

Dominic Grimaldi

Dr. Haught

ENGL 4300

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Decision Making and Correspondence

Piece Selection

The five pieces I selected are “The Winds of Change,” “Temple in Three Parts,” “In Appreciation of Laughter,” “Going to See Evangeline,” and “A Bridge Between Worlds.”

“The Winds of Change” by Peter Abe is a very unusual science fiction piece. It is driven by a mystical shot known as “The Cure” that grants immortality when taken at the age of 30. The author questions the benefits of immortality, claiming that it has only increased self-absorption in America while people starve due to overpopulation in less fortunate countries. American politics and protestation are also discussed. It combines social critique and science fiction engagingly. The viewpoints of two main characters, one from America and one from an undeveloped country, are contrasted and eventually blended. The protest fails miserably, but the underlying questions about whether or not it should have failed speak dramatically to today’s apathetic America.

Skye Hughe writes “Temple in Three Parts” in a short and sharp pattern. The poem resembles a Haiku in size and sentence pattern but is composed of three titular stanzas. The poem combines a terse rhyme scheme with evocative vocabulary to create an emotionally stirring poem without mentioning any feelings. In particular, this poem’s strength is in its brevity. Like the other pieces I have selected, this poem begins in everyday life but transcends its

available applications. The poem fits well with our other selections for this month's theme of loss.

"In Appreciation of Laughter," by Ana Roma, details the regrets of the main character's grandmother, Savta in leaving behind her relatives in Romania. The story resolves this conflict as Savta and her American family visit Romania. The piece is filled with detailed and nostalgic images of Savta's life and wisdom. The main character's longing to return to their roots promotes our goal of diverse, authentic storytelling. It expresses how a Romanian family grappled with losing their country and culture through matriarchal anecdotes. It's a rich story that deserves recognition in our loss entries.

"Going to See Evangeline," by Patrick Stoner, is a standard romance set in a fishing town. A young fisherman falls in love with a rich girl named Evangeline, whose family is questionable at best. While this is a cliché love story, its authenticity is found in its interesting details about the dock and fishermen's lives. The story touches on a formative time in formative years. Two young people with vastly different social obligations must overcome those obstacles to enjoy each other's company. This story represents a turning point from which neither character can retract. The future difficulty is implied, and a deeper dive into this story is recommended. How many romances begin with a smelly fisherman in a small sea town?

"A Bridge Between Walls" is a twist on the classic "technology is dangerous" science fiction story. In it, author Percy Esquire skillfully tells the story of a generation wholly desensitized to emotional stimulus by a technology that replicates and enhances natural emotion. Unconventionally, the main character, Ralph, uses this relatively standard plot to do something suddenly human. He uses it to suppress the feelings and memories associated with the passing of his wife. Critiques of technology have existed for decades, but I think this piece succeeds most in

bringing a real character with a relatable struggle to life. There are no high ideals or grandiose statements about life's purpose. There is just a broken and suffering man trying to forget something harrowing.

Rejection Feedback

The pieces I rejected were "Warped Time," "The Questions," "Life Changing Scar," "Her Journey," "Friday Night Candles," "Beautiful," and "Addiction."

"Warped Time" was rejected for a few reasons. It needed to be much longer to tease out the implications of the piece. The work is over-descriptive, which distracts readers from the plot. In addition, the reason the main character is so excited to see this unnamed person is unclear. Who is the "him" at the end of the story? The build-up of anticipation the author constructs falls flat without readers understanding the piece's goal. I was left wondering what the true message of this piece really was. Overall, the warping of time aspect of the work is understated, and the build-up of anticipation could use some revision.

"The Questions" was turned down for similar reasons. The poem focuses on telling the audience what emotions the agent showed instead of guiding us through the process. While the emotional struggle is evident, avoiding available language and lowering the dramatic tone of the piece would go a long way to making this piece compelling. Poetry is a matter of word choice and careful, precise direction over language. This poem is a good first attempt, but it needs significant refinement.

"Life Changing Scar" had some of the same issues as "The Questions." While this was a genuine life experience, and I would never discourage someone from writing about it, the execution needs assistance. The author tells readers how they should be feeling about the situation instead of drawing us in through compelling imagery and language. The details are

cluttered and jumbled: accurate for a first draft but needs further revision for publication. The message is powerful, but I want to hear more about what this story should mean or inspire in the rest of us. What are the implications of scars making us stronger? I think this should be teased out further.

“Her Journey” follows the pattern of “The Questions.” The language used was too complex and too emotionally available for the poem to engage its audience correctly. Again, the story is worth telling but lacks supporting and engaging details.

“Friday Night Candles” was a sweet and sad story. However, using “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” did not have the desired effect. It distracted from the compelling subject matter of the story, adding an ominous undertone that didn’t seem to fit the piece’s goal of commemorating a person who profoundly influenced the main character’s life. Without the song, this piece would be more compelling and easily followed by the audience.

“Beautiful” loosely parallels the plot of Snow White and therefore does not accomplish my goal of promoting diverse and original stories. The message is worth hearing but is available and overdone in its current form.

“Addiction” struggles with which perspective to emphasize for the readers. The story focuses on the mother’s son overdosing on a drug, but then the story pivots and focuses on her husband’s struggle with addiction until the last paragraph. I’m missing that big takeaway I like to see in stories. The story could use some additional length and focus on helping readers understand its true purpose. The perspectives are split unevenly between the son and the father.

Acceptance Letters

Good evening Abe,

I'm Dominic Grimaldi, a staff editor for *Sensus Magazine*. Thank you for submitting "Winds of Change" to our magazine, and congratulations on your acceptance into our third collection. I really appreciated your unique perspective on science fiction. Combined with a serious critique of American society, it makes for a very engaging read. Your story was both immersive and challenging. That being said, I would like to suggest a few edits. There are a couple of places, such as the end of Part II, where the story tells us how the character feels rather than demonstrating it through action or emotion. There are some areas where introspection would be better served as direct action. In Part III, an entire paragraph is devoted to the character thinking about their past in America. Here, it might be better for the character to question the challenges presented to their current worldview visibly. Overall, however, this is an excellent story. I look forward to working with you soon!

Best Wishes,

Dominic Grimaldi

Good evening Hughe,

I'm Dominic Grimaldi, a staff editor for *Sensus Magazine*. Thank you for submitting "Temple in Three Parts" to our magazine, and congratulations on your acceptance into our third collection! Yours was the only poem accepted from this round of submissions. The poem was concise, rhythmic, and powerful. Your imagery was visceral but not excessively emotional, which is difficult to do. Thanks again for submitting, and I look forward to working with you soon!

Best Wishes,

Dominic Grimaldi

Good evening Roma,

I'm Dominic Grimaldi, a staff editor for *Sensus Magazine*. I wanted to thank you for submitting "In Appreciation of Laughter" to our magazine and congratulate you on your acceptance into our third collection! The piece was powerfully nostalgic and reminded me of my desire to visit my home country. I liked the tree imagery in Genesis and how that has always been a symbol for the family to return home. However, as well-meaning as the imagery may be, the language of "Genesis" and "The Tree of Life" is very available. It does not provide the level of engagement readers may want to enjoy. I would suggest an image deeply connected with Savta's past or family history. This could be anything you decide, as long as readers don't already expect it. In addition, I would like to know more about the family's hardships. There is a brief mention of Savta's past and the hardships that forced them to move, but this could be leaned into more. Besides that, this piece is ready to go! I'm excited to work with you soon!

Best Wishes,

Dominic Grimaldi

Good evening Stoner,

I'm Dominic Grimaldi, a staff editor for *Sensus Magazine*. Thank you for submitting "Going to See Evangeline" to our magazine, and congratulations on your acceptance into our third collection! I loved the setting chosen for the story. It reads like a standard romance but is set in a fishing town with a fisherman, who isn't always the most desirable romantic partner. I liked all the personal details you attached to each person, such as unique accents, dialogue patterns, and personal epithets like "Big Momma" for the fishing boat. However, the story in its current form follows the typical romance lines too closely. I would like to see some conflict develop. Maybe Smitty becomes jealous of Elijah, or Evangeline's family dislikes him. I get the feeling there will be some conflict, but it is implied to happen after the story rather than during it.

I would love to see a point or twist where Elijah's attempts to woo Evangeline go awry for some reason. This would add interest and intrigue to your plot and give the opportunity to add character and meaning depth. Once again, congratulations on being accepted, and I look forward to working with you soon!

Best Wishes,

Dominic Grimaldi

Good evening Esquire,

I'm Dominic Grimaldi, a staff editor for *Sensus Magazine*. I wanted to thank you for submitting "A Bridge Between" to our magazine and congratulate you on your acceptance into our third collection! I have always been a fan of good science fiction, and this story does not disappoint. The premise of technological dominance is well established and expressed uniquely. There are some unusual turns, such as people's inability to view or process real life after consistent exposure to technology-based emotional stimulation. This is a story I can see happening in real life, which is very impressive. I also loved the twist where Ralph uses this technology to suppress memories of an unpleasant time in his life, much like an addict, which I think was your implication. Overall this is an excellent story, and I look forward to working on it with you in the future.

Best Wishes,

Dominic Grimaldi

Rejection Letter

Dear Mr. Hartman,

I'm Dominic Grimaldi, a staff editor for *Sensus Magazine*. Upon reviewing your piece, I must sadly inform you that it has not been accepted. This story covers the rich legacy of a very

influential person in the main character's life. I loved that part of it, and I enjoyed the twists and the clear emotional connection the main character had with their aunt. However, I would not advise using "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" the way you used it here. It did not add anything significant to the story and was distracting. This made it difficult for me to engage with your account, as the odd juxtaposition of lyrics constantly disrupted me. The tone is confusing. The song seems to be adding a haunting undertone, but at this stage, it is unclear whether or not this was your intent. In addition, the story's final line seems like it was meant to be sweet but came off as creepy. I recommend removing the song and focusing on the beautiful story you have developed here. Keep up the excellent work, and I hope to see your writing on my desk again soon!

Good luck with your future endeavors,

Dominic Grimaldi