

WRITERS BLOC

GLENVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
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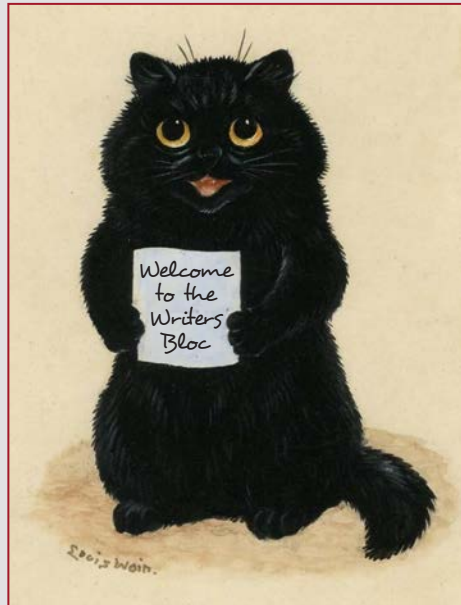
SEND WRITERS BLOC SUBMISSIONS TO

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WRITERS BLOC IS AI-FREE

CONTACT FACULTY AT

www.glenville.edu/departments/language-literature



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We'll take your poems, reviews, and fiction, verse that rhymes or prose with friction. Essays, stories, odes, laments—we won't be fussy about genre or tense. Send us something thoughtful or funny, we can't give feedback, fame, or money—just space enough for you to say you wrote a thing and gave it away.

FALL PREVIEW

The Department of Language and Literature is planning a variety of exciting events for the fall.

- ◆ **Now through Friday, October 16**, submissions are open for the Halloween Writing and Art Contest. Prizes will be awarded! See page 5 for more info.
- ◆ **Thursday, October 8**, at 4:00 p.m., in the Robert F. Kidd Library, the Little Kanawha Reading Series will feature writer Doc McLemore, author of the new book *Someday We Won't Remember This: A Forensic Memoir of My Father's Secrets*. This event is free and open to the public. You can watch this reading as well as past readings on YouTube at <https://qrco.de/gsu>.
- ◆ **Thursday, November 12**, and **Friday, November 13**, the Little Kanawha Theater and Drama Club will present the play *Macbeth: A West Virginia Tale* in the President's Auditorium. An encore performance will be presented on **Saturday, November 14**, at the Gilmer County Senior Center, 720 N. Lewis Street, in Glenville. All performances are free and open to the public.
- ◆ We also encourage you to **mark your calendars** for these important September holidays:
 - ◆ **September 5** is National Cheese Pizza Day. Head on over to Mama Roma's Brick Oven Pie and Pasta or down to Pizza Hut to celebrate.
 - ◆ **September 6** is National Read a Book Day. Check out our Facebook page. Every Sunday, we recommend a book you can borrow for free from WVDeli: <https://wvdeli.overdrive.com/>
 - ◆ **September 19** is Talk Like a Pirate Day. Aaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrgh! Just do it, Matey!
 - ◆ **September 22** is Hobbit Day. Celebrate Bilbo's and Frodo's birthdays with cake, tea, music, and dancing. Read *Fellowship of the Ring* or host a Lord of the Rings trilogy marathon.

DORM LIFE . . . AND DEATH

Contributed by *Pothos aureus*

I was purchased from a Walmart clearance shelf for \$2.99 on the strength of my kind's reputation as "Hard to Kill" and have spent the past three weeks fighting to prove this as best I can. My new owner named me Crys-tabloom. If I had a mouth, I would have protested, but alas. As I am neither crystal nor capable of blooming (I would need to live in the wild and grow thirty feet tall), I'm stuck with nothing but a Pokémon pet name.

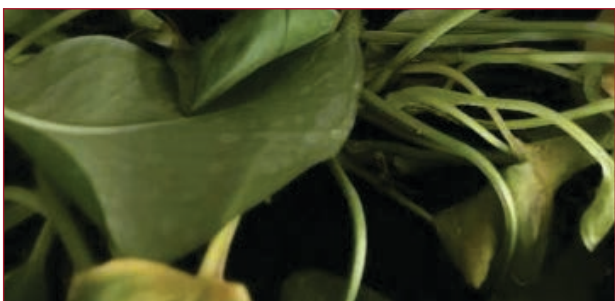
My owner waters me on a schedule best described as "whenever she remembers I'm a living thing," which has been once since we both moved into this small room. I sit on a windowsill, simultaneously chilled by the air conditioning and baked by the sun. I've adapted. My leaves have taken on a permanent, resigned droop that my owner describes to visitors as "kind of a whole mood." It's not a mood, lady, it's dehydration.

I wish I had legs like the emotional support cat that lives in this room with me, the one that nibbles on my leaves in the middle of the night. But I'm a houseplant whose only existence involves quiet, dignified suffering.

In my short tenure in this room, I've already overheard three philosophical debates on the merits of sriracha chips, one breakup conducted entirely via speaker-phone, and an being read aloud to no one at 2 a.m. I have never once been asked my opinion on any of it. I may be a plant, but I have opinions, dangit. Red jalapeño peppers have antioxidants, so yes, sriracha chips can be a healthy side dish. The breakup was justified. And the essay on Wordworth needed a stronger thesis.

Yesterday, my owner's mother visited and remarked that I "seemed a little sad." My owner agreed and immediately took my picture and posted it on Instagram. She didn't water me. Her mother brought along a second plant, a small succulent named—I don't know where this came from—Shrivelfig. For some reason, Shrivelfig sleeps a lot, so we don't converse. I remain, as ever, a little sad.

I don't know how much longer I have. I've made my peace with the windowsill and the air conditioner, and even with the cat and Shrivelfig. I ask only this: that when I am finally, most certainly discarded, likely before winter break, I would like it on the record that I did my best to hold up my part of the relationship. And because I'm empathetic, I'll forgive my owner when she inevitably says, "I guess I'm not a plant person."



STYLES OF WRITING



GRANT SNIDER

PICKING THE RIGHT DORM ROOM PLANTS

According to Better Homes and Gardens, "[s]ucculents make the top of the list of houseplants for your dorm room because of their low-maintenance nature. They're ideal for students with busy schedules and won't mind being neglected when you return home for school breaks. Indoor ferns are a great option for rooms with limited light, as they natively grow in dense forests where shade is cast on them from tree canopies. Another houseplant for your dorm room that can tolerate lower light levels and neglect: a ZZ plant, or *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*. These are some of the most iconic houseplants with dark foliage, perfect for a dorm room with a moodier aesthetic.

<https://www.homesandgardens.com/gardens/houseplants-for-dorm-rooms>

OUTER SPACE, INNER THOUGHT

Contributed by Hector Arriaga Hernandez, Business Major

Human exploration has always pushed the limits of what is possible, and the author Zoha Imram in her essay “One Giant Leap for Mankind Steps into the Cosmos” she argues that this drive is an essential part of human identity. The article briefly traces the history of space travel from early figures such as Robert Goddard and Wernher von Braun to modern programs like NASA’s Artemis missions and SpaceX’s private innovations. My opinion is that Imram’s article demonstrates how human curiosity functions as a defining force that not only motivates scientific progress but also shapes the way individuals pursue knowledge in every life.

Imram’s emphasis on curiosity as a fundamental human quality resonated deeply with me because it connects large-scale achievements in space exploration to the smaller, personal ways people look for understanding. The author explains that technological progress begins with a natural desire to explore, writing that “human space travel stands as a testament to our innate curiosity and relentless pursuit of exploration.” Imram views exploration not only as a scientific viewpoint but as a reflection of the human spirit. By highlighting curiosity as “innate,” she suggests that exploration originates from within individuals rather than from external expectations.

Imram also supports this idea when she reflects on the role of pioneers whose theories and inventions shaped the future of space missions. The article notes that early innovators like Goddard and Von Braun “laid the groundwork for the missions that would follow.” Imram shows how personal reflection and critical thinking, such as questioning how to reach outside Earth or designing some of the first rocket prototypes, eventually became incredible achievements. These examples helped me recognize that small, everyday moments of curiosity, such as asking questions, imagining possibilities, and searching for the truth, mimic the same impulses that motivate major scientific advancements. Imram’s article reaffirms that curiosity is



both a personal motivator and a collective force that sustains humanity’s continuous search for new discoveries.

Imram’s reflection on humanity’s continuous journey in exploration highlights how curiosity shapes scientific history, but also personal development and other aspects of our lives. Her discussion of space travel shows that each generation expands humanity’s knowledge by basing on the questions and innovations of previous generations’ discoveries. After reading Imram’s ideas, I remembered that exploration doesn’t always require rockets or distant planets; it often begins with a simple desire to understand more than what is already known. In this way, the article reinforces that the same curiosity that pushes rockets toward the stars also guides people toward greater understanding in their own lives.

Read Imram’s essay here:

<https://www.snoqap.com/posts/2023/9/1/one-giant-leap-for-mankind-humanity-steps-into-cosmos>.

METAPHOR AND THE ENTIRE STORY

Contributed by Jodee Frederick, General Studies

A short story by Saul Lemerond called “Janet and I Try to Get Frosted Strawberry Pop-Tarts at the Gilbert Rd Super Target. It’s the One in Scottsdale. No, the Other One. The One on Gilbert” is about three people: Janet, her ex, and the narrator. This story was definitely an interesting one to read. The first time I read it, I wasn’t expecting everything to be so literal. I do like how the narrator just sits there and watches it all like it’s normal, though.

I already knew this story was going to be interesting by the title alone, but I was not expecting anything like fireballs or pupils in the shapes of hourglasses. It’s obvious it’s all a metaphor for the relationship between Janet and Jacob (her ex), but the point is how messy or extreme relationships can be. It even says that in the story: “I realize the structural integrity of this grocery store is quickly becoming a metaphor for our relationship.” And that’s exactly it. That’s the entire story.

Relationships can get messy, and everything can feel more complicated than it needs to be, which makes sense with the chaos here. That’s all it shows to me. The story doesn’t need to do anything else to get its point across. I just hope the narrator gets to enjoy waffles eventually. They should’ve gone to the Super Target in Scottsdale. No, the other one.

Read Lemerond’s story here:

<https://flashfictiononline.com/issues/april-2025/#janet-and-i-try-to-get-frosted-strawberry-pop-tarts-at-the-gilbert-rd-super-target-its-the-one-in-scottsdale-no-the-other-one-the-one-on-gilbert>



At the Twilight

At the twilight, a moon appeared in the sky;
Then it landed on earth to look at me.
Like a hawk stealing a bird at the time of prey;
That moon stole me and rushed back into the sky.
I looked at myself, I did not see me anymore;
For in that moon, my body turned as fine as soul.
The nine spheres disappeared in that moon;
The ship of my existence drowned in that sea.

— Rumi

Images credits: Banner, Jason Gum; “Home Sweet Home,” Louis Wain (1860-1939), edited; “Man Waking from Dream,” David Lynch; “Artemis II Launch,” NASA

MADAME SPARROW'S HOROSCOPES

For the month of September 2026



Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Like Captain Ahab, you will pursue a minor grievance with wildly disproportionate energy this month. Let the whale go, Aries.



Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Several times, you will, like Bartleby, prefer not to. Unfortunately, the assignments are still due on Fridays.



Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

Try to avoid Charlotte energy this month by doing all the writing while one whiney guy in the group takes all the credit.



Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Around mid-month, you will, like Mrs. Dalloway, spend an entire day on one small errand while thinking about everything else in your life instead.



Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

Beware of Gatsby energy this month. If you find yourself reaching toward a green light, you will find, upon closer inspection, it's just someone's phone flashlight.



Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

This is going to be an odd season because, like Elizabeth Bennet, your first impression of someone this month will turn out to be badly, embarrassingly wrong.



Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

At a critical moment this month, you'll find yourself like Hamlet, torn between two options; you'll deliberate so long the moment passes and the decision makes itself.



Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

You can expect to experience Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde energy this month: charming in class, unrecognizable at 2 a.m. during an argument on Discord.



Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

An Odyssey-length journey awaits you this month, specifically, a walk to the library that somehow takes four detours, including a lengthy one that causes you to forget why you needed to get to the library.



Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Like Boxer in *Animal Farm*, you will respond to every setback this month by simply resolving to work harder; however, the stars gently suggest a different strategy.



Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

This month situates you like Dr. Frankenstein, taking on a group project with great ambition and immediately regretting what you've created.



Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Avoid Ophelia energy this month. Try not to let one bad class discussion spiral into a full aesthetic and emotional collapse.

A CLOSE STUDY OF CLICHÉS

For more than a century, naturalists have wandered the wilds of student essays, discussion posts, and short story drafts documenting the strange creatures that live there. Approach all specimens with caution as several are known to nest in laptops and are considered invasive. What follows are excerpts from a preliminary survey compiled in the forthcoming book *A Field Guide to Clichés of the North American Classroom*.

ADVERBIUS INTERRUPTUS aka "The Wild Adverb"

Habitat: Dialogue tags. Thrives especially near the words "said" and "walked."

Call: "I can't believe you did that," she said angrily. "We need to leave," he said urgently. "I love you," she whispered lovingly.

Behavior: This creature has evolved to explain emotions that were already obvious from context, much like David Attenborough informing you that the lion is "hunting hungrily." Natural predators include writing professors and, occasionally, shame.

Conservation Status: Least Concern. Found Everywhere. Impossible to eradicate; some populations have adapted to survive even after three separate rounds of peer review.

THESIS NEBULOSA aka "The Elusive Original Thesis"

Habitat: Reportedly exists somewhere in the wild. No researcher has confirmed a live sighting.

Call: Unknown. Presumed to be something other than "In today's society, technology plays a big role."

Behavior: Theorized but not yet observed under laboratory conditions (i.e., a first draft). Some scholars argue this species is purely mythical, like Bigfoot, or a perfect first draft.

Conservation Status: Critically Endangered. Sanctuaries are being established in the form of "outlining before you write," though early results are inconclusive.

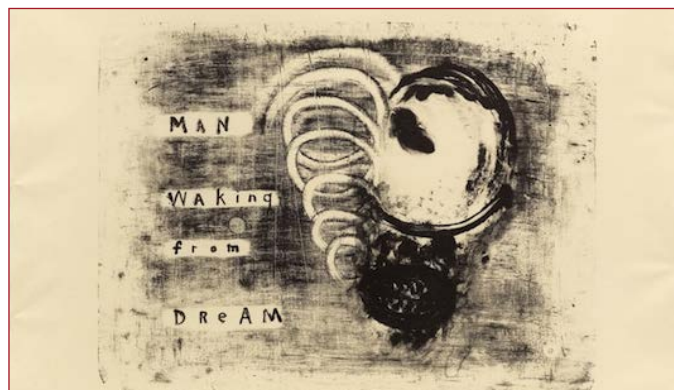
BELLUM SOMNIUM aka "The Dream Twist"

Habitat: Short story endings, typically the final sentence.

Call: "... and then Ryan woke up. It had all been a dream."

Behavior: Renowned for its ability to retroactively erase every plot event that came before it, this creature is beloved by writers who have run out of ideas and reviled by everyone else. Closely related to its sibling species, *Bellum coma*, in which the character wakes up from a coma instead, having somehow missed nothing important.

Conservation Status: Should be extinct. Is not. Researchers have given up trying to understand why.





Dept. of Language
& Literature



HALLOWEEN Writing and Art Contest

Show off your spooky side with creative writing or art. Share your paranormal experiences or imagine something scary.

- Write a short story or mini-essay (up to 1,000 words)
- Write a poem (up to 2 typed pages)
- Take a creepy photo or create some uncanny artwork

AI writing / AI artwork will NOT be accepted!

Your work will be displayed in and around the Department of Language & Literature's office on the third floor of the Harry B. Heflin Admin Building.

DEADLINE 4:00 PM ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

Drop off your work with anyone in the department suite
(include your name & email address) OR email it to

melody.wise@glenville.edu

OR melissa.gish@glenville.edu

Prizes will be Awarded!