

Creative Writing at the Kal Campus

Despite the cushions, the seat beneath me is hard and stiff, or is it my body that is so inflexible? The room is mute-colored and serene yet I feel sick at the sight, my senses overwhelmed with the ordinariness of it. Generic paintings float on the walls, so unassuming only a demented soul could have conceived the images and conjured them into this surreal place. The bland walls seem to expand and collapse with each breath I take, as though attempting to conform to some ambivalent ideal of a tranquil prison. I feel my insides quiver and I look away, into the room that boasts the horrifically idyllic sofas covered in soft, crushed fabric. I keep my hands high and to my sides, careful not to touch the relaxing cushion that surrounds me because I know it is an illusion.

My father sits upon a throne of blue padding not far from me yet I am unsure if he knows I'm here. His gaze is fixed on the hypnotizing wall that, though I do not look, I know is heaving under the suffocating pressure of this place. The light dims as the sparkling flecks slowly dissipate from the brown iris of eyes I love so much. Why does he not look away? This place is bewitching him, drawing out his soul without his awareness of it.

My sister is stretched upon a sofa, enclosed in its deceptively beguiling embrace. Slowly the living fabric creeps higher, further engulfing her, and I know she has given up. She has surrendered to this place, laid down her weary soul and closed her eyes to the struggle I still bear. I cannot begrudge her for I, too, am exhausted, a fatigue that snakes through me and threatens to decimate me.

Entrapped, my mind still wriggles out through a crack in the oppression and wanders back to a life that is already fading like a shimmering mirage. I think of my mother, the one who is not here, and I wonder what tortures she now endures. Is she aware of the prison that enslaves us? I cannot dwell on these thoughts and the repellently soothing prison beckons me back.

Why are we here? My mind combats the lulling drug of this place to pose the question and thrashes within me to complete its logic. Have I committed some evil in my past that has caused this? Perhaps my father or sister perpetrated an abomination so immoral that it initiated the chain of events leading to this moment, this place. Or perhaps there is no reasoning, no ordained destiny that lead us here, only happenstance, the unluckiness of a random universe.

A door at the far end of the room opens silently, like a phantom that clutches the key to the unseen future, and a figure skulks into the room. I cannot look for the firmness of the shape burns my eyes and freezes my heart in my chest. My sister rouses with lifeless limbs and half-opened eyes, as her gaze locates the entity. The creature selects my father first and he rises from his blue throne, but there is no fight within his movements, no certainty.

“The surgery was a success. We removed the lung and all the cancer. Your wife is in recovery if you'd like to see her.”

Heaven words from the entity's lips releases us from this cage. Fate sealed, we - I, behind my father and sister - stumble like apparitions of ourselves toward the light beyond the door and our resurrected lives.

Christal Murphy is a first year Arts student at the Kalamalka Campus. The above piece entitled “Purgatory” is a short essay submitted to John Lent's creative writing

course. Christal plans to use her passion for writing and interest in science to pursue a degree in medicine.