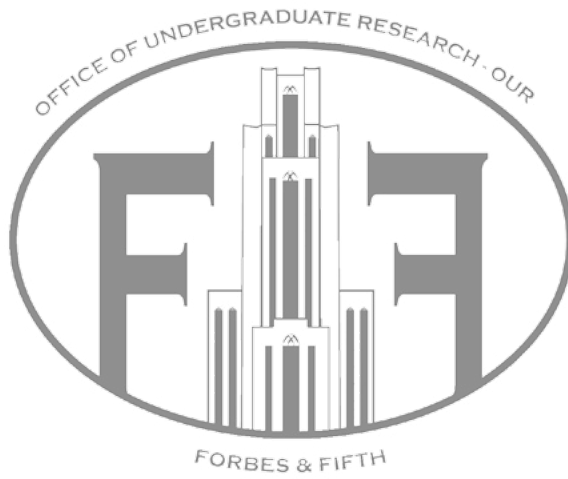




## • Alexis Tess

• Alexis Tess is somehow a senior, grad-  
• uating with degrees in English Writ-  
• ing and Anthropology. She has big plans  
• to fly to South America and never learn  
• the Spanish word for “plan.” Her writ-  
• ing has appeared, under many different  
• names (she is indecisive), in *Emerge Lit-*  
• *erary Journal*, *The Camel Saloon*, and *The*  
• *Legendary*.



## When the Falling is Done

It's like...

(search the skies)

it's like

finding the most wonderful chocolate bar. It's  
the raspberry ooze at the heart of the truffle, it's  
the Willy Wonka Golden Ticket to romance, baby,  
one way.

Eyes smile at the sight,  
nostrils sigh at the scent, every muscle fiber  
shouts hallelujah!  
and tap-dances in place.

So clutch the bar close to your chest, know  
it might melt one day, but that day  
is not today. For now  
let it be  
your savored, secret  
(almond) joy.

As soon as you're alone together,  
take a bite. A tiny one!  
Don't ruin your appetite and  
no! It's too good, take it all at once, shove  
it in, swallow hard, let it  
catch in your throat, let it  
coat your vocal chords with sweetness.  
You want it now?  
You got it now.

FORBES & FIFTH

But wait,  
stop and save the last bite  
wrap it up in silver foil and  
tuck it away.

\* \* \*

The days pass. And slowly,  
the sweetness is forgotten. Slowly,  
the Hershey Kiss compliments stop  
raining down. Chocolate droplets turn hard, hail,  
balled up wrappers pelt bare skin. Small,  
but man, do they sting.

And one day, you realize you  
can't move, you're  
buried beneath  
a mountain  
of

waste.

Who knew whispers in the night had such weight?

*Who else could love you? I mean,*

*Who else could love you? I mean,*

*Who else could-could-could-could-*

*STOP!*

Too long you've said nothing, too long  
you've swallowed tough love,  
choked down your voice,  
put permanent teeth marks into your lips.  
Just. Stop.

Find the last bit of that wonderful chocolate bar.  
It's still in your pocket.

Dig for it now,  
dig 'til fingernails pull back from flesh, 'til  
your heart pounds behind your eyes, 'til  
your stomach snarls in its den, and the weight of the world takes your  
breath away  
ahhhh

You find your chocolate and  
bring it to your lips  
just  
to taste the bitter bite of cocoa, a kiss  
of sawdust dried up on your tongue.

That  
is when you leave. That  
is when the falling is done.