

WHEN A STRANGER WRITES

UNIVERSITY OF BIHAĆ - PEDAGOGICAL FACULTY - DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS' MAGAZINE



Featuring short stories, essays and poems by:

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IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE



It was just an ordinary rainy day. Jane was sitting in the bus, cursing her life and long classes she had that day. The sound of her favourite song coming through her headphones was interrupted by an interesting talk between two girls sitting behind her.

She knew these girls by appearance but not by name and despite the fact that it is not very polite, she couldn't resist temptation to hear what they were talking about. One of the girls said: "Yeah, I heard that! I watched the news last night and they said that one dangerous, mentally ill person escaped from the hospital yesterday and could be anywhere. It is a male person, wearing white clothing, you know, one that they usually wear in hospitals. I don't know what I would do if I met that person." As usually, Jane made a joke of that. "Silly," she thought, "nobody is mad enough to escape from a hospital to a faculty." She smiled and continued listening to music.

It was 8 p.m. when the classes finished and Jane had to hurry up a bit to catch the bus as faculty was located in an isolated area and she was too tired to walk the way back. When she was just a few steps from the bus, she realized that she forgot her cell phone and had to go back. "I will be here in a minute, stop the bus driver, please," she said to her friend. As she was running upstairs toward the classroom she heard that well-known sound. The bus was leaving... "Of course! It must be that unkind bus driver who never waits for students." – she concluded. "Nah, I'll walk home. Let's burn some calories," she thought, trying to keep positive thoughts. She found her phone in the classroom and went downstairs preparing herself psychologically, more than physically, for the upcoming walk.

She was just opening the door when she saw a man in white clothing standing in front of the faculty. She froze! All the things she heard today just quickly ran through her mind. "That could be nobody else. What am I supposed to do? Where to go? If I go outside he will catch me, and if I run inside he will come after me? Am I alone?..." million questions in her head and no appropriate answer. The man suddenly made one step toward her but his face still was in shadow. Jane just turned and start running upstairs toward the nearest classroom. She entered the classroom number 3, and locked the door. There was no signal so trying to make a call was trying in vain. It was dark in the classroom and she was sitting in one corner. The only sound she heard was the one of her heart beating so fast as if it is going out of her chest. Her hands were shaking just as her whole body and she couldn't control that. Fear possessed her. She was stuck in the middle of nowhere and no one could help her. All the students were gone and all the employees of faculty as well. Jane tried to think about any possible solution to escape from there but unsuccessfully. The building was surrounded by wood and going out would be even worse than staying inside. "But nothing is ever done by sitting in a corner," she thought. "I have to do something to save my life." She stood up and made a few small steps toward the window. She saw a man still standing in front of the building. Suddenly something touched her hand... Everything she could see was a hand and white sleeve. "Is this how life ends?" she wondered...

Amela Hamzić

A small house overgrown with ivy

On a rocky cliff above the river
 I am combing through the clouds
 With rotten beams
 And broken tiles,
 Listening to the songs of wind
 At times peeking through
 The windows among black pines,
 And it seems to me I can see you coming
 All flustered and dead tired
 Lugging a smile, and
 As you lower down on your knees
 To weed around the doorstep
 You say: „It's been a while!“
 As you knock
 You tick
 And vanish.

It was just darn rain.

A small house standing still on a rocky cliff
 Overgrown with ivy
 In need of loneliness
 In need of a guest.

Elvin Dervić

Cloudburst

It's Sunday morning. I woke up to the sound of rain. Is there anything more beautiful than the sound of rain? Is there anything more peaceful? Only silence maybe. I can hear it echoing through the gutters. I can hear it thumping on a pedestrian's umbrella. Beautiful.

Why do I love rain so much? Well, because of my mom.

It was a rainy day, just like today. Me and my mom went outside. She carried an umbrella and held my hand. I don't remember exactly where we were going, but I remember a waiting room. It had huge windows and you could see people walking outside. They all looked the same, hiding under their umbrellas and then I asked my mom if she could buy me one, but pink. She asked why. I replied with saying that I want to be just like everyone else. If they all look the same with umbrellas, maybe I would be too. Maybe I would blend in. Maybe they wouldn't notice me. Maybe I

wouldn't stand out and I wouldn't be constantly stared at. She hugged me and said that I don't need one. I don't need to blend in. She said that I was born to stand out of the crowd because those who follow the crowd usually get lost in it. After that, she took my hand and we went outside and stood in the rain without umbrellas. She said, breathe it in sweetie, feel it on your skin, doesn't it feel calming? Doesn't it feel invigorating? Does it make you feel free?

Yes, people were staring, but we couldn't care less.

From that day forward, I stayed true to myself and was not afraid to stand out even more. I love you mom.

Sunday Morning, rain is falling...♪

Jasmina Demirović

Discovering my continent

The doors were shut and I couldn't get out. The doors were like any other doors, there was nothing special about them. The creator of the doors probably didn't want to draw any attention of others. I opened them and I could feel a breezy wind on my face, a cold air, fresh and clean, like nothing I ever felt before. It was foggy at first, but soon I could see rays of light illuminating the nearest grass fields. The sun seemed to be farther than the position I was used to, but it was pretty easy to adjust to it.

So many things about this place reminded me of my little homeplace where I grew up. I felt certain melancholy in my heart as I saw the empty fields of high grass. It felt neverending and I wasn't sure where to go. In the middle of that nothingness I could see a shadow of something, barely a person, following its own path. As I was getting close I could see familiar faces around me. Soon I

discovered I was in the world of my wishes, everything I ever wanted to do, but never dared to do it. And all these faces around me were people I admired from my life.

It seems that life or, in this case, this dream tried to teach me a lesson. It tried to teach me how to be a better person through faults of others, and all these people represented me and my past mistakes. I wanted to talk to them, but I woke up. It was then clear to me that that was a lesson. We can't know our mistakes until we live them and learn from them. It is impossible to be perfect and learn from other people's mistakes but our own. Mistakes are the part of our experience, and therefore part of our lives, and we should cherish them just as we cherish our success.

Emir Ružnić

Who can be a hero?

Are heroes only characters in cartoons, movies or stories? Of course they are not. There are real heroes in real life. The answer to that question is simple – everyone is someone else's hero, sometimes even without being aware of it.

In your childhood years your heroes are your parents, who help you win the battles of that age. They are there to witness your first steps, your first word or the first scratch you get while carelessly playing. They are there on your first day of school, feeling as excited as you are.

Further on, there are your siblings, two or three, even one is just enough. They are the people who will teach you how to be patient in life, because these people are the ones you will end up having the most fights with, even about your things, your clothes, your side of the room etc. At the same time they are the ones who will most likely be soldiers in your army in a war battle against your parents. They are the people who will share the most experiences with you,

therefore, they will give you the best advice and they will always be „the best shoulder to cry on“ when needed.

The third type of heroes are your friends - your brothers and sisters that you choose on your own. When your parents are not there or your siblings, this is the next group of people you will turn to for literally anything and everything. All in all, all of these people are the heroes of your lifetime. They get you through life, and they are your endless source of love, understanding and support. Heroes are the people in your life next to whom you feel like you are not alone in the world.

And one last hero in this story is you.

You are the hero of your parents, you are the hero of your siblings, you are a hero of your friends. There will always be someone in your life who will be your hero, same as there will always be someone to whom you will be one.

It's a neverending circle of life.

Meržana Kekić

Don't tell me about it

Don't tell me about unhealthy bonds
 And hearts that always break;
 The picture consumes my thoughts,
 My mind drowning in the deadly ache.

Don't tell me about pumping veins and raised voices –
 Everyone has their choice to make;
 Outside, their faces dead and voiceless,
 They chose the wrong path to take.

Don't tell me about mistakes and dissatisfaction –
 A mother's hand is here, you see;
 To stop the horror, to stop the action,
 Of what her children might come to be.

Don't tell me about sadness and the dark –
 For the girl is so young and so naive;
 To think a single mark,
 Will tell of what life she is to live.

Don't tell me about the no way out –
 A lady sits in her bony cage;
 Quiet, without any doubt,
 That her end has come of age.

Don't tell me about bitterness and damaged nerves –
 This man is slipping from the world;
 One year for every bruise,
 The life, oh how it got him good.

So, don't tell me about them;
 the things you fake,
 the stuff you break,
 the bonds you make,
 Because I hear them play,
 in my head,
 Every night, and every day.

Vanja Čelan

How To Spend Your Summer Vacation

Finally that time has come. Time when everyone wants to relax. Some students will find part-time jobs to earn some money, so they can spend it when the next semester comes, some students will go to the seaside with their friends or family to spend quality time because they didn't have the opportunity before, since they were occupied with classes and tasks. However, there are a lot of things that you can do on your vacation and I'll give you a few ideas:

1. Have a picnic in the park
2. Play tennis
3. Take a last-minute road trip
4. Go to a basketball game
5. Go camping



I remember one time we planned a trip to Croatia to go to the sea coast, but we ran out of money, so we decided to find part-time jobs to collect the money and then go on a trip. We were trying to collect money as much as we could. I was working at a restaurant, washing dishes and cleaning because I didn't have any experience with cooking. My friends told me that they also found jobs as a salesman, assistant and as a cashier. I was working really hard so that I don't get fired and I was saving money as much as I could, so that I can enjoy it later. People that I'd been working for were very rude to me, but I didn't really care because only one thing was on my mind - and that was the vacation in Croatia. One night I finished my shift and I called friends with whom I was planning to go on this trip to grab some coffee. When we sat down in a cafe bar we started talking about our jobs. They were complaining that they are tired and that they want to quit their job. I was sitting there, listening to them complaining and I had a feeling that they weren't interested

in going on a vacation as I was. Luckily, they didn't quit their jobs. After four weeks we finally had enough money. I called them to see when we are planning to go on our vacation. We sat down to drink coffee and to discuss when we would be going. As we started talking I saw that they lost their will to travel to Croatia, probably because they worked hard to get that money so they didn't want to spend it all, and I understood them completely. After a while one friend said: "Hey, let's go camping" and we all agreed to that. We had no experience in camping, so that part was exciting and it also made us a little bit scared. We bought a tent, some food and a few other things with the money that we earned from our jobs. We lighted the fire, we gathered around the fire and started talking. I must admit it was fun more than I imagined. After that camping, we decided to camp every year and every year it was better and better.

Aladin Abdić

Stay positive. That's what everybody says. But it is just easy to say. I am a happy person, but sometimes other people are negative and that affects me. I know everybody has their problems but it's not good for you to let little things affect you.

When it comes to the big problems, it's normal they exist. It's on us to fight against them. It's important for you to have good people around you because, with them, big problems are different. They are still big, but you have someone who will listen to you, say the words that you need to hear. I read



somewhere that if you are going to think "black", think positive about it. Don't think down on it or think it is something in your way and in this way, when you really do want to stretch out and express how beautiful black is, everyone will hear you. This is perfect.

When you have negative people around you it just get worse. Or if you are alone. Nobody deserves to be alone. But, every problem has its solution. It depends on us. Everything depends on us. No drama, please.

Edina Kartal

My trip to Switzerland

It was on my winter school break when I went to Switzerland for the first time in my life. I was there for about three weeks. The way I travelled there was actually quite fun because I went with my cousin who had pretty good music, a nice car, lots of snacks and he loved to speed so we arrived there in less than 8 hours. And as I said I was there for about 3 weeks, where I spent time with my cousin Medina.

I pretty much had a blast; at night we would go out, have fun, party and in the day time, shopping was our main obsession. But like every other thing, those three weeks went by really fast and it was time to go back home. That's when things headed backwards...

So it was still winter and it was really, really cold snow was everywhere and the way I was travelling back was by bus, a really old one.

It wasn't really packed with people; you could see some empty spots, but in the bus were mostly older people



who always had something to say; talk about, discuss and never just had time to shut up.

The bus was always buzzing, and practically I was near all those people who were pretty annoying. Also, the bus driver was a kind of mean one; we didn't have any rests; just like five minute ones. So everything that we had to do was in a rush; because he wouldn't want to wait.

And because it was winter, we were going slower than a snail and after more than 18 hours on the road, I finally arrived home. I didn't sleep at all during the bus drive because of all the talking, the laughs...

I felt drained, exhausted, tired... everything with me was just wrong. That's why when I arrived home and after seeing my parents I went straight to bed and didn't wake up for hours.

Dalila Medić

Modern fairy tale



. In the big city of New York, there lived a girl. She was very pretty and had a good heart. Her name was Lejla. She was engaged to a local locksmith, and planned everything with him: the wedding, their life together, kids and their house on the nearby hill. As the days passed by he started to grow distance between them: when they were supposed to have their together time, he didn't show up and when they finally did meet, he had a lot of excuses, but nothing of what he was saying was true. She was suspicious, so she decided one day to follow him. He worked in the office in the city downtown, so after he finished the job she was outside of his office and started to follow him. After some time she followed him into a house on the other side of the city. He went in and she wanted to see who was inside the house. When she got closer to the windows, she saw a nice lady with a red hair making dinner for her man. She started to cry and get far away from the window regretting that she was so stupid to think that he can love her. After coming back home, she decided to move away from her surroundings and start fresh in another city. When she got to the bus station, she bought a ticket for the first bus out of the town. Not knowing where she is going she went in the bus and didn't look back. The drive was long and she fell asleep. After a long drive, the bus finally got to its direction. After waking up, she realised that she was in Miami. Wandering through the city, she saw a sign that an employee is needed in a restaurant. She got the job and the owner gave her a place to sleep. Now Lejla had a place to stay and tried to forget what happened to her with her boyfriend and move on, working as hard as she could. After a while she earned enough money to buy her own place near the beach, never thinking about love again.

Enes Beširević

EDITOR'S NOTE

The title "When a Stranger Writes" introduces us to the magazine written by the second-year students of the English Language and Literature Department. The title might be a bit misleading when we take into consideration that after reading this collection of works you will surely feel as if you know the young writers.

In the words of the great Emily Dickinson, "A word is dead/When it is said, / Some say. /I say it just begins/to live that day." Many new words come to life in this magazine. We start with a chilling short story that ends in a cliffhanger, then move on to a pensive poem, and through the collection we encounter works that question our own ideas of life and love, we get to travel with the authors and go through a multitude of emotions ranging from melancholy to cheerfulness, feeling inspired and uplifted.

And so, dear readers, we hope you find yourself lost in the prose and poetry of "When a Stranger Writes". Since it is a fact that writers say more about themselves through their writing than they do about the topic in question, we are sure you will enjoy getting acquainted with our students.

Alma Žerić, MA

**IMPRESSUM**

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