shouts over the phone, “I see the stairs, but I don’t see you coming down. I’m waiting.”

Static begins to rumble, his voice dropping before coming back. “Raina?” he shouts. “I’m waiting. Are you coming down? Open this door now.”

“Dad…” My voice dries up, my head beginning to swim. I want to let my father in, back into this home whose walls he’d painted; whose living room he’d grace with the occasional Chopin piano sonata; whose kitchen he’d fill with the aromas of homemade mac-and-cheese. I want to let him back into my heart, which he used to fill with memories of tucking me and Elie in at night; teaching us how to play soccer; taking me to history museums; and helping me with science projects.

But…

“I can’t,” I whisper, shaking. My finger swipes the ‘end call’ icon. My father’s smiling face disappears – and with it, my last feeling of security.
The Silent Guitar

Cynthia Salinas

My mother was seventeen, when the picture was taken. Last time I saw it, it was on my desk, in the upstairs guestroom, my old bedroom. I had framed it. It was positioned where anyone entering the room could see it. She stood among other women holding a classical guitar. Her dark brown waves and white-skinned arm contrasted the reddish-brown guitar she stroked. This picture proved my mother had been musical.

I was surprised by the picture because as a child she would become silent after singing a couple verses to a song during family worship. Her striking soprano voice was dissonant to my father’s melodic tenor voice; she was tone deaf. I remember the conundrum I felt wanting her to sing all the songs during worship. I loved her and I wanted her to feel included in our worship.

“Mami, Mami. If you practice, in time, you can learn to sing on tune,” I told her.

Gently, she’d respond with a smile, “Cynthi, there are people who God gave the gift of singing and I am not one of those people.”

My little my mind struggled to comprehend how someone could not know how to sing on tune.

Around the age of seven, the guitar disappeared. My mother’s caring, selfless and yet, practical spirit had come through. My mother offered her silent guitar, when she found out a friend’s son wanted to learn to play. She felt someone else could use it and I felt betrayed. I had never heard her play, which meant now I would never hear her play and more significantly, I would never learn to play. I had mixed emotions the day I realized the silent guitar in my parent’s walk-in closet was gone; I had never said my good-byes. In fact, I had never really said my hellos. I just knew it sat there silent.

In 2007, my mother returned to Argentina, after almost twenty years. My brother and I went with her. I was seventeen years old. She was anxious, she was driven, and had a list of all the people we were to meet while visiting, except for one woman she had hoped to see, but thought had passed away.

As we walked to the special lady’s home, my mother began to tell us her life at the age of seventeen. She pointed to the homes, where friends and neighbors had lived. She described her activities on a normal day and her thoughts. Her likes and dislikes. My mother had never talked about herself. I felt like a silent woman had spoken.

My mother was raised in a single-parent home. Being the second eldest, she naturally led the household chores, cared for her four younger siblings, and worked to provide for her private schooling, guitar lessons, and home. She went to school full-time and worked two jobs.

One of those jobs was as a music teacher. This special lady had connected my mother with a teaching job so she could pay for her guitar lessons. As a teacher, at the conservatory, my mother taught music theory, piano, and solfeo for about three years.

When we arrived at the special lady’s home, and they began to talk, my mind escaped to try to mesh together the image of a musical-less mother and a musical one. This woman gave my mother an opportunity to
do what she loved.

About two years ago, I walked into the dining room to find my mother placing something into our piano bench.

Noticing my puzzled look, she said, “I’m placing all the music books into our piano bench.”

“But, what are those?” I asked. I had caught a glimpse of the music notes. “Those aren’t piano books, Mom.” I said.

“They were my guitar books,” she said as she handed me the books.

I flipped through the pages and couldn’t help myself, “Mom, those are complicated pieces!”

“Yes, they are,” she nodded. “I used to play well, but I don’t play anymore,” she said. She then got up and left me with the books, while she continued organizing books and papers in the other room.

She told me she had played, but she had never told me she had played well.

Recently, I could not take it anymore. I wanted answers. I texted her early in the morning, “Why did you stop playing the guitar?” She responded, “Because I am tone deaf.” I probed, “Really?” She added, “I couldn’t tune the guitar.” I was not satisfied and asked again, “So you only stopped playing because you couldn’t tune? But, you played those advanced books?”

She finally responded with a satisfactory answer, “When we came here [United States] and I got a guitar, I couldn’t tune it and I was very busy so I put it aside and never played. Yes, I did get to play advanced books with the guitar.”

Then I began to cry. And cry some more. I realized what had happened all these years.

My mother was pregnant with me a year after arriving from Argentina to the United States. During that year, she worked as a caretaker, while teaching herself English. As a child, she cleaned the church and worked in various offices late into the evening.

One year, things had become so financially tight that she came home after her full-time job, an hour away, to make decorative dolls. I recall sitting next to her watching her hot-glue ribbons and lace onto dolls late into the night. On the weekends, she would drive back into the city, an hour away, to sell them to make extra income.

When I was in high school, my mother worked a full-time job, went to college full-time, and cared for my younger brother and me. Most of the memories I have of my mother are of her working, and working. She silently toiled.
I felt betrayed that I had never heard my mother play the guitar; I felt betrayed that I was never taught to play. But, now, I realize why the silent guitar remained silent.

My mother worked hard so that I did not have to work two jobs to attend a private school at age seventeen like she did. She worked hard so that I did not have to work an extra job to have piano and flute lessons. She worked hard so that I could go to college without having to work a full-time job and having children.

My mother never taught me how to play the guitar, but she taught me how to be a selfless. My mother showed me Jesus by silently enduring.

As Jesus “endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him,” my mother worked and was fulfilled because I could play the guitar she stopped playing.
Vulnerability
Megan Manuel

Vulnerability. Every girl with a broken heart goes through this fragile exposure of her soul, and tears are the ink that write her sad story. Little did I know that I would soon experience the greatest heartbreak of my life.

It was the first day of October, and I was already stressing out. Not only did I have a nursing class assignment overdue, but I had tons of homework that I did not even start. “This is going to be the worst week ever,” I exclaimed to my friend on Snapchat. “I am definitely going to take so many L’s.”

However, nothing would compare to the loss on October 2, 2017. I can remember that day clearly, replaying in my head like a broken record. My mom informed me that my dad was in a terrible car accident and that I needed to come home as soon as possible. My hands were trembling, and I could barely stand as I heard the words “life support” come out of my mom’s mouth. He’s going to be fine, I tried to reassure myself.

Riiinggggg, Riiingggg.

“Hello?”

“Megan, it’s dad,” said my little sister, Sarah. “He doesn’t—” her voice cracked, “he doesn’t have much time left. You need to hurry.”

“No, no, no, no, no,” I sobbed, shaking my head with my hands in my hair. I dropped the phone on my lap, and the floodgates of my soul burst open. Streams of tears flowed down, and mascara painted my face as dark as the pain I felt.

My boyfriend sped down the road for over 5 hours, hoping to get me to the hospital in time, but I was forty minutes too late. My dad took his last breath without giving me the chance to say goodbye. I was shocked, angry, and sad. All these emotions swirled within me like a hurricane that knew no limit of its damage. My heart shattered, and as Rupi Kaur stated, “…the only place to put the pieces were the bags under my eyes.” I was tired and exhausted. The whole world around me was a blur.

Days went by, and the funeral passed. Everyone went back home, and the house became eerily quiet. The silence was so deafening that I could almost hear my fragile heart beating-- almost, because there was no beating. I felt dead inside. There was no win, only a loss. The loss of my dad.

I’ve stopped crying... for now, but the tears are still on the brink of spilling. Many family and friends show their love to me, which I am very grateful for. However, there are times when I randomly breakdown in tears from a triggered memory. It is like a reopened wound. I think I am doing better, but the pain never left. One little thing can bring me emotional healing, but one little thing can also bring destruction to my already destroyed heart. That’s vulnerability — my inability to protect my heart from the weapon of pain.
No Room for Tears
Yasmin Phillip

It’s past ten. Time for bed.

But you can’t get up. Because you know that if you try to sleep, you’ll suffocate.

You need somewhere to go to be alone. Somewhere to take those shallow, painful breaths in private as you try to stem yourself from bursting with the rush of emotions pumping through your body. Crying in here won’t work, because your roommate will walk in from studying and will see you. Time is of the essence; you already feel your tear ducts unbolting, latch by latch, ready to release the deluge.

Quietly, you leave your room and wander down the hall, your eyes blinded slightly. Quick! Wipe the moisture away, you don’t want anyone to see that you’re crying. Focus on the rows of doors, the threadbare carpet, the stale hallway air – anything but the pain.

Desperation creeps in as you analyze your surroundings. Where can you go? You can’t retreat to the basement, or your own bathroom, or even sit outside on the steps, like you could back home. No, ‘privacy’ is relatively nonexistent here in a dorm complex. Friends of your roommate fly into your room at all times to “borrow” anything from a comb to almond butter. Neighbors’ conversations pour through the walls. The flush of the toilet echoes drastically from the communal bathrooms nearby.

But a secluded area has to exist somewhere. Gritting your teeth, you round the corner and pick up speed, believing and almost demanding that the answer magically appear.

Instead, though, there’s a crossroad. Will you choose to walk upstairs and see if a dark study room is unoccupied? Or will you keep going straight, hoping that the tiny practice room is empty?

The tears are inching back now. No time to waste. You open the door to the next hallway and walk straight, praying that nobody has taken an unnecessary study break to practice their instrument.

But there it is – the tinkling of a piano hits your ears before you even reach the door. Ugghhh! You want to explode in frustration – and unfortunately, your body wants to comply. Ten… ticks your mental countdown.

Wheeling away, you stomp ahead, rushing blindly – that is, until you notice the change. A draft has begun to swirl around your arms. The overhead lights flicker as they cast their stale glow against egg-yolk-colored walls. A ripped carpet stares up invitingly, and suddenly, it hits you that this is it: a hidden, empty spot, tucked away in the last hallway on this block of the dorm. The journey has ended.

Or has it? Nearby to the left sits a dusty old ramp that runs right up to the back lobby of the first floor. Distant voices are beginning to float along it – people. People who are not supposed to see you crying. People who are not supposed to know that you’re hanging on by a thread.

Forget it, you finally decide. There’s nowhere else to go. Let someone see me, for all I care.

Your bastion of courage finally crumbles as you slide to the cob-webbed ground with your back against the wall. You’ve arrived – but frankly, you’re surprised. For all your anguish during the past several minutes, no tears seem to be coming. You blink once, twice. Still, nothing. What’s going on? you wonder. Have I been betraying myself this whole time?
The answer builds slowly, carefully. And then it hits, like a wave. Your head collapses to your bent knees – tears springing, shoulders shaking, angina striking your chest as you go, sinking in the flood as God says, ‘Let the rains fall.’

As is happening physically, a hurricane is also wreaking a havoc of thoughts in your brain. Why? you shout at yourself, your eyes blurred and your cheeks wet. Why do you feel this way? I’m going to be OK, you had told yourself at the start of the semester. You had believed, prayed, smiled, laughed, and talked things through.

And still your world has come crashing down.

You’d never thought of things like suicide, and yet you signed an action pact during counseling. Your counselor and her colleague looked at you – sobbing in their office chair while inwardly yelling at yourself to get it together - and made you fill out one.

You thought you belonged in this school, in its culture, on your career path, with your major. But now you feel utterly confused and desolate. The weeks of work and camaraderie and liveliness have become a huge façade, behind which rests what seems like a bleak emptiness.

Most of all, you thought you’d be able to forgive your father. After all, it’s this lack of forgiveness and yearning for revenge that has created the largest pile of emotional baggage residing in you. Never has the word hate run so rampant in your thoughts or on the tip of your tongue until this year. It’s shameful, you’ve told your-

And now, for the first time in these chaotic episodes – and for all the urgency you had in finding somewhere to be alone – the tender factory of emotions has thrown you a curveball: loneliness. You’ve slipped down this abyss before, but never so deep. The deluge in your mind becomes a tsunami, your body shaking with the wish that someone was here. Right now.

In your ears ring the tinkling of the piano and the clamor of distant voices. On the floors above and around you, hundreds of other dorm mates are walking, sleeping, studying, breathing – but can someone come and talk to you, wrap their arms around you, and help you keep your head above the waves? Because right now, you don’t think you’re going to make it.

But why can’t you make it? whispers a voice, quiet and soothing. Why not?

An hour and a half passes. Slowly, you raise your head. There are no rainbows, but something tells you that your forty days and forty nights of flooding have finally ceased. You can see again, and can breathe, too, as the bellows on your heart and lungs finally lay to rest. Airing out the damp collar of your T-shirt, you pull out your phone and check the time. Yikes. Almost midnight. Only seven hours until your new day begins – when, normally, you’d have to continue life as though nothing happened, believing that there’s no room for tears. Perhaps, though, after tonight, things will be different. For with that soothing voice came the realization that there is someone beside you– One who knew your struggles before they even manifested, who weeps with you and holds you in His arms, enveloping you with the deepest love and with all power to heal you. Knowing that He is there, you decide that there will be room - for tears, and pain and anger. For confusion and peace. For loneliness and friendship. For smiles, and laughter, and prayer, and more talking through things.
Most importantly, for hope.
End