

## Two Poems

Olivia Kost

### Cynicisms at the Coffee Shop

Who designated coffee shops as the obligatory destination for first dates? Condensation on coffee cups combining with the slick dew of their sweaty palms. What's your favorite color? How many siblings do you have? Any pets?

Another day, another overheard conversation. So many pyramid schemes to fall into, so little time. Over coffee, with skim milk and sugar free syrup, is also my favorite way to be fat-shamed by a blonde with a blowout. But it's okay. Her supplements will work wonders on my pitiful life.

False niceties exchanged between PTA parents. Yes, of course store-bought cookies are fine. I personally just prefer to not put such harmful chemicals in my babies' bodies, but it's absolutely up to you. I know how hard it is being a single mom. How are John and the receptionist doing, by the way?

Bitter words dunked in bitter drinks, taking away the bite. Like spite-filled scones. Knowing looks shared between barista and customer, as if to say, you heard that, too? She's heard it all before, like the rotating roasts of the week. Music to the girl who does not actually have any music playing in her headphoned ears.

## Monsters under the Bed

I have taken the necessary precautions.

I sleep in the middle of my bed to prevent  
toes stuck out of bedsheets, hanging  
over the edge of the mattress.

Everybody knows that they are banished to stay in the realms of darkness under the bed.

Long ebony talons inching out of their inky prison,  
creeping out of bed skirts,  
only to be expelled once again with the flicking on of a bedside lamp.

One may hypothesize that leaving candles lit would dispel the creatures to their dark  
recesses,  
but it is in fact,  
the opposite.

Instead, they thrive. Dancing between shadows  
patiently waiting for the light to be snuffed out by passing minutes.  
A wick burnt down to a stub until it is immersed in the fallen molten wax.

Darkness rising as the light falls,  
only chased away by oncoming  
rays of day.

**Olivia Kost** is currently a senior at the University of North Dakota, graduating this spring with a Bachelor's in both English and Secondary Education. She is originally from Bismarck, North Dakota and grew up with two loving parents and twin sisters, Abby and Amelia. She enjoys writing of the world around her, but with her own particular twist on things. Her time spent at UND has consisted of many Archives runs and taking naps in the Merrifield library.