

LOVE  
IS ALL  
YOU  
NEED

IMAGINE

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*Happiness is...*

Knowing your support system is only a phone call away

A bacon, egg and cheese with an iced coffee

Going to dance class every night

**Playing guitar on the beach**

Seeing the one you love continue to fight for survival

Eating my favorite snack

Cuddling with my boyfriend

Drinking something cold after playing basketball

**To love and be loved in return**

When my makeup and hair comes out perfect

Waking up and having nothing to do all day

A nap in the afternoon

Having a reason to smile at 6:30 in the morning

Accepting yourself and moving on

**Achieving what people said you couldn't do**

A bowl of cereal

Being independent

Fitting into your favorite pair of skinny jeans

**Living your life to the fullest**

Watching the leaves change as you drive down the street

Whatever you want it to be.

Written by many, compiled by Sydney Mueller



Christina Midollo

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Katie Stevens

DISCOVER YOURSELF

Start Your Journey

CARVE

A NEW EXPERIENCE

fall in love

Do something different

express

AND

CRAFT

yourself

REDISCOVER

THE WAY LIFE

should BE

FOR YOURSELF

Enjoy. Experience. Engage

Catch

your

DREAMS

START

a

new chapter

THE FUTURE

do ES

matter...

*An Ode to You*

You are beautiful, like an untouched pine forest powdered with snow  
You are lovable like a teddy bear, cozy, cuddly, and warm  
You are my hot chocolate on that cold night of Christmas Eve

I sit here  
Writing an Ode to you  
And how you shine brighter than the sun on a steaming summer's day

You are creative  
You are imaginative  
You flourish with radiance

You beam with energy  
I don't know how you do it  
You relieve pain like Novocain

I sit here writing  
An Ode to you  
An Ode to your glowing smile  
An Ode to your rosy pink cheeks

I sit here writing  
An Ode to you  
Only reaching the tip of the iceberg  
Of how amazing you are

**Angie Martinetti**



David Mera

## *Curiosity*

Curiosity is there all day  
Hiding from the upstairs light  
Try to find it if you may

Children are outside at play  
Not wanting to cause a fright  
Curiosity is there all day.  
If it is not there, you will pay.  
It will follow you with all its might.  
Try to find it if you may

Go across the foggy bay.  
It is there in the darkened night.  
Curiosity is there all day

Take a wild jump in the hay  
Look for the hidden needle  
Try to find it if you may

Take a look at the rising sun  
Take a trip, enjoy the flight.  
Curiosity is there all day  
Try to find it if you may.

Shannon Zuccarelli



Shannon Zuccarelli

## *Martian Haiku*

Red sand in my trunks  
Summer vacation in space  
A Martian Haiku

Andy O'Rourke



Tyler DeRafele



*Love Story: Shakespearian Sonnet*

There once was a man who enjoyed eating.  
He especially liked chocolate pancakes.  
He truly hated tests and was cheating,  
The man would rather stay at home and bake.

He was upset about a girl he liked;  
She was popular and he was so not  
He brought her a love letter on his bike.  
She thought he was weird but he loved her lots.

The man was upset by her reaction.  
He thought he would never have a true chance  
He realized he needed to take action;  
The man wanted to invite her to dance.

He thought she would give an answer of no  
But she decided to say yes and go.

Hannah Bender



Shannon Zuccarelli

*The Thank You Note*

What are these plants? Why are they so tall? I coughed violently as more smoke filled my lungs. My mind is so hazy. This feels like a dream. Or maybe a nightmare. I stood up, timidly took a few steps, and peered around a corner. "Helloooo? Is anyone there? I need help, there's a fire!" Silence. Only the fire spreading and crackling in the distance. "This is your Princess speaking; I command you to answer!" I croaked out. I could barely see past a few yards; the smoke was too thick. I kept going towards it though; maybe it's not too late to smother it out. I ripped the flimsy silk fabric off of my Caribbean blue dress and used it to tie my hair up. Psh, I never liked this dress anyway. Where are my servants? The last thing I remember was falling asleep to them fanning me, and now I'm here? This is all wrong, I'm definitely dreaming.

I paused to look at my surroundings. Is this a corn field or something? I continued walking, each step getting heavier. I felt my eyelids beginning to shut. No, no, I can't pass out, I just woke up! Then I felt something solid under my foot. I reached down and picked it up, a candle? Could this tiny little candle have started this blazing fire? Are stocks of corn really this flammable? I think I have these exact candles in the castle surrounding my bathtub. Most of the wax was melted off though. Shivers ran up my spine, I swear I just heard something. "This is Princess Ruby speaking, I need help. I order you to show yourself!" I heard a distant chuckle. Okay, this is really starting to freak me out.

Someone screamed, I think that was me. I felt a thud against my back, and something hard came up by my neck. It smells like metal. A knife?! I can't see anything.

"Don't make another sound," a deep raspy voice whispered in my ear. My stomach caved in. Definitely a knife. I didn't say a word. He tied my hands together behind my back, really tightly. I heard the ripping sound of tape and then it was around my mouth. "Mmmmm!" I could barely breathe. He pressed harder with the knife on my neck. I obeyed and became silent. He nudged my back, urging me to step forward. My legs were shaking and things were starting to black out. I just kept walking, I tried to look back to see his face, but every time I started to turn around; he pressed the knife harder to my neck. He led me out of the corn field and into the woods. I was dripping sweat from the fire. He ripped off the duct tape.

"Tell me the code to the palace safe," the man said. That's what he wants-money?!

"Tell me now, if you want to live to see tomorrow." Everything was going in and out, the trees around me were spinning and moving.

"7.....2....."

"Hurry up, you worthless tramp," he dug the knife into my skin so hard blood oozed out from my neck. I tried to take a deep breathe, but my mind couldn't focus.

"3.....8" It went black.

I opened my eyes and saw my pink satin curtains across my bedroom. I yawned and turned over onto my side, rubbing my neck. Ow, why does it feel sore? I sprung out of bed and rang the bell for Mabel to draw my bath. Just then, I heard a loud commotion downstairs, along with a lot of yelling. Throwing a bathrobe over my pajamas, I flung down the three flights of stairs into the main foyer.

"I don't know where it went, my Queen," Dad shouted. A bunch of the guards were lined up. They had guns in their belts. I quickly turned my head so they wouldn't see my spying.

I dashed through the hallway and then trudged back up the stairs taking two at a time. Mabel came in and handed me a letter. That's weird. I, like, never get mail.

"It's to you, Princess," she said softly. It was just blank, no address or anything, just my name. I stared at her, hoping she'd get the picture to get the hell out of my room. I tore it open. A thank you letter? Thanking me for what?

"Ruby," It began. It was a pretty rose colored paper with a floral border.

*Thank you for the splendid evening last night.*

*Thank you for all of your help!*

*I hope you didn't get burned.*

My eyes widened. Everything came rushing back. Last night. The fire. The knife. That man. I had dreamt about being in a corn field, could it have been real? I brought my hand slowly up to my neck and felt the long horizontal scratch. My knees buckled beneath me. Just then I heard a knock on the door.

“Ruby, we’re in a crisis situation. The money’s gone. All \$9,000,000 of it. Do you know anything?”

Amy Geller



Shannon Zuccarelli



*The Apple*

She took the apple  
That poor, young girl  
Her skin so white  
Her hair so black  
And the birds  
Watched her fall to sleep

She would sleep  
After she took the apple  
And the birds  
Would watch that girl  
With her hair so black  
And her skin so white

Like snow, her skin so white  
As she belonged to sleep  
With the hair so black  
Framing her face and the apple  
That the girl  
Took below the birds

And the birds  
Were white  
Just like the girl  
Who was a prisoner to sleep  
That ate the apple  
With the hair that was black

A heart of black  
Below the birds  
Gave her the apple  
The girl with skin so white  
And it put her to sleep  
That poor, young girl

There lay the girl  
The sky now black  
And she was deep in sleep  
And so were the birds  
Her skin so white  
And her lips as red as the apple

And the girl who lay near the birds  
With hair so black and skin so white  
Would forever belong to sleep because of an apple



Katherine Ensign

Tara D'Antona

*BE. YOU. TIFUL*

Don't waste your life when  
 Their words don't mean a thing  
 You have a chance to power your own city  
 You have a chance to make a difference  
 A chance to repair what's broken and replace them with something new  
 You have a chance to live your own life  
 Remember the memories and where you came from,  
 Cherish every day  
 Prove others wrong  
 Define how you see your destiny and fulfill it  
 LIVE A LIFE YOU'LL LOVE

Samantha O'Rourke



Erik Johansen

*Heavy Heart*

My heart feels heavy and cold as I drive away once more. The second he vanished from my view was the second my heart hung in grief and despair and utter loneliness. I gaze out of the car window hoping that somehow I'd find him chasing after me, standing in the rain, waiting for the day we could be together again. You see, he's like day and I'm like night; complete opposites in their nature, yet needing each other to survive. You would know just how I've felt if you woke up in the dark. If it was still night, but day never came to save you from the monsters under your bed. If you never again got the chance to see his weary smile, knowing that he ran all this way just to find you. The weight of my desire for him, is getting heavier as we become one, as "I" turns into "we". The rain pounds on the car window and releases me from my thoughts. Each raindrop leads me farther from him, farther from day...

Alexandra Franco

*Break*

Sometimes it's better to let it all go.  
Just lay back, relax, and let life flow.  
A break from it all, a stroll down the hall,  
if you run you will stumble and down you will fall.  
So give it a rest if you're feeling stressed.  
You know you'll return, refreshed for the best.  
It's not such a crime to take off some time,  
and every once in a while, to skip over a rhyme.  
When life is a shrew and weighs upon you,  
just let it pass by, and see it all through.  
Find strength in optimism, and guidance in will.  
Persisting, existing, across every hill.  
The world will not change, but individuals can.  
Forget about the little things that make you wonder when-  
When will the madness go away? Is it possible to win?  
The answers lie in each of us and must be sought within.  
The point that I am trying to make  
is that everybody makes mistakes.  
We all shall find our time to take,  
to balance, to take a break.

Pasquale (Alex) Tosto



Michael Leake

*Eternal Love*

“Would you like an hors d'œuvre, miss?”

“Oh, no thank you.” What a handsome young waiter. I pull my shawl closer to my body. The spring breeze is chilly at night. I look up at the moon; very nice and full. I can see some stars too! It's such a nice evening for a wedding; it kind of makes me forget about my hip pains for a little. Hmmm, where's the bar? I'm not supposed to drink according to my new doctor, but it *is* a special occasion, after all. There's the cute waiter over there. I started hobbling over towards the bar. “Excuse me ma'am, there's wheelchair access over there in case you need it.” How sweet, his mother must have raised him well. I read at his name tag. Tybalt. I once had a cousin by that name. “How old do ya think I am?!” I joked. “Not a day past 20!” he joked back. What a cutie. I'm actually 93. Almost 94. But that doesn't stop me from enjoying this wedding. I say hello to a few friends and make my way to the bar. I order a martini. I look down at my sagging wrinkly skin. I barely fit in this light blue dress. This is one of my favorite dresses. Have I shrunk? It's almost 11, I should get my husband and head out soon, he's probably tipsy and sleeping somewhere in a corner. Oh, the adventures we used to have together. We were such crazy kids back in the day, now we just sit on our porch sipping iced tea every afternoon. Still just as good to me.

“Attention everyone! In celebration of our new bride and groom, I'd like to say a few words”.

I try to raise my glass to the toast, but my hand is shaking too much. Oh no. Not here.... There he was. Leaning over me. His beautiful blonde locks tickling my cheek and his hot breath warming me up. His eyes were glossed over with tears. I looked around. It was dim and silent. I can barely breathe straight. I blinked a few times and the blurriness went away. I shook my brown shiny hair out of my eyes. My husband. He leaned down and kissed me. His kisses are so sweet. What's that in his hand? What's he doing? “I'll see you soon”. He took my hand and kissed it gently. Wake up. Why can't I wake up? Why won't my mouth open? It's glued shut..



He took the tiny glass vial and raised it to his lips. It all clicked right then. “Noooooooo!” I shouted. I knocked the vial away from his lips with a burst of adrenaline. His eyes widened. He held me up and kissed me, face wet with tears. “You’re alive, how can this be?” “The friar.” I whispered. He showered my face with tiny kisses. I leaned into him and kissed him back. Then it hit me. Everything. I got a twisting lurching feeling in my stomach. I jolted up and noticed all of the candles and crosses surrounding me. I was dead to everyone. We’ll have to leave Verona. We’ll have to start all over. That’s fine with me as long as I get to be with him. Ugh my head, everything’s spinning. What was in that drink? I began to cry. I wonder what my life would be like now. “Shhh lie back down, everything’s okay, I’m alive and you’re alive; and we’re together at last.”

I snap out of it. My whole body is shaking. I have goose bumps and my gray hair is raised on the back of my neck. That night, the night my whole world almost ended. If I hadn’t woken up just then...or if he hadn’t seen me....I think to myself how things would have changed. My whole life would have been different. Nurse would have been out of work. My parents would have been happy I was gone at least. I can hear my heart pounding rapidly in my ears. But the feud would have continued. We worked together to bring it to an end. We fixed that city. The two of us together, we were unstoppable. We stood up to our families once and for all. Okay, steady your breathing. Did I forget to take my pills this morning? I feel a hand brush against my arm. His hand. “It’s okay, my love, I’m right here” Romeo says.

Amy Geller



Gabriella Garcia

*The Fallacy of Facebook*

As if a "like" on a picture  
Was one more rung climbed on the cruel social ladder-  
An appreciated expression of jealousy or admiration  
That made you, a sad, quiet girl within,  
Feel better about your stance in this world.

As if a status  
Was a kind of voice your vocal chords have never known-  
The only outlet in a society where freedom of speech is a right  
Written in the un-wearable stone of our declaration-  
And is your sole opportunity to speak... without speaking.

As if suddenly, you are raging bully  
Sitting behind the bulldozing machine of your computer-  
Destructing everything in your cyber-path...  
Your keyboard- your fists of rage;  
Your mouse- the final punch.

As if adding a friend  
Was the same as being friendly,  
And suddenly you are Ms. Congeniality.  
But understand, these people with the bubbly looking profiles  
Are nothing more

Than number hungry

Popularity craving

Predators.

Amanda Friedman



Wajidah Heyward



Elizabeth Klein

### *Acceptance*

If I could change one thing about Harrison High School, it would be that everything and everyone is accepted. As of right now, not everyone is accepting of everyone else around them. Basically, I would like to see the school without hatred, where every interest and idea is equal. There would be no one excluded and no one thinking their ideas, opinions or interests are bad or inferior.

However, I do realize that this will never happen. It can't. For while there are people, there is hatred. And hatred is part of a personality.

Emily Murray

Alexandra Franco

**LIVE FOR**

**LOVE**

Make

Mistakes

**FEEL**

**NO LIMITS**

**CRAFT**

**a**

**NEW**

**STORY**

**ANYTIME.  
ANYWHERE.**

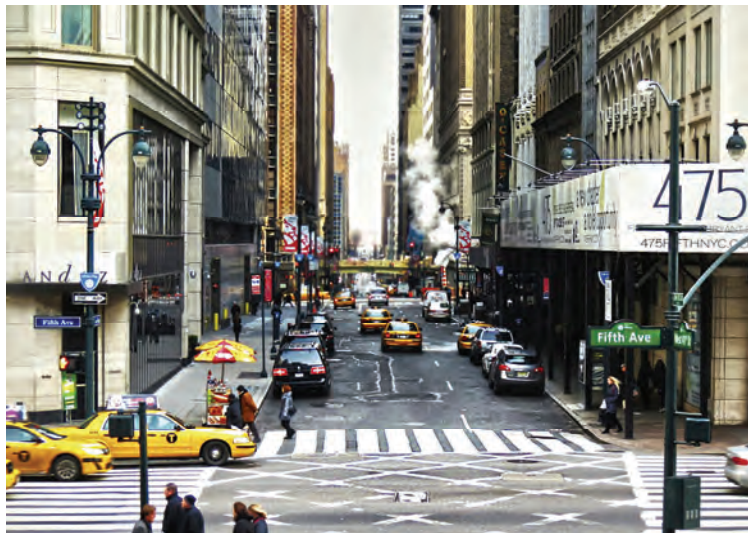


### *Curious but Confined*

Curious but confined,  
 Stuck in a little box,  
 Wondering,  
 If I kick here,  
 Will the box break?  
 Thinking,  
 What's out there?  
 So naïve  
 In my little cage,  
 Trying to learn  
 To become someone.

My path is fixed  
 Everyone is a fixed proportion,  
 You're born into society,  
 A class,  
 Your parents raise you,  
 They make you,  
 You never had a chance,  
 I don't have a chance.

My days are numbered,  
 You're all born and you all die,  
 But not everyone learns,  
 I want to discover,  
 Create,  
 Make.



Shannon Zuccarelli

How do you fill a day?  
 Work, errands, eating,  
 sleeping,  
 Generic lives,  
 Generic people,  
 Generic society.

Keep your advice,  
 I want to find my own,  
 Find my own path.

Is this really set in stone?  
 You wake up,  
 You think,  
 You sleep,  
 You dream,  
 Does it make a difference?  
 Majority rules,  
 You're grouped,  
 You're insane,  
 You're smart,  
 You're stupid.

You'll never win,  
 But you might succeed,  
 Get a raise,  
 Get a grade,  
 Maybe a love?

Everyone is different,  
 But they're not  
 They're all the same.

Victoria Tiburzi

*Ode to the Unknown Street Performer*

Oh street performer,  
 How your smell of sweat  
 Broken dreams  
 And cheap cologne draws me closer

Oh street performer,  
 How the sound of your Goth violin  
 Tries to rip off AC/DC and  
 Black Sabbath riffs

Oh how your facial expressions change  
 As if you were being cavity searched  
 By Edward Scissorhands

Oh, how your skin looks as if it hasn't been washed in 2 years  
 Oh, the endless possibilities such as the audience  
 Correctly guessing the number of pimples on your neck

Oh how a man with a net and a giant syringe  
 Would appear from the crowd and chase you through Manhattan  
 In my dreams!

But,

I do credit your intelligence on

Locks,

Kung-fu,

And driving

Needed to escape wherever you were holed up

Before this stint

Oh, street performer,  
 How you will probably be famous one day  
 Looking back on this chapter in your life  
 And stopping to laugh

Until then, you are stuck doing this...

Although,  
It is better than being  
A clown,  
A guy in a goofy suit at Disney world (wear knee pads)  
Or a guy who gets hired to do kids birthday parties  
In hot sweaty costumes (wear armor)  
Or, a police attack dog trainer

Although the last one sounds cool, it isn't

Oh, street performer,

How after your act you always seem to hit on younger women

And yet, you put up with this whole ode because  
You'll be famous one day  
And you can laugh at this point in your life...

But until then

You'll have to tolerate the teenager  
Who is doing a stand-up routine  
Poking fun at your job

And he's getting more of a crowd

Andy O'Rourke



Tyler\_DeRaffele

*Rise and Shine*

I want to live in a nicer place,  
where the birds will cheerfully sing for you.  
And those birds will gladly take the place,  
of the rooster's cock-a-doodle-doo.

What a nasty sound to hear when you awaken.  
You think about where you might have been mistaken.  
Then you realize the poor rooster longs for his wife.  
She crossed the street and lost her life.

He now is depressed and lives by himself.  
But why did the chicken cross the road?  
That's a rooster, not sure what to do with himself.  
His hen has been struck with a heavy load.

He walks across the busy street,  
quickly shuffling his tiny feet.  
He looks for the spot where his sweetheart died,  
and so every morning, he has cried.

So why did the chicken cross the road?  
Why did she leave her man behind?  
Perhaps she was simply chasing a toad,  
and couldn't make it across in time.

She inadvertently changed the way  
the world would wake up every day.  
She was not seeking the other side  
so whoever said that obviously lied.

Now all of the roosters,  
while not all related,  
will still cry in the morning,  
for the one who was mated,  
to the bravest bird in history,  
who decided to cross the road.

Pasquale (Alex) Tosto





Christina Frohlich

*Soldier*

Standing up for what he believes in  
Out on the battlefield is where he fights best  
Loyal to his country  
Determined to be the last one standing  
Integrity, honesty, moral and honorable  
Even with the odds against him he  
Remembers what the true battle was for

Katie Stevens

*From Everything to Endlessly Alone*

From the outside, I appear to be nothing more than an unattractively plump, middle-aged man with a thinning head of hair and sideburns that fail to ever stop growing. My ears are long and droopy, as if each word I hear is so large and heavy that it actually weighs them down. My lips are shriveled- both from the wrinkles that are slowly conquering my lower-face, and, most likely, from the over-socializing that has occurred throughout the years. My eyes are narrow and piercing and exploding with a vibrant green color that makes me look more like a sly cat than a dodo-brained human. Quite telling, they are... My cheeks are rosy and full like those of old Saint Nick, but the red comes from the fire within me- not any form of joy. My body is stocky and stubby but *thick*- as if it were filled with the red-stone bricks of my Manhattan apartment building. From the outside, I am simple- simply nothing special nor surprising. But, if you were to take a little peek into my life, you would come to believe quite the opposite.

Now, I'm not going to tell you I'm part of a gang or sector of the mafia, because that may scare you away. However, if I'm being honest here, I'm actually part of, well, both. It all started back in the 70's—I was a rambunctious young man with the potential to do far more than my path was about to lead me to, and *the* organization, like some savior from the Bible, took me in. I was their foster child and they were going to give the once sad, lost orphan, just about everything I needed to succeed. THAT, my friend, they did. Now, I reside(d) in a building within the city of which I own approximately three floors. I have foreign butlers stick-stiff spines taking my orders. I have cute little imported French maids to clean up after my carelessly messy self. I have a chef (whose origins I am unsure of) cooking me the most delectable, sense-pleasing, beautifully sculpted meals *at least* the three necessary times a day. I sleep on a bed that was once lied upon by the emperor Xio Xe He of China, and has recently been refurbished by Martha Stewart. My sheets are of the finest, lavender silk known to any living creature on the surface of earth while my pillow is stuffed with the fluff of the cheery little animated bear from the "Snuggies" commercial. My life is—excuse me— WAS, perfect, and the money was practically seeping out of my pores.

Your question at this point may be more about what my organization does, rather than how it allowed me to transform into Daddy Warbucks... Though I would previously had been violently stabbed in the face multiple times for disclosing any form of information about the "secret society" to outsiders, I feel as if nothing matters while sitting in this jail cell, so why not?

My organization is named the “Excers”— solely based on the fact that we somehow have the miraculous power to “ex-out” (if you catch my drift) anything or anyone that hinders our rise. It was founded in the 1920’s, as most mob-like groups were, during the dreadful time of the prohibition and the confusing aftermath of a world war. Times were tough and dry in the Midwest, where stiff conservatives actually enforced the newly strict laws and Joey Linguini had just about had enough. Linguini had traveled over to America- the land of dreams and corn, with but four pennies clunking around in his back overall pockets, and wished to start over. The U.S. was to provide new opportunities for him- a new career, house, woman... However, because of the difficult times, (especially in Oklahoma where he initially settled), America became more of an enemy than the helpful friend myths of miracles had made it out to be. Linguini was presented with no new career, house, or woman, and he wasn’t just about to sit back and watch all he had worked for sink in the currently struggling American society. Yet, more important to him than making things better, was doing what his hotheaded Italian relatives were known best for- getting revenge.

You see, the government, to him, was to blame. The government was the reason Linguini lived in a crooked farmsmack in the middle of nowhere that was constantly being covered by oceans of black dust. The government was the reason Linguini was not suddenly the head of multiple corporations on Wall Street and able to afford the best suits that new department store, Sears, had to offer. Though his logic to a mundane outsider may not necessarily make sense, to Linguini, it was without fault. As a result, the delirious and dangerously determined man set out to attack the government, but planned to do so in a more “behind the scenes” secret agent sort of way. First, he decided he would need to gain a group of followers that shared the common, overwhelming hatred. Second, he would plan small revenge-motivated attacks on the government that were more meant to show that angry people existed, rather than to hurt anyone. Third, after multiple years of minor bombings of empty space and shootouts that only once in a while took a life, Linguini’s successors would carry out the largest attack of all. This attack would end everything— the government, its laws, any form of order... After ending everything, his Excers would take over and rebuild the civilization inhabiting the U.S. from scratch— molding it to the way he desired it to be back in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

About a month ago, it dawned on the Excers after finally deciding to take a quick glimpse on their terrorist calendar, that the large attack, according to Linguini’s plan, was soon to come... two weeks soon.

That's when everything was shifted into high gear and the sluggish members, (fat from their extravagant lifestyles), began to move at a rapid pace. If this deadline could not be met, it would seem as if everything Linguini worked for— everything he hoped and dreamed about since he entered this unforgiving country would disintegrate into nothing. Therefore, lives were put on hold to make sure all was carried through flawlessly and the only thought allowed to be on minds was the thought of total destruction (or, basically, success). Due to the fact that many of the members were placed strategically around the country, cell-phone communication during this time was flying through the roof. Though this appeared to be the ultimate way to get little, often pointless, messages out about the upcoming attack to ambassador Excers around the U.S., it was also a method that got me, well, here.

It was two weeks ago, and I was pouncing around my luxurious, three floor bachelor pad in satin pajamas imported directly from a small textile village in Vietnam. It was a Saturday, (my favorite day), and after finishing my cholesterol-filled brunch, I decided to waltz outside to get the paper. It was my usual waltz, and I did so automatically— not taking in any of my surroundings as I did so and only focusing on the newspaper lying ahead. However, this time, instead of my blocking out the usual German Shepard peeing on the side-street fire hydrants and the rolling by of six baby-carriages shoved along by jogging mothers, I blocked something, um, different. Yes, I blocked out 15 rock-solid FBI secret agents in full-on uniform. They kindly greeted me in my pajamas with a nice ole' shove into some guy who then cuffed me. Though this was an odd Saturday morning, I didn't even question the scary men or shackles. I knew why they were there. My fellow members and I, THE CLUB... we were all finished.

This didn't quite turn out to be the case. No, they all weren't finished just quite yet— only I was. The FBI had heard word of the ultimate attack drawing near and decided to bug known Excers' phones to obtain more information. Apparently, due to my multiple absences at meetings over the past couple of months while I was enjoying the Hawaiian sun, I was not properly informed about the necessity of using "code" when discussing the attack via mobile devices. Therefore, the only legitimate insight they received about the attack came directly from my cell phone... and ONLY my cell phone. This hard evidence gave the FBI enough of a reason to interrupt my morning routine and shuttle me down to the police station behind the back seat bars that most commonly encage *actual* hoodlums. Afterwards, they threw my large bum in a jail cell where I was greeted by a lovely blue-haired woman and a man with enough tattoos on his body to imitate a piece of Van Gogh artwork.

It was there, in that cell, that I was given two choices: 1. Sit there and rot. 2. Reveal more information about the attack, sell out my fellow mob-members, and get off FREE. Yes, FREE. That second one, to me, as a man who had always valued the mob as the greatest form of family a person could have, was not even considerable. I chose then and there to sit, and of course, to rot.

However, I didn't actually believe I would be left there to decay like the rat carcass in the corner. I was thoroughly convinced that a "family" member or two (if not all) would show up in red sparkling capes and fly away with me back to a building with running water or heat. (I would take either). Yet, none of them did. Not a single Excer appeared at the jail. Not a single Excer wrote nor called nor yelled to me outside the cracked window of my cell. I was in fact left alone to rot, and I slowly began to realize why. I was an embarrassment. I was the man who failed to follow protocol. I was practically one of the oldest members of the group, and was the most idiotic of all. To them, my brothers, I was a disgrace.

Not many know this, but my family abandoned me at a very young age. I was left to fend for myself- out on dangerous streets, through harsh winters and all, throughout the majority of my childhood. I had never come to know the true meaning of caring for another or even the simple feeling of being supported. However, when I came upon the Excers, and they took me in with open arms, I finally got a taste of everything I had missed. Suddenly, I knew what it was like to be a part of something special where I was actually appreciated. Most importantly, I then knew what it was like to be loved. We loved each other- us Excers...Again, I believed we were a family...

Now, after laying upon this concrete bed for what I am almost positive to be three weeks, I have come to see the truth. I was never a part of something special or appreciated or loved. No, I was just a chess piece in the total, ridiculous operation. These men, they have a one track mind. They want to reform the world, and that's it. They don't need nor want friends... they don't need anything but power. I, on the other hand, only became a ruthless member for the family I thought came along with the deal. Sure, the money, the apartment floors, and the general respect (I BELIEVED) I had was nice, but it wasn't my favorite part of being an Excer. Right here, in my cell, I have finally realized that the part I enjoyed the most was, in actuality, not even real.

Amanda Friedman



*Old Man*

The other day I saw a shirt, upon an old man's back.  
The names that were written on it, were all typed up in black.  
I couldn't make much sense of it; there wasn't anything more.  
It was just a list of names, you see. To be exact, there were forty four.  
This very morning, a little boy approached the elderly man.  
The fellow gave a baffled look, and away the small boy ran.  
This afternoon the boy returned, his mother holding his hand.  
He wanted her to ask for him, a question for the man.  
She asked of the shirt he wore, and what the names all meant.  
To answer her, and the little boy, this is how he went:  
The names you see which cover me, are names which now are gone.  
It seems that I'm the only one who has yet to move on.  
There once were people living here, who very well could claim,  
the ownership to every single one of these here names.  
Alas I am alone on earth; we all have parted ways.  
It's been so long since they've been here; you cannot count the days.  
People call me a veteran, and I'm honored far and wide.  
I've created this shirt here for all my loyal brethren who have died.  
Each and every one of them stays stuck inside my heart.  
To tell you what they meant to me, I wouldn't know where to start.  
This one goes out to my soldiers, not just the ones on my shirt.  
For all of the people defending their country, and all those buried within the dirt.  
The army, the navy, the air force, and of course our valiant marines,  
will always live forevermore, in all the nation's dreams.

Pasquale (Alex) Tosto



Christina Frohlich

*Escape*

I guess my life was sort of a mess under the part of it that looked and seemed great. I mean, even I thought everything was going good. My family loves me, and we have a nice enough home, and live in a great kingdom. Actually, let's go back to the beginning. That's usually a good place to start.

My name is Alice. Alice Smith. I'm twenty-four years old. A long time ago I was engaged to be married to a man called Victor. In his eyes, our marriage would be the greatest thing ever. Not only would it benefit both of our families' positions at court, but also he was madly in love with me. Seriously. It was too weird of a situation for me, since he had been my friend since I was seven. So what did I do? The only thing I thought was appropriate, of course. I ran. Looking back, it actually probably wasn't that appropriate.

Maybe that's why my parents were always so worried about me. I did what I wanted. I was a 'rebel.' I really didn't think a rebel was someone who did what they thought was best for themselves. Of course to them that was more proof that I would cause them much stress. I like to think I'm brave. That's what I dream of being, anyway. I'm on the right path, though. After all, bravery is shown through action, not thought.

Anyway, I ran for a long time. Being alone was good for me. It was better after I stole a bow and arrows from an abandoned village. I've always been a really good hunter, which most people saw as unrefined for a girl, but I'll tell you that the only skills I needed when I left home were survival skills. And thanks to being so unrefined, my survival skills were probably the best you would ever see. But sometimes I was a little too cautious.

Every time I heard the slightest noise, I would panic. Immediately my bow would be in my grip and I would be pulling an arrow back to shoot at any given moment. The nights where I had to sleep in caves were the worst during these situations, because there was nowhere to run. I tried to keep near villages, and sell game to earn enough money for a night or two in an inn. I eventually found myself in one of the neighboring kingdoms. The people were kind and offered me a place to rest simply because I looked tired to them. One of these people in particular was a man. Sebastian. Yeah, yeah, I know. Here's the part where it becomes a sappy love story. Sorry. But before I loved him, I hated him. I resented the fact that he pitied me, or so I thought at the time. I didn't see that he truly wanted to help me. Skipping all the gross, mushy details, we fell in love when I finally stopped trying to kill him. Or maybe we were in love from the moment we met and just didn't notice it. Is that how love works? I'd ask Victor, he knew a lot about love.

But I obviously can't do that.

I have a daughter now. Her name is Grace. Sebastian, like myself, being of noble blood, got us both spots at court. Surprisingly, I'm allowed to hunt sometimes still. I suppose women are more equal in this kingdom. My ladies and I also spend any free time teaching my daughter how to walk and talk. We want her to get an education, a great one. Sebastian is quickly becoming the King's best friend.

Sometimes, though, I get sad. I remember my home. I think of the love I feel for Sebastian and Grace, and how heartbroken I would be if they didn't love me back, if they ran away from me. That's how Victor feels, only worse, because it's real. I wonder what he would say if he saw me now. It'd probably be horrible for him.

But I suppose if we lived our lives to please others, we would not be free.

*BoB*

There once was a guy named Bob  
Who found a store to rob.  
He went during the day  
Forgetting he wouldn't pay  
So he bought some corn on the cob.

Julia Provino



**Samantha LisK**



Nicole Murphy

*Perspective*

Be wary of how you act  
Towards those who you do not know.  
For there may be evil lurking in them  
And the agony that they lived through,  
Grows ever greater inside  
Until that pain becomes a part of them.  
The tormented becomes the tormentor  
His anguish can only be satisfied by the misery of others.  
So the tormentor inflicts his pain upon them,  
Shooting the innocent down, a screaming bullet, tearing families apart,  
Wishing for them to feel as he had felt.  
The misery has altered his mind,  
The innocence of children is an insult to his hate  
The tormentor creates a growing disgust for them  
And believes they must be killed.



She rose to power,  
Welcomed death as if he were an old friend.  
Silently, he carried her away from  
The spilled juice boxes,  
The chalkboard walls,  
The kids she lived to teach.  
She glanced at the lifeless bodies  
And understood that she would be teaching her last lesson:  
A lesson of loyalty  
A class dedicated to heroism  
A final notion that would forever be remembered.  
The city of Thebes now weeps in unison  
For the girl who never had a mind  
But a beating heart that never thought to stop.

The fatal call was made that one unforgiving day  
Their hearts hanging in the air.  
The families grieved for their loved ones  
Their hearts poured out from their tears,  
The one who gave her life was gone  
The young voices will never be heard.  
Silence suspended over the town for days  
A deathly stillness replaced the joyous laughter,  
The cries for Antigone's body  
Matched the lamentations heard at the funerals.  
Some will wish it were their own kin that were guarded  
By the heroic instructor whom will live in their hearts forever.

Alexandra Franco, Sydney Mueller, Michael Johansen

*Stories*

Do you ever wonder about the stories?  
Of the girl next to you in class  
The girl who tucks her hair behind her ear  
The girl who looks around to see if anyone is watching  
To see if anyone cares anymore.

Do you ever wonder about the stories?  
Of the boy who lived down the block  
The boy who had a secret crush on the girl next door  
The boy who wonders if she'll ever notice  
To see if she cares anymore.

Do you ever wonder about the stories?  
Of the little girl who runs around the park  
The girl who doesn't realize that her grandma is dying  
The girl who believes happiness will last forever  
Because she believes everyone will always care for her.

Do you ever wonder about the stories?  
Of the elderly man who lives alone  
The elderly man who sits on his porch watching  
The elderly man who still has hope in humanity  
Because he sees that everyone still cares.

Do you ever wonder what would happen?  
If all of the stories were combined  
Would they realize that there is hope?  
Would they realize that humanity is virtuous?  
Would they realize that people would still care?  
Sydney Mueller



Shannon Zuccarelli

*Fire*

Searingly painful heat that will leave you aching for the remainder  
of your life. Red, yellow, orange; white, blue.

Warm, illuminating, and breathtaking; painful, devastating, and  
heartbreaking.

Memorizing.

Scorching .

Warms the heart and leaves the skin in ashes.

Burning, fire.

Emily Murray



Jaclyn Russo

*A Regretful Farewell*

Goodbye my friends,  
To you I say goodbye.  
I took my life with my own hand,  
And you might ask why.  
I had too many worries,  
And too much pain.  
But the Dead Poets Society,  
Was not to blame.  
Through you I found my passion,  
And love for the stage.  
But what made me feel serene,  
Brought only my father's rage.  
Mr. Keating taught us not to conform,  
Rather to "seize the day".  
But when I demonstrated this,  
My father threatened to take me away.  
I felt lost and trapped,  
Like a mouse in a maze.  
I thought the only way out,  
Was to put an end to my days.  
So in a cowardly fashion,  
I put a gun to my head.  
Because in my impaired mind,  
I thought I'd be better off dead.  
I should have turned to you,  
Because you understood me best.  
Don't follow my footsteps,  
But continue with D.P.S.

Michael Pizzultello

*The Story of John Hayes*

John Hayes here, probably heard a lot about me right? Ha! Just kidding, but let me tell you a story that changed my life forever. Right now I live a wonderful life in a quiet home, on a quiet street, with my wife Rosie and two children Harold and Haley. My life was not always like this though, once upon a time I was a hobo, horrible I know. That part of my life is a key factor that plays in to how I got where I am today. Let's take a journey down memory lane.

So, let's start with my childhood. I was an only child and had two loving, devoted parents. We were not rich money wise, but we were rich with love for each other. My life was going great up until my parents were killed. It was a tragic accident, my parents were coming home from dinner and a drunk driver hit them. I was 19 at this point, living in New York City in a little tiny apartment with my parents still, when they were taken from me so unexpectedly.

What did I do? My life had just fallen to pieces right in front of me. I was not going to let this bring me down, so I figured I would use what little money my parents had saved to sustain myself while I searched for a job. It did not take me long to find one, but it was not anything special. I was a clerk in a grocery store, making minimum wage. I was able to live this way for a few years but then I got sick and all I had saved from working so hard was gone. I was hospitalized for a few weeks and all my money went to paying my bills. I could no longer work and soon enough I was going to be evicted from where I lived.

It was not fair that I was getting stuck with all the bad luck in the world. I did not ask to get some strange foreign disease from eating fruit. I did not ask to lose my job because I was hospitalized. I did not ask to be kicked out of my apartment either. Yes, it seems like I am complaining a lot but I was a 24 year old man, homeless and without a means to even make money especially considering how awful the economy had become in the past few years. I wondered when something good would finally come along and change my luck.

A few months passed without much change. I did not have many friends and the friends I did have only let me stay with them for a few nights. I was out on the street from then on. Usually I slept on these church steps with a few other homeless guys because it was the best that I could do at this point. The only thing that kept me going everyday was hope. I held on to hope tight and prayed to God asking him for help.

Months continued to pass without any inkling that my life was going to turn around. Of course, looking back today, I am so happy to be where I am. Anyway, this is where it gets good. I was walking down Main Street when I looked down and found a penny. I picked it up and thought to myself maybe this is my day, even though deep down I thought it was a crock and it would be just like any other day of the miserable life I was living.

I continued to walk because what else was there to do with my life. I was so tired and out of it that I ended up bumping into someone. They cursed at me and told me I was scum. I guess by the way I looked they felt disgusted that they had even touched me by accident. Well, without that man I would have never stopped in front of this little Sushi bar named Hokkaido. I will never forget the name because this place is what changed my poor old ratty life. A sign on the window said "Poker Night! Play and Win a Cash Prize and Free Lo Mien!" I thought, why not I have a penny to bet and an empty stomach.



Amy Carton

I went right into that place and played my penny. You will not believe me when I tell you this; I won. That one penny gave me a whole new life. Just wait until I tell you how much I won! I won one million dollars, yes, I said one million. I did not even care about the lo mien anymore, I just wanted my money. I thought I was going to faint right there and then. It was such an unexpected experience that happened and forever changed my life.

Now who would have thought after my sob story I would make out with one million dollars, a wife, and two lovely children? Not me, that's for sure! This just goes to show that even when you are down in the dumps, or even living in them like I was, there is always hope. I started to lose it, but I am so glad that I kept hold of it or else I would never have ended up picking up the penny and giving my luck a try.

Katie Fanelli



*Mirrors*

I was alone. I felt alone, it looked like I was alone. I was staring at myself in the mirror. I thought the door was closed, I thought I was looking into the mirror. But then I wasn't. Then the door was open.



JJ Tenner

There she was. She looked familiar. But I couldn't quite figure it out. She just looked familiar. She was standing in my bathroom doorway. I don't know how she got here, or why she was here. And for a mere second I was more concerned about my confusion of who she was than why she was here. She inches closer. In the light I see all of her. Hair matted to her face, eyes glistening. A knife shimmering in her hand.

I was frozen. Unable to move, not even backwards. But where would I go? She was blocking the door, I was trapped. I wasn't in control. That probably frightened me more than anything else. The fact that I didn't know the outcome. This didn't feel like reality. My thoughts spun. Why....

A smile on her face, she lunged, intensity dotting her eyes. And then I was on the floor, wet. Grasping my side, while my lungs did the same for air. There was a clatter on the floor. The knife no longer shimmered. It laid covered in my own blood, dulled. The floor, my hands. I looked up. Where did she go?

No one was there. It was only me. I was on the floor. The knife was in my side. And the door was still closed.

Victoria Tiburzi

### *The Gulls*

The gull it flies, beneath the skies, through cloudy puffs of air.  
Yet never full is the mighty gull, which captures whom he dares.

White wings, with which the seagull soars to tackle flailing fish,  
are flapped at heights, to be at which, a man can only wish.

The dusky night's nocturnal flight embarks on a winged race.  
Whoever is first to reach the moon shall be the king of space.

But alas the days, the fortnights through, the rain becomes a storm.  
No longer can we live in peace; we must be someplace warm.

Abandon dock! It's not too late! The lot of us must fly!  
The gulls are leaving; you follow me unless you want to die.

Our chicks shall perish; they cannot come! They are too small and weak.  
A new place to thrive, where we can survive, is all that we gulls seek.

Abandon dock! Listen to me now: arrange yourselves in pairs.  
Hath God enacted a plot of death, the seagull must be spared!

It's surely possible to organize a clear flight of escape!  
Get off your rump! It's time to jump! Society must reshape!

You birds are deaf and blind as well. A storm is now afoot.  
We must go now or we will burn into a slump of soot!

My plea is final; do as you like. Your life is not my concern.  
Between safety and storm, at least I am, smart enough to discern.

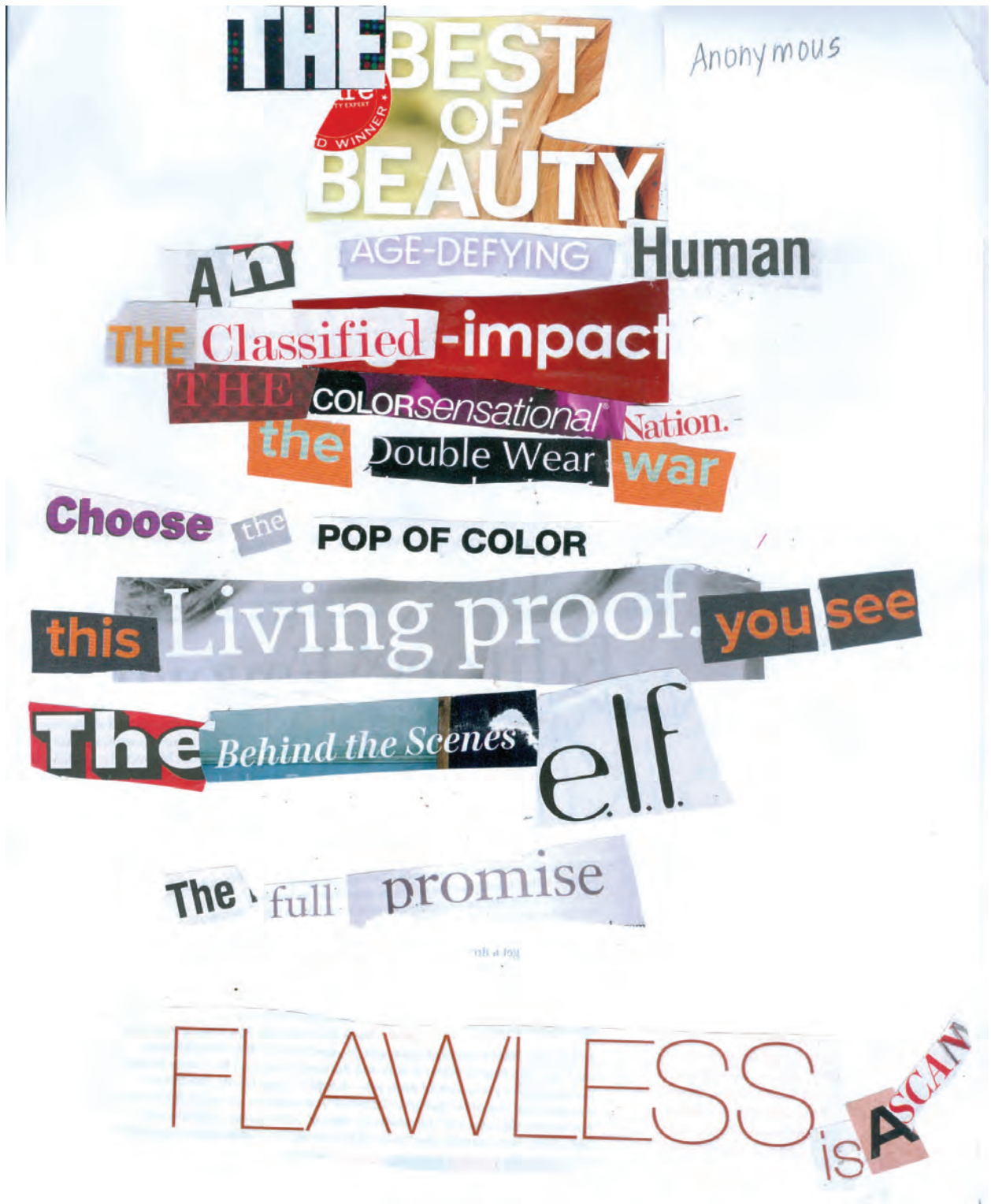
The gull now flies, with his loyal followers, away to better lands.  
He wishes he could have only made the others understand.

They all could have lived. They didn't have to go. They only had to listen,  
to the single gull who knew what to do, whose heart shall forever glisten.



Pasquale (Alex) Tosto

Tyler DeRafele



### *Comparisons*

How can I compare?

When I am kept in the dark  
Shut away from society  
Locked in my room  
Forcefully shunned away  
For all of eternity.

How can I compare?

To those who are out every night  
Filled with happiness and joy  
With more friends than one could count  
Given the freedom to express themselves  
Able to enjoy life without any suffering.

How can I compare?

To the girl who buys all the latest trends?  
While I am stuck with tattered shorts.  
To the girl who has the newest car?  
While I am stuck riding my bike.

How can I compare?

It is simple; I can not.

Unless I have *hope*.  
Hope that I will become that girl  
Who is not afraid of the world  
Not afraid of how others will compare me  
I will be the girl who conquers her fear.

Sydney Mueller



*Individuality vs. Conformity*

Many schools struggle to decide whether to support individuality or conformity. In society, people are pressured to conform and be like everyone else. However, school is a place where this should not occur. It is important that each student has his or her own individualized way of learning so that he or she is benefiting and getting a good education. Schools with structured bell schedules especially struggle between individualizing and conforming their students' learning. By having a structured schedule, these schools are forcing their students to conform. Schools with structured schedules and routines are ultimately setting up their students for failure because they do not allow their students to be independent individuals and to learn to be organized on their own for both short and long term events in their lives.

High schools with highly structured schedules do not teach students to be independent because they limit flexibility in class choices. Secondary school is a time when students should be taught how to weigh information and make thoughtful decisions. It is believed that most schools are properly preparing their students for independence. However, this is not the case. In fact, limiting the ability of students to design their own schedules undermines their growth. Strict scheduling often hinders learning. John Holt, an educational theorist states, "it is a rare child who can come through his schooling with much left of his curiosity, his independence or his sense of his own dignity, competence and worth." (Source E). This source shows that schools with rigid schedules can cause students to take a passive approach to learning and even stop trying as hard. Forcing a schedule on students also goes against the differentiated ways each student learns. Students have unique learning styles and needs and approach subjects at their own levels. As a high school student, it is evident that students forced to take courses they do not want are often less successful. Their schedules do not meet their interests and needs, and they become demoralized and distracted. Enforcing the same course schedule on every student does not enable students to make independent choices about their education. This can lead students to see school as a "dull and ugly place" that they do not want to attend (Source E). It is a scary thought that school becomes a dreaded place for many, when it really should be a place to enjoy learning. Rigid schedules do not help students become successful. On the contrary, many schools are failing at what a school is meant to do: educate students to achieve the best of their abilities.

Enforcing daily structured bell schedules in schools does not prepare students well for the future because life does not have bells to guide adults at work or in their communities. These



bells prevent the students from learning time management, which is necessary for life outside school. In high school, teachers coddle students with warning bells to make sure students will not be late. A typical public high school schedule has eight to nine periods that last for 45 minutes each. Source B shows a typical daily schedule followed by students in a public high school. In addition to a bell before and after each period, there is also a warning bell at the start of the day to remind students to go to class (Source B). This shows that students are taught to follow the same routine every single day rather than learning how to manage their own time. Students should be able to figure out what time they need to arrive at school without a late bell warning. When students are put to the test after high school to manage their own time, they may not be successful at meeting their commitments and staying on schedule because they have not had any practice. In other words, the coddling needs to stop.

Schools with structured schedules fail to teach their students how to deal with real life situations in the future. In life, every person faces obstacles that come up unannounced and unexpected. Students should be taught how to react to challenges and should learn strategies to address these issues. However, most schools do exactly the opposite. High school students are often incapable of managing unplanned things; they are only used to following predictable schedules. By enforcing the same bell schedule daily, students become creatures of habit. They have adapted to a certain routine, and it becomes familiar to them. John Taylor Gatto, a former high school teacher, believes that school reform is necessary. Gatto explains that most students go to school for six classes a day, five classes a week, nine months of the year, for twelve years (Source A). This is a well-defined routine that does not always lead to success. With daily schedules like this, students become accustomed to repetition and are not used to change. Historically, people did not go to secondary schools with structured schedules, if they went to secondary schools at all. Gatto refers to the fact that George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, some of the most important American historical figures, were not educated in this type of structured way (Source A). These important men learned to lead by making choices in their education and experiences. “We have been taught (that is, schooled) in this country to think of ‘success’ as synonymous with, or at least dependent upon, ‘schooling’...” says Gatto (Source A). But success is not directly related to schooling; success comes from education. It is difficult for students to learn how to deal with an unpredictable world if they only have been taught to live in a predictable one.

One might think that having a rigid school schedule will help students become organized in

their approach to life. This is mistaken. Strict schedules only teach adolescents to become creatures of habit, stuck in their daily routines. It is an important life skill to learn how to stay organized without a set schedule to follow. Adults must stay organized on their own because life does not have bells reminding them when to get their work done. They will need to understand how to balance work and family responsibilities and design their own schedules, and make adjustments to their plans, to make sure they accomplish what they need to do. There are times when people need to work overtime, outside of their anticipated schedule, and must adapt accordingly. One of the most important lessons a school can teach its students is the ability to handle real life situations by making independent choices for themselves. Eliminating a daily schedule monitored by school bells will better prepare students for life after high school.

Secondary schools with rigid schedules are not helping their students become independent, adaptable and successful adults because they stifle individualized learning and fail to teach students how to manage their own time. By limiting the flexibility of students to determine their own class schedules, schools find themselves with students who are less energized and interested in learning. They do not prepare the students well for life after school because there are no bells in the real world to guide adults how to manage their time. Structured school schedules are not the way to teach adolescents how to be productive adults; they must learn to adapt to unexpected circumstances to be successful in life. Putting adolescents through such rigid systems cause many students to lose their interest in learning. This means that schools are ultimately failing at their main goal of educating students so they can be prepared to lead successful adult lives.

Ariel Coonin



Jaylene Vasqueze

### *Ode to Heroes*

Ode to those who put themselves in danger,  
 To protect the people they don't even know,  
 Ode to those who don't see their families on holidays,  
 They're too busy saving lives.

Ode to those who run into burning buildings,  
 Those who save insane people in danger.  
 Ode to those who die in the line of duty,  
 And die too young.

Ode to the man and woman that try to shock a person back to life,  
 That tries everything in their power to save her.  
 Ode to the young teens learn that the trade,  
 All the young firefighters and young EMS workers,  
 Learning something new every time they jump on to the truck.

Ode to all the men and women,  
 That give up their lives to save a person.  
 Ode to all the brothers and sisters,  
 Who have died in the line of duty.

Christina Frohlich

*Just One Chance*

I was breathless when you opened that door;  
 Your hair was shiny like the morning dew;  
 Although we just met, I'm in love, I'm sure;  
 My eyes dance every time I look at you.  
 Come to the play with me just this one night;  
 My heart will be impaired if you don't come;  
 Stand close to me 'cause I'm your perfect height;  
 When I'm near you my heart beats like a drum.  
 My eloquent words navigate a way;  
 For you to hear how much you mean to me;  
 If we diverge, I will be blue each day;  
 My heart is locked, let me give you the key.  
 So, Chris, give me one chance so I can prove  
 A steadfast love that will not ever move.

Amy Geller



Sydney Rosenstein

*The Waterlogged Bride*

She didn't love the water, but the water loved her  
 It loved her so much, it took her as its bride  
 Replaced her lungs with seaweed gills and filled them with the tide  
 Wrapped her in its cool embrace, hugged her 'till she slept  
 Down she traveled with the fish and rested in their sept  
 At first she thrashed and tried to go, from the water's grasp  
 But the sea, calling her name, regained her in its clasp  
 It told her lovely stories, lullabies and tunes  
 Whispered her sweet nothings under the unseeing moon  
 Married her it did, that first night 'pon the shore  
 Took her as his wife upon the ocean floor  
 It did not like the change in her, the way her breath grew none  
 But there was nothing more to do, its dance with her was done  
 Years later they would speak of them, as legend and as myth  
 About the water and the girl, the life they both took with  
 It is not a silly tale or one to take in light  
 For the sea does not bide the mockery of its young, dead wife  
 Tara D'Antona

*Alienated*

The calm, yellowed plain had been still all morning. Its serenity circulated around the fields and into the lonely farmhouse. The tattered barn overlooked the entirety of the farm, as it sat on a small hill in isolation. All was well, until... CRASH! Soil began spurring out from the ground, as it rumbled and shuddered with confusion. The trees whipped around each other in a variety of directions, sending out a warning to anyone within distance. Then, in what seemed like seconds, an immense fire emerged from a large pile of hay. The flames quickly engulfed each grain and transformed them to ash. This fire, however, was unlike any other; it reflected a blue and green spectrum of light that flickered and crackled with every breath of oxygen it inhaled.

Hidden beneath the explosions of the fire stood a disheveled and helpless teenage boy. His face was covered with the ashes he had been standing in and a few lacerations on his forehead had begun to bleed. Despite the confusion and nervousness spread across his face, the subtle green glow filling his two irises gave off a sense of hope.

Dazed and fearful, the boy slowly stepped towards the direction of the old farmhouse porch looking for shelter. Before he was able to reach the stairs, however, an older looking man emerged from the house with a wooden bat. Leaping down the steps, he thrust the bat towards the trespassing boy in attempt to knock him out cold. The boy dodged the bat effortlessly, as if he knew what the farmer was going to do. Using even more force, the farmer swung his weapon, but again, it had missed the boy and left him unharmed. Between breaths the farmer managed to yell, "Who the hell are you and what are you doing on this farm?"

The boy slowly released the grip of his clenched palms, a gesture suggesting peace. A perfect silver tear droplet ran down his cheek as he glanced at the surrounding world. "I... I don't know why I'm here, sir. King Zerj shouldn't have sent me. He promised I'd get a trial. I didn't... I'm not a thief. How could he...?"

"Shut it, boy! What are you talking about? What trial?" the farmer asked in extreme frustration.

"I don't understand. How could they have banished me so quickly? There's no proof..."

The farmer quickly cut off the boy's ramble. "Banished? What time period are you living in, son? Crazy hooligans these days..."

Not understanding his confusion the boy responded, "I'm sorry, old man, but I don't know what to do. I'm obviously from this time period, just not from this place, the one you call home.

Planet 7 has always been my home, but King Zerj was forced to banish me! He sent me here and I can't get home." A wave of sadness washed over him as he recollected memories of the only place he'd ever known. "What do you mean you're 'not from this place'? Where the hell are you from, boy? Australia or something?"

"I'm from Planet 7, the land of Zerj. It's an entirely different world. The feeling of the metallic blue sand, the glow of the spacecraft's lights at night, the way the white light reflects off the moon and shines on the towers. Its magical". His eyes lit up with desire and he felt this longing to return home.

"You're telling me that you're some kind of alien...? What kind of idiot do you think I am?" Frustrated and angered by the boy, he decides to head back to the porch.

"Wait, don't go! Yes, if you want to put in into human terminology, I am an alien. Although we prefer to be called galactic space creatures, thank you. But, really, I'm from 7. I'll prove it! Touch my arm!" The boy outstretched his arm with such enthusiasm that he almost knocked over the old farmer. The farmer leaned back, attempting to duck the alien's quick reflexes, "Watch it, kiddo! Me touching that dumb tattoo on your arm is really going prove everything, wont it?" He barked, sarcastically.

Tired of his insensitive remarks, the boy impatiently insists, "Just grab my arm, will you?" And with that, he grabbed hold of the farmer's hand and forced him to touch the star shaped tattoo displayed across the width of his forearm. Instantly, the symbol began to glow and sent a surge of power out into the body of the farmer. He felt an indescribable sensation of happiness mixed with other feelings of pride, joy, and triumph. The farmer was able to feel the cool pleasure in touching the metallic blue sand and a new excitement through inhaled breaths of clean air.

"That was... unbelievable. I.... I could feel what you dreamed. I could see your home. It felt so real." Still in awe, the farmer reached to touch the tattoo again.

"Paws off! Now will you help me get home?"



“Go on, explain.”

“ So, on our planet we have a sacred jewel called the Boah Diamond. This diamond can do wonders. It can basically control anything in our solar system, including Earth. Its held under high security at all times in the King’s Palace, which is almost impossible to enter unless you work there. Sawk, another alien from my planet, had always been jealous of the King because he had control over the gem. He has always been hungry for power. So he stole it... and framed me. The punishment: being sent to Earth, with no way home.”

The farmer, so desperately trying to understand the story, chimed in, “ Sawk... just stole it? But how did he frame you?”

“He’s smart. He works in the King’s Palace. No one would suspect him. Long story short, I need a way home.” Getting impatient, the boy began pacing around in a circle.

The farmer began thinking long and hard and seemed to arrive at a solution. “Hmm. Can I trust you?”

“Of course, sir. That is, unless, you think I’m a thief like they said on 7.”

“You don’t seem like a bad kid. I think you’re okay.” And with that, the man began jogging over to an old and worn down silo off towards the side of the barn. The tall, red building stood higher than the surrounding places on the farm. Not understanding what the farmer was doing, the boy followed closely behind, hoping he had found some solution to his problem. Within seconds, the doorway carved into the silo was opened and both the farmer and the boy walked in. “Look up,” he said.

To his amazement, the boy looked upward and saw an enormous rocket ship standing right in front of him. It seemed to stretch for miles until it reached the top of the silo, forcing both boys to tilt their necks back. “What... what is that, sir?” asked the boy in complete shock.

“That right there?” he said as he pointed toward the rocket. “That right there is your ride home, boy.”

Alexandra Franco

*Betrayed*

Betrayed,  
I felt hopeless sitting on this stone floor.  
Tricked  
I felt anger rising as I stared at the cruel door.  
Embarrassed,  
By those whom I thought of as friends.  
Blind,  
To the point I could not see that they were fiends.  
Scared,  
As I heard footsteps headed my way.  
Relaxed,  
When I realized it was faces who would never betray.  
Foolish,  
Was the person who ignored their advice.  
Wise,  
For they saw the truths and the fiend's vice.  
Relieved,  
For these were truly my best friends.  
Glad,  
For they would never hate me  
And forever love me.

Amr El-Azizi



Dean Sepe



Sarah Lisk

*Not a Poem*

This is not a poem.  
 There is no sappy love story  
 Or journey to the moon  
 Or even a sad sounding song lyric  
 That will harness your soul to every line  
 And force the flow of tears.

This is the beginning.  
 This is the irregular trickle of words to paper  
 The struggling hand desperate to make the right mark  
 And the soft breaths that dance upon each very line  
 Longing to coat them in desire.  
 This is not a poem.  
 This is the creation.

Alexandra Franco

*Stress's Stab*

Stress is not an emotion, it's a boulder-  
That chunkily rolls down the trembling hill of your sanity  
As it finds it's home on your shoulder,  
And strips you of that once proud vanity.

It's the reason in the mid of night  
That your eyes stare mindlessly at a ceiling of nothing;  
That your tired lids won't go down without a draining fight  
And your heartbeat begins to sound more like a scuffling.

It's the reason your soul begins to twitch  
While your attention sprints across the globe,  
Attempting to escape intensity's ole' witch  
That's there to take your life- destroy it and probe.

It's the reason the air when breathed in  
Seems like oil clogging your lungs  
And makes you breathlessly suffer until the win-  
When the ladder of hope has lost all its rungs.

Stress will tare hope to shreds of meaningless waist  
And quicken the life once so perfectly paced.

Amanda Friedman



Erik Johansen





### All About Him

All I know is we said "Hello."  
 You said it in a simple way.  
 How strange that I don't know you at all.  
 I quite like the way you say my name, how you swirl a conversation.

You don't see the way I look at you  
 when you are not looking at me  
 I wish that I could tell you every single thought I ever had.  
 Stutter when I talk, flail around, all of my words come out wrong.

*I hope she buys you flowers;  
 I hope she holds your hand  
 She better look in those beautiful eyes.  
 Would she say she's in L-O-V-E?  
 You're probably hanging out.  
 Does she look at you the way I do, try to understand the words you say, and the way you move.*

You're a subject of admiration  
 messing with my concentration, so  
*shine bright like a diamond since*  
 There's a fire inside of you that can't help but shine through.

Deanna Penna

*Light Bulbs*

Light bulb to run out  
 But light bulb cannot shout  
 Light bulb only to cry  
 Knowing that it will die

Light bulb shall reach time  
 When light bulb doesn't shine  
 Light bulb goes away  
 So no more light today

Light bulb left in dark  
 But light bulb cannot make a spark  
 Light bulb ready to explode  
 when expected of light for the road

Light bulb to be battered and torn  
 When light bulb to be used and worn  
 Light bulb to be useless and low  
 And nobody else shall ever know

Until light bulb is turned on  
 And its light to be gone

It isn't a light bulb anymore  
 For no more light in the lost war

You get a new one all in vain  
 Just for that light bulb  
 to go through the same

Agonizing pain

Demetri McMullen

*The Falling Star*

There once was a wonderful star  
 Who thought she would go very far  
 Until she fell down  
 And looked like a clown  
 She knew she would never go far.

Amanda Archili



Jaylene Vasquez



*As I Wash the Tears Away*

As I wash the tears away  
I think of what I should've said  
as the time passed slowly.

Perhaps "Why me?"  
or "I hate you",  
maybe even "You're dead to me".

But interlocked between the words,  
and choking back the sobs,  
I couldn't speak.  
I was appalled.  
Why would you be this way?

You blame it on me;  
"pretending" to be mature,  
becoming arrogant.  
But really you chose her  
for the  
kindness  
                    and  
                    heart  
that is truly unreal.

As I wash the tears away  
I do not regret one single word  
I said to you this day.  
But you should miss  
the conversations of  
how I feel  
and how I think  
and "what happened in school today?"

Because  
you won't be a part of that anymore.  
No, not after this, at least.  
No longer do I consider you close.  
Just a remembrance of the past.

But mostly,  
you should've thought more clearly.  
Because even though you're  
BIGGER  
and older  
And richer  
I am still young, fresh and new,  
and that  
is all in the past for you.

As I wash the tears away  
I remember  
that I have the time  
to do this things  
you wish you could,  
and the ability to fulfill your wildest dreams;  
BUT  
you chose her  
for who I am.

She is but a mirror of me and how I act  
when you are not looking.  
I am the one who buys the gifts,  
thinks the thoughts,  
and helps everything fall into place.

While She  
stands there,  
takes the credit,  
and receives all the praise.

Her life, a mere mimicry of mine,  
Her thoughts, apathetic without the addition of mine,  
Her act, as fake as the "I love you" she speaks.

So  
as I wash the tears away  
I do not regret,  
I do not care,  
I just wish you hadn't acted the way you did.  
Because now  
we are estranged  
and a bitterness is left in my heart  
that cannot be repaired.

Unless-

Unless you wash your tears away  
and wish for a better day  
but until then  
this will remain  
and I will still be stronger.

Anonymous



Shannon Zuccarelli

*Second Chance to Save*

I was running for my life, but I wasn't running fast enough. They were following me; the demons from my nightmares had finally become my reality. Every single demon had materialized with her help, and probably others too. I didn't know where to turn to, all I knew is that I had to keep running through the only place I knew as well as my own room. The forest. As well as I knew that I had nine tank tops in my closet, three blue, two yellow, and four with flower patterns on them that I only wore when I visited my Aunt Catherine, I knew every single leaf on every branch in the forest.

I had seen every single animal that lived in it over the past two years when I made my daily visits past the polluted stream and over the ivy overgrowth that hid too many creatures to count. I didn't want to think of what otherworldly creatures lurked beneath the dark leaves, watching me before I even knew they existed. Now I wish I didn't know any of it, I wished I could go back to the day I realized I was going to be apart of this new world that I created through my dreams and nightmares. The only hope was that the dreams could win over the nightmare, but I was losing hope fast. That was the last thought I had before I slipped and fell down the hidden hole and heard the faintest sound calling my name, "Madeline!"

- - -

It took quite a few moments for me to grasp what had happened to me, the damp walls that surrounded me were an unfamiliar site and I had never seen this part of the forest before. The monstrous trees no longer hid me under their branches and shielded me from the evil beasts from the otherworld. This time I was on my own and there was no going back. I knew that from that day two years ago when I stepped foot into the forest and realized there was magic living in every thorn and blade of grass in sight, the day Carter died. I could almost feel Carter in the shadowy cave I was trapped in, as if he had never left me. Correction: as if I had never gotten him killed. Just then I could slowly feel myself drifting out of consciousness.

"CARTER!" I screamed as I sprinted for the cliff my brother had just climbed onto. As he turned toward me I automatically knew something was wrong and Carter was not controlling his actions anymore. Something, or someone, dark was in command over my innocent twelve-year-old brother's body. I discovered that earlier the forest was not only inhabited by mortal creatures, but supernatural beasts that skulked in the shadows. I knew I wasn't supposed to make this discovery because as soon as I opened up the portal between two worlds, a voice whispered in my head,

“There will be a price to pay for this.”

I would never have guessed that the price would be my little brother's life. For a millisecond I forgot what I was running for, but it didn't stop me from sprinting faster than the speed of light once I saw Carter inching closer towards the edge with a fifty foot drop only a few footsteps away.

All of the sudden, there was a hooded figure hovering next to Carter two feet off the ground. I remembered seeing this figure in the nightmare I've had every night over the past two weeks; I only hoped that Carter's fate was different from the ending of every dream. At the end of every dream I was pushed off a cliff into the stormy sea filled with sharks below me, but I never reached the bottom because I was jolted awake. Just as I was attempting to remember the details from my dream, Carter took a step off the ledge.

I heard someone screaming, but I realized that it was my own voice. I was too late to save Carter, too late to save my innocent little brother from a sudden death. Just as I felt myself drifting out of consciousness I saw the cloaked figure turn to me and smile with a face I will never forget.

It took me a while to remember where I was after I woke up from the nightmare of the day Carter died and no one knew what happened to him. No one except for me. Even I sometimes questioned if what I saw was real and whether or not this world I uncovered was a figment of my imagination. Only now I knew that the otherworld was just as real as my overcrowded tank top collection. I could sense that there were others in the dreary cave with me, people, things, that I couldn't see in the forest because it was a mortal world. I had entered their world now, whether I liked it or not. Just then, I saw a distant shape moving towards me from deeper in the cave. It looked almost identical to my shadow and silhouette. That's when I gasped, because the closer the person came to me, the sooner I realized that they didn't just look like me, it was me.

This girl wasn't just a look alike with a few distinct differences, it was almost like she could play my stunt double if I was an actress; this girl had the same wavy blonde hair as me with my distinct hazel eyes that couldn't be duplicated by any scientist in the world. I couldn't believe what I was seeing because this was not the world I had known for my whole life. This was like those

natural phenomenon that scientists had no way of proving, only this wasn't a hoax or myth—this was my life.

"H-hello?" I creaked out to try to assert myself. The girl looked at me for a second, then smiled as if she knew had all the answers to the million questions I had.

"Hello Madeline, I'm glad you finally arrived. I have been calling your name for weeks now hoping you would be around. It is imperative that you showed up because as you know, the Higherworld and Lowerworld are on the verge of battle, and it's our job to fix it." She said this as if she was asking me what the math homework was in class that day. Meanwhile I still didn't know her name.

"Excuse me, but who exactly are you? And what do you mean there is an approaching battle, how am I meant to know any of this stuff?" The minute these words left my mouth I was looked at as if I had three heads.

"Did Carter not tell you about this world before he left? I am the Lowerworld version of you—I'm Skylar. Everyone in the Higherworld has an alter ego that has the ability to contact them when it is necessary. I assumed Carter would've told you this before he was brought here unwillingly." I couldn't believe what Skylar was saying, how had Carter known about this world when he was only twelve when he died; or when I thought he died?

"Wait, Carter isn't dead?"

"Fortunately he is not, about two years ago he was brought down here by the Dark One as a lure to drag you into our world. Every day for the past two years I have been calling your name through the hole in the cave, but today was the first time you decided to listen. Unfortunately, since so much time has gone by, we only have a few hours to save Carter before the Dark One sacrifices him."

I could not believe what I was hearing; Carter was alive and I had less than one day to save him or else I would lose him for a second time. I wasn't even sure if this Skylar girl was telling the truth, but I somehow knew that she wasn't lying to me. Maybe it was the fact that I had been having insane nightmares the past two weeks, or the fact that she could pass as my

identical twin; I knew I couldn't give up hope that I had the ability to bring Carter home. As I came out of my train of thought, I saw Skylar staring at me with questioning eyes, debating whether I trusted her or not.

"Alright, I'll go with you. I don't completely trust you yet but if there is a slight chance of saving Carter I'll risk it." I couldn't bear to waste another minute of stalling because all I wanted to do was get my baby brother away from the Dark One and bring him home.

"Thank you for trusting me, but unfortunately I have some bad news. In the Lowerworld, time passes much quicker than it does in the Upperworld. Even though it seems you haven't been in this cave for very long, it has been two hours, which means you only have about half an hour to save Carter. I have the key to his cell so you should be able to find him if you quickly run to the end of the cave and turn right once you see the torch on the wall, Carter's being held captive there. There is still a chance to save his life—if you aren't caught by the Dark One." Apparently Skylar wasn't going to be coming with me, which meant I was on my own. This was the last chance I would've ever had to save Carter's life. I was not going to waste it.

I sprinted down the corridor faster than I had ever run through the forest; I sprinted as if I was running for my life. Only this was more important than my life, this was Carter's life. I reached the torch within a matter of minutes, and as I reached for the key, my hand began to shake. As I regained my composure I turned the key and slightly opened the door without making a sound.

The second my eyes adjusted to the dark lighting, I saw the cage where Carter was supposedly kept in. At that exact moment I saw the Dark One coming at me from fifty feet away. My heart sank. The boy in the cage was not Carter. This boy was a monster, a six foot tall man with wild black hair who was kept in the dark. The Carter I remembered was a twelve-year-old child with blonde hair and freckles who wouldn't hurt a fly. This man was the complete opposite, this man—creature—could not possibly be the younger brother that I once adored. The Dark One turned his innocence into corruption. His childhood was stripped away from him. I felt tears streaming down my face as I knew the Dark One was approaching me. Her smile had not changed in the past two years; it was the same creepy combination of teeth that haunted my nightmares for weeks.



“It is too late Madeline, I have won and you have lost. Carter has already been turned into a servant of mine; his youth was drained from him because the LowerWorld’s concept of time is different from the UpperWorld’s. Skylar was wrong, Carter has been my servant for weeks and it’ll continue for eternity. You may join too, evil will always win against the light.”

“I will never join you and what used to be my brother, no matter what it takes I will prevent you from defeating Skylar and I. Trust me on that.” I screamed at her while the tears turned my face into a salty ocean, but I meant what I said. Whether or not it took me years, I would avenge Carter and all of the slaves that fell to the Dark Ones power before him.

Sydney Mueller



Tyler DeRafele

*Autumn Love*

An autumn breeze frigidly touches the debilitated lives  
 Harsh darkness surrounds the broken souls  
 Mellow serenades that once played between two hearts  
 Pathetically have transformed into heartless sad songs

Somewhere beyond the thick, fluffy clouds  
 Cupid has lost his romancing arrows  
 He played sad effectual harmonies on his bow  
 Dedicated to all of the despairing lonely hearts

Roaring winds blow through the haze  
 Sounds of sorrow race in all directions  
 Fuzzy humid air breaks through the inner lust  
 And leaves imperfection slowly as the autumn leaves fall...

Amanda Evangelista



Dean Sepe

*Mysterious Blue*

The loud crashing of waves rings in my ears. I can feel the sun beat down on my closed eyelids. Each tiny grain of sand burns like fire upon my tanned skin. My body lays there soaking in the beams. I open my eyes, I can smell the salt. Slowly, I rise off my sand bed, brushing off the backs of my legs and shoulders. The sea is so blue, like millions of sapphires mixing around in a humongous soup bowl. Sand fills in the spaces between my toes; they feel like hot coals against the soles of my feet. My delayed steps turn into long strides, then a sprint for the blue. A rush of cool water brushes along my stamping feet, foam attaches itself to my skin, though more water would come to wash it away. I can hear the sand, the water being pushed and pulled, the children splashing, the parents clicking away at their cameras. I dive under. The chilled water refreshes me; I can feel it weaving its way through my hair. The liquidated sapphires whip me around, and as the last bits of bubble leave my nose I rise up from the mysterious blue. It drips down my face, down my arms to my hands and back to its home, the ocean. The breeze sweeps the last of the sea away from my body as I walk back to my towel.

Angie Martinetti



*I Want*

I want to go away  
Find myself among the waves  
Find the beauty in the trees  
Make friends with the earth.

I want to give life to the nonliving  
Just like the sun does to the plants  
I want to feel special  
Feel important.

I want to give up  
All the rushing  
And smashing  
And crying  
And just forget it all.

I want to be free  
And swim among the waves  
And live among the living  
To learn what is important.

I want to give something back  
Instead of live in a  
Take and take  
World.

Victoria Tiburzi

*Hate*

Hate is a strong word  
 How can four letters carry such a burden  
 When it packs a punch of a boxers clenched fist  
 The weight of an NFL lineman  
 The severe implications of a global crisis  
 The word cant simply be tossed around.  
 If love makes the world go round  
 Then hate stops earth right on its axis  
 It creates anarchy, chaos, and destruction.  
 It causes bitter feuds, passionate arguments, and corruption.  
 Even on a smaller scale  
 Hate is around us everyday  
 Describing others  
 Lamenting problems  
 If it were a crime, the whole world would be in jail.  
 We are all guilty of hate.  
 Hate is guilty of causing crime and passing judgment.  
 Hate is a never ending cycle of madness  
 Four letters held together with animosity and anger.  
 Coated in a bitter film.  
 One bite and its hard to the core  
 In fact, there is none because hate is missing its core  
 Devoid of any reasonable foundation  
 Hate is a strong word

Kyle Lefkowitz



Samantha Lisk

### *True Friends*

You can jump, and then fall  
 You can sprint, but you can trip  
 You can try, yet you fall  
 You can win, or can lose

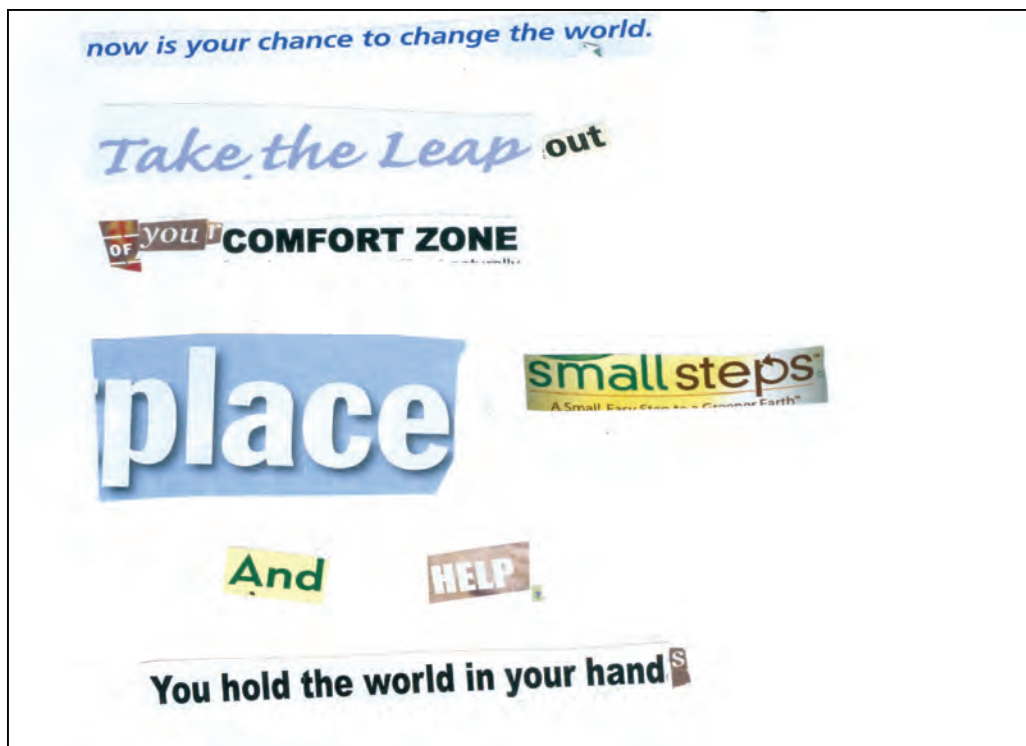
But you will be okay  
 So long as you have them here  
 They won't stop picking you up  
 That's their job, and they're  
 good

You can win, you can lose  
 But they're here, so you're fine  
 Try enough, you'll succeed  
 Don't give up, they're right here

Have no fear 'cause you know  
 They will never give up on you  
 Tell the fakes from the real  
 By seeing who stays right here

By your side, through thick and thin  
 Over mountains and under hills  
 Those are the ones, which you trust  
 Those are the ones, you call friends.

Amr El-Azizi



Taylor Fabiani

**ALL  
YOU NEED  
IS  
LOVE.**