



S.O.U.L.

Society of Unusual Literature

feather
Krauski

S.O.U.L.
Society of Unusual Literature
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| A Writer's Stand | 3 |
| Pure Incentives | 4 |
| Uncertain | 6 |
| I don't mind | 7 |
| Dusk Falls | 9 |
| Holding On | 10 |
| Missed Connection | 11 |
| King of Lies | 13 |
| At Summer's End | 16 |
| Focus | 17 |
| Morning Lake Surface | 18 |
| Painless Balancing | 19 |
| A Means to an End | 20 |
| Aware and Eager | 23 |
| Unexpectant | 24 |
| Traveler's Favored | 25 |
| Traveler's Forgiven | 26 |
| Clay | 28 |
| Listening to Johnny Cash with My Friend Arthur | 29 |
| Souls' Sanctum | 30 |

A Writer's Stand

Garret Chmielewski

We hold our mighty spears
Standing side by side with peers

We must hold on to our way
So we may brighten others' day

No one else can understand
The limitless power in our hand

We will push all our monsters back
And ready for our great attack

Against a world set to stay
Trapped in its internal way

For only together we will survive
And prove our writing will never die

Pure Incentives

Ayesha Susan Sultana

Pulling the strings of the heart
Playing the faithful harp
But I struck the wrong cord
What have I done my Lord

Illumination was my desire
But got burned by the fire
Yes, my instrument was wrong
Though my melody was strong

God I surrender I was wrong
Nowhere left to hide
Inflicted my own scars
What pleasure did I derive

It all began with one lie
That I won't fall, whatever I try
Now I can't sleep at night
So numb from my inner fight

How could my soul be so dumb
Thought I was pleasing the One
God knows what I feel
Intuitions are so real

God I surrender I was wrong
Nowhere left to hide
Inflicted my own scars
What pleasure did I derive

My mistakes will haunt me now
History cannot be undone
Glazing over all my faults
Living through my assaults
Through guilty prayers, I kneel
With remorseful pleas to heal

God I surrender I was wrong
Nowhere left to hide

Inflicted my own scars
What pleasure did I derive

Uncertain

Jason Norton

What comes now without frequency?

Also know now who you are,

same hang out with dim blinking street lights reminding you of tomorrow.

Who do I recognize in these faded parking lines?

Let me find a new face who believes can help,

feel my hands in shallow glass puddles.

Distortion from wrinkles and unrest, how do you leave if there was never an exit?

No indication of return or warning.

Winds of vengeful peace submit their choices of broadcast,

mirroring parts of me to make a whole.

wondering if such things take place,

Being the observer of some new lesson.

happy for those who do not stop,

Look down and continue to fake thought.

eyes showing so much that your smile won't allow,

Teeth grinding to make sense of it all.

I don't mind

Jamira Bennett

Her heart whisked away
Too blinded by the city lights to notice.
God knows where she is going.

But I don't mind.

In the night,
She keeps on going
She keeps on moving
Never stopping.

Her heart whisked away
Too blinded by the city lights to notice.
God knows where she is going.

When the bills keep falling
Never stopping
When she is crumbling.

Her heart whisked away
Too blinded by the city lights to notice.
God knows where she is going.

But I don't mind.

Her lipstick stained the mirror,
Her reflection staring back.
Footstep getting nearer
Yeah, she has a knack
For dancing alone on the floor.
Following her own music.
Following her own pace.
All they see is her tripping.
Going back.

Footsteps getting nearer
Yeah, she has a knack
For dancing alone on the floor.
Following her own music.
Following her own pace.
But I don't mind.

Dusk Falls

Dorothy Anna “Dar” Timberlake Moore

Dusk falls

Like a dancer

Into the long armed

Pine tree

And insects

Rise applauding--

Enter: Night

Holding On

Jason Norton

Tipping ladders with vaseline handles waiting for me to ascend.
Dust pans filled with ash and bone, the debris of life and lives forfeited.
Hairless vultures peck on withering tightropes overhead.
Tricks of the trade left behind no longer a secret to the neighborhood.
Squeeze yourself in a bottle, the sailboat awaits.
Stay longer this time, pull a splinter, bleed.
Quiet remarks tell you of your departure.
Jointless bones race to the peak.
Don't ask for the check yet! someone sees you and needs more time.

Missed Connection

Gregory Silagy

April and Monica lived on opposite sides of the country and had nearly nothing in common. Monica was athletic, loved soccer, and she had plenty of friends in school. April, who was a few years older than Monica, preferred indoor activities. She liked reading, watching movies, and had a small, but close, circle of friends. Despite the plenty of opposing traits and distance between them, the two affected one another in an almost indescribable way.

It was October when they met, April had been in California, Monica's home state, visiting family the same way she did every year. Now, April sat in the airport and waited for her parents to sort out how they'd get home now that the flight they had booked was cancelled. As for Monica, she was just arriving home after visiting a few colleges on the east coast. She took a seat in the terminal as her parents went to collect their luggage.

April was mindlessly looking around the airport when her gaze landed on the tall blonde girl who had just sat down across from her, only a few feet away. She was staring down at her phone and reminded April of the locals she'd see on her yearly trips to the west coast; not usually the kind of people she spent much time around, but something about this particular girl seemed a little different. Her mind began to wander. Suddenly the girl looked up and April quickly looked down at her phone, avoiding possible eye contact.

Monica, bored, looked up from her phone and stared blankly around at the interior of the terminal. Her eyes drifted around coming to a stop on the short girl with dark hair who sat across from her, staring down at her phone. She didn't look like someone Monica would hang out with normally, but Monica thought she looked nice; like someone that could be really easy to talk to. The girl shifted in her seat and, fearing possible eye contact, Monica looked back down at her phone.

April had become very aware of the girl sitting across from her. She couldn't stop herself from thinking about her. What was she like? April kept answering that question over and over again in her head in different ways. She imagined conversations they could have. What would she say? How would she talk to this girl? It seemed so impossible, but she was right across from her. She was so close that it *felt* possible.

Monica was starting to think that the girl sitting across from her had seen her looking. Part of her hoped she hadn't, but another part of her hoped she was looking back. Her mind started to fill up with ideas about what the girl was like. Before long, the terminal around her disappeared and her mind was completely occupied with thoughts of how she and the girl could finally meet. The space between them seemed to grow smaller as Monica filled in the blanks of who this mysterious girl who sat across from her was.

The two girls sat there, opposite each other, both looking at the blank screens of their phones, caught up thinking about one another, caught up thinking about what the other was like, how they'd get along, what they could do together, and wondering if it was worth the risk to steal another glance. Then, by sheer coincidence, they looked up at the same time. They didn't mean to catch eyes, but when they did, they didn't look away and pretend it didn't happen, they held the connection. In that short moment, they were so busy looking at each other that they didn't notice their respective parents approaching them.

“April, come on. It's time to go.”

April. The name burned itself into Monica's mind. Of course that was her name. It was perfect. She had to stop herself from saying it out loud.

“You ready to go, Monica?”

Monica. The name hung in the air around April. Hearing it warmed her from the inside out. She repeated it over and over again in her head. It made so much sense.

As the two walked away from each other, they felt like they were being pulled apart. They felt like they didn't want to leave, but the further away from each other they got, the less sense that feeling made until it was nothing more than some forgotten day dream, quickly pushed aside.

April would never get to talk to the tall girl with blonde hair, nor Monica to the short girl with dark hair. They'd never really get to know each other, only the person they came up with in their heads. They'd never know how the other person was thinking the same way. But in that moment, in the most meaningless of places at the most meaningless of times, the two gave each other meaning.

King of Lies

Magnus Hjaelmar Tomasko

Along grow hollow husk and bone
Damned upon forgotten throne

Shattered sights askew thine light
Whilst sorrowed voices forge the night;
Silenced amongst putrid sins
Their pains recall, descent begins

Beckon-call to praise thine grave
On mounds of rubble none forgave
Whereupon thou damnèd lies
Pierce these hazed and dampered skies
With treason, hate, damnation, demise;
Hold mine hand, you king of lies

Promise brittle, thou spirit breaks;
Bear my soul, mine deafened hate!

(chorus)

Sound the hymn of ancient sin
And bind the lock to hallowed clock;
Time is fleeting, ever thin
Straying sight of hope within;
Sacred promise turned amok
Seal thine heart of broken rock
With lies begotten from the ring;
Death shall meet thee, lying king
(chorus end)

Along trail harrowed hopes and hurts
Left amongst unspoken words

Hidden shame, forsaken fame;

Thou brittle promise speaks in vain;
Upon thy ring, a kiss of death
Bestowed 'pon traitors all forget

War against thine hollow words,
Righteous slain for truth unheard;
Beneath their banner waving proud
These damnèd calls ring more profound
Than burrowed truths from traitor despised;
Hold mine hand, you king of lies

(chorus)

Sound the hymn of ancient sin
And bind the lock to hallowed clock;
Time is fleeting, ever thin
Straying sight of hope within;
Sacred promise turned amok
Seal thine heart of broken rock
With lies begotten from the ring;
Death shall meet thee, lying king
(chorus end)

"Wherefore hath my people gone? Sacred loyals but merely pawns to fallible fate and ornate
tales forged against mine cordial scales."

Thou hath stained us mortals with blood
Rampant hate; thou stands with none

"Cloaked in drapery flying bright, ye warriors know not honor, but might. Strength surrender, for
it cannot shatter mine dearest console of hallowed matter."

Giveth us thy mockery thin;
Our vengeful chagrin cannot forgive
What harrowing damnation bringeth forth
Unto citizens whom fear the worst

When, before, hath thou not sung
These crippled scriptures so carelessly strung
From blighting hope and silver tongues?

No longer bathed in innocent blood
We, the common, herein, now rise;
Give your hand, you king of lies!

“Heart embraced by deathly reign
My people, I have lied in vain;
End mine sins, mine painful lie;
Death descend from grace divine
Unholy against mine dearest whim;
Farewell, kingdom built on sin.”

(chorus)

Sound the fare of freedom nigh
Unbind these chains of abysmal time;
Kingdom righteous, peasants bright
Mortals reclaim throne with might;
Sacred promise turned about
Seal thine heart in smothered doubt
With truth now ravished from crown and ring;
Death has met thee, lying king

(chorus end)

At Summer's End

Dorothy Anna "Dar" Timberlake Moore

At summer's end
White asters

Scatter, blowing
In dry grass

Like a torn-up
Love letter

The sky wrote
Long ago

Focus

Barbara K. Brown

There once was a student,
And one day she astuted,
“I will now be productive!”
Then she unlocked her smartphone, and got so sucked in.
Hours later, she groaned, “That was ever so stupid!”

Morning Lake Surface

Dorothy Anna “Dar” Timberlake Moore

Like the shiver
On a horse’s flank

As the fly
Settles.

Painless Balancing

Jason Norton

Pencil lead ashes smudging under my hand.

Reminders of the dirtiest times.

Exploitation of personal rights shine like a military button on display.

Reflections on yellow stained teeth removing grit of judgment with moist clothes of sweat.

Pursuance of demands that shake and rattle bones.

Unbalancing loose-leaf shards of headlock pains.

Pills hit the floor, turning to dust.

Memories unlock into a quiet room.

Hallow, only static seeping loneliness approaches at noon.

A touch that never leaves more than a mark.

Show me when the floor starts to dry, stain free.

Frost-bitten book pages turned to glass shatter upon every turn leaving no reminder of your story.

Waist belt notches winning again.

A Means to an End

Magnus Hjaelmar Tomasko

Legend told four Giants were born upon creation of the world, Artorias. Land, Life, Death, and Time, the lonesome pair of Life and Time grew hermetic with simply two other companions, and therein, created Humanity for company.

Death detested this.

Arguing over Humanity, Death claimed it would destroy Land and, therefore, kill her. Land, however, stood her ground against him and argued she could not feel more humbled sharing herself with other beings, especially ones with such potential, choice, and opportunity. Nonetheless, Death perversely grasped his hatred of Humanity. He created a plague to ravage them and stated: “Lest one Human bring knowledge before me as to why I should let them live, this plague shall wipe their very existence from Artorias.”

Upon Land existed many villages forged by her beloved creatures. Nearly invisible, however, a small, western village birthed a young Human named Grimchain. Years passed as he grew, watching fellow villagers fall victim one by one to Death’s fatal plague, and so slowly grew the bright Human’s heart hollow and grim. Angry, he swore an oath to the remaining villagers:

“I shall cure this plague, even should my life be lost in trying!”

Grimchain traversed Artorias in search of the worldly Giants. Crossing vast, dense lands and rough seas, he one day reached an ancient forest and followed its misty path filled with gorgeous foliage and luminescent flowers. Further ahead, however, tree leaves browned and flowers dulled. He nevertheless pursued the path, but beyond, every tree paled and their branches stood naked, and the flowers wilted, desaturated, and withered. One step further, the forest fell to ash and dust, flowers ceased to exist and the sky became murky with decay. Sitting upon a throne of dying branches and long-dead vines with sharpened thorns, Death himself rose and gazed down upon the Human.

“After centuries, you mortals discover my place at last,” he commented. “But discovery is not much, Human, for it shows determination. That is not *nearly* enough to make me care. *Anything* may have determination if it has feeling. Even the plants here have courage in death, for they seek to turn the sky grey and ancient, punishing me for taking their lives away.”

Grimchain squared himself before Death and stared the Giant in the eyes. “Then what must I do to impress you?” he asked. “I have been born, I have seen the world, and I have passed many ages watching this world change.”

“But you have only *seen* death,” the Giant told.

Grimchain grew silent.

Death twiddled his fingers idly for a moment. “You have been born and therefore learned about life; you have watched a few decades pass and therefore learned about time; you have traversed the world entirely and therefore learned about land. But you have not yet died,” he said. “You have experienced nearly *everything* in your search for knowledge of a cure to give Humankind. Life is everything to you, for, without it, you are nothing. If you truly care about Humanity, be the last to experience death by my plague because selflessness and sacrifice of the very thing you wish to save will be *more* than sufficient to impress me. Such dedication... a Human willing to learn all four aspects of this world... That would bring such honor to you creatures, and I would be *glad* to share Artorias with you the same as Land herself.”

“I’ll do it,” Grimchain immediately declared.

Death, silent and mouth agape, asked the Human, “You would experience such tragedy for the lives of others?”

“It would be my honor,” he assured.

The Giant stood astonished before Grimchain and granted the plague upon him. Within mere hours, the Human fell quiet, and his movements slowed.

Breaking the long bout of silence, Grimchain rose his head and eyes to Death with a smile. “Knowledge is the means to an end,” he said. And there he died.

Death kept his promise and ended the plague upon Humans. Devoted to their courage and desire, he even began working with Life, helping Humanity grow and thrive. However, Grimchain’s dedication, desire, and devotion to knowledge never left his mind. These Humans continued in place of him—one single man who sought knowledge of every aspect for their sake, and somehow, nobody honored this sacrifice.

Reaching into the afterlife, Death pulled the soul of Grimchain and forged from decaying, ashen branches a hardened, full body, this time larger and stronger. Like a Giant's. And Death placed the soul inside this creature and bowed before it.

“Once mortal in search of knowledge, I grant you life again,” said Death. “Grimchain of Artorias, I return you to this realm eternally in honor of your sacrifice, this time as Giant of Knowledge for, you have experienced what we are, yet we—Life, Death, Time, and Land—have not experienced *you*.”

Grimchain rose before Death and embraced him with a smile. Existing once more with courage, Grimchain of Knowledge forever walked amongst his fellow Giants and the now-thriving Humans, bringing insight to all, opening new doorways for all eternity.

Aware and Eager

Jason Norton

Distractions that appear as imperfections,
thoughts that clog the pores of my intellect.
Simple finds in dusty boxes bring distinguished comfort,
pushing towards a pre-destined accomplishment.
The prize in hand awaits the ego to wince and drool.

Ironing out the fabric of life,
aggressive pursuers of liquid love bleached to perfection.
Crowds standing for their moment,
Applause for the smallest movement.
Please stay for the finale.
Distractions as humans, soulless and selfish beings,
getting past the capes of time consumers.

Unexpected

Dorothy Anna “Dar” Timberlake Moore

A few blueberries left

Dry and pursed over moss

Old women watch

Another sun set

Into summer’s end.

The following pieces are fan-based works based on the game *Destiny 2*[™] (2017) created by Bungie Inc.[™].

Traveler's Favored

Magnus Hjaelmar Tomasko

Dawning

New Golden Age

Day 365/365

His steps shake the fabric of reality. His breaths become the currents of time. His heartbeat quakes worlds, forging mountains and valleys. His tears fill oceans which nurture the masses. His Light is the sun, keeping alive everything and everyone. Should he fall, all will with him, too.

He walks the galaxy with boots silver as the stars. With bullets, he pierces the veil between enemies, and through actions, he weaves these forces into a harmonic braid, golden like his Solar Light. Wherever shadows loom, he shines with the Traveler's radiance and dispels it. He overwhelms the Dark with the fury of his God.

Corrupted souls discover peace merely upon sensing his presence. Taken are returned with his words. Unified have all lives become when upon their land he has tread.

Slain by his guns and hammer are those who cannot die. Brought alive with his kindness and love are those who cannot live. Held peacefully together with his deeds are the fragmented worlds, lives, societies, and galaxy which cannot join as one.

Favored is he by the Traveler who cannot discriminate.

Magnus Thorbjorn, Hero of the Red War, Evocate-General of Cabal, Vanguard of the Vanguard, Life-weaver, God-slayer, Traveler's Favored. Live eternal as the Light. You *are* the Light--its purest embodiment.

Dominus Ghaul

Student of Magnus

Traveler's Forgiven

Magnus Hjaelmar Tomasko

Dawning

New Golden Age

Day 4/366

His ghastly pleas echoed through realities. His forsaken words bellowed across time and space, yet touched only one. His fractured soul cried for freedom to deaf ears. His solemn acceptance of the end became swallowed whole by Darkness.

And then came a Light.

Sorrowful tears dripped like blood from his eyes. With every one, life fell away, but these tears could not drain from him entirely. He existed without end.

As he spoke, the broken respirator drew inside him poison, seeping through every vein, and only beholden, honest words released. He existed as but a corpse forced to live through decay. The world around him was decay. *Darkness*.

I thought him to be gone forever. The Traveler apprehended his soul, I believed, unto itself, burning apart every fiber. Yet, before me, corruption and sadness--the consecrated essence of despair--*lived*. And begged me to end it.

But I could not bring myself to.

His every word carried overburdening weight of the damning past, and his every reason the means to overcome it. His corruption beckoned damnation, but his will called for redemption. Redemption through *death*. Once before, I had already killed him. I had killed many. And I had learned to kill is not to do right, but only to protect.

I protected the world. Now, I must protect him. A Light within the Dark.

I greeted despair with open arms. Small within his, the cold, rigid fingers grasped mine. My Solar energy overwhelmed his shadows abound--swallowed them until I could not see anything but Light.

The Traveler itself.

Torrential tears dried before they touched upon sacred ground. Unbroken--whole--the lost soul declared my Light finally saved him. Yet now, upon holy land, it bound him to what he did not deserve.

I found this Darkness; I dispelled it, and unto him, brought Light. *My Light. The Traveler's.* I existed as one with its being, embodying my God. I could save him.

Suffering redeemed his past self and, before me, forged the new--the deserving. As claimed by the Traveler. Once more did I offer my hand, and this time we stood together in Light, as Light, *with Light. Guardians, Forgiven and Favored.*

Titan Redeemed, Dominus of Cabal, Student of the Favored, Brother mine, Traveler's Forgiven, Dominus Ghaul, exist to uphold that which you once sought to take, and share its glorious bounty with all. Everything which you once desired shall someday become yours so righteously. Live forever, Light's Disciple.

Magnus Thorbjorn

Teacher to Dominus Ghaul

Clay

Michael Griffith

Rain trailed off the backs and legs
and faces of the elephants who gathered
to stand over their dying great-mother,
She-who-gives-but-can-give-no-more.

Years they stood, for it took years for her to die,
and years it rained, for the sky wept
as it could hear her happy cries no more.

They stood and sank down, down into the ground.
The ground swallowed them as it swallowed the sky's tears,
as it swallowed that rain. It swallowed the elephant's bones
and tusks and hair and ears and skin.

It swallowed their great-mother.

And now the ground gives as she gave:
the bricks of our homes and streets, the clay of our roofs
and our bowls and our necklaces and rings.

Great-mother is with us, her children are with us.
We must thank them as we must thank the rain, thank the sun.

And who gave us the skill to work the clay?

For that, child, thank your mother.

Listening to Johnny Cash with My Friend Arthur

Michael Griffith

Listening to Johnny Cash with my friend Arthur in his room at the nursing home...

I can only understand about every third word that Arthur says, but it's alright,

Johnny says enough for any three men.

Souls' Sanctum

Garret Chmielewski

We stay together side by side
Helping new poets and authors with a guide
Together our job is to help each other stand
To stop everything from becoming tasteless and bland
We have what it takes to make our words stand true
And share these words from me to you
So now the hardest task will show its face
But we together will show it its place
For now we stand proud
So it's time to make a change the time is now