

Not the City lights. We

Went -

The moon -
The Moon

none of our own doing!



GLIBER

CREAT

spring
2024



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FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

Thank you for opening our magazine. You've entered the stall, now would you please close the door behind you? Take a moment to notice the doodles on the walls. Countless visitors have left their imprints on this magnificent space, which—for a moment—is all yours.

It's been an exciting and tumultuous year for Sliced Bread. We've had to rise again from the amorphous and bubbling void of a sourdough starter, but we're so grateful to have found a community of creative and energetic individuals who are dedicated to cultivating the literary and artistic community here at UChicago. To all our breadheads, thank you!

This issue, fifteen years from our founding in 2007, is a recommitment to featuring the voices of the many talented writers and artists on our campus. We hope that you'll find within these pages an appreciation for the endless creativity, thoughtfulness, and love of our contributors.

A huge thank you to everyone who has made this issue possible. We loaf you so much, and we're hungry for so much more.

Panivorously yours,
The Breaditors

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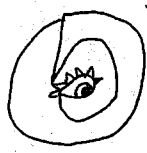
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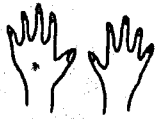
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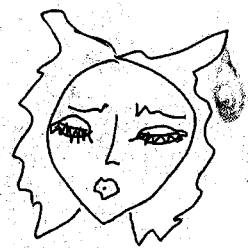


POETRY

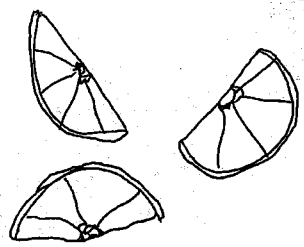
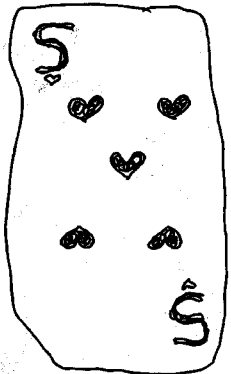
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?



you cant just wake up
and be an artichoke...



>:0



being again,
I walked astray
an april day,
and loved the rain.



WOULDST THOU LIKE
TO LIVE DELICIOUSLY?

Dedicated to everyone
who thinks I'm
writing about them.



IN SCENTS OF ORANGE AND CEDAR

by Daniel Volk

In scents of oranges and cedar, roasted
pig, with goblets, black, we drank the sparkling
grape, a color pink, and smoked inside
with friends. Quick game set pace the lure, and at
each other tossed tined words. Small cuts, as night
wore on, were just the cost of having fun.

STRÜMPELL ARGUES ABOUT DREAMS

by Kavya Krishnamurthy

Whereas the psyche thinks and imagines in verbal images and language when awake, in dreams it imagines and thinks in real sensory images (The Interpretation of Dreams, p. 35)

And I must ask
Is every poet always
Sleeping?
Every lover in a
Hypnagogic hallucination?
Is every kiss a
Sensory impression which comes from within?

One long look and I am afloat on slumber?
Your cheek on mine and everything is
Chartreuse
Especially my pants which you are wearing but
I understand them as my own

Maybe this is all a dream so that I can hold all of it in my head
The grape popsicle the piano music the palms of hands resting in the heavy air
Maybe this is all a ploy to touch you
So privately that not even I can piece together our movements in the morning
Maybe we are monstrous and bizarre ideas who chase each other
On the basis of a coincidental connection or a distant symbological relation
A whisper of a thread of a tie that might bind
And the only place we can find each other is a dream

But how can we be figments of the afflicted imagination?
Born to help some heretic self soothe?
How? When I can bring your face to the frame of my mind
Without any missing patches or distortions
If I can pinch myself and stay in your arms?
If I can hold your body in my sleep
Warm and intact and pressed against mine
And find it again in the light?

THE WISDOM OF CRABS

by Ian Olson

One million small red crabs
are all assembling on a beach
in the western Indian Ocean.
The soft spread of water at the end of each wave
slides up the beach,
and one million small red crabs
rearrange themselves.
At first it seems they rearrange themselves
to avoid the moment of submergence,
until one recalls that crabs
are not concerned with submergence,
and it is coincidence that they rearrange themselves
with the soft spread of water at the end of each wave.
The beach is broad and flat;
if one were able to view the beach
from directly above,
its approach down to the western Indian Ocean
would appear broad and flat
like a map of the beach and the crabs.
But even if one were able to view the beach and all the
crabs from directly above,
the pattern of crabs,
that is, the way they rearrange themselves,
would still elude one.

I imagine a really big computer,
but even it cannot predict
how the crabs will next appear on the beach,
even an instant later.

CARCINIZATION, OR AN EXPLANATION FOR MY RECENT CRABBINESS

by Josie Barboriak

carcinization (evolutionary): eternal recurrence of the crab form

1. i'm a cancer. climb to the surface, take a protractor to the night sky, and read me there— cover to cover unfolding, stars blanketing. i, the cynic, am almost-contrac-tually obligated to denounce this new religion but i can't deny that i, too, feel moon-pulled. i, too, can float and lose my own outlines in the salt, like a double-amputee stick figure mistaken for a crab.

2. i can't eat seafood anymore. i've come to realize that every child has their Old Yeller moment. perhaps the divide between human and beast is our conscious abbreviation of the circle of life, snipping its sinewy tendons into a line with a start and an end. my mother returned from the market with three new friends and that night we feasted before the tears had dried, crustacean souls cleaved from bodies and chins dripping with soft-shell crab.

3. i would work for minimum wage on the ocean floor. o, conical lord, you dazzle me with your click-clack boxing gloves and rattling grin that smells of blood and money. how captivating your crimson skin, your nose that strikes like lightning, playful raindrops of boiling oil. i promise to flip your patties with more zeal than that smarmy yellow rectangle ever could, for you are Bezos as a crab.

LOVE SONG #3

by Sammy Aiko

I met him in September.
Smelling of salt and sweat and chaparral,
Clambering barefoot into bed,
Not a nation between us.

“I like dahlias,” I told him. “Red.
Big bloody flowers on my bedside table
Like organs in a jar.”

How beautiful he was then,
Golden as the valley.
Dry lightning in the summer
When the world was all starving.

“I like dahlias,” I told him. “Red.
Big bloody flowers like baby beasts
With hundreds of hungry tongues.”

That spring I went back to California
With him in my teeth like caramel,
Sticky and unforgivable,
Hot as highway tar.

“I like dahlias,” I told him. “Red.
Big bloody flowers warm like the Western sun,
Whispering words wicked and sublime.”

And still he wondered
What sort of woman I was.

HAIBUN FOR S.G.

by Sarah Kim

Haibun for S.G.

Back then, I still believed nothing went unpunished. Unable to forgive myself for more than an hour at a time, I let the whole garden decay. The melons split into thirds and clay dolls sprouted from the rot. The aphids chewed the cabbage into lace. I prayed myself into delirium, facing the Big Dipper, then shrieked myself out of it. I hung my vocal cords to dry after drowning them in green tea. I began taking your absence like medicine, corrective against the voracious gene of desire lines. How can I unfever myself of your fingernails, sharp like arrowheads through my dew-flushed skin? Swaths of life are missing from the both of us and I have nowhere to flee; truthfully, I am scented with your haunt. There is no arch leading to the plaza, no plaza leading to the park. Only a bridge of magpies, once a year, that may lead me to your door. The word remote comes from botany: the exact distance between two flowers. If you must sow into the ground, take hold where I can face you. I tire of leaving messages in the burning bush. I tire of the quiet stage, of trolls hibernating in the arboretum. Sleep on me now, angel. Warm you closer with me, this last kiss roughened by sentencing, softened by a vow.

*My cherished Cowherd
the bloom in my heart-meadow
asleep in Tashkent*

POND SCUMS

by Mateo Daniel Connelly

Early Spring and the ice is thick
as microscope glass so the critters
asleep in the scum come up
to the edge of the dead leaf litter
claws grasped to flotsam some
with lungs gasping through gnashed
black teeth yearning to breathe
above the surface an earth plast
ered with bees mastered work
in moss and trees and bould
ers floating grass tips on the
water to show the young bugs home. They'll
cross the pond's cool black skin, souls
combined, they'll bring an Early Spring.

IF I HAD A STINGER LIKE A BEE,

by Summer Cramer

I'd use it.

I'd push it deep into Him and watch him retch.

I'd laugh so hard I coughed and cried, and I'd feel my eyes
sickle once I got hilt deep.

Then I'd pull out, slow and hard,
and feel us both rush out.

I'd feel my body pour, first bowels then bladder then uterus
(sorry about the blood and shit)

and then floodplains and ire.

Often I'd twitch, mainly when the veins crisscrossing my arms
would snap,

but mostly I'd grin and gurgle.

Look how I cave, Him!

Look how I totter and shatter in your mighty light!

Though your eyes have dimmed, please, please wrap them
around my bracken waist!

It would only be halfway through the death that I would realize
my barbed stinger was still embedded deep in Him,
and his rush was nothing but breath
while I splattered.

THE HERESY OF AN UNBELIEVER

by Alex Hu

I confess,
I didn't know hell before you.
I knew life and death,
And thought soft gray silence otherwise.
Then you told me of a fire that never went out.

But the cold of winter deep in your bones,
The ivory of your fleeting smile,
The sting of an orange peel under your nail.
What fear should I have of forever?

INVASIVE PROCEDURE ON A FOREIGN BODY

by Daniel Volk

Pressed to loud paper on an exam table
by the cool hands of adults, unable
to discern between loved one and other,
the doctor's forceps go in. My mother
looks away. Did I scream, did I struggle
as something was coaxed out of my nostril?
Black and fetid, grotesque ball of cotton,
stashed in the skull to reemerge rotten.

No, I'll never again know how that felt.
My mother was there but no story to tell.
Its vital force has long since gone, now she's
lost sight of the memory, too. All these
details loosening, stitches undone. The
story based on an experience we
have both lost sense of having lived. Blotted
by time, this memory now forgotten.

Experience rots inside a story.
Once sustained and given form, now gory
with putrid stench from its body's mouth. Stood
stunned, mother tells her son, "Brush your teeth good!"
The doctor speaks from the phone in her ear.
"There's something up his nose." In the mirror
the double looks away so neither sees
me entomb this secret permanently.

Must have worked, 'cause I don't remember. I
have to google "What does decay smell like?"
Putrescine and cadaverine; words to
feel as far from the lived scene as I do,
a boy in a tale. What is the secret
to feeling the breathed experience in it?
Divorce it from stale words too often said?
How do you revive what is almost if not dead?

MID-NIGHT, OUR FLATULENCE SOUNDS

by Daniel Volk

Mid-night, our flatulence sounds
like whale songs calling deep
and sad cries to one another out here;

low and longing moans, like slow and
hesitant agreements to some suggestion, I reckon,
the tenor of things, large and lonely,

moving in shared proximity through strange darkness.

DOGS ON WHEELS

by *Anonymous*

“The wily lunatic is lost if through the narrowest crack he allows the sane eye to peer into his locked universe and thus profane it.” — Colette, *The Pure and the Impure*

My fingers sit wedged in the cracks of your locked universe. Your voice is the light which escapes through spiderwebs. I break them, gasping dust. The room is built of song lyrics, with dingy corners of adolescent politics, whiskey’s *jouissance* spinning down to linoleum floors. Deep in a tunnel lined with trinkets, a dragon hunched, eating Camels. Maybe you’d make a difficult home.

But the sparkling! The conversations like fish jumping in tandem through the river. Looking out at the stars, the beautiful alien women spotted posing on the moon, the ocean’s trenches echoing messages of love. In the glimmers, I want to risk the rare sharks that have tried to kill us once before and untether myself from this deep-sea diving machine.

Maybe your dreams mirror mine. Dress me in lover’s clothes and set me running at breakneck pace after you. Rattle the lock, but don’t wake the beast. You’d shake me off your back if you knew I hover closer than just to guide your stumbling. The delicate dance, the particles spiraling closer and closer. Who is the black hole? What if we were lost together?

THE BIRDS MIGRATED IN MAY

by Ruth Witter

It was a quiet year,
The cicadas still underground,
And I held the girl tight to my chest.

She didn't know she was held,
But she was held, tight as the leaves
On the white-pink bush outside her front door.

She was held, but she'd already
Run laughing down the street,
Cut her hair and drunk half a bottle
Of cheap-homemade cider.

I knew her face but I didn't see
Her looking at me like
I was cold gravel and cheap perfume.

Still, I held the girl tight to my chest
And hoped she'd hold me back.

But night fell and the birds migrated in May
And I sat crying in the elementary school parking lot.

I held myself tight to my chest,
Turned down the music and opened the windows
To hear the wrens and chickadees
And thrushes on the power lines.

The birds migrated in May.

It was a quiet year,
And I held the girl deep in my throat.

THE RECORD PLAYER

by Meghane Saidenberg

my mother my
father him her
maybe them too
my brother my
sister and still
on and on this
list goes in no
particular
order and I
stare at the sky
thinking wow the
act of living
is to possess
the courage to
lift the needle
look I want to
stay still to stay
the same just to
stay but for this
world of static
sanding me down
like a broken
record catching
catching at a
pity party
for one but still
spinning spinning
like jewel box
ballerinas
yet unlike them
I could still step

forward step by
step flat on my
feet living for
those who erase
the scratches of
my vinyl mind
so every night
I list them count
them repeating
their names in my
head one by one:



ur so cool

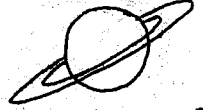
tiny dots on
an endless timeline...

MEMENTO



MORI

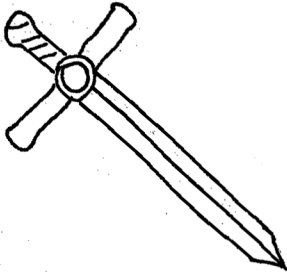
ART



WHO AM I?



↑
I'M NOT A
MORNING
PERSON



FUCK
HEGEL

Fool me once, shame on you
Fool me twice, can't get fooled agaa



Leaf me alone
;)



I'M A RAT.





MOTHS

by Noor Rekhi



DAISY
by Noor Rekhi



CONTOUR
by Arjun Bhakoo



SWISS SMOKER

by Arjun Bhakoo



NOWHERE

by Subham Dutta Chowdhury



DRUID AT STONEHENGE

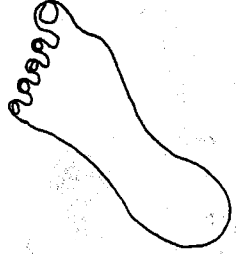
by Julia Momtazee



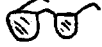
TWO FROGS
by Kate Whitaker

playing with my
spaghetti

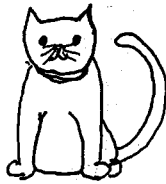
oh brother.



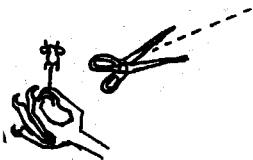
WRITING



nevermind



HELLO
LEMON



The answer is always in
the room with you ☺

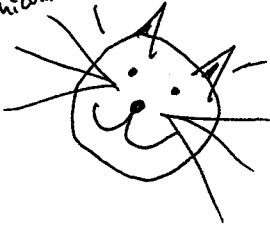
Girl What if I'm
outside?

I looked around
the room, but I
still failed my physics final

eggcellent!



I have been charged
with 37 counts of
vehicular manslaughter



meow

BEQ SHUT UP

u shut up

see you later,
space cowboy...



THE PIT

by Moss Quanci

There is, or so one must believe, a dark pit in the woods where animals go to die, their warm bodies tumbling into its depths. The rotting, diseased odor is intense, yet localized, warning away any healthy animals that come near if they stumble across its unseen presence. Perhaps that is why only animals on the brink of death, whether pursued by hunters holding guns, the starvation of dens destroyed, or the subtle presence of poison in their blood, arrive at such a place.

From time to time, stirred by the fears flickering in the hearts of people living in houses, an animal will shudder up from within the pit at night to stand on legs once more. Such animals are not the rabbits, deer, coyotes, foxes, possums, and so on that originally met their end there, but a little more and a little less. Though damaged, they seem called to take on a new hunt: their muscles, supplemented by the other denizens of the pit, strain powerfully in their limbs, even if those limbs do not move quite right, and their jaws are over-filled with the teeth of a dozen species. Such maws were not made to sate the innocent hunger of the starving carnivore—sinless need has no place in such constructions.

They stagger forward, relentlessly crashing through the undergrowth towards their destination. This din is the only sound that meets such creatures, for even the most silent of living beings, moths, know to swoop away from their paths. Every time, they emerge from the forest onto peoples' lawns just as day is about to break. Their feet step out onto the evenly cut dark green grass, coolly wet with dew, and pause. Oddly, their untamed forms seem perfectly suited to this carefully cultivated environment. In that

moment before dawn, perhaps your eye would slide over them like ordinary garden statues—before your own terror hits you. But they always pause there, and this marks their end, because at that very moment the first rays of the sun fall upon them, and they burst into fumes at the boundary of the yard.

Yet, one after another, these beasts are continually being drawn into our pursuit, endlessly making their way to the border of human-tamed territory—they cannot go any farther. “But what if they can go farther? What if they can cross over? Aren’t they almost in sight already?” With such thoughts, they are assured their presence at our fragile edges.

I AM ALIVE

by Toussaint

I am still alive this morning, so I wake up.

My first thought is to gather food for my children. I must feed them so they can stay alive. But then I remember my children have already gone. Quite a while ago, too. They gather their own food now, or at least I assume. I have not seen them in some time. I am sure that they are rather good at gathering food and that they are still alive because I taught them, and I am good at gathering food, because I am still alive. If they are as good as me, they must still be alive. This pleases me.

Instead, I shall gather food for myself. I shoot into the air, but not too high. I am small, and there are things bigger than me that would gather me for food. Food to keep them alive. I would be upset if they gathered me. If they ate me. But I would understand. I gather things that are smaller than myself. I eat them. However, I am alive, and I enjoy living much more than being eaten, so I will avoid them until I am caught. I am a small creature, and I am very good at avoiding things.

I find a bush in no time at all. I land deep inside, out of sight, and begin to eat berries. I have no one to feed, so the berries are all for myself. This pleases me. While I am eating, someone else flies into the bush and begins to eat berries. Another small, flying creature. I do not know them and I assume they do not know me, so I immediately freeze, trying not to be seen or heard. They are not much bigger than me, so I do not think they will try to eat me, but caution has taught me well over the years. It has kept me alive. This stranger looks all around

as they eat, searching for any possible danger, no doubt. Nothing has ever tried to harm or hunt me in this bush, but I respect their fear. Caution is good. A stiff breeze blows through the bush, pushing aside a leaf. They see me, their black eyes losing their glare in the darkness of the bush. They see me, freeze, and fly away. Probably out of caution. They probably thought I was going to eat them. I wasn't, but they didn't know that. I wonder if I will see them again. I see a crawling thing on a branch near my face. I am a small creature, but this one is even smaller. It is black and bulbous and not much bigger than a seed. I eat it without hesitation. It is unfortunate that it was not as good at hiding as I am. If they were, I would not have seen it, and it would still be alive. Perhaps it was not as concerned about staying alive as I am. I fly away.

Later, after I have eaten my fill, I land in a tree in a wide space with many trees and much grass. Here, there are many large creatures walking around with each other. These creatures, I have noticed, are very peculiar. They are perhaps the most bold and suicidal things I have ever seen. They do not hide, they cannot fly, they do not move very fast, and they constantly sit out in the open, unbothered. Unaware. And, sometimes, even worse, alone. It is almost as if they do not fear. They have no caution. Are they not concerned about staying alive? What if something attacks them? What if something wishes to gather them? To eat them?

But, then, I have never seen a single one of them in danger, and I believe I have seen many things. And sometimes, on occasion, one of them will notice me and do many strange things, but never have they chased me or

hurt me. Am I beginning to think that, perhaps, they are not going to try to eat me. But, of course, it is good to be cautious. I will stay up here, in the trees, watching them foolishly walk about.

For I am a small creature, and I do not wish to die.

BURNT TOAST

by Nat Larsen

The heat amplified the beating of the ticking clock in Sophie's kitchen. She felt the pulses every second throughout her whole body, constantly reminding her how slowly time passes. Even in her tank top and shorts, Sophie was sweating—it was mid-day during a San Antonio summer. She sat alone on the tile floor, blankly watching the day tick by. She sat crouched, her knees touching her cheeks, rocking back and forth to the pounding of the heat and the clock in her head.

Yesterday she went to SeaWorld. Sophie wanted to go back today, but her dad hadn't been home since last night and her stepmom was occupied with her baby half-sister. Sophie wondered how such a small, pink face could produce the glass-shattering screams that made her stomach turn. She liked to stand over the cradle, mesmerized by the transformation from a sleeping baby to a crinkled, red face. Perhaps her parents were fervent believers in the Ferber Method, or they were just too busy yelling at each other to hear the crying child.

So Sophie's dad didn't do much, but he drove her to SeaWorld. He won the tickets in an online raffle, and he grumbled about wanting the bottle of cognac, but Sophie was glad he accepted the SeaWorld pass anyway. Anything with "sea" in the name sounded refreshing to someone sweating through the San Antonio summer —and pretty authentic to someone who had never even seen the Gulf, much less the ocean.

Sophie's favorite part of SeaWorld was the killer whale show. She liked the video that played about a boy who found a whale in the ocean. At first, the boy was

scared; the whale is called “killer,” after all. But, after a montage with many sunrises, the boy and the whale slowly grew close, eventually enough that the whale let the boy ride him. On the whale’s back, the boy took a block of wood and carved the whale’s tail, and wore the necklace forever to remember their bond.

When a man with a whale tail necklace stepped out from behind the screen, the crowd cheered. After so many years the boy and whale were still together, Sophie thought, they were still family. But then the show finished, and her father tore her away from the (non)killer whale, and away from SeaWorld. They walked through the gift shop, stocked with towers of toys and trinkets taller than Sophie’s head could even lift to see the top. Out of the corner of her eye, Sophie saw thousands of whale tail necklaces, like the one in the video. The necklaces were fake and even worse, the story was too. Sophie realized the man onstage was not the boy from the video. Their connection was pretended, made up for an audience to “aaah” and buy a replica necklace.

The whale was alone, with someone who did not really care about him, just money and attention. Sophie thought about the whale, and how she felt the whale had looked at her. When they shared the gaze, they shared their understanding of life, and Sophie realized that the whale was the only one in the world who knew her. So, Sophie begged for the replica carving of the whale necklace at the gift shop, because she wanted to remember the whale, and even the video and story too. She knew the truth but sometimes only pretending can make it real.

Just like how her building calls itself “Paradise

Apartments,” not “Broken Air Conditioner Apartments” so people would live there. At SeaWorld, “paradise” meant baby sea turtles, palm trees, and the wave pool. Maybe Paradise Apartments is just a different kind of paradise, Sophie decided. Maybe for some people paradise is small apartments and dry grass. Sophie thought about what her paradise would be. Not the paradise of Paradise Apartments, she decided. Somewhere with no crying babies, no heat, no ticking clock, but definitely a SeaWorld.

And yesterday felt far away, except that today, as she lay on the cool tile of the kitchen, she felt the wave tail around her neck, sliding her fingers through its curves. After every few ticks of the clock, Sophie’s head clouded and the room started to blur. She covered her ears to drown out the ticking, growling, crying, and yelling. But the noises were so loud that they were in her blood and beat around her body, so then her insides screamed. Her roaring stomach drew her body to the table, to the loaf of bread. She scooped up her body and reached for a slice, its whiteness reflecting the blurry light like it was from a celestial paradise. The ticking flooded her head.

Sophie lifted her gaze towards the clock and then the microwave. Toast sounded better than bread. She put the bread into the microwave and the buttons clicked. She pushed several, and then several more. The clicks were music. The machine began to purr, whirl. This was the sound of delicious toast in the making. Louder than the noise of the apartment, the house, her stomach, the sounds of toast surrounded Sophie as she softly fell back to Earth. She twisted the whale necklace in her hands, sliding her fingers through its curves.

First smoke, then steam clouded the kitchen, and the room, the floor, the microwave faded into light dancing underwater. Sophie was in the ocean, and the killer

whale emerged from below the floor. “Sophie, I’m so glad to see you again,” he said, placing his black and white nose in her small hands. “Swim with me.” Sophie leaped on the whale’s back, and they dove below the crusty tile. Slowly, the light from the burning flames and the sounds of the ambulance drifted away as Sophie and the whale sank to the sea depths. Still clutching the whale necklace, Sophie finally found silence in a cold and dark place. She felt she found paradise.