

# OMNIVISUM

literary magazine



who we are

## Dedicated to Carter Diggs

Written by Sydney Vincent

**I've traveled these roads countless times. I've seen a million faces, kissed thousands of lips, stayed the night with hundreds of strangers. On the east coast, many people spurn my ways. The west coast embraces it. I've never been fond of the middle. The ocean draws me in too heavily.**

**I've often enjoyed the company of older men. I've fallen for their stories of bar fights, old lovers, their younger days. I tend to like their hardened hands, their laugh lines around their eyes, the scars of past adventures, far too worn to see unless you look close enough. The younger men or even the men my age no longer interest me. They haven't lived enough, or they choose not to live.**

**I've taken on many habits in my time of wandering. Many of the people I have met fill their veins with strange substances, but I've only ever allowed cigarettes burn between my lips. The sting of the smoke either exhilarates me or calms my inner havoc, whichever is needed. I've fallen for the feeling of riding along the empty backroads as the sun dips below the horizon and the feeling of my feet dangling at the edge of a cliff. I've fallen for the feeling of waking up in a different place than where I last remember being awake and for the feeling of true freedom. I suppose old habits do die hard.**

**As a child, my mother would dance around the kitchen while she made dinner, so wild, so free. My father was a bit harder. He would sit in his chair and watch every Dodgers game on the television, but he was always ready to laugh at the mascots and**

### *ABOUT THE AUTHOR:*

Sydney Vincent is currently a rising sophomore at Susquehanna University, studying Publishing/Editing and Creative Writing with a minor in International Studies. In her free time, she enjoys spending her days outside hiking, kayaking, and rock climbing in the Pocono Mountains, which she calls home. She hopes to open her own independent bookstore one day, hike the Pacific Crest Trail in its entirety before she turns thirty, and own a Golden Retriever named Hunter.

close-up of the audience dancing to the stadium music. They were good parents, the best I dare say. Solid, and loving.

A few young boys had tried to woo me in my younger years before college, but they always fell short. They wanted me to stand by their side and look pretty. They wanted to go on dates here and there but refused to talk to me in the hallways at school. I was only an accessory. My mother had always said I had matured fast for my age. These boys only proved her right.

Every once in a while, now, while I'm lying in the tattooed, wrinkled arms of a temporary lover at night or watching the rain fall just ahead of me as a roofing protects me from the drops at a bus stop, I'll think of him. The boy I left for this life. The boy who looked at me strangely. The boy who stared at me with love in his eyes as I said my final goodbye. The boy whose lips were the first to ever touch mine. The boy I spent the night with after my twentieth birthday. The boy with the red, white, and blue flannel on his shoulders and red bandana in his back pocket. The boy who tried to mask the smell of cigarettes with enormous amounts of cologne. The boy who loved me.

I remember when he strolled into the gas station store off campus along Interstate 405 where I worked late on the weekends and some weekdays to earn some extra. He picked out a carton of iced tea and asked for a pack of Marlboros. I had known him from school, had passed him and his army of brawn brothers on my way to class; I recognized him from the baseball team. If there was one thing I had learned from my father, it was the love of baseball.

"Aren't these bad for an athlete?" I asked, ringing up the pack and carton.

"Eh," he shrugged and gave a goofy smile, "Old habits die hard. And baseball isn't forever." "Neither are your lungs." I replied with a small smirk.

"I'll take my chances, Doc," he chuckled and winked at me, paid, and took his things.

I watched him leave in his truck, his taillights fading in the distance. He returned the next night, and the next, always buying something different, something odd that would amuse both him and I. He would pass me on his way to class with his pack, and always take the time to say his famous line "What's up, Doc" to me, which he thought was hilarious when it wasn't, and I guess that fact would make me laugh.

I had never felt love towards him. But there was something there. A shared, mutual feeling: the want of freedom. I followed that feeling after college. He stayed behind. It's been almost a year since I've seen his face. His shaggy dirty blonde hair, his gold-speckled brown eyes, his smug grin. But he still comes to mind every so often. He haunts my thoughts every time I light a cigarette, listen to classic rock, or hear a baseball game through some radio static. He was just an ordinary boy. But there was something underneath that perfect, charming surface of his. A fire that was waiting to be unleashed. A wild beast of war fighting in his mind and soul. No one else was able to unlock this blaze inside of him. No one else but me.

It's been exactly five years since I had first met his true, wild self. But he never fully knew what my mind held. What my heart held. What he meant to me. I had gone to the lengths and edges of the country, staying wherever I had wanted to. I floated, always a few feet off of the ground, without a place to call home. It was liberating. I never knew where he ended up. He had always talked about going to the major leagues, but he never seemed too hopeful. He still dreamt of it, though, and I dreamt for him, too.

I sit here now outside a bus station near his hometown, resting before the bus pulls in for the journey to wherever, reading his obituary in the local newspaper as I smoke a cigarette on this rainy July night. Carter Diggs, I dedicate this, all that I do, all that I will do, all that I have done, the search, the fall, and the rise, to you. Every single strum of John Fogerty's guitar and every puff of that forbidden smoke, to you. Every ounce of love I will ever feel, every heartbreak, and every day that I sit in the back seat of a cab and watch the headlights roll past as the droplets spill down the glass, I will dedicate it all to you; until the day my last breath catches and sinks into the ground below. It's all for you and that fire inside.