

COUGAR CHRONICLES

Volume 02

CONNECT | CREATE | INSPIRE

Issue 01

THE MIND IS LIKE WATER.
WHEN IT'S TURBULENT,
IT'S DIFFICULT TO SEE.
WHEN IT'S CALM,
EVERYTHING BECOMES
CLEAR.

-Prasad Mahes

JUST LEAVE

ANONYMOUS STUDENT, *POET*

In life, people will always come and go. So this is to everyone, all the ones who leave.
Who leave you wondering why what you did so wrong.

The ones that leave us crying the left behind.
That leave us in fear of being close to anyone again.

I have been left too many times to count
and with each time you ran out that door,
i shut it and added a new lock every time someone came knocking.

I'm afraid of what's on the other side trying to get in.
i'm afraid to taste the joy it will bring and the closure i will gain,
i'm afraid that it will run fast and hard in the other direction
never to see it again.

So if you are just here for a short while,
Please,
don't even knock,
walk the other way and never come back.

If you are going to build me a castle only to tear it down with your bare hands,
then let me build a shield to withstand your desperate blows.

I can't take another happy story ending turned sour by your lies and deceit.
My future doesn't contain people who can't understand my madness or those who want to destroy my perfect image of a dream.

So please,
don't knock,
don't break my windows,
don't come and try to save me like Rapunzel in your twisted way
you're just going to leave me in this high building waiting to fall to my death if I look over the side.

so,
I am here
And you are there
So let's just leave it that way
Because i do not want to break anymore.

YOU'RE TOO GOOD

ANONYMOUS STUDENT, *POET*

This is to her
The girl that was "too good"
The girl who, with her tear stained face, was forced to walk away
The girl who he left

No sweetheart, it is not your fault, it is his
He is the one who left
You are exactly who you're supposed to be
And he wasn't strong enough

Do not cry
Do not change

He left
And you stayed
You stood their building him up as he tore you down

He left
"You're too good for me"
Oh no baby-girl, he doesn't get to leave you like that
So listen to me,
He didn't want to try
He wouldn't shake the chips off his shoulders

You ARE too good
Because he didn't fight for you
He didn't try to be what you deserve
He just left

And now you're here,
Left in confusion
With waves of sadness
Wondering why

No he doesn't deserve you
Because he is a coward
And a queen needs a king
Not a fool

So stand tall
Quiet the storms
Build up your pride
For you are strong
And you deserve not good
But the best
And darling
He was merely ordinary
And you deserve so much greater

BREAKING POINT

ANONYMOUS STUDENT, *POET*

You thought I would break
That I would break like glass
Shattered into a million pieces

You expected me to cry and pyne over you
To wait for you
To crawl back to you

Thought I would feel lost,
As if there was no one better than you
That I would never find another like you

And perhaps I won't...

But thank God for that

I broke
But in the most graceful way possible
I broke the parts that were too picture perfect

I broke my idea of you
Now I see your flaws

I broke free from your clammy grasp
And I am growing and sprouting

I broke my idea of a perfect dream
And realization came to light

I broke the way you prayed I wouldn't
I broke into a woman

I broke the girl that would run back,
The girl that would pretend to be ok
When her whole world was falling apart
And I broke into a new formed strength
That you will never gain

I broke my walls
But in an unfamiliar way

I broke
And I grew
And I knew
Exactly what this would mean for you

So goodbye and farewell
For I have finally reached, my breaking point



Emily Ruffini, *Photographer*



Emily Ruffini, *Photographer*



Emily Ruffini, *Photographer*

THE CRANBERRY COLORED EYES

Audrey Blanchard, *Writer*

Every cranberry in that bog is a fallen angel. That's why they're so bitter. When you bite into one, you're tasting all of its sins. Her grandfather used to tell her that whenever they'd walk to the cranberry bogs in Rochester. It wasn't too long of a walk, but after a while he started getting slower and slower.

One day he was so slow, he stopped. "What're you doing, Pep?" she asked her grandfather. Pep was short for Pepere, French for grandfather. She loved that about her family; they were French. She didn't even know when she was taught to call him Pepere, but she stuck to it, every week.

"Mon cher," he said. "I'm getting too old to do this every week. Some day I'll become a cranberry, like my mother and father, and their mother and father, and so on. We will all become cranberries someday."

She looked at him dead in the eyes, "Pepere, there's no way. You're perfect. Look at you, 86 and still living. You outlasted Memere."

"I know, but you have to understand," he said raising his hand onto her arm. "There are many secrets living in that bog. Many."

She giggled a little and put her own arm on his fragile shoulder. "You're silly, Pep. Let's go home before you really do turn into a cranberry." As she walked away she paused staring into the bog. She thought she saw something but she was probably just seeing things.

When they got home, she took out two packets of hot chocolate mix. As they sat in the living room curled up with blankets and hot cocoa, they watched a silent film called City Lights with Charlie Chaplin. "Pepere, did Memere turn into a cranberry? I mean she was a very nice lady, she didn't seem like a sinner."

"Oh, mon cher, your grandmother

was almost the devil herself when she was just a teenager. She used to be known as the Rochester Witch back in '56."

"Wait, Mem was a witch?"

"Well, some might say that. But she was mostly known for the risks she used to take. She would steal penny candies from the store once a week, the little cranberry flavored gummy worms especially. She would bring home one for herself and one for her brother every Sunday night. It was their favorite."

"Oh no, not the penny candy!" She said sarcastically. "But why was she called a witch? That's what I'm not getting," she asked him with bright eyes, truly curious.

"Memere was a very mysterious lady. Every night she would walk out to that cranberry bog in just a cloak around three in the morning up until she was 67 years old. She'd bring with her an empty container, a purple candle, some matches, and just a bit of sand from an hourglass that broke when she was 15. I guess that was when she first started doing it."

"Doing what?"

"Ha! Lord knows what that woman did out there at three o'clock in the morning! I was always well asleep before she left. One night I heard something fall in the kitchen, and it woke me up, so I went and took a look and asked her what she was doing. She said she was 'going for her midnight soul-search'. I never knew what that meant. Still don't. Didn't bother me as long as I knew she was safe."

"Awe, that's so cute, you really loved her, huh?"

"Oh yes, and she loved me. She'd always bring me back a few cranberries. They were always really sweet though."

"Hm, weird."

Knock knock.

She jumped and he shuddered at the sounds of the door breaking the silence. "Hey, hey, hey! Honey, you ready to go?" Her mother asked from the kitchen through a wad of chewing gum.

"Awh, do I have to go? Pepere was telling me stories about Memere."

"He was doing what?" Her mother said sternly. "What did you tell her?"

"Nothing much, just general things about the cranberries," he replied.

"I told you not to talk about Ma like that to my daughter! She doesn't need to know and she never will know because she's not coming back. We have to go. Get your things, we're leaving."

She looked at her mother with a strong gaze of pain, as if it would hurt her if she didn't hear about what secrets weren't being revealed. "You can't do that! This place is my sanctuary, my only peace from what goes on with you and Dad! I will come back eventually whether you like it or not someday somehow." She ran out of the old house in mad anger, slamming the door behind.

"This is your fault. You know what happens when you tell stories about Mom. You will tell her nothing else. Entendez-vous? Entendez-vous?! (Do you hear?!)"

He bowed his head and she stormed out of the house leaving the old man alone.

As her mother drove her home, she wouldn't stop thinking about her grandmother and what she used to do in the bogs. Questions swirled in her head like a tornado. What exactly did she do? Why did she do it? Did she do it alone? Is Pepere lying? Was he in on it too? If so, why would he be trying to cover it up that he went and not Memere?

When she got home her mother pulled her into the kitchen. "Listen, promise me you won't go back to those bogs with your grandfather. He is crazy and he's not doing well, honey. He's going senile. Don't listen to him and don't take him back to--"

"The bogs. I get it. Fine, we won't go back to the bogs."

"Thank you." And at that, they parted ways.

Of course, this is a classic teenage story, and what do teens do the best? Break the rules! So, that's just what she did. That night she snuck out of her bedroom door with all the things her Pepere said her Memere brought with her to the bog at three in the morning: a black cloak she got for a Halloween costume last year, a pine tree scented candle that she hoped would blend in with the woodsy smell, and matches. She didn't have any hourglass sand so some pocket lint would have to do.

It was very dark out so she brought her phone in case she needed to call anyone, and to use as a flashlight.

"It's so dark out," she whispered to herself then immediately face-palmed herself. "Well no dip, Sherlock. It's night time, der."

As she approached the bog, her hands started clamming up and she became increasingly aware of her surroundings. She's forgotten about her irrational fear of the dark.

She walked up to the edge of the bog and laid out the things in front of her. She carefully lit the candle and put out the flame of the match in the sand that the crimson red berries grew in. All of a sudden a muffled scream is heard from the distance.

"AH! What was that? Oh my God, what the hell was that?! God, I knew this was a bad idea! Why did this have to be a stupid typical teen fiction horror short story?!"

Because I said so.

"Ugh." She walked around to the side of the bog closer to where the scream came from. Shakily she lit a match. "Ow! Son of a biscuit!" She dropped the match into the dirt which catches some weeds on fire.

"Crud! Why am I like this?" She questions while stomping on the flames that only seem to be getting bigger. Soon the fire spreads to the cranberries and eventually half of the bog is on fire due to the candle she left burning. "Well this escalated way too quickly."

She stands at the edge of the bog staring out into the flames. "What have I done? Oh my God, it's four in the morning, and I just burned down half of a cranberry bog. This is it. I can't go back from this. This is exactly how I always pictured my death..." she trailed off thinking.

As she took a step closer to the heat. Suddenly she heard another scream coming from the berries, only this time it was clear. It wasn't muffled like the last one. Looking around, no one was to be seen. Then another scream was heard. And another. Next thing she knew, a chorus of screams surrounded her and blasted her eardrums as if she were listening to a heavy metal concert through ear buds on the highest volume. She covered her ears with her hands but she still heard the annoying screeching of ultimate pain and suffering.

After about five minutes of holding her ears and shaking in a small ball on the now warm ground, she came to a conclusion and slowly put her palms to the ground. The cranberries.

She laughed a little bit, and then it turned into a mad cackle. Soon she was laying on the hot ground heaving for breath. The air was getting toxic and the fumes of the flames were suffocating now. She rolled over onto her back and tried to get up. The lack of oxygen made her weak, and she

fell back into the dirt, and tumbled down the bog. She felt the heat burning her clothes but she couldn't find the strength to get up so she just lay there. Her eyes close slowly and the last thing she sees are thousands of cranberries swarming her body, covering it like a blanket.

"Every cranberry in that bog is a fallen angel. When you taste the bitter, you're tasting their sins."

The little boy's eyes were full of intrigue as his grandmother told him these stories.

"That's silly Memere. Cranberries aren't people, they're cranberries!" He looked out into the bog.

"Oh, you'd be surprised, my boy. What're you looking at?" She questioned him after she noticed him staring at something in the berries.

"W-what?" He replied coming back into the world. "Haha, let's go back home, I'll make hot chocolate!"

"Yay!"

The boy and his grandmother walked away from the open bog. She stared back into the distance with a glint of sadness in her expression. She turned back and walked back home with her grandson and he had completely forgotten about what he had seen. Little did he know that what he was seeing was melted candle wax over a charred up skull with two cranberry eyes poking out of the sockets.



Belisse Hawkins, Artist

Years passed and everything flashed
And in the heart of a storm
He came and sat in my rain
Questions subsided
And peace remained

He held a world of emptiness on his shoulders
And the breath of life on his lips
Leaving my lingering wonder
And uncommon stance

And with that smile
He, not blow away the storms,
But found tranquility among them
And for this I saw him

So I stood
And I waited
Till the day he realized his worth
And the beauty that lie within him

HIM

ANONYMOUS STUDENT, POET

There was something about him
Something about the way he carried himself
The way his eyes held a story that remained untold
How he stood tall and unknowing

His eyes never met mine
For he remained blind to my affections
And as the whispers drifted like the wind
So did my suspicion of the truth

My thoughts gathered
And my mind realized
That he couldn't love me
For he wasn't stupid

And with that
My dreams began to flurry
As I stood at a distance
In awe of his existence



Belisse Hawkins, Artist

I'm Sorry

Alyssa Labrecque, Poet

I'm sorry I hurt you
I'm sorry I didn't trust you
I'm sorry I put you through this
I'm sorry I'm still in love with you
I'm sorry I couldn't make you happy
I'm sorry I didn't make you smile
I'm sorry our planned is ruined
I'm sorry you can't trust anyone else because of what I did to you
I'm sorry you're happier with someone else
I'm sorry I made you move on
I'm sorry you're stuck with someone that's not me
I'm sorry I'll be waiting for you
I'm sorry



Emily Ruffini, Photographer

Within the second issue of the Cougar Chronicles tri-annual magazine, you will find literacy pieces and artworks created by our students and staff at Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School.

The Students who were willing to share their identity are named at the bottom of their work and the end credits below. Anonymous pieces are also displayed throughout the magazine. We express our deepest appreciation to everyone who was willing to share their talent with the Old Colony community.

Art Contributions made by:

- Emily Ruffini, 10, Machine & Tool
- Belisse Hawkins, 10, Graphic Design & Communications
- Heather Gifford, Staff, Student Services

Written Contributions made by:

- Alyssa LaBrecque, 10, Health Careers
- Audrey Blanchard, 9

