Logged in on LIVE
Emily Heasley

When the start screen loaded on life
they told me, “Pick a difficulty.”
I decided to play
on insanity mode.
Not to show off,
not for the challenge,
but because it sounded more interesting
than normal.
But I’ll tell you
it isn’t for amateurs
because while some may play their games
as RPGs
I’ve booted up a survival horror
first-person
epic sandbox brawl.

See, while Commander Shepard was ripping through Reapers,
I was shooting down depression, PTSD, anxiety.
Necromorphs? Isaac, please.
Try Ivan, Opal, Dennis, Katrina.
Ezio Auditore was assassinating Templars
as I tempered the toxic words
of a hundred bull-rushing bullies.
Sure, ship me off to Bright Falls.
Send me to Silent Hill.
Pyramid Head and the Taken
are kittens compared
to the monsters I’ve crushed.
I lived through worse horrors
than any Enderman could bring:
The murder of a friend.
My grandmother’s funeral.
No boss or baddies,
Big Daddies or Locusts
scare me.

High school drop out
turned Hero of Time
with twenty credits in one year.
Achievement unlocked:
Graduated With Honors.
College classes racked up
quicker than my gamer score.
Thinking with Portals
ain’t hard for me.
Dovahkin of pottery, painting, and prose.
Fingers flying down frets
faster than any Guitar Hero.
I’m so grossly incandescent,
can you keep up?

So bring on the battles
because this is only level 20.
Set me up with some ammo,
a health pack
and a tough co-op partner.
Throw me Blights and super mutants.
Show me zombies, infected.
I can take it all.
When it comes to ranked matches,
I’m number one.

First Place, James and Christian LaRoche Memorial Poetry Contest, 2013