Cover Image – “Dexter Gordon”  
Pencil Drawing, 13” x 17”  
by Anthony Hurt  
Bachelor of Business Administration
Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural edition of ASYNCHRONOUS, the new South University, Online Programs student literary and arts journal, which is intended to reflect the spirit of student creativity shared online. The journal’s mission is to showcase South University, Online Programs students’ writing, photography, and artwork. The journal’s goal is to provide an outlet for creative expression that cannot always be fully expressed in a classroom setting.

The word ASYNCHRONOUS has been defined in different ways over time. Some older definitions of the word define it as occurring in a different “geological” time or belonging to a different time or era. Today, we think of ASYNCHRONOUS as not occurring at the same time, not having the same period or phase, or not concurrent in time—like our online classes. Similarly, creativity takes place without consideration of time or place, and the created works may belong to another era or be without “fixed” time.

I would like to express deep appreciation to those who took this germ of an idea and nurtured it to fruition. Michael Loyd Gray, Fiction Editor, and Ashley Johnson, Poetry Editor, are full-time faculty members in the South University, Online Programs English Department. Other former faculty contributed, as well. Without the editors’ tireless efforts, this journal would never have made it to publication.

ASYNCHRONOUS represents an opportunity for South University students to share their work with one another and the greater world at large. If you are a current South University, Online Programs student writer or artist, please consider sharing your work with the university community. If you are an appreciator of the arts, please enjoy the work you will find collected here. Following the release of our first issue, we invite you to share your thoughts about the journal and students’ writing and art by submitting feedback to asynchronous@southuniversity.edu.

Kind regards,

Dr. Donna B. Nalley
Program Director, English
South University, Online Programs
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Complicated Construction

Digital Photograph, 11” x 14”

by Chelsea Durant

Associate of Science in Allied Health Science
This Life

by Barbara A. Barron
Associate of Science in Allied Health Science

In the still of dusk the traffic moves hurriedly but steadily on,
Cars screeching, lights blaring, and people chatting on cell phones,
Texters, tweeters, email checking and Facebook updaters,
To one another, their bosses, their friends and even their haters

Can you imagine a world without the internet – of course, high-speed,
Wonder what we all did before we had this awful crazy need
To research everything, our past, present and our future,
People so afraid they won’t catch up with you or somehow lose you

Funny, I still don’t know why the cage bird sings, or if it even does
Or why trees turn green in spring and why fools always fall in love
Often with other fools, or at least they’re thought to be when yelling
At one another from the top of their lungs from some sort of jealousy

Now the dusk is night and the traffic has slowed to a near halt,
Birds aren’t flying, lights are out and the lovers no longer find fault,
With each other or life itself because a familiar song is softly playing,
A Tina tune “what’s love got to do with it”; well, you know I’m just saying!
Grieving

by Kay Golden
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Lurking agony stalks relentlessly.
Icy hot shock. Invisible defensive wounds.
Abused substance. Shield deflects reflection.
Peril perceived. Amputation anticipated.

Stolen future releases adrenaline hemorrhage.
Aching soul executes slash-and-burn sanity.
Possession protection. Entitlement expires.

Cankered spirit seeks alternate channels.
Rewrites & plotting. Possibility confusion.
Unrequited guilt forms eerie shadows.
Dredged dregs. Forever fantasies.

Unsought Education decomposes phantom limb
Void. Overwhelming chaos shatters light.
Objections overruled. Venue vacancy.

Endurance enables psychic subsidence.
Extenuating circumstances. Chalk-outlines.
Euphemistic eulogizing revises traditions
Ageless anniversaries. Rezoning required.

Unsought education decomposes phantom limb.
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Endurance enables psychic subsidence.
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Euphemistic eulogizing revises traditions.
Ageless anniversaries. Rezoning required.

*based on the five stages of grieving from Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’ book On Death And Dying--denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
Days End – Red Fox

Acrylic, 12” x 18”

by David Looney

Associate of Science in Business Administration
Me...Free Verse

by Gail Shazor  
Bachelor of Business Administration

I
want
words
Without subjugation
Or punctuation
Label me
Tag me
Claim me
Smart, round
Sexy
Words
Enthusiastically
Speak on
What you see
What you taste
Lick me
Disaggregate
My sums
My total
Collect the pieces
In your hand
And blow
Until the particulate
Runs through
Your fingers
Shape
Make
Disambiguate
Desire
My words
My thoughts
Return Exclamations
Logo me
See me
As
I
Am
Wake the Waking

by Gregory Walker
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Why is it today I cannot see?
Why does my focus shift and settle like the sea?
Why does my gaze dart and dive like gulls at sea?
I can see, but seeing never rests – don’t you see?

Never rests, does not sleep
Waits to call until after I’ve gone to sleep
Hey you! Now I lay me down to sleep
But in sleep, the sleeper dreams of wakeful things – and not of sleep
(No, not of sleep)

So now – I lay me down to wake
I’ve waited my entire waking life just to wake
I pray that you not gather and hold a wake
For my sake – for who would wake the waking? Not the awake
(No, definitely, not the awake.)
Shattered Spectrum

By Gregory Walker
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Seriously,
I was only seven
When heaven’s hazy orb first took me by the scruff of the neck
And showed me the Earth – from Aquarius
I was his chosen
And his eyes were so Open and Amiable
Back then.

I thought it was commonplace
To see him studying me
To hear him calling to me
And to feel an occasional pulling sensation that
Caused me to awaken with my eyes – Altered, yet Aware

Little by little,
He’s been collecting those broken pieces I lose during my irreverent night flights
The parts of me that know about the illusions of the earthbound
The parts so callous to carnality the crack from their core
And just drift – weightlessly – off into oblivion
But they turn up eventually
In the face of that wise and other-worldly apparition I sometimes call Father

Last night
I think I sent the last little bit of a heart I had out into orbit
Daddy’ll be so proud
But tonight I don’t see him anywhere
I don’t even feel the pulling anymore
I just find myself circling – observing this place
With eyes – Empty and Awestruck
Memory Stick
Digital Photograph, 2304x3072 pixels
by Gail Shazor
Bachelor of Business Administration
His Hands

by Brandice Dawson
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Carl Jung once said, “Often the hands will solve a mystery that the intellect has struggled with in vain.” I have been angry with my husband for many things but my heart still choses him. My brain, however, tells me it is the wrong decision. I keep listening to my intellect and reminding myself that I am making the best choice for my future and my daughter. I went to visit him this week-end. While I left with the same thoughts in mind, I left my heart in his hands.

My mother-in-law, daughter, and I pulled up to the entrance of the El Paso prison. It was a scalding hot day made worse by the emotions flowing through me. The imposing guard pulled out his clipboard to ask us the required questions. When he had all the information and was satisfied he directed us to the assigned parking. We got out of the car and walked inside where we took off our shoes and let the guard search us. We were ushered into a white room that smelled of disinfectant. It had many tables, most of them full of families going through what we were. We sat at a table in the back of the room near an organized row of overpriced vending machines and nervously waited for him to be brought out. I anxiously tapped my nails on the table and fussed with my hair until I saw him behind the glass. They unlocked the door and told him to walk down the middle of the tables with his hands behind his back. He looks the same except his blonde curls were cut very short and his blue eyes were a brighter healthy blue. He reached our table quickly with his 6’4” frame swooping over to catch our daughter in mid jump. His eyes were a mirror image of mine; both were full of anguish, love and tears. He hugged our daughter fiercely, not caring that others were watching his emotional display. She sat in his lap and told him everything going on in the world of preschool and princesses. I silently sat holding his hand while they talk. I rubbed the very soft white skin on the top of his hand down his long, slender fingers and over his short nails. While dazing out of the conversation, I saw our relationship in those hands.

I studied his hands while I sat there. They were long and clean. They also felt very moisturized and sweaty. It could have been the heat or maybe the anxiety of the visit. He was always soft and gentle very much like the skin on top for all to see. The real relationship that only we saw was as rough and calloused as the palms of his hand. Our relationship was always rocky. I never felt like I was the one he wanted. Just like the deep lines running down his palm, he, too, was always finding a way to run. Whether it was his job that kept him gone for weeks at a time or when he was having too much fun to come home. He always seemed like two people, the gentle and loving man that wasn’t seen often and the man who was always working whether it was legal or not. I didn’t just see the bad when looking at his hands though. I saw that his nails were somewhat long. They were long enough that the white tip was able to be seen but just barely. Normally his nails were bitten to the quick. He always had many bad habits, being a nail biter was one. But here he was overcoming a habit that had been a part of him for so long. What else had he overcome? What other habits were really gone? That small observation gave hope.

I held his hands for the whole four hour visit. I studied the clean growing nails and the callous under each index finger that was slowly smoothing away. I noticed the strength in his grip yet gentleness while he held our daughter. I left feeling sad yet hopeful. His hands were the same as I remembered yet vastly different. Maybe he was too. I was left thinking of something said by Alfred Lord Tennyson. He said, “And out of darkness came the hands that reach thro’ nature, moulding men.” Maybe this dark experience changed him and not just his hands.
Female Orchestration
Acrylic, 38” x 26”
by Anthony Hurt
Bachelor of Business Administration
Timbre

by Gail Shazor
Bachelor of Business Administration

Beat
Rise and fall
Pulse matching pulse
Echoes of waves rippling gracefully
Reflections distorting images of dance
Heartbeat one note

-Match-

Note one heartbeat
Dance of images distorting reflections
Gracefully rippling waves of echoes
Pulse matching pulse
Fall and rise
Beat
Vietnam

by Catherine Grace Stroud
Bachelor of Business Administration

A boy touched the foreign soil...
As death reached out to touch him.
In that moment...
He knew he could not go back.
A child rushes past,
And next a gun blast.
The child dies
with gun in hand.
So wrong...
Oh, so wrong.
But there was no right,
and there was no wrong,
In Vietnam.
Cool Heron Morning

Acrylic, 33 ¾” x 18 ¼”

by David Looney

Associate of Science in Business Administration
Just Turn Away

by Julia Ann Oatsvall-Watson
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Turn away before my tears begin to flow
Your love undecided, mine unrequited
I never mattered anyway
Just turn away

Turn away before I tell you I love you
Your silence hurts worse than violence
Still you have nothing to say
Just turn away

Turn away but don’t say goodbye
More than I could take, this heart would break
You say you cannot stay
Just turn away

Turn away and leave me with a glimmer of hope
That one day my dreams will be fulfilled
That you will turn away from the life you’ve chosen
Just turn away…
Pain Leads To Dancing

by Dawn Starbinski
Associate of Science in Allied Health Science

I am inviting you on a journey. As you read, I want you to allow your heart to see, hear and feel the memories. To taste the saltiness of my tears and know that in the midst of the ashes and dung heap lays one of the greatest discoveries of my life. That is this.....Pain is a very good teacher. If you sit still and let it do its work, it will make you very wise. And wisdom is to be treasured far more than silver or gold because when it is coupled with love, it becomes the currency of life here on earth. To have the wisdom, is to be wealthy beyond your dreams.

As I sit here attempting to compile years’ worth of writing, I am faced with the real possibility that some of my harshest memories are about to be exposed. A thought that is more than a little disconcerting. However in reading through these pages of black and white, some fading with time or tears, I have seen a glimpse of promises. These promises of healing and freedom should not be ignored or hoarded for me alone, but are to be shared with as many others as possible. For the memories of my "Exodus" haunt me still.... Not so much the journey but the “what ifs”...

What if I chose to ignore the chance to forgive? Would I still be in that pit, even now? ...So I choose to write... I am willing to allow the dung and ashes of my pain to become a ticket to freedom Perhaps it has your name on it....As I look back over the whole process, I am quite amazed. Fate is not one to take lightly promises made. In fact, we are held to them. Sparing nothing, destiny sets out using every possible circumstance to bring us to a place of freedom. We must choose to forgive.

It is beyond my comprehension that all of it was ordained. Not that fate wanted me to be rejected and suffer as I have but that in the midst, with every beat of my angry little girl’s heart I was given an opportunity to forgive. As I witnessed such violence in my own home, as my innocence was taken from me without my consent, as my angry little girl heart turned to stone in a young woman’s heaving chest, the chance to choose was there all along. I didn’t realize then but now I do, and it inspires this heart to remember the journey. To allow all the brokenness to show, to break open this alabaster jar allowing all the exquisite perfumed oil to flow out. The paradox being that without breaking the jar, the oil remains hidden, useless... It is only in the breaking that the fragrance can be experienced. The depth of the pain is what gives worth to the oil....You can’t have one without the other....

Somewhere we must all make a decision.....Either we continue in the pain, anger and sadness or we choose to climb up out of that pit and allow ourselves to heal. Healing is not always an easy process. It’s messy and tedious. Sometimes it’s just easier to stay wounded but I can personally guarantee that it’s worth the price of the ticket.....Because once you are free… there is no cage that can hold you.

If I could choose to redo the whole thing, I would not change a single painful event ...No; I’m not a masochist but one who has seen how forgiveness transforms a broken, wounded little girls heart, mind and spirit into a beautiful, vibrant woman. Dancing and singing in the presence of my pain.... There is no greater freedom! Sorrow cannot contain me any longer. I am free! And I have found that nothing satisfies or heals my brokenness more than this. I am not breakable, I am love.
Garden of Passion
Digital Photograph, 11” x 14”
by Chelsea Durant
Associate of Science in Allied Health Science
I am a Faerie

by Britnee Evans
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

I am a Faerie, and no not the type of Faerie that is two inches tall and has sparkly dragon fly or butter fly wings. I’m also not the type of Faerie that is homosexual either. It amazes me still how words can get twisted throughout the years. I am a descendant of some great Faerie priestess, and I was kidnapped. Yes shocking I know, a descendant of some powerful Faerie priestess is kidnapped and held for ransom or some other rubbish. Even though yes I was kidnapped, I was not held for ransom, I was kidnapped because the other Faeries were curious. Curious about why a mortal gathering was emitting such a high concentration of magick. I am sure that you have heard of Faeries kidnapping mortals they find interesting or mortals disappearing when they walk into a circle of mushrooms or flowers. Normally the kidnapping would be contained to those with some musical or artistic talent, so that they could entertain the Faeries throughout their long lives, but several hundred years ago a Faerie priestess fled the realm of Faerie into the Mortal realm. The stories go that the priestess fled because she was being hunted, but the stories don’t tell what she was being hunted by or why; and apparently through my mother’s bloodline I am a descendant of this Faerie priestess, which was not made known to me until sometime after I was kidnapped.

The day I was kidnapped was beautiful, and I was spending time with my aunt, my sister, and my husband. We were walking through the mall, and just having a good time when two professionally dressed men step in front of us, causing us to stop.

“Well none of them appear to be Faerie, but the source of the magick is definitely coming from the four of them,” one of the men said, and the other grimly nodded. My sister and I look at one another, as my husband grips my hand.

“Now lovely ladies and gentleman, the four of you are about to experience some disorientation then blackness, but don’t worry the four of you will be safe with us," the grim man says as he waves something in front of our faces, and just as he says the world begins to spin and it all fades to black.

I am unsure on how long that I slept, but it was apparently long enough for my world to be turned upside down. Out of the four of us that was kidnapped, I slept the longest and I apparently missed all of the excitement. While I and my loved ones slept, we were tested to see which of us had any magickal talent and out of the four of us only two of us have any talent: my sister and I. When I awoke, my sister was there holding my hand with tears streaming down her face. Her auburn hair, which had been short while we were in the Mortal Realm, had dramatically grown until it reached past her shoulder blades and was twisted up into an elaborate bun. She was dressed in a sleeveless cardinal red mid-thigh length dress, belted with an obsidian black belt and knee-high obsidian black boots. Gold earrings hung from her now pointed ears, while golden necklaces hung from her neck and golden bracelets swung from her wrists. Her once vivid green eyes were now a swirling vortex of emerald green, forest green and gold. Both my sister and I are naturally pale, thanks to our Irish heritage, but my sister did visit tanning beds so she had a very nice tan when we were yanked into the Faerie Realm, but now she was pale once again. Underneath her pale skin, was a shining luminescence that seemed as if she had swallowed the moon. My sister was the perfect embodiment of a Sidhe, even with the tears rolling down her statuesque cheeks.

I struggled to sit up and soothe my crying sister, but once she realized that I was awake, she placed her hand on my shoulder, “Do not move, sister. You are not finished changing just yet and movement can be painful," she whispered, as if she was afraid to speak any louder.

“What change? Where are we? And why does my throat feel like I have gargled with barbed wire and rocks?” I barely manage to croak out.
My younger sister laughs, rather sorrowfully, and says “We are in Faerie, the place that we have talked about and dreamt about for so long. Apparently the two of us have Faerie blood, which is in the process of becoming dominant, which is a rather painful process as your DNA is reconfigured, which will also explain why your throat feels as if you have gargled with unpleasant sharp things.” I stare at my sister as her words slowly sink in. Even though I am lying flat on my back, I feel as if I am falling; the edges of my vision start to fade.

“Okay, Faerie I can try to handle that, but if this is what we have dreamt of for so long than why are you crying?” My voice sounds as if it is coming from a long tunnel.” I am crying because by the time that we can go back to the Mortal Realm, no one that we know will be living anymore and they sent our Aunt back to the Mortal Realm because she didn’t have any magick talent in her.” My sister’s voice trails off, and before I can get the chance to ask her what happen to my husband, the blackness swallows me.

The next time I came to, I was alone and it was night. I slowly stood up, and moved around the room, my fingers trailing over the bed, dresser, desk and chairs. From what I could tell by the moon’s light, the room was decorated in ivories and creams. I slowly walked to the room’s door, and cautiously opened the door and stepped out into a corridor, the walls seemed to be made out of yellow alabaster stone and the floor was covered in a creamy yellow carpet, which felt oh so soft as I walked along it. The corridor was silent, and the carpet muffled the sound of my footsteps as I walked down the hall. Every few feet there was a sconce in the wall with flickering golden flames, and in between the sconces, the shadows seemed too deep and dark and I could swear that there were sparkling eyes peering out of the shadows at me, following my slow progress down the hall. I turn a corner, and see to very large double doors at the end of the corridor, which are wide open. I walk closer to the doors, and peer into a large ballroom, where male and female Faeries are swirling around in fantastical outfits and jewels. Skin colors range from white to black to gold and to every other color under the sun, as does the hair and eye color. Some have wings while others have tails or even horns. I take a step into the ballroom, staring at the sights all around, but none astounds me more than that of my sister, dressed in some burgundy finery, twirling about with some tall man that looks like he could be the embodiment of winter; all silvers, whites and light blues. I stumble through the dancing crowd, pushing pass Faeries, my fingers barely touching the silks and velvets they are dressed in. Whispers begin circulating throughout the ballroom, and by the time I’m in center of the ballroom, my sister and her dance partner have stopped; her dance partner seems bemused while my sister just stares at me in astonishment.

“Myra, you have finally awoken. How I have missed you dear sister.” My sister comes up and embraces me. She smells of summer days, and feels just as warm. “This is surely a good sign, for you have awoken on Beltane, a day of new beginnings. Welcome sister to your new life in Faerie, it has been many years since you last awoke.” My sister is smiling and her eyes are sparkling. A complete contrast to how she was acting when I had woken before.

“Years? I have been asleep for years? Arianna, exactly how long have I been sleeping?” I ask, stepping away from my sister, confusion swirling inside of me.

Arianna’s smile quickly disappears; she takes my hand and quietly says, “Myra, you have been sleeping for the mortal equivalent of one hundred years. Your transformation took such a long time, for a while there we weren’t sure if you would ever awaken, but now that you have I am glad. Now we can enjoy the treasures that our new home has to offer us, together.”

“A hundred years? Seriously? Where is Liam? Where is my husband?” I say, my voice wavering as I try not to shout. A hundred years, I start shaking as I realize that all those that I had known were gone, and I still didn’t know about my husband, if he had been sent back with my aunt or if he was here with my sister and I. My sister looked even more forlorn as she sadly replied, “I am not sure Myra. He awoke before any of us, and all that has been said is he didn’t have any magickal talent but he also refused to go back to the Mortal realm until he was able to talk with you, rumor has it that he might have been forced back, but I am not sure.” I stepped away from my sister, and turned my gaze to the listening Faeries. None of them were staring at my
sister, or even listening to her words but they were staring at me. Astonishment was written all over their per-
fect faces.

A flame of anger rises up in me at their prying eyes, “What are you all staring at?” None of Faeries answer 
me, except for my sister as she lays her hand on my shoulder.

“They are staring at you dear sister because where I seem to be the embodiment of fire and summer, you 
appear to be the embodiment of water and spring. Now come dear sister, you are only clothed in a nightgown, 
we must get you better dressed before you can officially meet the courts and the rulers.” Arianna takes my 
hand and leads me back to my room.

What is probably an hour later, I have been primped, coiffed, and dressed. My sister steers me to the mirror 
and bids me to look. My waist length chestnut hair has been curled and twisted into an elaborate bun; my sis-
ter dressed me in a long sleeved flowing royal blue dress with a white ribbon tied into a bow around my waist 
while white ballet slippers adorn my feet. I have two silver hoops in each of my pointed ears, and silver bangles 
jingle on both of my wrists; instead of a necklace, I have a chocker that is made out of a silk white ribbon from 
which a silver triple moon hangs. My eyes are what holds my attention though, I use to have hazel eyes but 
now my eyes are a shimmering collage of royal blue, emerald green, and deep purple with flecks of glittering 
silver; my skin however hasn’t changed much, since I have always been pale but now it carries a moonlit glow. 
“Myra, if you look deeply into your eyes you will be able to see flower petals and water, just like if you look 
deeper into my eyes you will be able to see sea shells and fire. We are the embodiment of spring and summer, 
as well as water and fire. Now let’s get you to the ball so that you can fully enjoy your first day as a Faerie.”
I nod and as we head out of my bed chamber and to the ball room, I sarcastically ask, “But you seriously had 
to make me look like a porcelain doll, complete with my doll-like shoes?” My sister’s laughter rings throughout 
the corridor.

The following days, or years even it is incredibly hard to tell time in Faerie, passed in such a blur, while my 
sister threw me in yards of silk and had me dancing with many a Sidhe Lord. I had long evenings of twirling 
and flirting and eating deliciously sweet foods; the day light hours were spent resting and talking with my sister 
as we got reading for another long evening. I was filled with a glowing happiness as my sister and I explored 
our powers; our influences over the seasons summer and Spring, as well as the elements of Fire and Water. It 
took me awhile but I finally discovered that my sister and I weren’t in any official court, but in a gathering place 
of sorts. Where it didn’t matter what court you belonged to, a place where many different types of Faeries could 
come and gather and party. All the revelry came to an end when the Winter court’s and the Summer court’s 
monarchs arrived. That is when the dreams started.

My dreams are filled with a face, just a face but not any face, I feel as if I know this face but unable to place 
the face, his face; an achingly handsome face that held the most beautiful set of amber eyes, which remind-
ed me of spun gold and butterscotch candies. His long hair was bound in a single braid and was the color 
of the blackest night, but instead of being just blakc it seemed to draw the color in and reflect it back to you. 
Where my sister and I seem to have soaked up the moon, his skin appeared as if he had soaked up the sun 
on a summer day. Every time before I wake up, I look deeply into his amber eyes and his dark pupils change 
to where they become vertical instead of the everyday circle; the bones become sharper, more define. Even 
though his face could scare even the ones that go bump in the night, his eyes are filled with such sadness and 
yearning. “Myra,” he whispers, and I wake up with tears streaming down my face.

The evening after the monarchs had arrived; a big ball was planned, the last one for many seasons. The 
monarchs allows the neutral realm to remain for only so long, than all Faeries with in that realm has to choose 
which court they would be going home to, based off their talents or even personal preference. My sister and I 
did not see one another all that day. I was busy with my own preparations, so I wasn’t concerned. I had two 
phoukas assisting me with my gown, both were female and they were day and night of one another. One had 
the ears of a wolf peeking out of her straight black hair that hung around her dark face while the other one had
the ears of a cat peeking out of her straight white hair which hung around her light face; just by looking at them you wouldn’t been able to tell they were in fact sisters, and twins at that. All that they had in common was their eyes, which was liquid silver in color with no pupils. They hummed while one brushed my long hair and the other picked out an outfit for me to be presented in.

“Aieeee!! Mistress Myra, what have you been doing to your beautiful hair?” Jour, the light phouka, exclaimed. Nuit, the dark phouka, hurriedly rushes over to examine my hair as well. “Oh Mistress Myra, we all loved your hair the color it was before and I am sure that the monarchs would of loved it as well. You didn’t need to change the color of it to impress them,” Nuit chattered away as both her and her sister took turns running their fingers through my hair. I watch as my chestnut colored hair began to change. In the space of mere seconds it went from chestnut brown to a turquoise color, with dark green and blue highlights.

“My darling phoukas, I have done nothing with my hair but it seems that I wasn’t done changing like we all thought,” I whisper, my fingertips barely touching the shining glass of the mirror. With a shrug I turn away from the mirror and to my bed where Nuit had laid out my dress.

Thankfully, Nuit had picked a rather simple dress compared to the ball gowns and hoop skirts my sister had been picking out for me. I was being dressed in an emerald green mid-thigh length dress that had flowing sleeves that reached past my fingertips, and the neck line should a nice amount of cleavage; dark grey tights hugged my legs and mid-calf black boots adorned my feet. I had a silver chain linked belt draped around my waists, and a simple silver chain was around my neck, from which a silver triple moon swung gracefully. Nothing adorned my wrists or my ears, but I did have seed pearls strung throughout my flowing curls. After Nuit and Jour was finished helping me get dressed for the monarchs, they both gave me hugs with tears in their silver eyes. I could feel their sorrow caused by the belief that this could be the last time they would see me.

“My dear friends, if you wish and if you want you can follow me to which ever court I become a part of,” I whisper and smile as their smiles bloom at my words. Before they can express the gratitude that I can feel gushing from me, my sister barges into my chambers and pulls me from my room and towards the banquet hall.

“Arianna, I was talking with Jour and Nuit,” I grumble as we enter the banquet hall.

“I am sure the three of you were having a very stimulating conversation, but it does no good to be late at this particular party. Since we were the last to arrive we have to go first, in the choosing of our Courts,” Arianna says, her voice trembling in anticipation and nervousness. I just shake my head, and allow my younger sister to lead me through the crowd, where we stop beside her beau, Kairi. Where my sister is the embodiment of Summer her beau is the embodiment of Winter, the two of them have a lot of jokes circulating around them since fire can melt ice. Kairi is tall, taller than my sister and me and we are pretty tall; he has skin that looks like glittering snow, his long hair is silver and hangs down his back with diamonds glittering as if they were pieces of frost. His eyes are pretty amazing; they are silver and blue with snowflakes swirling within them. For this joyous and sad occasion, he is dressed in a light blue tunic matched with light grey paints and light blue boots. Gazing at Kairi, as he takes my sister into his arms, has the face from dreams loom in front of my eyes. A sigh escapes my painted lips; if only I knew who this man was that haunted my dreams. Arianna shoots me a questioning look; I just shake my head as trumpets began to play. Everyone’s attention automatically turns towards the raised dais, where three male Sidhe had appeared.

The male on the left hand side was dressed in nothing but a pair of golden silk harem pants; a golden torc rested around his sun kissed neck, no other jewelry or clothing adorned his body. He had long, wavy chestnut hair that had golden highlights sparkling though it; his eyes were gold and green, and you could almost see the sun shining in them. This golden Sidhe male was the representative from the Summer Court, and he stared at all of us, his face impassive. The male on the right hand side was dressed in silver silk trousers with fur boots laced up to his knees and a short silver fur vest on his otherwise bare chest. A silver torc hugged his
luminescent neck and he had silver beads threaded through his long black hair; his eyes were silver and dark blue, glittering snow shined from his eyes. The Winter Court’s silver representative, smirked as he took in the barely hundred Faeries that stood below him. Even though the Winter and Summer Court’s representatives were enchanting, it was the male in between them that held my attention, which had my heart pounding. The male in the center appeared as if he could be a melding of Summer and Winter, and he seemed so much more threatening than the other two males did. He was dressed in a long sleeved black shirt, which had a blood red vest over it; he had black trousers and knee high black boots. His boots and vest had golden embroidery on them, depicting dragons. His black hair was bound in a braid, and you could see nearly every color reflected in his hair; blood red gauntlets adorned his wrists. His skin was sun kissed and his eyes were the eyes from my dreams, amber eyes with draconic pupils. These eyes were sweeping across the assembled Faeries, but when his eyes met mine, they widened for just a moment, in recognition, and then they grew cold and distant. The man from my dreams was the representative from the High Court, the hardest Court to get accepted into; the Court where you had to be incredibly talented or be a descendant of a Dragon, Pegasus or Unicorn. Looking at this man from dreams, hearing his voice whispering my name, I knew that I needed to get into the High Court. Somehow.

The Summer representative took a step towards the front of the dais. “My fellow Fae,” he began with a smile that could cause anyone’s knees to melt “Thank you all for gathering here in such a timely manner. No one will know for sure what court they have been accepted into this night. You will not know until the morrow. This realm’s servants have given all courts a description of who each of you are, and what your talents are. Now enjoy the festivities, the three of us will be circulating throughout the crowd. Enjoy your evening.” The music started up, as his words ended. The three representatives disappeared into the crowd as we all began to dance, laugh and have fun. Kairi swept my sister away, and I slowly made my way through the crowd, trying to place where I knew the High Court’s representative from. I declined dance invitations from the males that I generally dance with; my mind to fixate on the mystery of the High Court representative. The evening passed by so slowly, and when it was suitable to do so, I escaped to my rooms to fall into the deep oblivion that was haunted by amber eyes.

I awoke to being shaken by my sister, her twirling green eyes sparkling in impatience. “Come on Myra sister, open your envelope. Jour and Nuit want you to as well, they are just too well-mannered to awake you,” Arianna says as she rips the silken sheets off of me. I struggle to sit up, wiping sleep from my eyes, as Nuit hands me a heavy envelope. Hers and her sister’s eyes are twinkling in anticipation. The room is silent while my shaking fingers break the glittering wax seal on the envelope. I take out a sheet of heavy parchment; I quickly read what is written in shimmering silver ink.

“Well!?!’’ my sister inquires, but instead of waiting for my answer she yanks the paper from my trembling fingers. “You got into the High Court!! Me too!! Kai got into the Winter Court, but the awesome thing about the High Court is that there is no central place for it. You pretty much can reside in either Summer or Winter. The High Court is more of an elite group of guardians, warriors and mages.” My sister’s melodious voice rambles on, as she describes her earlier meeting with the High Court’s representative, and all the information he had given her.

Jour cautiously sits on the bed beside me. “Myra, are you okay? You seem to be in shock,” she whispers to me as Nuit sits on the other side of me.

“Arianna, if we are part of the High Court, what are we? Dragon? Unicorn? Pegasus? Did the High Court representative say what we were?” My voice trembles.

Arianna stops in mid-ramble and her eyes reflect her blooming curiosity. “No he didn’t, but he did say that we will find out once we have gotten a room at one of the courts.” I numbly nod, and began to pack my few belongings.
Creeper
Digital Photograph, 448x338 pixels
by Gail Shazor
Bachelor of Business Administration
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