

Three Poems

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Winner of the Thomas McGrath Award in Poetry

Paper Cuts

She used to tell him about paper cuts,
How they'd skim the surface,
But were too deep to touch.
How a bullet wound
Would be tended to,
But a paper cut,
They said,
Should not cause you to be
So distraught.

She used to tell him about paper cuts.
All the scars and tragedies
We cannot see.
How because they never came to the surface,
They were ever so deadly.
Doomed to be dismissed
By the people

Too oblivious to pay attention
To the fatal consequences
Of their cynical actions.

She can still remember
How they lined his face
Hiding under the bags of his eyes
Unearthed by the cries
Of his self-righteous pain.

She can still remember
The moment she realized
He was not the one
These paper cuts lined.
Now it was her
Or maybe it always was
His scars a figment
Of his sociopathic mind.

She never considered
He'd be the one
To leave these cuts
That would never be undone.
And now she's only left to wonder
What her life
Should've become.

She never considered
That these little cuts
Would morph into suicidal gun shots
That would have no regard
For the potential they had
To leave scars to decorate
Her unbeating heart.

So here's to all
Your little paper cuts.

Burn the Girl

Burn the grass,
It comes back stronger.
Burn the girl,
She comes back harder.
Black leather jacket
Two-inch heels
Never again to let
A man bypass
Her heart of steel.

Burn the grass
It comes back stronger.
But what about the girl
Who didn't come back harder?
Who didn't ride the waves
But became its captive
At the high tide
From a love whose pain
Would never subside.

No fire without a match,
No heartbreak without a love,
Her ashes to ashes,
Her dust to dust,
But was it all worth it?
When all was said and done?
To chase a spark
That scorched the heart
Of the one you claimed to love?

Maybe

Maybe you joined
The witness protection program
And didn't have the time
To say goodbye.
And maybe one day I'll run into you
At the grocery store
And it'll be you
Not a stranger in the frozen aisle

Maybe a friend of yours got caught with
Dangerous people
And you threw yourself in the crossfire,
Knowing that you'd already lived a good life.
And maybe the killers forged your name
And someday we'll decipher the crime
When we realize an inconsistency
In how you dot your i's.

Maybe I haven't come up with enough scenarios
Of how you actually died.
Maybe one day I'll figure it out
And whoever did this will pay the price.
Maybe one day I'll have a daughter
And I'll see you in her smile.
And maybe I'll be able to tell her
You weren't the reason you died.

Ella C. Weinmann is a freshman at the University of North Dakota double-majoring in English and criminal justice. In addition to writing essays, Ella also enjoys writing philanthropic speeches, sharing her talent in original oratory events on the national stage. Ella is also involved in the Theta-Iota chapter of Kappa Delta at UND, which has surrounded her with women who push her to be a better writer and person. In her spare time, Ella also enjoys reading, running, and spending time with friends and family at the lake.