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Titanic

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About the Contributor (Optional)

David Grandouiller is a Junior English major at Cedarville University. He is interested in the unglorified, concrete moments of human experience: O'Connor's dust, Paul Harding's toothache, Brian Doyle's Ash Street, Francis Schaeffer's blue pomegranates.

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TITANIC

BY DAVID GRANDOULLER

CEDARVILLE
REVIEW

Atlas sticks his toe out from under the comforter, and that was the moon tonight: a ghostly, cloudy, arthritic nub. Atlas shrugs. What does he know? He spends his days spitting out his medicine on mitered sheets. The Fates will spoon-feed him a pureed breakfast. They'll massage his atrophied shoulders. They'll check to see if he's dry. He can't tell me I'm wasting my time, that everything into which I've invested myself is already passing away. He speaks in garbled sentences, or in whispers almost too weak to hear. He smiles good-naturedly below vacant eyes.

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*Where is Kronos? He grows restless. Where is Kronos?
I heard the rustle of his robes, as he passed.
I heard the rattle of his scythe,
I heard the striking of his staff.
Is he coming to devour me, too?*

He's gone. He came and went and all
We hear of him is a ticking in the distance.

Atlas pulls me by the arm,
His grip still very strong.
*I held the world up, you know?
I cooled my fingers in the deep Pacific.
I hugged the horn of Africa against my neck.
Am I dying?*

*It must be your turn now; you give it a run.
You're young.
Let me see those strong arms. He gives me another tug.
What are you holding up? You're titanic.*

*I'm not titanic.
I don't want to be titanic.
I don't want to hold things up, or
Sink under the weight of them.
I just want to be a human being.*

*Like Bill in the back wing of the nursing home, saying *You won't make me take a shower! Damn it, I'm right with Jesus Christ, are you?* Old Bill in his camo cargo pants. And out of them. Naked and outnumbered and scoured by students in white scrubs. They tell him he looks handsome as you would tell a child. *I want to be a human being in your eyes.**

*I fed a woman called Juanita, with big, watery eyes. *Here's some more of that oatmeal* I told her. She coughed and choked on puree, her big eyes so red.*

*Are you finished, Juanita? Are you full? And she said
How would I know that?
*How would I know that?**