

# The Chariot

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## KJ's Childhood Stories: Copious Amounts of Regret

by Kathryn Masano

So this story takes place but a few months ago, around the beginning of November. My ego and IQ get progressively lower each time I tell of it but out of the kindness of my comedic heart, I have chosen to share. I was browsing the aisles of Giant looking for my favorite ritualistic coffee: the \$3.75 Green Mountain Hazelnut Keurig Pods. They were out of stock, a seemingly fatal tragedy as the upcoming week was anticipated to be brutal. I needed a caffeine fix—I needed it yesterday—and my eyes desperately searched the shelves for a temporary solution.

It was at that moment when I came across what would be the downfall of my career: Super Coffee. One may note that I am always looking for ways to increase my daily nutrients, so you can imagine my excitement when I saw that this brand was “infused with essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.” And so I naturally assumed that the “Super” in Super-Coffee stood for Superfoods. ‘Twas a horrible mistake. The following Friday morning, I excitedly brewed my naturally flavored Mocha Super Coffee and packed it into my largest travel mug to take to school. (Continued on page 2).

## The Return

by Paul Monsour

It was Mother’s Day. The sun shined, the birds sang, my Xbox purred. My sister practiced taekwondo—a sport that apparently requires the athlete to emphasize all of their attacks with equally violent, possibly more damaging screams. My father pretended to read a book approximately 15,000 pages thick about The Recession of 1840 (an event you've never heard about, but I can assure you was very important). I myself played Minecraft, a game my friends told me was “impossible to be bad at.” Well, I certainly showed them.

“What a peaceful day,” I thought to myself. But I knew it couldn't last. My phone buzzed. Feeling content with my peanut butter and celery snack, I ignored it. Without another minute passing, it buzzed again. I glanced at the message from the editor. “Paul,” it said, “there isn't enough to fill the final edition of the Chariot. We need you to write an article.”

“An article?!” I thought. (Continued on page 3)

Read some amazing poems on pages 4, 7, 8, and 9.

Find some music recommendations from Stella Koch on page 10.

Read another fun story by Kathryn Masano on page 5.

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(continued from page 1). It had a horrendous flavor, but the starchy aftertaste left on my tongue was thought to be at fault of the thousands of Superfoods I was consuming in one sip. One word: FALSE. As my mug progressively emptied, the clock began to speed up. My brain was going miles and miles a minute and every thought was processed at warp speed. Every color had a smell and every sound was visualized. Antioxidants were not only enlightening my gut biome but simultaneously enlightening my knowledge, right? RIGHT?! Later in the afternoon, I picked up my cousins to use my soon-to-expire Starbucks gift card. I only had one cup of Super Coffee that day, so I could spare another glass. Obviously nothing but vitamins and pure minerals were swimming in my system. My order came out to be a medium iced vanilla latte with almond milk and, here's where I began to crumble: a shot of espresso. When I returned home, I could actively see every pore on my skin and rattle off the first 500 digits of pi. And yet not one puzzle piece of this problem was put together. It was time for my run and fast. The sun was setting. Half of a Celsius, approximately 100 mg of caffeine, was consumed following my typical pre-workout ritual. Quite honestly, I'm not sure where I went or how long I was gone for, but to say the least, the pace I was going at would have won me gold in the Olympics. The only

memory of that run I can recollect was a brief moment in the Pine Woods when I had tripped and pondered "how did I get here?" Seconds later "The Real Slim Shady" played into my headphones, and the idea was immediately dismissed. After who knows how long, I walked into the kitchen to be greeted by my mom. She was reading the "Super Coffee" package. In the midst of me raving about the product, she proceeded to inform me that the SUPER did not stand for super FOOD; It stood for super CAFFEINE. 200mg per k-cup to be exact, whereas the average pod only has 60mg. Not only did I drink the whole thing, but I drank that plus iced coffee plus espresso plus Celsius, totaling up to be over 320 mg of caffeine. For the next 22 hours, I would be awake. It gave me a chance to question my knowledge, my career, the secrets of life, and and my true purpose on

earth. I also rearranged every square inch of my room and did several ab workouts in the early hours of dawn. The following Saturday night ended with me breaking into a cold sweat and being horribly ill, as the product of no sleep, little food apart from one entire cantaloupe, and copious amounts of caffeine came coursing out of my veins and into the toilet. Do I remember anything besides that? No. Have I drank Super Coffee since? I'll say no to preserve what little dignity I have left. The moral of this story is to always stick to Green Mountain Hazelnut Coffee and to never, EVER, eat or drink anything that has the word "Super" in its brand name.



(Continued from page 1). I had only written one article all year, and I had since enjoyed the privilege of calling myself a Chariot writer while not actually having to do any more writing. The idea seemed preposterous. Outlandish. Completely unreasonable. In writing that one well received—if overly dramatic—article about the air conditioning and construction in the school for the September edition, my place in the Wyomissing Chariot Pantheon had surely been cemented. I retired at the top. Of course, it occurred to me that I could write more articles, but any time I tried to write, I found my words empty. In the weeks following my Magnum Opus, I had gotten complacent. I let the success get to my head. I had lost my love for the game.

“Editor... I'm retired, you know that” I responded, “I'm not cut out to write for such an esteemed newspaper. Those days are behind me now.” My day was ruined and just as I headed to the shower for a good cry, my phone buzzed again.

“You're the only one who can do it, Paul. You're the only one who can scribe a page of decent to passable writing about absolutely nothing in under an hour.” She was right. But I couldn't come back. I was a different man now. Besides, there were plenty of overly caffeinated honor students who wrote pages upon pages about nothing for grades. You're telling me she couldn't get any one of them? But even as I thought this, I felt my old self creeping back. Why couldn't I, a middling student with a bit of an ego problem, get back in for one last job? Of course, the editor can only count on me. The other writers and their “passion,” “work ethic,” “genuine desire to tell a story,” and “responsible urge to inform the public” had been bugging me for quite some time.\*

I stood on that staircase for a while, letting all of this bounce around in my head. Would I continue my trek to the shower—which

I probably should've taken in the morning since I had been in a hot tub last night—or would I try to find my iPad and write that one last page? My legs carried me to my backpack before my brain could think any more. When I found my iPad, I quickly found my old powers returning to me. I was writing before I even knew what I was writing about.

An hour later my article was done. It was glorious. So simple but nuanced. So verbose but compact. Truly, my latest work would inspire a new generation of writers to suddenly remember that they are part of the school newspaper and frantically write about the first topic that enters their mind. Paul Monsour out.

\*I also saw Sutton Dareneau buying flowers for his mom, which made me feel guilty, and honestly, I felt like somehow this would make up for that.

## That Girl

by Anneka Gernert

I was not myself.  
Who was that girl?  
Deep in a hole of despair  
Roaming the world  
Within a cloud of gloom

That was not me  
Standing there  
With a blank stare  
Brushing aside the things  
That really mattered

She, a slave to academia  
Me, now free  
Of everything  
That bound me

The anxiety,  
Fear,  
And guilt  
Gone.  
Now she is free,  
Filled with joy,  
And motivation,  
And energy.

I am me again.  
Thank goodness  
Because I hated that other girl  
I wish she'd leave forever  
But I know and dread  
One day  
She will return...



## sunshine, blue skies, and thoughts of summer

by George Ellington

i want good things to happen to me  
driving fast with windows down  
sunshine hitting my skin  
music playing loudly  
strawberry tea  
sweet coffee

i want good things to happen to me  
kissing her like i'll die if i don't  
sunshine burnin my skin  
music just for us  
blueberry bread  
orange tic tacs

i want good things to happen to me  
laying down by the joy of exhaustion  
sunshine blessing my skin  
music playing lightly  
please more good things tomorrow  
please more good things tomorrow

## KJ's Childhood Stories: Match Point

by Kathryn Masano

So this one time, I had a tennis match (oh my god, really?). To be up front, this match wasn't anything special, and we won in less than two hours. It was mid season in a place I don't remember and quite frankly, don't plan on remembering. But the events surrounding that day have left me unable to forget. We will refer to this location as Mountain-Ville due the long and windy mountain that housed the long and windy road on which our long and windy van had to make the long and windy trip (do you understand where I'm going with this?). On a late Friday afternoon too, so I was quite slumped. I curled up in the back seat of the van to take a little nap. When I awoke an hour later, I found myself severely dehydrated in a horrendous cold sweat; I had but fifteen minutes to gather myself back into the bizarre reality I was living through. First, I let the blood rush back into my head. Then, I took the scariest pee of my life. Due to the secluded mountain area, my only option was a fifty-year-old porta-potty teetering on the edge of a cliff. Peeing with the risk of tumbling down a mountain in a poo box was quite an unpleasant experience. After all of this, we lined up for introductions and began playing. Again, it was nothing exciting. I was only there for a good time. The girl I was playing was not. She took part in the classic ritual of trying to hit me with the ball, slamming her racket after every point. But what I believe really tipped her off was the song that Ananya, Hadley, and Cece serenaded her with from the bleachers directly behind the court. It went a little like, "KJ's playing tennis, KJ's playing tennis," to a "cha-cha-cha" sort of theme. My opponent lost her mind (and the match), to say the least. Tears were streaming down her face as she screamed at me, her coaches, and her teammates, but it continued to get progressively worse considering Ananya wouldn't stop singing. Post singles, Charles and I played last minute dubs, secured the dub, and secured a photo of us

her mum made us pose for mid-point. Our doubles was nothing special, but Cece and Hadley's was. They were the final players on the court up against two Mountain-Ville girls, for whom I urge should get their eyes checked, considering the amount of times they called an in-ball out. As you can imagine, this led to some tension. Who did we leave to resolve this tension? Ananya. She took a creative approach to the conflict and began barking at the other team. Not bark as in bicker or argue or shout. Bark as in 'woof woof woof you, \*b-words\*.' And you know what? We let her bark it out much to the disgust of the entire Mountain-Ville crowd. As soon as Cece and Hadley secured a much deserved win, we headed to Sheetz that would soon lead to a costly mistake. The smell of rancid grilled cheeses and oily fries was enough to send me over the edge down the long and windy road of Mountain-Ville. I vomited in a paper bag, might I emphasize, PAPER bag. Coach chose to not utter a single word. He kept his eyes on the road and tuned out the sound of my hurling, pretending he was anywhere but a horrible smelling van with seven panicking teenage girls who had all reached their wits end. Cece's motherly instinct took over as she supplied me with more bags and napkins. Charles and Elise rummaged through their bags for extra ice water as Hadley cranked up the AC. Ananya set a timer on her phone with the ETA back to the school chanting "HOLD IT IN! HOLD IT IN!" When we finally glided back into the school parking lot, barely in one piece, the night came to a perfect end with the rubber lining around the doors breaking off onto Cece's head. As for me, I was forever banished to the front seat. The moral of this story is to leave Ananya in the van with the windows cracked and to never, under any circumstances, play another tennis match on the top of a cliff.



**KJ's Childhood Stories: The Time KJ  
Carried The Chariot**  
by Kathryn Masano

'Twas the night before SAT's when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even Pounce. The ID's were lined up by the window with care, in hopes that a good score would soon be there. When I was tested for the Gifted Program in sixth grade and told that I was "Superior yet not of a gifted mind," I was petty. Honestly though, over the years of torturous schooling, I've come to realize that they were definitely right. My memory is rather astounding, but could I tell you what the mitochondria is apart from the powerhouse of the cell? No. And my biology teacher can attest to this. Impeccable memorization did however lead me to be a pretty decent test taker, so when the SAT's rolled around, I wasn't nearly as nervous as everyone above the age of fifty claimed to be. "I studied for five years," "I promised my first born in return for a perfect score," "I can still recite my entire study booklet cover to cover," yes, yes I've heard it all. But in recent years, even Ivy League colleges have been caring less and less about scores so long as they were decently above average (just like the gifted program described me as). I set my alarm approximately for 6:45 a.m. so I could strategically drink my morning coffee with an hour and a half to spare. After doing my nightly exercises, printing out my school pass, and drinking a cool glass of water, it was off to bed I went. And I slept like a log. A log that didn't hear Olaf knocking my glass over in the middle of the night, the screaming foxes that live in my backyard (shoutout to my dad for not calling animal control), and as one might guess, all three of my alarms. I awoke neither to the sound of chimes nor the smell of coffee but the frantic calls of Katie Kaufmann. Bless her heart she agreed to pick me up in the morning so I wouldn't have to worry about walking. Her calls came at 7:45—the doors closed at 8:00. I was in her car by 7:49. With

tears streaming down my face and ratty hair through frantic breaths, I apologized over and over to her while she peacefully rolled down my driveway and changed the radio station to calmer music. When we arrived, we were one of the last to enter into the testing rooms. If you know me, you know that I've never been warm a day in my life. My average body temperature is 96.8 degrees, so you can only imagine the violent shivers I endured while reading about god knows what in seven-year-old adidas shorts I wear to bed every night and nothing but a thin pull over. And to wrap it all up, every student and teacher in the building that day was thrown for a loop as, when everyone turned to section five, there was no section five. So not only was I panicking from the circumstances I was already under, but I was surrounded by a frenzy of burned out and teary-eyed students looking for section five as though it were the golden egg in an Easter egg hunt. After the matter was resolved and every blood cell in my body turned to ice, I called Teddy who came to pick me up with the coffee I never got and a spare set of sweatpants to cover the plague of goose bumps that were once my legs. As the staff dismissed us to go home, the rest of my afternoon was spent in deep self reflection and a nice hot shower. The moral of this story is that college, and the gifted program, is overrated.

## The First Time We Never Met

by Katie Schadler (Last Dance)

Here's to the ones who play in the rain.  
The ones who laugh at the cars and fall in love in church parking lots.

Here's to the ones who take themselves too seriously.  
The ones who sip their coffee slowly and weep when the music's too loud.

Here's to the ones who live in the movies.  
The ones who break hearts and whisper promises they cannot keep.

Here's to the ones who come alive at night.  
The ones who bleach their hair in summer and dance upon their imperfections.

Here's to the ones who suffer in silence.  
The ones who tame the dragons and entertain the thoughts inside their heads.

Here's to the ones who are afraid of the dark.  
The ones who speak to the sky and run from the words that are too hard to say.

Here's to the ones who believe in magic.  
The ones who wander but always find their way back to the breadcrumbs.

Here's to the messy, morbid, maddening wreckage of a life that moves every fiber of our being until we are nothing but the person we never wanted to become. What a tragedy it is to love. To have known you forever and yet not at all, I still search for you everywhere but in the flesh, you are nothing. How can you exist so effortlessly and yet so intensely all at once? I am painfully consumed by everything you do and everything you are, and I haven't even met you yet.

Here's to the strangers we call friends.  
And the lovers we call enemies.

That's a wrap for your senior editor. It's been real.



## Possible Forgiveness

by George Ellington

*can you come over here?* bed with neat sheets  
*it's been awhile* half-open drawer with photographs of people smiling  
*i'm not sorry* crackling, popping candle  
*but i miss you* but it's lavender scented  
*i think the only way to get you back, though,* dusty, wrapped present by the door  
*is to forgive you* "thank you" card in an almost empty trash can  
*but you know i can't, i can't, i can't, i can't, i can't* blooming spider plant  
*you always said i was stubborn* document with names blacked out  
*and held a grudge for far too long* water bubbling on the stove  
*i wonder what it feels like* half finished art piece  
*to be on the other end of it* container of sewing threads  
*i need to say goodbye to you* cracked door  
*but you need to say goodbye to everything you've ever known* day-old coffee cup  
*i'm not sorry* crackling, popping candle  
*and i'm not coming back* extinguished.





## The Game of Soduko

by Tyler Nolt

Remember the days you looked at the board,  
 anticipating all the ways you would solve it.  
 Now you look at the board,  
 instead wondering how it could be solvable.  
 You have gotten some numbers on the board,  
 but now you feel stuck in a loop.  
 Getting anxious looking at the board, wondering if you will  
 ever be able to solve the boxes you need to complete the puzzle.  
 Eventually you get so sad, unable to complete  
 the boxes, so you take a break from the puzzle.  
 You start to relax until you feel like you have done nothing to  
 try and solve it, so your sadness worsens.  
 You hate feeling the sadness,  
 and so you replace it with anger.  
 Angry that nothing has gone the way you anticipated  
 and that the puzzle never seems to get easier.  
 This painful cycle repeats itself  
 while the numbers gradually fill themselves in.  
 You have become so blinded by the pain of the cycle  
 that you are unable to see the cells you have filled in along the way.  
 You long for a consistent state of happiness,  
 but the game of life is too complicated for that.

5	3			7				
6			1	9	5			
	9	8					6	
8				6				3
4			8		3			1
7				2				6
	6					2	8	
			4	1	9			5
				8			7	9

### **Stella's Top Song List - Sunday Restart**

These songs are something to play when you need to clear your mind and feel refreshed. They never fail to put me in a good mood and make me sing. Each song has an upbeat flow and great word choice. I would listen to these songs at any point of my day, but I think they are best played when I need to relax or feel happy. These songs also get me going and make me feel motivated to start the day.

1. AMBER by Unusual Demont
2. While We're Young by Jhené Aiko
3. Ebb & Flow by FELIVAND
4. World on Wheels by DUCKWRTH
5. Nikes by Frank Ocean
6. Rhiannon by Fleetwood Mac
7. Friends by Ottawa
8. Why Don't You Come On by DJDS, Khalid, & Empress Of
9. Little by Jany Green
10. Good Days by SZA

### **Stella's Top Song List - Hype Music**

Now some of these songs aren't normal hype songs one would consider. My hype songs are either rap or songs that just make me wanna jump up and down. Whether you're a track runner warming up, getting ready to do a workout, or needing something to listen to, these are good songs to play. Some of these are definitely guilty pleasure songs, but they still get me pumped up and ready to go.

1. Tuesday by DUCKWRTH
2. Perfect by Logic
3. IV. Sweatpants by Childish Gambino
4. Grown Woman by Beyoncé
5. Tell Me You Love Me by Galantis & Throttle
6. Patty Cake by Kodak Black
7. WTF (Where They From) by Missy Elliot featuring Pharrell Williams
8. Woman by Doja Cat
9. Hey Ya! By OutKast

# Fun Section:

S	U	P	E	R	C	A	S	C	I	L	E	M	E
T	G	S	M	E	G	E	L	L	O	C	N	E	N
S	E	N	O	E	L	M	T	S	C	F	I	E	E
U	S	N	L	D	S	M	P	U	H	A	F	I	M
N	U	F	N	Y	U	S	U	E	Y	T	N	E	I
S	M	C	L	I	I	K	Y	E	P	R	M	K	E
H	M	P	E	D	S	O	O	S	E	N	I	H	S
I	E	P	C	S	E	L	C	I	T	R	A	R	S
N	R	S	U	N	M	C	I	T	A	M	A	R	D
E	H	I	A	Z	I	I	S	O	N	G	S	A	S
Z	O	R	S	T	Z	M	L	G	N	M	E	U	N
N	N	I	S	I	M	L	C	I	S	C	S	S	E
E	R	R	N	A	D	A	E	R	N	E	D	L	U
S	C	A	N	D	L	E	D	L	C	G	I	R	E

SMILING  
 TENNIS  
 COFFEE  
 DRAMATIC  
 COLLEGE  
 ENEMIES  
 HYPE  
 SONGS  
 SODUKO  
 SUPER  
 PUZZLE  
 GIRL  
 SUMMER  
 CANDLE  
 ARTICLE  
 SAT  
 SUNSHINE  
 MESSY

Have a great summer!

— Anneka and Katie

