

My One Thesis

By Susan DeWolf, Harvard Neurobiology class of 2010

I speak now of a torturous love
A subject that has filled my mind
Since sophomore—no, since freshman fall
When I first stumbled on my field
And all at once became enthralled
With that great study of the mammalian brain,
Of synapses, and neuronal cells
And how they so elusively evolve.
And so this love started quite small
As I dabbled in courses and let my thoughts roam.
But very soon I was quite sure
That love at first site may be the truth.
The biology of brains became my quest
The object not just of my academic love
But also of my one Thesis.
Decision made—no turning back.
The science lab as my new home.
The dream of some great data strong—or results
To tell a novel tale. So many hours at the bench
With one goal looming at the end:
The Thesis. The culmination of these college years.
The closure of a lengthy search
For something to preserve in words.

The time has come for hands to write,
That abstract Thesis no more a dream.

Though now I wonder: am I, dear Thesis, writing you,

Or are you really writing me?

The month of March has thus arrived

A storm of questions with it too:

Will this work really reach an end?

Will two weeks pass---and task

Complete? How will it feel

To hand it in? How will it feel,

And when will I know?

For now an utter wreck am I

Torn between two towering fears—

The first a deadly dread o' the clock

A ticking deadline I cannot stop.

But the second fear is far

More grave. A fear of finally letting go,

A fear of reaching the other side...

The side of that post-Thesis time.

For then there will be no return.

The finally copy printed and bound.

Forever gone. Forever gone.