



THE MERCURY

THE STUDENT ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE OF GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

Year 2009

Article 25

1-1-2009

Grief Is A World Unto Itself

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Class of 2009

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Blaser, Lee A. (2015) "Grief Is A World Unto Itself," *The Mercury*: Year 2009, Article 25.

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Keywords

creative writing, fiction

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Lee Blaser is a senior Theatre major and Spanish minor from Frederick, Maryland. During her junior year, she spent semesters abroad in England and Argentina, and will be presenting a one-woman show about those experiences this spring. She likes peace, dancing, and frisbee.

Grief Is A World Unto Itself

"Grief is a world unto itself."

He reread what he'd just written and winced. His handwriting looked cumbersome, like a dog standing on its' hind legs. Not only that, but he didn't even know what it meant. The phrase that had seemed so insightful and profound in the car ride here now appeared vague and the result of an awkward obligation to pretend to sympathize with something he didn't understand: death. He had no idea how to follow it up. But it would have to do, he resigned. He only had one greeting card and he was writing with permanent ink.

He put down his pen and reached for a cigarette. He always did his best thinking alone in the car with a cigarette. He considered the card. The light pink rose lost in a dewy mist on the front seemed so fake and forced, like the kind of art that was made for doctor's offices and hotel lobbies. But he hadn't had much of a choice from the grocery store's selection, had he? Hallmark doesn't make cards that read, "To my lover: sorry about the death of your husband." No. Much better to go with something blank.

Looking out the window streaked with raindrops, he could see cars lining up behind his on the side of the road across from the funeral parlor and people all in black climbing out of them. That seemed so appropriate. Rain on the day of a funeral comforted him, for some reason. If he had to be sad, so should everyone else.

It was then that he saw her, greeting some people at the door. She looked very pretty, he had to admit. Somehow depression worked for her and made her seem even more delicate and feminine. She managed a grateful smile as she allowed herself to be hugged and her hair smoothed. When the new arrivals had disappeared behind the frosted glass of the home, she returned to close the door and apparently recognized his car. She stared and her mouth dropped open involuntarily. The sadness in her eyes shone across the lawn and through his car window. She didn't move but just stood there, rigid, fixed in her gaze, and he could feel her needing him to be there with her. Suddenly, he couldn't help but allow himself to feel the weight of the guilt he'd been trying to bat away.

Expressionless, he stuck the cigarette back in his lips and started the car. Tears slid down her face for the first time that morning as she watched his car roll away.