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Remembering John Hauser

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>Remembering John Hauser

Leah Hanley

From: UND Notifications (noreply@und.edu)

The University of North Dakota community is deeply saddened to learn of the death of John Hauser, a student majoring in Commercial Aviation from Chicago, Illinois.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to John's family, friends, classmates, and fraternity brothers. They are all in our thoughts and prayers.

On the afternoon I realized that John Hauser was gone,
he had been dead almost four days.

The afternoon sky, as the sun slowly set,
was a pure crystal of rosy purple
except for a few low clouds that looked like
blobs of paint smeared with a palette knife.

John Hauser would never admire another painted sky.

Walking home, I saw a solitary plane
flying toward the airport, and wondered
if the pilot was thinking about John Hauser, too.

That night, on my knees at the side of my son's bed,
his hair smoothed back and cheeks rosy with sleep,
we clasped hands and prayed the Lord our souls to keep.

He didn't understand my lingering gaze
and laughed at my repeated *I love yous*.

Leaving his room, I prayed that John Hauser's mother
could remember similar nights.

Sometime in the deep evening, my eyes opened with a jerk.
John? John Hauser! John! *Oh no. No, no, no.*
In the dark, I searched through records, and found
his name on last year's class roster: John Hauser.
And then I saw his face, illuminated, blue light,
and I asked him, demanding, "John, what happened?"
But he just gave me his polite smile
and looked away.
Reaching out for comfort, I woke the father of my child.
His hands found mine, warm, soothing. He left
to fetch some water, and came back cheerful, "It snowed."
I'm not ready for that, but went to the window, compelled.
Not snow; every surface was alight with
a thick blanket of moonlight.

Leah Noel Hanley is currently in pursuit of a Master of Arts degree in English at the University of North Dakota. Her writing focuses on the exploration of deeply human experiences, through which she hopes to inspire empathy across cultural boundaries. She also hopes to inspire conservation and preservation of our Earth through her use of natural subjects and landscapes. When Leah is not writing (or grading papers), she is likely cross stitching, cooking, or spending quality time with her loved ones.