

POETRY & FICTION



By Brandon Jones

Soft melodies whispered through the evening air. Fingers and strings ran together in a veritable symphony of motion. A young girl sat cross-legged on a backless park bench strumming the guitar with the years of experience she had worn into the tips of her fingers. The song "Goodbye days" faded into the wind as the final note sounded and Miyabi Shibata raised her delicate face away from her guitar to see reds and blues playing harmoniously in the sky as the sun set across the bay. Times like this made her wish she was someplace else. The screams she had run from still rang loudly in her head. Her parents were fighting again.

Her dark auburn hair tickled her neck in the fluttering breeze. She fidgeted on the bench and moved her legs from the crossed position so that she could lean forward to grab a notebook and pen stashed in the worn guitar case that sat at her feet. She laid the guitar in the case as one would a newborn baby to rest and began to write. Words flowed across the page in a torrent of motion; her eyebrows were furrowed in recollection. Her left hand clenched as she wrote. Music was her rest. It was all she had left. Her face relaxed as she continued to write. She revealed in the ability to put to paper all the anger and sadness she felt because of the apparent hatred her parents felt for one another.

After the flood of words subsided, she set the notebook beside her on the bench and picked up her guitar again from its case. The guitar snipped her knee as she lifted it to her lap and her face crinkled in a grimace. She reached down and gently rubbed the knee through the hole worn in her jeans. A black brace peeked out from behind the worn denim and many scars ran in "x" shapes on her knee cap. The grimace faded and her hands returned to the guitar. The headstock gleamed in the dying sun; white letters spelling Fender crossed the deep brown of the wood behind them. A few scratches ran along the body of the guitar. The smell of lemons wafted up to her nose and the polished wood caught the sun creating a dazzling splash of orange across the bulky guitar body.

Miyabi looked up towards the purpling sky and saw people looking expectantly at her instrument. She smiled lightly and began to strum again. A rebellious note sounded out and Miyabi adjusted the silver tuning peg before looking out at the people once more.

"Hello everyone, my name is Miiya and the song I want to play for you is called 'Stay with me'."

"Can you come over for a minute, Miiya?"

"Sure... I'll be there as fast as my legs will carry." She grinned into her cell phone and hobbled to the bus stop just down the path from her bench. She sat down gingerly after setting her guitar case against the seat. She began to tap the rhythm to her song "Stay with me" against the guitar case as she waited for the bus. Cars sped by, here a Honda, there a Mitsubishi, all going by with low rumbles and maybe an angry wasp or two. After a few minutes of impersonal car sounds passing by, the faint low growl of a diesel engine grew closer. The bus pulled to a stop with a hiss and the doors opened with a snap. Miiya limped up the stairs and sat in the seat behind the driver - a young woman who looked out of place. Miiya hugged the guitar to herself as the bus rumbled off.

"Thank you for coming over so quickly, Miiya."

Miiya shuffled in slowly behind another young woman.

Melodies

"Thanking me for coming over? Why so formal, Kari? You know I'd come over in a heartbeat." Miiya looked at Kari strangely. Kari led her through the small house, past various photos lining the walls and past a kitchen that smelled like beef.

Kari noticed Miiya sniffing the air. "We had grilled beef for supper tonight." Miiya laughed.

The two entered through a closed door plastered with various threats and warnings for those who dared to come in. Some clothes littered a corner of the room around a small basket filled with balls of cloth. Miiya looked up from the messy room at Kari. A flash of worry crossed Kari's face as a small, discontented sigh escaped her lips.

"Miiya, how are you doing?" She looked at Miiya sadly.

"I'm fi..."

"Before you tell me you're fine. I should say that I know what's been wrong with you recently," Kari interrupted.

Fear crossed Miiya's face.

"You... You do? How?" A stuttered gasp escaped before Miiya could quell it.

"I heard your parents arguing when I went to your house to see if you wanted to hang out. I couldn't get you on your cell."

"I suppose you want nothing to do with me now." Miiya sighed.

"How could you say that? You think everyone will run away from you just because you have some obscure disease?" Kari looked at Miiya, her eyes wide and mouth left slightly open.

"I did." Miiya held her head low.

"Well... I did some research on the disease. I know what will happen to you eventually but I'm willing to stick with you. I'll even push your wheelchair for you when you get one."

"I... I don't know what to say." Miiya sighed again.

"What are friends for." Kari smiled at Miiya and pulled her into a gentle hug.

"Thank you, Kari."

It was about 8:30 p.m. when Miiya arrived home from Kari's house. She laid her guitar case against the wall in the entry way and slipped off her shoes before tip-toeing into the main part of the house. Her right foot dragged slightly behind her as she entered the kitchen. The smell of burnt meat and rice wine saturated the air of the ruined kitchen. Tiny daggers of white ceramic were all that remained of the dishes, and the shiny skillet her mother had just bought lay neglected next to a bruised refrigerator. She shuffled slowly along out of the battered kitchen into the living area. She saw her father's black hair which looked grey in the pale moonlight over the back of his favorite chair.

"Dad, what happened here? It looks like a typhoon blew through the kitchen." Miiya sat down stiffly onto the couch adjacent to her father's chair. She then noticed the faint noise in the room before realizing that her father had been listening to music. Beethoven's 9th.

"It doesn't work anymore." Her father laid his face in his hands.

She sat fidgeting, her right hand clenching and unclenching. "What doesn't?"

"The song." He looked up at Miiya. "She's gone, Mii."

"I'm sorry." Miiya looked at the ground.

"It's not your fault." He sunk back in his chair with a sigh.

"You were fighting about me, weren't you?" She leaned forward looking intently at his face for any deceit.

He didn't answer.

"She left because she couldn't handle me being sick right?" She glared at him.

"That's not it at all." He looked at her sullenly. Her rage toward him melted away from her demeanor.

Her father spoke to her candidly as possible about what had happened. Flashes of anger and pity for her mother crossed Miiya's face from time to time. Her father stood up - not as straight as he normally would. He walked into the kitchen and began slowly picking up the pieces. Miiya was left on the couch in the dark moonlit living room, her eyes blurry with unshed tears. Someone had left her because of her illness; however a small smile remained on her lips as she remembered the words of her friend. Their bond became thicker than blood earlier that night.

"I'm willing to stick with you. Even push your wheelchair for you when you get one."

New Poetry by NC Wesleyan Students

Graffiti March Anthem
By Veronica A. Vega

*Fall to rise again,
Back from the Origin;
Marked the compass with the blood
from my fingertips.*

*"Man is wolf to man";
Fight to the last stand;
Trekking on corpses with names
unspoken.*

*Eyes, unfazed-forward,
Always walking toward,
To the end where praises unsung...*

*Fire's in my blood,
Remembering all I love;
Traces of your warmth still linger on me.*

*Memories and fears held tight;
Your receding form's in sight--
Gathering courage thought forgotten.*

*Feet picking up speed,
Rushing forward with the need
(To get to you...) To see your face
again.*

*With the need to get to you...
To see your face again...*

To get to you...

For The Artist in You
By Kyaire Daniels

*Paint me something that resembles
truth,
No Technicolor dream world; illusion.
Give me black lines,
White surface,
Finished*

*Paint me freedom...
Brush stroke with heart, and blood
And frame it with your soul.*

*Paint me
Broken
Jagged
A tangled mass of uncertainty
Eyes tired, heavy with words, and
vacant of sleep
Trade me for something simple and
shallow*

*Paint you
Translucent deception
Vividly full on nothing, but now
Hide it,
Discover it later,
It won't change.*

*A genius in the eyes of others
A liar in mines*

And still

A masterpiece

Just unfinished...

Thirteen

By Kyaire Daniels
*I am the tragic downfall
The great unwilling*

I am no one's happily ever after.

*I am heartbreak and nightfall
Fire in the Amazon
Black ice on bridges
The grass stain on your knees*

*I am your walk home from school
The razor blade beneath your mattress*

*I am your missed period.
Your walk to the clinic
The unwanted child
The thought of abortion*

*I am your mother's disappointment
Your fathers orgasmic let down
The ghost of your little sister's heroine*

I am the curse of a generation

I am your failure

*I am your lost dreams
Failed ambition*

*I am Tuesday's gossip
Wednesday's morning sickness*

*I am your stretch marks
Used maternity clothes*

*I am your stereotype
The one you warned your sons about
The slut
A whore
The tramp*

*I am
Someone's princess
Someone's spitting image
Someone's Mother*

I am thirteen.

Ode to the Blank Page

By Jessica Autumnne Smith

*Possibility.
Opportunity.
Challenge.
Frustration.*

*The blank page.
Taunting and welcoming
all at once.*

*Encouraging the pen,
teasing it closer.
Then pushing it away with a hateful-
ness meant for rivals -
not compliments.*

*The blank page.
Waiting. Wishing.
Expecting. Demanding,
the written word.*

*The blank page.
Encouraging creation
while simultaneously
incredibly discouraging.
An obstacle to overcome.*

*The triumph of
conquering the
pleasant tyranny
of the blank page.*

Haiku

By Kyaire Daniels

*The sunshine mocks me
Strangely we have met before
It knows all my pain.*

**Ramble: When Love
Was All We Knew**
By Kyaire Daniels

*i.
You wore easy like,
Go Going Gone
Like I was afraid to love you
And not ready to own me
So our skin felt like
New leather gloves; stiff and foreign*

*ii.
I brought into the definition of
No Not Never
Because I refused to surrender
Would fight you like cancer and sleep
at 6 am
This wasn't supposed to last past
Thursday
It ached to be Friday.
That was the end.*

*iii.
We were like
Loved Lived Life
Moon light at noon
Un-kept promises of spring
Forbidden drunken corner kisses
And moments apart felt like suicide at
day break.*

*iv.
We bathed in
Fall Falling Fallen
Like common sense was a concept we
couldn't spell
Like Caution threw to the wind
Wrapped in a cumulus cloud
Just to be broken
And loving each other is all we knew.*

Chaplain Barry Drum leads a recent memorial service for Wesleyan student Kenneth Curry, a freshman who died at his family's home in Rocky Mount on Wednesday, November 26. "K Lo" was remembered by classmates, faculty, staff, and family.
Photo by C. Thomas

