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# Excerpts of Creative Writing

## Short Stories

### “Solace” Excerpt

*Published in the Pulse Literary Magazine 2018*

“Hey, Amigo!” my father said to Miguel. “Speak English! You’re in America!”

“Bye,” Miguel whispered to me.

Miguel turned from my father and walked back toward the sidewalk. We didn’t expect him to be home; he never was. We had just gotten out of school, and usually at that time of the day, he was at a bar or with some whore. We tended to avoid my father as much as possible. I knew he didn’t like Miguel, but Miguel and I had been friends since kindergarten. Our friendship had endured all of my father’s shit from kindergarten until middle school, and he was still somehow my friend. I sometimes thought it was out of pity.

My mom had liked his family. She always talked to Miguel’s mom, behind my father’s back as well since she too didn’t want to set him off. I didn’t see the problem in hanging out with him. My mom had understood my father’s dislike but never explained it to me. She just said that he didn’t know them and was cautious.

“Why do you have to do that?” I asked my father as Miguel took off.

He laughed, took a deep drag of his cigarette, and continued to harass anyone that walked by our house. Our neighborhood had been ‘tainted,’ as he liked to call it, by immigrants over the past several years. We lived here our whole lives. Well, he had with Mom. She died in a car crash about a year ago. My father got worse after her death. It should have been him instead of

her. He was the drunk. The asshole. And the one responsible for her death. As far as I knew, they were both dead.

“Ain’t I told you not to hang out with them Wetbacks?” he said to me.

“He’s not! Stop calling him that!” I said. “That’s why no one likes hanging out with me. Because you’re such a . . .”

“Such a what?” he asked as he stepped in my way.

I stopped on the second step of our mold-covered porch. I knew I fucked up but didn’t care. I was right. He was being an ass, and that wasn’t right. I stared past him, knowing I could out-manuever him to the front door. His wounded leg, hurt in the Vietnam War, would prevent him from catching me. And I knew I was in for it unless I somehow got past him and locked myself in my room.

“You gonna tell me?” he asked.

“No,” I said, pushing past him and reaching the screen door.

I opened it and said, “such a *puto*.”

I thought he wouldn’t understand me. He never did. Never cared for learning or speaking “their” language unless it was to insult them. But I was wrong. Somehow, he found his army strength and pulled my ass back outside before I got a chance to run inside. Yanking me by my shirt, he dragged me down the steps and flung me on the dried patch of front lawn. For everyone to witness, he undid his belt right then and there, and I knew better than to run; it would only make it worse.

“You ain’t a Wetback,” he told me. “You gonna speak right!”

“Eidolon” Excerpt

*Published in the Pulse Literary Magazine 2018*

Office Alvarez

He stood there at the edge of the bridge looking at the rushing water underneath him.

“Dispatch, this is Officer Alvarez on-route home,” I said as I pulled over. “I’ve got a possible 10-56A on Willow River Bridge. Going to check it out.”

Another suicidal civilian. Just what I needed on my way back to base. I took a long drag of my cigarette as I stared out at the figure standing by the bridge’s railing. Suicide bridge, the townspeople called it. Haunted by a ghost who made people do strange things. At least, that was the tale. That was what everyone always said to scare the kids. But the statistics added up, and that’s why everyone chose to avoid this route. It was an abandoned road with only the suicidal making their way here to enter their eternal sleep. Twenty or so a year jump off this bridge. That was enough to keep townspeople a mile’s distance from this place. No one wanted to get sucked in by the voices calling out to them. Me, I didn’t really care for such nonsense.

After a final drag of the cigarette, I open the cruiser door. The damn rain would extinguish it, and I had just lit the damn thing. I had to act fast with this guy. I didn’t know who he was; the rain blurred his image even with the headlights shining on him. The lights alerted the man staring down the bridge. He stared, and as I drew near I could hear a faint mumbling.

“Sir,” I said. “I’m Officer Alvarez. Step away from the railing.”

“War. Death. Bombs. Bullets,” said the man to himself, not acknowledging me but staring past me toward the cruiser. “Bill. Dead. Death. My fault.”

A distant siren sounded, causing the man to go into a frenzy. He thrashed on the ground, as if the sound of an incoming siren was his cue to completely lose it. Pounding the ground with

his fists, he couldn't take it. The noise. The lights from my cruiser. The rain. It was all too much for him, and his panic forced me forward. I rushed forward while he was distracted. Until I recognized him. His behavior.

"Charles" I shouted over the man's panic, acknowledging his episodic behavior.

"Charles, it's alright."

I drew near him, inspected him for injuries but found none. I knew his trauma. His pain. His trigger. The rain and the lightning brought back the demons: the images of the war. And then I wondered what he was doing out here, miles away from his home. So far away from our neighborhood. After all, he lived four houses down from me, and that was no walking distance from here.

"Charles, listen to me," I said as I looked up and noticed the crashed railing where Charles had been standing. I rose to my feet and followed a car's tracks that crashed into the bent railing on the bridge. Looking down, I managed to catch sight of a pair of tail lights before they disappeared under the surface of the water.

"Oh God, Charles! What did you do?" I said. "Dispatch! I need backup and paramedics at Willow River Bridge!"

"Charles, where's Nancy?" I yelled back to the man rocking back and forth on the ground. "Charles! Listen to me! What happened?"

More sirens sounded in the distance, and the scene became infested with officers. Charles was removed from the scene, too distraught to say anything. There was no more we could have done. We searched for the submerged vehicle, but it was too late. I was too late.

“Immersion” Excerpt

*Published in the Pulse Literary Magazine 2018*

“I told you to stay away from them Wetbacks,” I heard Charles say from outside.

I dried my soapy hands on my apron and rushed toward the door. Not again. I couldn’t stand it. Not my Charlie. Not today.

“Charles,” I shouted as I pushed on the screen door.

Only, Charles had placed my flower pot in front of the door, preventing me from running to my boy’s aid.

“Charles,” I shouted, as I struck the screen door with my hands.

“Stay out of it, Nancy,” he responded without even turning to face me.

The two stood out in the gracefully colored front lawn, adorned with my flowers, lawn ornaments, and bird feeder. Charlie stood with his back facing the street, his eyes watering as they called out to mine. Charles, belt in hand, did it once more. Again and again the leather struck my boy’s delicate back as his father scolded him for having *different* friends. They were only boys. He didn’t know any different. I didn’t raise him to hate because of the color of one’s skin, a parenting choice opposite his father’s. Charles didn’t understand. Ever since he was young, Charles has had a problem with colored people, a trait forced upon him by his own father. I knew his past. His father’s abuse on him for doing just as Charlie had done. A cycle repeating itself.

“Charles,” I shouted once more, pushing desperately on the door. “Stop!”

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Charlie cried himself to sleep in my arms. I held him close, allowing tears to escape my own eyes. Charles in the next room, our room. With another woman. Their moaning and

groaning trespassed the thin walls, each noise biting away at my soul. The man I once loved. The one who swore to love and protect me. With another woman. In our bed. I couldn't stand it. I couldn't take his infidelity. But what more was there for me to do? What else could I do but remain strong. For Charlie.

I refused to sleep in that room. In that bed, ever again. And Charlie grew more scared each day. The only thing that made him happy, the only relieve he had in his life, was his friend. A good friend. And a good family. A family I wish we were. The home stilled, all sound drowning in the boiling thunderstorm cooking outside. The calm sent chills down my body until the clicking of heels and slamming of the front door signaled the beginning. It was happening again. And I had to stop it. I knew what I had to do, knew what I would go through. And as I kissed Charlie's puffed up red face, I built up enough courage to do it.

I set his head down on his pillow, carefully as to not wake him. I crept to his bedroom door, locking the door from the inside before stepping out. One final look at his still body on the bed and I walked out, closing the door behind me. I then turned to our darkened home. My home. My life. A life I didn't desire. Didn't expect to have. Nothing but sadness filled my hallways. My room. And I accepted my fate. I was being punished for my own disobedience. My failure to listen to my parents. To my family. To my friends. They warned me, but I didn't listen. I was in love. Blinded by Charles. And I fled. Left the loving home I had with my parents. Left my friends for a life of misery. I deserved it. I deserved this punishment. But Charlie didn't. He deserved happiness. And I would ensure he obtained it. I mustered enough courage and stepped forward.

"Charles," I spoke as the bedroom door creaked open.

## Novella

## “A Predator Game” Excerpt

*Submitted for publication to Writers of the Future Contest 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2018*

The light of the Tasker on my wrist illuminates the dark corridor ahead of me. I don't initially know what I got myself into. I don't even know how I got here. But I soon know all too well where I am by the technology embedded into my wrist and the darkened path ahead of me. I've seen this very image too many times to know exactly what is going on before it's explained to me. I'm in the game, inside the very nightmare that started it all. Years of studying and analyzing the history of the Predator Game could not prepare me for this. Not that I care much for studying. That never gets anyone anywhere. What does science lead to? What has it led to? To this! To this “entertaining” form of “justice. It's sickening. Yet here I am, about to be one of thirteen to go through The Hunt.

Thirteen prisoners get thrown into the Predator Prison. Everyone who commits a crime, no matter the crime committed nor the age or gender of the accused, must endure Terra-Emulous' form of justice: The Predator Game. The only advantage to the game is for those who commit smaller felonies. Each criminal gets sorted from a number between one and thirteen. The smaller the crime, the smaller the number. The advantage comes into play when the game commences. The Predator Game involves two sides: the prisoner and the Predators. Each prisoner gets paired with a Predator. And as the game begins, the Predators get released one at a time in reverse order starting with thirteen. Once the game begins, a Predator gets released every two minutes, so whoever is thirteen never stands much of a chance. The Predators' job is simple: hunt and kill their criminal. They can only hunt and kill their selected criminal and therefore

must search through the prison until they find their target. In turn, the prisoners have one job: Reach a Safe Point to the next stage.

There are ten stages to the “game.” Each stage becomes more difficult, though there is no need. In all the history of the game there has only been a handful of people successful enough to reach the end of the tenth stage: Freedom. That is how Terra-Emulous defines justice: survive the prison and earn your freedom. So pretty much, everyone that comes here knows they’re dead. Escaping the grasp of Terra-Emulous’s trained pets is not easy. The Predators are savage psychopaths specifically trained to kill. They know no fear or pain, making them that much more dangerous. They stop at nothing to get their kill. To us inside, this is our last moment alive. To everyone outside, this is their form of entertainment, while it simultaneously reminds them of what happens to those who don’t follow the rules.

I was never one for rules. There were too many to keep up with, broke at least thirty of them every day. I’m surprised I didn’t land a spot in the monthly Predator Game sooner. I finally got what I deserved, I guess. To be honest, I’m not even quite sure why I’m here. I mean, yes I deserve it. I just wonder which of my many acts of defiance led me here, which one drew the attention of the officials at Terra-Emulous: my graffiti, my burning stacks of books, my keying T.E. officials’ vehicles. There’s so many to choose from. I lived a good life, I guess. The best a girl can nowadays. The last eighteen years of my life have been a blast. Who doesn’t want to live in a country where everyone is afraid to even breathe the wrong way? I guess me. I refused to be like those slaves! I did what I wanted. That was only going to get me so far, but I didn’t care.

And now, I question my life decisions. Maybe there was a better way. I could have caused a riot in a different sort of way, stir others into a rebellion and stand up to the oppressors breathing down our necks every day of our lives. I couldn’t have been the only one tired of it.



## Novel

*Eight in Glory* Excerpt

## Chapter 1

“Javier Lopez,” I hear on the PA system. “Report to the principal’s office immediately.”

The class turns to the back of the classroom. All of them stare at me. What the hell! I haven’t even done anything this week. What do they want me for?

“Jay,” says my math teacher/soccer coach. “There something I don’t know about?”

“You tell me,” I answer him as I get out of my seat and begin walking to the door. “They always rat me out to you first.”

“Well, get going,” he replies. “Expect to run bleachers today in practice.”

Great. Not only did the secretary embarrass me by making the announcement over the PA, but now I’m getting punished for I don’t even know what. I leave the classroom and head right to the staircase. I walk downstairs to the first floor, passing up teachers asking for hall passes.

“I’m Javier Lopez,” I say to all of them, and they all let me walk on by.

When I reach the central office, the secretary leads me down the row of rooms, the vice principals’ offices and the counselors’ offices, until we reach the end of the small hallway. The door to the principal’s office is closed, and the secretary knocks before opening it. She pushes the door open and signals for me to walk in. I do and notice a woman sitting in one of the two seats across from the principal. She turns around and smiles at me.

She’s a thin lady with a bob-styled red hair. She wears a black business jacket, and her face is not as caked with makeup as the girls that walk around the school. I step forward, and the secretary closes the door behind me.

“Have a seat, Jay,” Mr. Kelley, the principal, says. “What trouble have you caused this week?”

“None that I want to tell you about,” I answer him as I sit down in the chair next to the red-haired woman.

A strong fragrance from the woman hits me as I sit down. It doesn’t smell bad. She just has too much on. I don’t even know how to describe the fragrance other than sweet and too feminine. The scent is a sweet, flower-like smell.

“I think I’ve been lenient with you this year,” says Mr. Kelley. “But no matter what I do, you end up right back in my office.”

“Yep,” I answer him while nodding.

He isn’t amused by my response. I wasn’t trying to be funny. He’s the one that keeps telling me to stop arguing so much. I simply agreed with him. Some stupid crap just always happens, and I end up right back here. I think the teachers are just tired of me. Last week, I ended up here because I was sitting in English class not doing anything. We were supposed to be working on some research paper. I was sent to the office for “failure to do what I asked” as the teacher put it. She exaggerated. She just asked, “Jay, what are you doing?” And I said, “Nothing.”

I think she was more upset at the class laughing at my remark than at me not doing what I was supposed to be doing. But in all fairness, I was ahead of the class. I had spent that morning before class in the library working on the research. She was the one who recommended I did that because I was going to be out for one class period due to a soccer game. I was ahead on my research paper, but that wasn’t enough for her. I told Mr. Kelley that.