

"IMAGINE" Literary Magazine Harrison High School Harrison, New York 10528 2019 Edition

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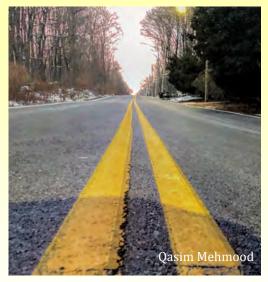
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Letter from the Editors

Here it is - our 2019 edition of Harrison High School's literary magazine, Imagine. In the two years that have gone by since we changed the size of our magazine, it feels like we have finally grown into our own skin. Every year, we are doing more to earn our title as a "Student Run" publication. But, this year, like every year, we still hold the question heavy above us: What defines our magazine?

The answer, we have found, is actually quite simple. It's whatever the students submit. Whether it is a lighthearted poem or a heavy-handed narrative, the submissions we receive shape who we are. It is kind of unnerving going into the year not knowing where you will end up. Yet, at the same time, that openness makes us that much more connected to the voices around us. This year especially, the contributors to this magazine were more emotional. After living through traumatic event to traumatic event, we found it harder to love. Luckily, however, this didn't stop us. In fact, it fueled us to do some of our best work yet. And while we may have found it harder to love, whether with families, friends, or even ourselves, it is clear that we are loving harder than before.

Happy reading,

The Editors of Imagine

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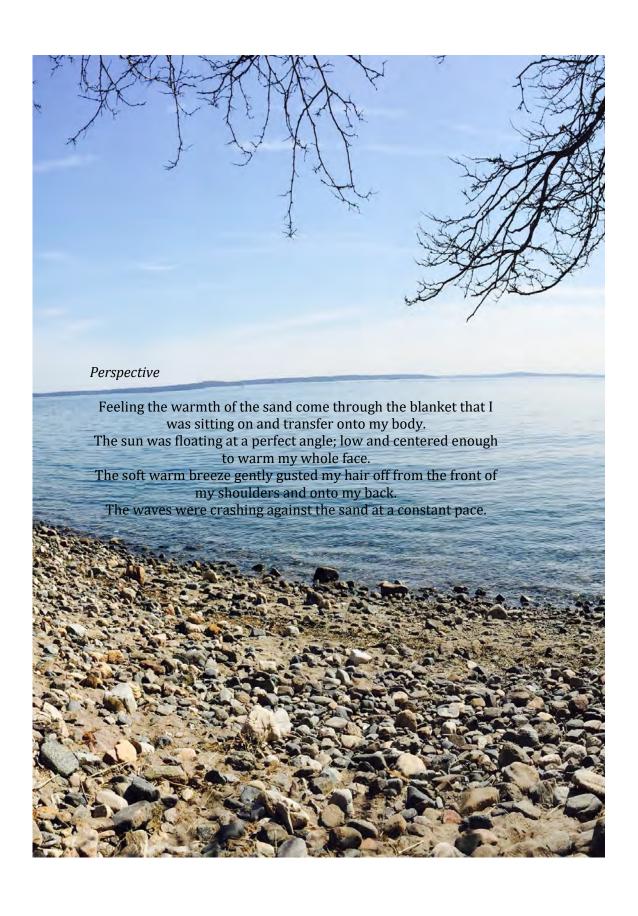
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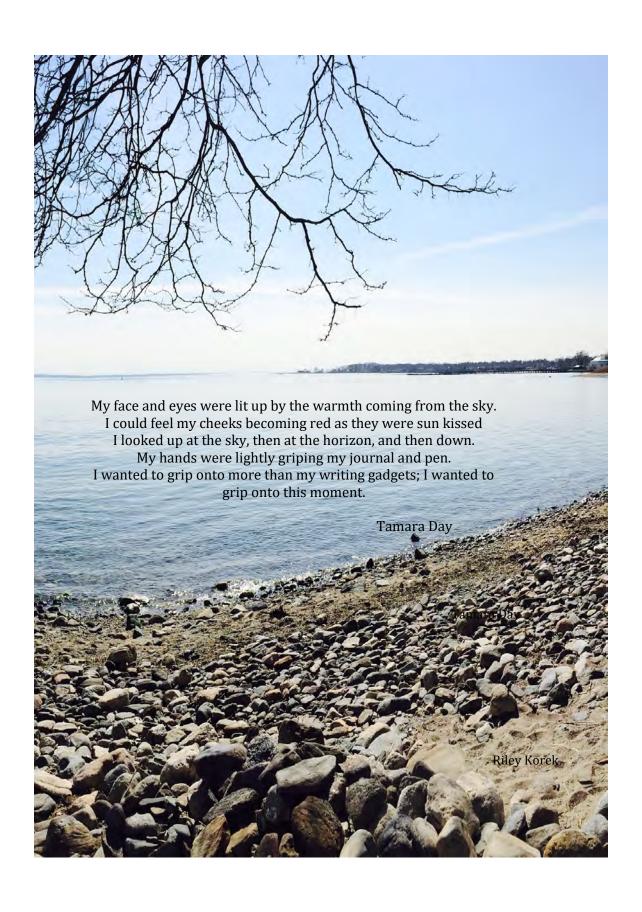
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My Artistic Journey

Little Angels Daycare, 2004: Naptime

I'm the only toddler awake because my mom wanted me to stay up for naptime so she wouldn't have trouble putting me to sleep at night. While everyone else naps, I am sitting at the lunch tables, drawing Batman who is hanging upside down and imagine that he's attacking his enemies from above.

Home, 2009: Sick Day

My feverish head starts to numb as another hour of television passes. I'm becoming bored of watching Tom and Jerry chase one another, so I find some computer paper, and a writing utensil and I begin to watch YouTube videos on how to draw my favorite Dragon Ball characters. I learn to love anatomy although at that point my own anatomical drawings were a work in progress, to say the least.

Portland, 2013: Casablanca Comics

I pick up issue number twenty of Nightwing and admire Brett Booth's dynamic art. Drawing comics becomes fascinating to me, and I declare that one day I will be the one drawing comics for other readers.

Home, 2014: Meeting with Carl Potts

I hand my sketchbooks over to Carl Potts, a comic book creator generous enough to visit my house and critique my artwork. He tells me how hard it is to be a cartoonist, not only because of the versatility one must have but also because of the job instability. These imperfections make being an artist seem all the more attainable and more of a reality than a dream. This only motivates me more to draw comics.

Harrison, NY, 2018: Applications

People love to influence a young mind, trying to impose what they think is the best career path. I have always known I wanted to be an artist and influencers have not changed my desire to pursue my passions. The college process is a slow build up to success, but I plan on using all of the time I have to further my development as an artist.

New York, NY, 2017: SVA Pre-College

I'm in a room with artists my age using comic book vernacular and referencing comic book legends. The room was like an unimaginable dreamscape and I stood there in awe. Is this what college was like for an art student? Doing what they loved for hours each day instead of forty minutes and being with the people that make them feel comfortable? There was no ridicule about being passionate. Three weeks later, I'm finalizing my comic book, exhausted from the non-stop work. Balancing my work with my commute was exhausting, getting very little sleep each night. The production of this comic had me hanging off the edge of my sanity. However, once it was over the feeling of exhaustion relaxed into a sensation of accomplishment and I realized that drawing comics isn't unrealistic. For three weeks, art was my entire life and I realized that I wanted art to be my entire life for a lot longer than three weeks.

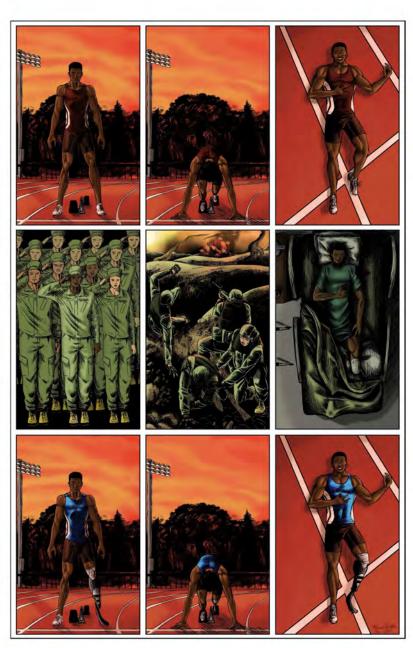
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Michael Barletta



Caitlin Policarpio



Michael Barletta

?stars ours to happened What

I tried to warn him.
The sun turns, you turn too
But you just can't help it, can you?

It is scorching, risky, and dangerous Still

She is your sun, You are her moon

I warned him, scared for him: Evermore, the sun shines too brightly. By no means as an equal to the moon.

But the moon still pursues after the sun: Whenever the sun walks The moon gallops to hold on

I watched it happen...

The stars left broken and crying, Left behind.

The sun is a Star
You can't just walk away because
No matter what
I am the earth
You cannot walk all over me

What happened to our stars?

Victoria Gloria

Popular Choice

She awkwardly stands there,
Scanning the room nervously for a place to sit and eat.
Hesitating to walk to a specific table.
She sees a blur of strange faces,
Red, yellow, purple, brown,
Gawking up at her like she's a museum exhibit.
Where she came from, the cafeteria was never this buzzing
The children would sit and eat in silence,
Like it was yet another task being graded.
She was good at that, she liked that,
Studying, honor roll, being the best at something...
She began to cower as the chaos unfolded in front of her,
Assaulting her five senses like never before.

The table in the middle
What seemed like an oasis of popularity,
Among a desert of mediocre
Girls in fancy clothing,
Bright red lipstick,
Long blonde manes,
Sneaking glances at the boys,

Giggling.

The small table in the corner
Kids all shapes and sizes,
Tall, short, round, thin,
Eating in silence,
What she was used to.
Both wave and offer a seat among their crowd
She swivels her head,
Unaware of what to choose.

Stick with the old or join in with the new?

Pretending like she doesn't notice, The lonely table in the corner, She moves towards the middle, Self consciously stroking her frizzy red hair She licks her chapped lips And stuffs her hands into the pockets of her overalls *Play it cool* she thinks to herself. Next to a girl smiling with great big pearly whites, And an annoying high pitched voice She sits down. A dead withered bush in an oasis. That's what she is.

Maria DiRusso



Vincent Longo

Escape

In a world where life revolves around stress, Work, study, practice, drama, fights, issues, problems, You can escape, Because you have the opportunity. You leave for just a little bit.

The long hallway leading to simple double doors, Followed by another hallway, dim.

Another set of double doors, that look directly at the desk.

Covered in all variations of purple, the space is warm, welcoming. It smells like hand sanitizer.

Carpeted and comforting, people all around: parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, waiting.

Some watching, some listening, and some just sitting. Peacefully. The atmosphere contains no gravity, a kind of weightlessness.

There is no pressure to be anyone else.

Enter a studio; stark contrast awaits.

Cold, grey, a large reflection of yourself looks back at you, unrelenting. And yet it's still soothing, mesmerizing,

And you dance, and you dance, and you forget where you are.

Pressure is alleviated, all memory of the outside disappears for a moment.

A long moment, a moment you long for to never end.

Moving endlessly through motions, with no thoughts of what's real.

The cold, hard, grey floor supports you,

And the cold, sticky air chills you,

And a slight smell of sweat and a strong smell of hairspray,

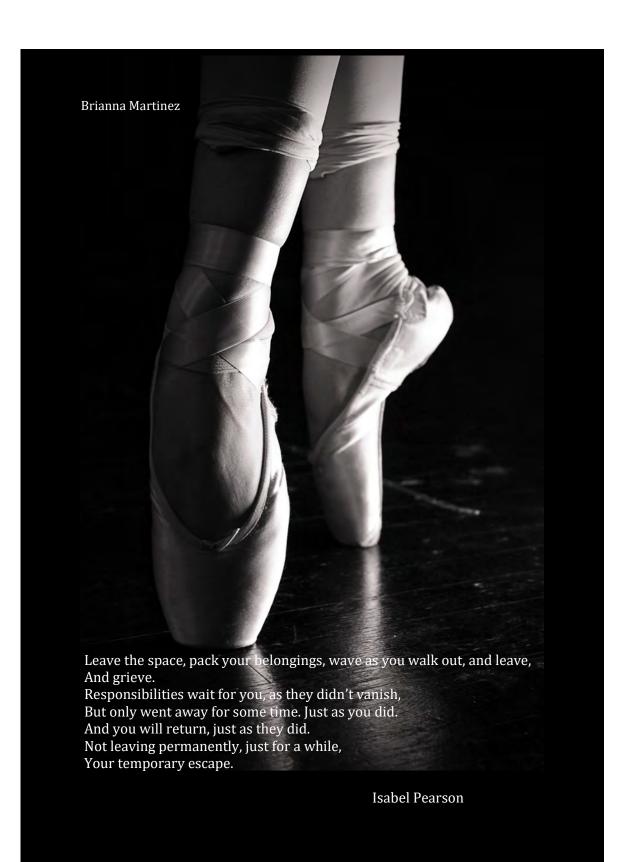
The fluorescent lights take over all that you see.

You check the time, a reminder of reality, and begin to remember what awaits:

A due date, an appointment, a schedule that must be followed.

And you start to grieve, silently and solitarily, for the moment that's about to be lost.

For the escape is gone, but will always return when wished upon.



You May Think You Know Me

My friend, you may think you know me. The school I go to, the computer I type on. You may think you know me.

My best friend, you may think you know me. The school I go to, the computer I type on, My secrets, my middle name. You may think you know me.

My parents, you may think you know me.
The school I go to, the computer I type on,
My secrets, my middle name,
My fourth favorite color and my third favorite food.
You may think you know me.

Many may think they know you.

Each and every detail.

But

You are truly the only one

Who knows all your truths,

As well as all your lies.

And it might be hard when someone says they think they know.

Every detail about you.

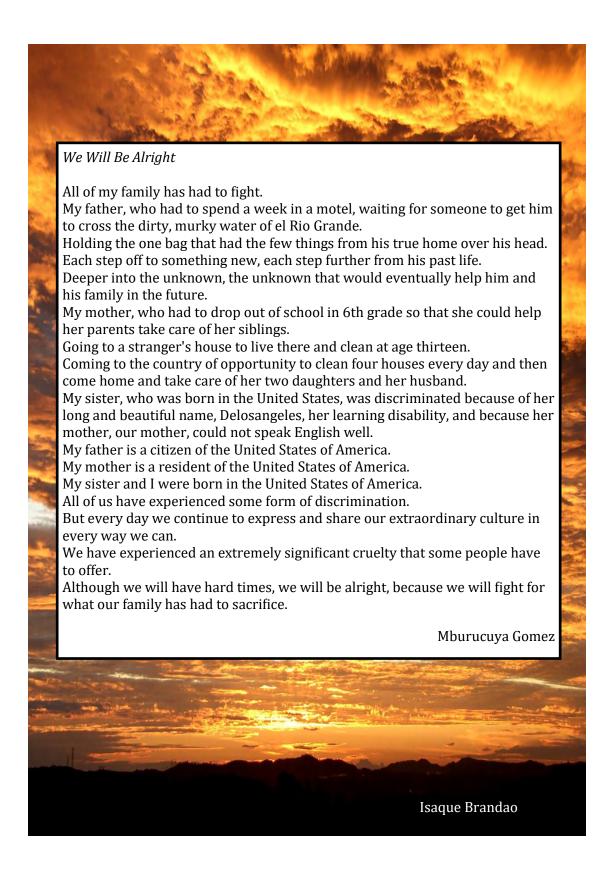
When truly,

You are the only one,

That knows yourself.

Isabelle Paris





The Murderous Adventures of Mitch Murden

Mitch Murden was a self-proclaimed professional killer. He was proudly able to call himself that after killing his twelfth person. It was too easy of a kill, as he snuck past security cameras in a parking lot and waited for anyone to notice him. On a Friday night, Mitch easily stabbed Number Twelve in the neck. Number Twelve didn't sense Mitch's presence, as he was buried into his phone, blindly pressing buttons until he heard the beeping of his car. After carelessly leaving the body of Number Twelve right in the garage he found him in, he went to IHOP and ordered himself a tall glass of milk. He ran his blood-stained finger over the rim of the cup, his free hand a podium to rest his tired head on. Killing people was hard work, don't get him wrong, he was just getting a little bored. This was his twelfth city and his twelfth victim, and he hadn't gotten caught yet. Mitch traveled across the United States and into the most popular cities. But instead of getting a shirt, a magnet, or a mug, he killed someone and took their wallets. Not as trophies, but he needed money to get to his next location. He stayed long enough to understand the city, then found a location that had people, but not the risk factor of getting caught. Afterwords, he tried to stay a day or two later to watch the local news, and if there was a report of any murders. So he was in New Orleans, which was meant to be so vibrant and lively, but the streets were empty and buildings were already closed for the night. It was almost as if they knew he was coming. People weren't even looking at him weird! Mitch leaned back in his booth and sighed. He needed a change. The last time he said that, he was in Seattle and decided to kill as many people as he could without getting caught. He had big shoes to fill.

He placed his fork down and opened the wallet of Number Twelve, a businessman in his mid fifties who was probably planning on going out to a bar after work. Mitch scoffed at Number Twelve's driver's license photo. Number Twelve hasn't looked like that in a long time. He didn't see any pictures of any sort of loved one, instead he thumbed through lots of credit cards. Mitch decided he would book himself a cruise to the Caribbean. He bought the ticket and made it on the plane no problem, which was a bummer for Mitch, as getting detained by TSA would be enough for someone to notice him. He was able to get into his room just fine, and ordered room service for his next seven meals after that. Two days cooped up in his extravagant hotel room, he decided he was ready to look for Number Thirteen.

He decided to go on a day-trip to the tropics, where he was going to be guided on a tour through the jungle. He looked past the sights of exoctic animals and wildlife that he was able to see, and instead looked at the group of people that was going with him. At the same time, he searched for law enforcement or anyone that could get him into trouble. Alas, he only found families, newlyweds, and elders. Mitch didn't like the selection, so maybe he would toss a coin.

After two hours of walking around old people with canes and families with barely walking toddlers, he decided that he had to kill newlyweds. He thought killing babies was too tragic of a death, and elders were too easy of a kill. By the end of the day, he found a particularly annoying couple that looked slightly similar to each other. They didn't call themselves anything other than sickening pet names like 'Sweetie' and 'Honey Bunches', so Mitch called them Mindy and Matthew. He followed them for the rest of the evening, and lingered around the honeymoon suite area as much as he could. As the sun was setting over the Bermuda waters, Mitch found Mindy and Matthew sharing margaritas, leaning over the ledge. Mitch's stomach turned at their happiness, declaring he could no longer sleuth around waiting for the right moment.

Mitch was ready. He ran towards them, arms ready to push one of them over. His racing steps made Mindy and Matt turn their heads slightly. Out of instinct, Matt pulled his new wife closer to him and away from Mitch. Before he could stop himself, Mitch flung himself overboard, the new couple watching the waves as it swallowed him, easily disposing Mitch before carrying on with it's normal flow.



Brianna Jackman



The ocean and the tide come in,
The beach is flooded and laid bare.
The sky is wide and infinite,
The ground is cold with winter.

And I?
What am I, beneath the sky,
What am I doing, walking on the beach
In the middle of winter?

When I leave, I cannot remember How to walk- my legs seize up And shrivel, and die-And I don't know where I am.

Enouement

My aunt and I: we pass it by.

My memories, which have pretended to die,
Like Lazarus, come back alive.

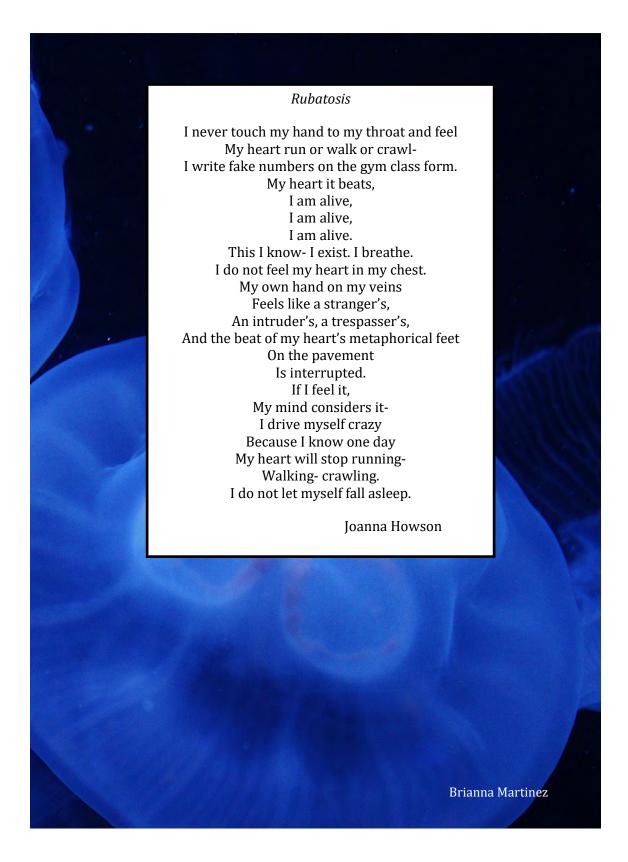
Back when I was a child, Back when I lived *here* for a while, The memories are still on file.

Would it all turn out okay? Would I be happy, some other day? Would the sadness ever go away?

That I wondered, when I was young And yet the words never passed my tongue But then my every action sung.

Now it is all in the past: The worst time has gone at last. However the time has gone too fast.

I wish that I could go back sometime, And whisper an answer written in rhyme-But there is no unspooling time.



Alone with Company

Here it comes, so bright and sweet. That golden light, oh what a treat! My company's arriving soon, with the exit of the moon.

The roosters crow and dogs say "woof!", And one can hear a horse's hoof. Sheep talk here and oxen there, Nature's voices everywhere.

Then just as the light shines more, up above the songbirds soar.

Melodies float in summer breeze, underneath the whispering trees.

Filled with gossip, ripe to share, their stories fill the noontime air.

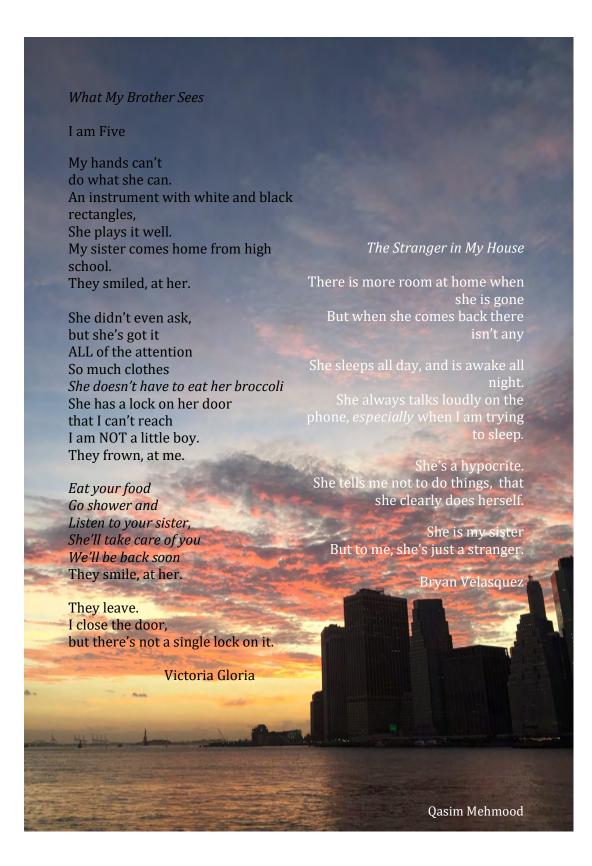
But then comes black, it's dark and bold, and it comes and eats them whole! All the creatures soon are hushed, and the only sound's the brush.

So I sigh and then I lay, down to rest in prickly hay. No more voices out at play, what a lonely time of day.

Kate Rube



Michael Barletta



The Crazy One

I have to take the bus to my mother's because otherwise I will die. At least that's what she says the spirits told her. I'm not sure how exactly this will happen. Maybe a land mine will detonate under my feet. Maybe a man with swine flu will cough on me as I enter his Uber. Maybe I'll crash my car in the unrelenting ocean-turmoil of New York City travel. However I'm supposed to go, my mother will invariably blame me not listening to the spirits and refusing to ride the bus.

Now there is a long list of things that I have learned in my relatively short life. I know how to make a computer bow down to me. I know multivariable calculus. I know my mother is probably going insane. But most of all, I know to listen to her. Even if everything else I know contradicts that.

I can't stay in my (tiny, but exorbitantly expensive) apartment. The bus is coming at nine, which probably means something like ninetwenty considering traffic, and it's eight thirty, and the square feet that have been sufficient for all my life here are starting to squeeze in and suffocate me. Unlike my mother, I am not crazy. I know her spirits are a figment of an aging brain. But I can't escape the squelching feeling in my stomach that screams "breathe, you need to breathe, you need to breathe, Briella."

The bus is not here yet and will not be at my stop for fifteen minutes, maybe thirty, and it was cooler inside the apartment after all and I have nothing to do but stand and not think about anything for the next fifteen, maybe thirty, minutes, so I go into the corner convenience store. Outside, the horns are blaring in what passes for music in this city. I buy a Cliff bar and take out two dollars and give it to the cashier, who wears a name tag saying BROOKLYN and a phone on her hand, and then I see it. The little tabloid my mother writes horoscopes for.

The bus pulls up after fighting its way, a dragon, through the hustle and bustle of traffic. I get on, and it's not summer-hot anymore but an artificial Arctic with the AC blaring in the back. Almost like a TV, too. There, but forgettable.

So the ride is nothing, just filler, and it's too cold to be hot and panicky and afraid of phantoms. It's a long ride, too, down out to the mid -size suburb I grew up, right in that big house with the Lolicia Thorsten, Supernatural Interpreter and Psychic sign out front and the clients coming in at odd hours because they saw Grandma's ghost in their basement.

I just stare out the window and watch the world pass like a movie screen. Eventually we have to stop, and the length of the ride is all gone behind me, and I can barely believe I'm here already. But I am. It's only three straight blocks from the bus stop and there I am, staring at a living childhood memory. The thing I notice first is that the sign is peeling. Odd. My mother always keeps it in tip-top condition, because otherwise people will just think she's some roadside hack, lying her way through magic to star in an infomercial. Now, my mother was like that once. Then, she went crazy. These days, she's the fake so good she fooled herself.

The thing I notice next is how the door's just open, even though my mother always keeps the door locked and used to make me stand by it every night, waiting for clients. She says a locked door keeps earthly interferences away, but I know she's just afraid of robbers. So it's odd, again, and I frown. Something's not right. For a fleeting instant I wish I was back on that freezing bus, and I feel super-hot again, but it vanishes into smoke quickly enough.

And then I smell it. Heavy and thick, it hangs in the air like smoke after a fire. And it overwhelms my nose, breaks down all my defenses, insinuates itself up out onto the porch through the open door to where I am, my mouth a little open. And I taste it, that corpsesmell. That horrid smell, I think distantly. It's like I'm watching television and this is a movie. It's like when taking the SATs I was sitting there and I knew my calculus and my algebra and my trigonometry and I could not for the life of me remember what five times three was.

And I was sitting there, with my back aching from the hard chair-back, and I just couldn't figure out five times three. And it was as if I could just close my eyes and open them and then, like my mother's magic, remember five times three. Because I couldn't possibly not remember five times three, it simply wasn't happening. It's like third grade again, and everyone laughing and tears I can't fathom staining my cheeks.

Somewhere in the dark corners of my mind, I should know why it smells, but I don't and I open the door all the way. The thing's rusty, always has been. I should tell my mother to get it fixed.

And inside it smells worse and worse, like some slaughter-house from the nineteenth century, almost, like we learned about in school. It's hot, and the heat is amplifying the smell, spreading it. I walk through the front hall where I used to wait for clients and I go into the kitchen and I see it.

Google Search I believe

I believe **in you**I have
I believe **in me**

I have **nothing**I believe **in a thing called love**

I have no one

I believe in miracles
I believe in unicorns
I believe in magic
I believe in magic
I believe in destiny
I have so much anxiety
I believe in hone

I have so much anxiety
I have so much anger in me
I believe in hope
I believe in dreams
I believe in forgiveness

I want
I want to know
I believe in happy endings

I want to whow
I want to understand
I believe in truth

I want to see I believe I can fly

I need Michela Rawson

I need **someone** I need **a hero** I need **help**

I wish

I wish it would rain

I wish I knew how it would feel to be free

I wish I had a river

I wish I could

I wish I could turn back

time

I wish I could fly

Somewhere we **only**

know

Somewhere we **could be** Somewhere we **belong**

Because of you
Because I live
Because this is my first life



Ayana Kimijima

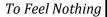
The Lonely Knight

For it seems that we only prepare for the battle, The short term moment of truth, But what about the war?

I am just a lonely knight,
On the battlefield of life,
Fighting off my enemies,
Holding my shield readily,
Tirelessly trying to survive,
All I do to win is strive,
Firmly, I grip my sword
And make a prayer to the Lord
I breathe in the human flesh,
All I want to do is refresh,
I feel my heart pounding out of my chest,
It is always a fight to be the best.

I am just a lonely knight, Doing what I need to do, To see another daylight.

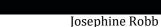
Micaela Udell



A life with no feeling.
A life with no meaning.
You're just there,
A person to fill up space.
You have no emotion.
You just drift in the ocean.
Who really cares?
Not many people do.

People laugh beside me.
But today I feel blue.
It's hard to have fun when people mess you up.
It's hard to live when you have no purpose.
Crying is hard when there no more tears,
Laughing is hard when there are so many fears.
Others are floating in the water,
But I'm struggling to swim.

Isabella Medina



TIMEOUT DISTRICT COURT STATE OF NEW YORK

JOHNNY WILLIAMS NO. 56 VERSUS SECTION Z TIMMY JONES

The above-entitled action came on for a Jury trial before the **HONORABLE TED CARLTON**, Associate Judge, and a jury duly impaneled and sworn in, in Courtroom Number 319, commencing at approximately 3:15 p.m. right after school.

APPEARANCES:

REPRESENTING JOHNNY WILLIAMS:

TERRY SQUAMP, ESQ.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ATTORNEY

REPRESENTING TIMMY JONES:

REGGIE DOO, ESQ.

NEW YORK PUBLIC DEFENDERS

REPORTED BY:

DYLAN FITZGERALD, CCR, RPR

UNOFFICIAL COURT REPORTER
IN AND FOR THE STATE OF NEW YORK

WITNESS INDEX

PROSECUTION JOHNNY WILLIAMS

Direct Examination by Mr. Squamp Cross Examination by Mr. Doo

DEFENDANT TIMMY JONES

Direct Examination by Mr. Doo Cross Examination by Mr. Squamp

TEACHER BEN TURNER

Direct Examination by Mr. Squamp Cross Examination by Mr. Doo

CLASSMATE TOMMY JENKINS

Direct Examination by Mr. Doo Cross Examination by Mr. Squamp

MR. SQUAMP:

Your Honor, the Prosecution is ready to proceed with the trial of Timmy Jones.

MR. DOO:

Your Honor, Reggie Doo on Behalf of Timmy Jones.

THE COURT:

This is the matter of Johnny Williams versus Timmy Jones. You may call your first witness.

MR. SQUAMP:

The Prosecution calls Johnny Williams to the stand.

JOHNNY WILLIAMS,

After having been first duly sworn, did testify as follows:

- DIRECT EXAMINATION -

BY MR. SQUAMP:

Q: Could you please state your name for the record?

A: I'm Johnny

Q: How old are you, Johnny?

A: I'm 6 and three quarters!

Q: Who is your teacher?

A: Mr. Turner.

Q: Johnny, may I ask you exactly what happened during recess today?

A: So um... like I was playing on the slide, an-and Timmy wanted to go... B-but it was my turn! So I told him to wait and like then he said I was st... he said a bad word!

Q: Do you see the defendant in the courtroom to-day?

A: Ummm... No... OOOH! WAITWAIT he's over there! I see him! Hi Timmy!

MR. SQUAMP:

Please let the Record reflect proper in-court identification.

EXAMINATION BY MR. SQUAMP:

Q: Johnny, would you mind further elaborating on the bad word that was said by the defendant?

A: No, I can't say it. It's reeeeaaaallllly bad!

Q: Johnny, It is OK. You have permission to say the word in question, it is actually imperative for the court records that you do so.

A: ...

Q: Sir, this trial will go nowhere unless you tell us what is wrong.

A: H-he um... He called me stupid!

Courtroom Gasps

Murmurs throughout the jury

Untitled

The dark sky glimmered with stars over the kingdom. The cold and dead forest that laid on the outskirts of the kingdom. Deep inside that forest, there was a smaller version of what looked to be a castle. Inside, a man stood. He looked out of the window in his room and into the direction of the town that the royal family visited most often. He had a sour look on his face before he shook off all sense of emotion. His plan started the next day, he needed to be prepared. The man, Oliver, set off to fix up what he needed for the following day, he set out the clothes and went over his plan once more as his green eyes flickered across the page. He just needed to get close to the Princess and he knew how.

The following morning, he set out to the town by foot. Halfway, he used his magic to conjure a horse made of shadows and rode the rest of the way. Once he was close enough to the village, he got off the shadow-animal. He then snapped his fingers and the creature turned into dust. He brushed off his clothes and headed in. He walked into the shopping center since he knew the Princess enjoyed visiting the area to speak and connect with the villagers that were her age. He just needed to wait for the Princess to arrive.

The children rushed to greet her, they all were excited to see her. "Miss Alice!" one of the kids called the rest of them gathered around her. She laughed and sat on her knees and began to talk with the youngers. Eventually, Oliver got bored of waiting for the kids to leave. He sent a small bunny that he created to head towards the group. One of the small kids noticed the bunny and called out to the others. They all waved goodbye to Alice and ran after the bunny. Once they were far enough, Oliver came over and held his hand out for her to take it. She smiled and grabbed his hand to lift herself up. "Thank you," Her voice was heavenly. Oliver almost found her beautiful but he knew what he had to do. "It's no problem, I would do anything for someone as gorgeous as you." This caused her to blush darkly, "I've never seen you around here before, are you new to the area?" Alice asked this question while looking into Oliver's eyes. He nodded, "I'm thinking of moving into this kingdom. I came a long way and I find it beautiful here. My chances of living here got higher once I saw that you lived here," he spoke with a shy smile. He had to play his part well if he was going to get into the castle.

She took the bait, "well... I could show you around? Maybe let you see the castle and meet the king so you can know who will be ruling over you." Oliver had to suppress the urge to laugh at her stupidity. "That would be amazing, Thank you. I'm Oliver." It would have been better to use a fake name but he just didn't feel like it would affect his plan. He hadn't been in the town for years. Plus he was sure that the king erased any records of him. "I'm Alice," she introduced herself while she began to take Oliver's hand to lead him around the area.

After the tour, Alice took him to the castle. She showed him around and eventually came to the throne room where the king, her father, was sitting. She pushed the doors open and began to walk to the king with Oliver behind her. The king looked up at them, he had been reading a book but stood up quickly once he saw Oliver. "Alice, get away from him," he commanded. He had recognized Oliver almost instantly which put a smile on the green-eyed man's face. Alice's face showed pure confusion, "Father, he is simply a man who wishes to move into our kingdom." She spoke while moving closer to Oliver. The king opened his mouth to yell but was silenced when Oliver's body began to get surrounded by a cloud of dark smoke. This caused Alice to gasp in shock and move away from him.

The smoke disappeared to reveal a different version of Oliver. This version had grey skin with shiny, gold dots decorating his body. His usual green eyes turned bright yellow, they had a slight grey tint in them. He grew large black horns on his head, one was chipped. It looked like someone tried to rip it off but only got the top half.

He laughed loudly, "this house is full of fools!" He stepped towards the princess and grabbed her by the throat. She began to kick and squirm to get anyway from him but he just held onto her tighter. The king began to call for his guards but Oliver had been smart enough to lock the doors with his magic.

He looked at the man in front of him, "You poor thing..." he spoke is a mocking voice. "You should have never touched what was mine. My family is dead because of you. My mother, my father, my sisters. Even my soon to be husband was murdered by your army," he turned his attention to the princess. "You will learn what it is like to be left with this feeling of anger and loneliness."

Fog

An eerie mist clouds the air, masking any hint of shape in the landscape,

The tops of the trees are enveloped by the fog, seemingly fading into nothingness,

A persistent chill breeze drifts by, rustling their slick leaves and whispering in my ears as if it wants my attention.

And though I shiver, the air doesn't feel cold on my skin, I take comfort in the way it surrounds me and gently

tickles my face.

I'm lost; even when I squint my eyes, my sight cannot pierce through the fog's relentless veil, Where light and darkness become one, and vou can't differentiate between the two. But, in the corner of my vision, I see a twinkle of light jumping off the droplets of the mist, Dancing in the distance, as if it's calling for me to come and bask in its warmth

and safety.

I oblige, and travel deeper into the fog to investigate the source of the light,

And out of relief, for a moment, I'm almost happy, and the corner of my mouth briefly turns up, Just out of the possibility of finding refuge at the heart of its illumination,

Every step closer I take granting me equal curiosity with excitement, as the light pulses and gets stronger.

Finally, I step out of the woodlands into a clearing that overlooks the sea, equally cloaked by a layer of the gray blanket over its smooth waves, Yet my newfound smile leaves as quickly as it arrived, as the culprit of the luminosity reveals itself to me.

Not a haven, Not an escape,

But it's just an abandoned lighthouse, in close enough proximity such that I'm still drawn in to its intriguing pulse of light,

Usually a symbol of safety,

Of security,
But this time, I already know
That no one is inside.

With this, the fog rolls back in and swallows me whole, But this time, the cold has a firm grip on me, And this time, the chilled air bites my skin.

Ethan Piliero

In Response to the US House of Representatives Passing a Bill to Fund More Security to Schools

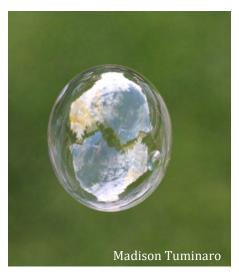
I don't really know what's happening Everyone's eyes are big and bulgy The teachers are talking to each other But I don't know about what I wonder where Kate is?

They said we have to keep quiet
They said we have to play the quiet game
Kate and I love playing the quiet game
I wonder where Kate is?

They told us to stand up And go in a single file line And we still have to stay quiet I really want to know why I wonder where Kate is?

There are big sounds
Like someone dropping a bowling ball
Or someone banging against the wall
I wonder where Kate is?

I see cars with blue and red lights outside Why are there police cars? I keep hearing the loud sounds It's getting really scary mommy I wonder where Kate is?



We made it outside
There are so many people
They looked happy once they saw us
Why are there so many people?
I wonder where Kate is?

I see you, mommy I'm very happy to see you, mommy But why are you crying? I want to know where Kate is?

I see Kate's mom
But I can't see Kate
Why is Kate's mom crying?
Maybe she's sad Kate didn't come out
yet
I hope she comes out soon
I wonder where she is?

Teresa Ferreira

I've written about you before.
I thought it was hard to write about you, but it wasn't
If anything it was the easiest thing I've done in my whole life.
Although, it wasn't easy to look back at.

It's been six years.
And I am okay.
I'm okay with no father daughter dances
I'm okay with not knowing what else I am made up by
I'm okay with you leaving
I'm okay with it.

I'm not okay with you bothering my family.
I'm not okay with you taking what isn't yours
I'm not okay with the fact that if you know where I am
If you know where to call
If you know who to talk to about me
Why don't you?
Why don't you care?
I cared.

I cared so much I called you everyday for a whole year And you never answered. I'm not okay that you don't care.



But that's okay. Because I'm okay. And I hope you are too.

This one was hard.

Tanya Reyes

Brianna Martinez

The Silence and the Storm

I.

The storm shook us through Four years ago when I saw you last I can still hear the thunder and see the lightning I am still thinking of the past.

Blocking out the thunder We played our music too loud, if only just to feel Like the lightning does the sky, we cracked ourselves open Searching for something meant to be real.

I remembering tearing my eyes from the damage before us To glance at your face Finding that it was as blue and dim as the night sky Gone without a trace.

Watching the storm that night I knew what you would do Just like the lightning You split our sky in two.

Now it's only silence I don't hear a thing Empty expanses of blankness before me I am a queen without a king.

I've been trying to fight the peace The quiet is almost too much Longing for the storm Longing for touch.

I can't name the stars myself Though I still look up during storms I don't see anything before me Except our silhouettes sitting, except our dark forms.



Jordan Blair

They say stormy weather is the worst for boats For it's difficult to control the mast But as I try to navigate these calm waters I can't navigate waters whose storm has passed.

They say that there's silence before the storm But I can't handle the silence after.

II.

I can still feel the waters Roiling and turning beneath me But I am no longer thinking of the past. I now know that nothing ever lasts.

I can still feel the thunder
Breaking bridges beneath my skin
I can still feel the lightning
But I'm no longer questioning the skin I'm in.

I hear the music and know meanings are built to last But that doesn't mean that they don't change. I am more than happy to be a queen without a king.

I count my own stars.
I know there is nothing wrong with silence as I learn that I am not a dark form. I am light.

The storm has passed And I am here Waiting for my next storm Waiting for my next healing And anticipating what it will bring.

Sofia Goldstein

Il Piccolo Fiore

It was so quintessential. In Italy, at a pizzeria surrounded by little wildflowers. The smells of the freshly grown produce surrounding everything. It was just my mother and me, sitting there, with me translating the menu for her. There were only three other tables outside; covered with the red and white checkered tablecloths. There was alone, elderly man sitting across from us. His eyes were old and endearing, his age visible to those looking at his worn face. He was holding something small in his hands, barely noticeable; he gazed at this petite object intently. After sitting quietly for quite some time, he turned to me.

"Mi scusi, questo e possibile per tu prendi il questo fiore?"* This old man handed me the tiny flower he had held, moments before. I nodded and let him continue.

"Grazie. Dai questo all un'altra persona. Creare un amico o amica. Tu sei una persona bellissima."**Contradictory to what we are taught, I accepted his request. I took from a stranger to give to a stranger. I turned back to my mother and she smiled. This person I had just met continued to tell his life story and how he was a librarian at a small Mediterranean college. He soon left and has never returned into our lives since. I knew the right thing to do was to pass the flower to the first person I saw and respond with the same that he had told me. This might have been a very simple action, but I knew this was a good way to spread good in the harsh world we live in today.

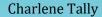
To this day, I bring this small event in my life with me to help remind me that there is good in this world. With all of the conflicts and wars that occur, small acts like this reinforce that hope is always possible and that just sharing this hope and joy could help someone through a hard time, as it reminds them of the light. Even when I was dealing with difficulties in my lifetime, I think back to this moment to remember that there are good people and there are hope and peace in the world, despite what we commonly see and hear of on this planet.

Anna FitzPatrick

^{*&}quot;Excuse me, is it possible for you to take this flower?"

^{**&}quot;Thank you. Give this to another person. Make a friend. You are a beautiful person.

They say that sometimes you can feel it in the air around youthis gut feeling. But I didn't feel this one at all. I'd say I was clueless, almost. Maybe I was ignoring what was around me. You see it happened all so abruptly, that I feared if I paid too much attention to one little thing I'd miss the whole story. The craziest thing, the craziest part- to me, was that I was waiting. I was waiting for it to happen but he was so much stronger than the forces of the universe that I missed it. I missed it, yet I took every ounce of it with me and every drop of words that sprained and every detail of the hospital bed and every small insignificant amount of what he wore that night with me. Maybe it was the wind that day and maybe it was the food they served in the hospital- or maybe it was the endless amount of sleep I got but somehow I still felt tired, empty. Maybe it was the sirens that blared throughout the town and maybe it was his screams that I still hear and maybe it was the fact that he asked us to pray for him on his deathbed and I scarcely watched him.





Madison Tuminaro

Excerpt from *The Musuem*

"Okay," Auntie said. "Meet us in front of the exhibit at 2:00." I could do that. In front of

the exhibit.... Certainly, she meant the front hall of it. At 2:00, I was in the front hall of the

Egyptian Wing. Auntie, Grace, and Anna were outside, in the Great Hall of the Met.

After a long wait punctuated by trips back into the exhibit, I went to the Great Hall and found Auntie on a bench.

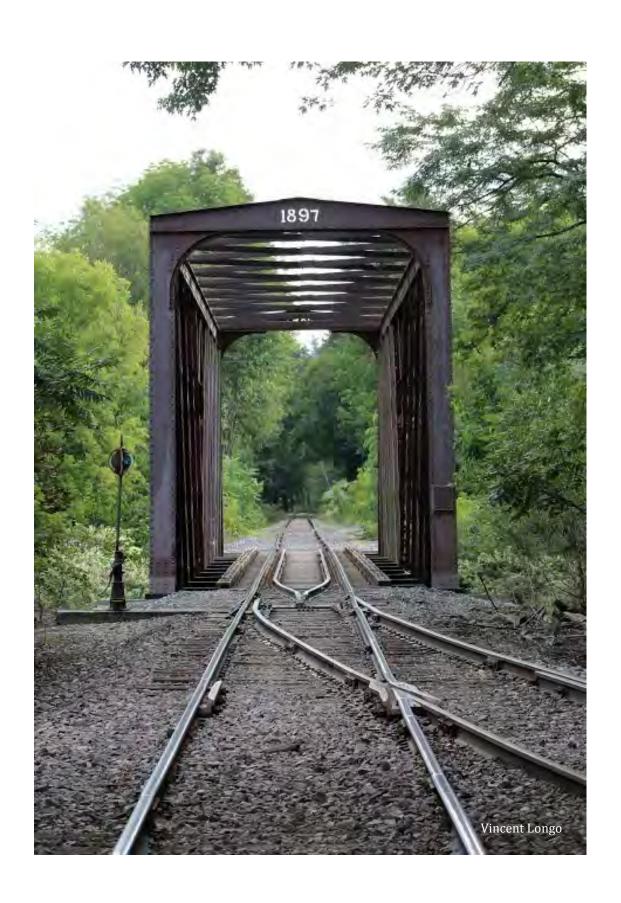
She was alone.

"Where were you? Grace and Anna went to go look for you! You have to go tell them I found you!" Auntie said. A sick, sinking feeling lodged itself in my stomach. Grace and Anna were gone, somewhere in the gigantic museum, and it was all my fault. I had misinterpreted the directions and failed to take any initiative. They had had to go in search of me. Worse, the Howsons were out there somewhere too. I shuddered to think of what would happen if they found Grace and Anna wandering around, alone, looking for me.

I had to find my family first.

The first place I searched was the Egyptian Wing itself. I practically ran through it, desperate, but there was no sign of a short brown-haired girl with freckles and glasses or a platinum blonde. They weren't upstairs either. Finally, I caught their trail- the American Wing, which was right next to the Egyptian Wing. However, Grace and Anna weren't the only people in the American Wing. Wim, Tijs, Rasmus, and Matthias were sitting in a corridor, having predictably become bored of their tour. By this point I was absolutely panicked. Whatever came next, I just had to get Grace and Anna back. They could be kidnapped or lost or...! I asked the Howsons- well, Creutzbergs- if they had seen Grace or Anna. They hadn't.

Finally, I found an elevator. Grace and Anna had gone down in it! A new burst of energy filled me like a balloon. There was hope. Yet, hope is often followed by despair. I couldn't figure out how to work the elevator. It felt like I would never get out. Punishment, I guessed, for my sins. I was the one at fault. When I finally worked out the elevator, Grace and Anna hadn't gone far. The first thing I did was hug Anna. Yeah, she was annoying sometimes- actually most of the time, but I was glad to get her back.



Excerpt from Crumbling

My life so far has been fairly sheltered, given that I live in an affluent town with little crime and a stellar educational system. And while I've always known that I have a lot to be thankful for, I never liked feeling so shielded from the rest of the world. I wanted to know what was beyond the flat screen TVs and pretty clothes I take for granted every day. So, when my church youth group announced that they would be taking a service trip to Louisiana this past July, I immediately signed up to join them.

That evening, even though we were still covered in dirt from our day's work, the chaperones decided to take us to the Lower Ninth Ward. There were signs describing the damage after Katrina, and how celebrities such as Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie had donated money. We had just arrived and I was reading one of the signs with my friend Lauren when five kids suddenly ran up to us.

"Hello!" The youngest of the five exclaimed. "I'm Kevin!"

He ran up and gave Mr. Rogers, one of our chaperones, a big hug. Kevin was adorable. We laughed and said hello back, making friendly conversation. Two of my friends, Christine and Sofia were especially excited to meet our visitors. They let the little kids sit in their laps and took pictures with them.

After a few minutes of this, I noticed that the chaperones were huddled together, whispering and shifting uncomfortably as they observed the scene. The oldest of the five, a girl who appeared to be around my age, seemed to notice this too. Her eyes narrowed as she watched the chaperones warily. Then, without warning, her eyes slid over to mine. Instantly, a friendly smile was plastered on her face, but it didn't reach her dark blue eyes. They were cold and filled with an emotion I couldn't place.

I was starting to get a little concerned, wondering why everyone was acting so strangely. But before I could turn to Lauren and ask her if she knew what was going on, several things happened at once. The oldest girl bent over as if she had dropped something, and Heather, another chaperone, slammed her foot down on Christine's wallet, which Christine had foolishly placed on the grass. The moment she did this, an old, scratched white car, which had been heading slowly towards us, jolted abruptly before swerving around and driving away.

"Girls, come on. We've got to go," Mr. Rogers said, gesturing for Sofia and Christine to put the kids down.

Before I knew it, we were quickly making our way back to the vans we came in. I could feel the kids' stares burning into my back as we walked away. The drive back to the church that hosted our trip was tense and filled with the loudest silence I'd ever heard. I knew what everyone was thinking about and could tell that no one wanted to be the first to speak. So I leaned back in my seat and looked out the window, trying to sort out my jumbled thoughts and struggling to make the connection between the car and the wallet.

When we arrived at the church and filed into the chapel, a boy named Kyle blurted out the question that was on all of our minds.

"What just happened?"

Heather sighed and sat in a folding chair that was facing us.

"Those kids are trained to do that," she said, as if that explained everything.

"Trained to do what?" Christine asked, confused.

"To distract you. I can't be sure, but I'm guessing the little ones were supposed to get us to pick them up and put our wallets and purses down so the older kids could grab them and throw them in the car window. The car would drive away and we would have no one to call the cops on except for a bunch of children."





Kimberly Reves

Permit Patty Busts My Illegal Baby Bunny Selling Ring

Icy spring wind blasted against my face as tears rolled down my cheeks, the heat of the two baby bunnies nestled in my arms was starting to become uncomfortably warm, and as if I was not suffering enough, the cop looming over me was making sure I got the message that I was a dangerous, cold, hardened, criminal. He got the cold part right. In the spring of 2017, I was selling baby bunnies in Rye with my best friend, Meg. We were holding one bunny each and wandering around town, letting people pet them. A woman had just exited a shore store and was holding the hand of a special needs kid. They walked up to us, and the woman's kid was having a great time petting and scratching the ears of what he called "puppies". Then, out of the shadows, slinks in Permit Patty. She stood at a whopping 4'8", had on a wrinkly white and navy striped shirt, and a look of utter contempt on her face. "Hey!" Patty nagged in the most condescending voice she could muster. "You can't sell those! You're minors, and you need a permit!" I politely told her that no, I did not need a permit because these bunnies were over 6 weeks old and I was letting potential buyers see them before purchasing them. At least, that's what the internet told me. Patty did not like this. She screeched her head off on how disrespectful I was for talking back to an adult, and insisted that selling these rabbits was a health hazard. The woman we were talking to before did not want any part in this conversation, so she, to her son's disappointment, left us alone with Patty. I also had had enough of Patty and her unnecessary vigilante justice as well, so Meg and I walked away.

Meg then decided she wanted to treat herself to some Starbucks. I held both bunnies in my arms and waited outside the coffee shop while she went in and ordered her Tiple-Mocha-Caramel-Drizzle-Cold-Brew-Frappuccino. While I was waiting, a police car pulled up besides me and the cop inside hopped out. I had a sneaking suspicion as to why he was here, and my suspicions were confirmed when he asked, "Are you the one selling rabbits?" I nodded, and he said I needed to stop and I had to donate them to a shelter. I was about to interrupt his lecture with what I had said to Permit Patty just minutes before, but decided against it because he was a cop and I didn't want to get shot at or arrested. Halfway through his talk with me, I started panicking and crying out of nervousness. Why was he taking so long explaining this? Is he just stalling his time until backup arrives and a SWAT team comes around the corner to bust my baby bunny selling ring? Or does he just think I'm stupid?

Eventually he finished his speech (no SWAT team needed), hopped back in his car, and scooted away. I wiped the tears off my face (which is very hard to do while holding two bunnies, mind you) and started forming hypothetical plans of revenge against Patty. Who did this woman think she was, calling the cops on a child selling bunnies? What a hypocrite. I bet her children partake in the highly illegal activity of hosting lemonade stands without a food vending permit. Meg tapped my shoulder and was waiting right behind me, Tiple-Mocha-Caramel-Drizzle-Cold-Brew-Frappuccino in hand. How long has she been there? Who cares. I'm sick and tired and want to go home.

At the time, I was furious at Permit Patty. Petty, self righteous people like her need to get off their high horse and be shown that their actions have consequences. If you go around calling the cops willy-nilly on people you don't like, then that will come back around to haunt you. I, however, was not angry at the cop. He was just doing his job. Because of Patty, I was too afraid to bring those baby bunnies into town ever again. What if the cop drives by and sees that I, the hard-ened criminal bunny dealer, am back on the streets? I ended up giving away two of the bunnies to the Humane Society, and the last two went to the guy who installed my sprinkler system. From what I've heard, he gave them to his grandchildren.

If this situation happened to me today, I would react almost the same way. The only thing I would change this time around would be to ask for Patty's address so I can flood her yard with a bunny infestation. No, but seriously, heinous crimes go unsolved every day and people like her contribute to that problem by wasting police time and resources. I'm not as angry at her now, but I still have not forgiven her for her atrocious actions. How is it even possible for someone to be so arrogant? Because of Patty, I no longer completely comfortable being around police. Whenever I see a cop, my first instinct is to leave the area because I feel as if they are looking for excuses to arrest me. This reaction isn't spawned so much out of fear as it is out of distrust, but I think it's a little bit of both. I no longer feel 100% at ease in the mall, in the grocery store, or even online. However, I'm considerably more observant now than I was before, so that's a plus. Furthermore, Patty's plan to stop my involvement in the illegal bunny trade has backfired. All she's done by calling the cops on me is made me a better bunny dealer. If my rabbit gets pregnant again, I'll be more discreet about selling her babies this time. But hey, if this incident had taught me anything, it's that you can never to be too careful.

Sister to Sister (inspired by "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes)

Well, sister, I'll tell you: life for me has been no walk in the park on a sunny day. It's a marathon It's angry, hungry birds attacking you for food Seeing homeless people hopeless It's police giving out tickets But all the time I've been chugging along Feeding the birds And talking to the homeless So sista, don't hide Don't hesitate Don't think the worst Keep with it Older would know, right Cause life for me has been no walk in the park on a sunny day.



Eileen Plotkin

Danielle Vella

Riptide

The tobacco in your breath Will make a pedestrian wheeze Your lungs looked like the Black Death Such surfing was not a breeze

We stayed out on the waves till My skin began to peel You were so happy, then you needed your refill But we knew you'd get nasty; it wasn't ideal

The fingers that held my board Were now holding a time bomb At every breath you intake, I thought 'oh lord' Again I paddle back to calm

You carried the board atop your head Barefoot you strolled as I biked You teased me as I rode quite stead You still, holding the

bomb I disliked.

Caela Vasilkioti



Leslie Yanez

Excerpt from #Curley'sWifeToo

People say it all of the time. *Believe in yourself! Know your self worth! You can do it!* But, as I'm sure all of you know, it's much easier said than done. It also gets much harder to have confidence, and be fearless as you grow older. But why is that? What about our culture wears down, breaks, and lessens our confidence as we grow? Today, I want to really dig in and explore the value of inner strength, and how society affects the way women in particular value themselves.

According to the Google dictionary, there are twelve ways to define strength. The first one you'll see is regarding physical strength. "The quality or state of being strong", "physical power and energy." Then you will find definitions regarding intellectual and emotional strength: "the emotional or mental qualities necessary in dealing with situations or events that are distressing or difficult", "the degree of intensity of a feeling or belief". The list goes on and on. Clearly, strength is a concept with many different meanings and interpretations, and something that people have given a lot of thought to.

Some of the strongest members of our society, are women. Women are forced to endure discrimination and sexism, due to the unjust conditions and social norms in our society. Gender roles have clouded the minds of the people in our community, dating back as long as anyone can remember. While treatment towards females has improved over time, we are still struggling to reach the same level of equality that men in our society obtain without having to work for it.



Remy Rabin

Michael Barletta

Changes

We were all born the same With a mouth, a pair of eyes, a pair of ears and a nose We were all children With scrapes on our knees and sweat running down our face from playing childhood games, Games we'd play with anyone who wanted to join. We never saw a difference. We are all teenagers We all begin to realize that the world isn't filled with peace and love We begin to see changes. We begin to see individuals on the news being treated differently We begin to see rights being taken away. We see those who are different being silenced. We begin to see the legacy of our history. How the same individuals we once played hide and go seek with have changed.

Mildred Maldonado



Alison Kenny

10,000 and Climbing

The air,
Wafer thin,
Cuts the curvature of your throat;

The muscles in your thighs Burn into dead matches

Your lungs, Gasping, never filling

Your heart, Beating until it bursts

Your mind,
Trapped in itself,
Blank,
Speckled by the mountains, the rivers, the shadows,
A welcome change from its own weight,

Now stripped away.

Free.

The oxygen floods your body,

As if seeing the sun for the first time.

Josephine Robb



Jessica Leckart

I had always feared death, and I bet you do too. You can say you don't, but it is actually the survival of our species. We don't jump from cliffs, dive into water if we can't swim, or attempt any other ridiculous stunts because we do not want to die. I had always been scared, ever since my brother died when I was just eleven years old because of a war he had no part in making, that he played no role in until the day of his untimely death. He was a civilian casualty, one whose memory flashed on the news and on candles then burned out again, in a chilling silence. We all already know our time is limited, no one teaches us that. But what my brother teaches me is that sometimes it just doesn't matter if you die, not when there are billions of people on Earth, much of which more important and significant than you are. You're just not that special. And so I run from death the best I can, just do avoid that fate of disappearing from the world's memory. Maybe one day I'll do something to make me famous and remembered, but I highly doubt it.

But it's hard to run from death when it is everywhere, and has been since I was ten years old. That was when the war started, when childhood ended and I had to grow up faster. Live each day like you're an adult now, because for all you know it is the oldest you will ever get. I'm sixteen. Maybe this is me while I'm just a teenager, or me when I'm middle aged because I'll die in my thirties. Or, maybe this is me as an elderly person because this is my last day on Earth. Time is tricky like that.

For me, it looked like no one saw the warning, if it was even there. No adult had ever told us the time may come when we would have to drop everything and run, run away from bullets and from borders, because of what men in suits were saying on TV. When supplies started to thin out, no one told us it isn't because we're trying to save money but because the stores are running out, supply going down and prices being jacked up. When everyone's phones started ringing, that was the first thing we were told of.

Where we were, it was pitch black, the ground was hard and the air around us was cold in a way that clenched my throat. All any of us could hear, aside from the occasional fearful mumbling, is bangs going on from above the Earth. When I was that age, and when I was inside of there, I came up with a nickname for the people we were at war with-The Callers. The nickname only became stronger as time went by.

Mia Altamuro

Breather

The doors to bathroom stalls, and I think everyone would agree with me, have the obnoxious habit of being extremely patronizing. Today, as I sit atop the closed lid of the toilet, it asks me the questions I don't want to answer, all too aware of what my responses might be. I glance down at my wrist and see the hands of my watch move at an incriminating speed, but to be completely fair to my watch, that's not a very quick speed right now. I run my hands through my hair and leave them there like they'll keep me grounded in some way. Like my head needs to be held down so my thoughts don't get out. Why is this so hard for me? My eyes pierce into the stall door and even that seems too difficult to comprehend at the moment. My focus is competing between the individual indents and crevices on the door and the echoing of people saying words I don't want to hear.

They don't tell you in the movies, or the books, or in Forbes magazine or whatever, that it's painful to be in love. That if you're like me, even when she makes you feel like you're walking on clouds, you're always scared you'll fall through. That having someone, and feeling something, comes with the caveat that at all times you have something and someone to lose. And when I find my focus even slightly slipping, and her voice gets lost in the white noise I can't help but begin to qualify her I love you's. Because if I do and she does the same things that I've experienced before and I have to remember the feeling of hands the way I felt them back then I get scared I'd stop being able to love people the same way ever again.

There's a faucet or a pipe somewhere leaking just slightly. I can hear each drop fall onto the floor and ripple into a puddle. I can picture growing on the floor. Now I'm thinking about the fact that she's out there waiting, and actually living life, and I'm stuck here in a bathroom stall. In a bathroom stall watching a watch with moving hands, but where truthfully, time stands still. A bathroom stall with a door that asks me why I'm so scared to try and keep living my life. A bathroom stall where my world becomes nothing but four flimsy metal walls and the excuses in my head. No matter how many times you say that you mean it, how does this not make someone harder to love?

How am I not harder to love.

worse when your chair is empty. Come back when you can.

I feel my phone vibrate in my pocket. She's texted me. (6:45pm) I know you promised that it's just an upset stomach. But just in case it's not, you're okay. It's okay. Everything's a little bit

Harrison Sakai

Untitled

The sun continued its rapid descent
Over streetlights
A cold burning
Can you really endure?
The absence of love
The absence of care
And after a while you learn
You live over the sea
And they live over the way.
So you decorate your own soul
Instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers
Strong
You really learned.

Josephine Robb

It's Just Me and You

Here is my best friend It might sound crazy, it might sound strange But I promise you This friendship will never change

I read him my books I tell him about my day He sits there and listens And he has the best things to say

I ask him what to do When I feel scared inside He tells me, It's ok, I'm here, you don't need to hide

I ask him what to do when school is tough He tells me, Just do your best and that's enough

> He is always with me When no one else is around When no one wants to listen, Or even make a sound

Here, is my best friend It might sound crazy, it might sound strange But I promise you This friendship will never change

Anonymous

Brianna Jackman

Labyrinth

I.

I get this energy inside of me, this energy that eats me;

like my heart is jumping out of my chest and into his.

I remember when I first met him - a basketball game.

I felt the energy even if we had only said a few words to each other. There was something I could not understand, but each time they brought his name up,

I felt alive.

March 17th, St Patty's. We talked by the fridge, by the table and by the other table we never ran out of words we were tied together,

the energy was uncontrollable.

And slowly, without realizing it, we were captured in a new world - just the two of us - Smiling
As our hearts beat faster and faster.
And slowly, without realizing it,

we fell in love.

But you see, with love comes fear. This fear that drives you crazy.

The truest you feel:

losing the most precious thing you have.

I can feel his presence and almost hear his voice. a sincere tear so smooth, comforts my cheek.

Like a fire that warms you when you are lost and cold.

I wish he could understand how much it hurts when he goes on pause, or when he tells me about another girl.

And I say *I love you* and he says *I love you*

but once again I feel completely distant from him. He has no idea that's what hurts the most, and he never will.

You see the thing is that being sad over him,

suffocates me

like you are in panic because you realize you cannot find the way out of the labyrinth.

He was a waste of my thought,

but he was my reality:

my only thought to have.

I don't recommend love - people get lost in it -



Ariane Guyonnet

Caitlin Policarpio



What if there is no evil in his world for it's only vile if you think it is I don't want to think about the families about their fathers and sons now nothing more than mere sludge at the bottom of a 50 gallon drum why can't David himself around those immature card games when is Timmy's soccer practice over if you poison men with liquor the empty bottles get the blame cops don't consider adding a mourning widow to a watch list so what's the difference between doing something awful and being something awful.

Eileen Dockery

When You Grow Up

You don't grow up when you lose all your teeth.
You don't grow up when you turn 18.
You don't grow up when you graduate college.
You don't grow up when you buy your first house.
You don't grow up when you have a first kid.

You grow up when you know your true self.
You grow up when you learn to be kind.
You grow up when you understand the world.
You grow up when you make a positive change.

You don't grow up when you go off to kindergarten.
You don't grow up when you read your first book.
You don't grow up when you enter middle school.
You don't grow up when you get to put your materials in a locker.
You don't grow up when you play on a varsity sports team.

You grow up when you stand up against a bully.
You grow up when you learn to care for others.
You grow up when you stand up for what you believe in.
You grow up when you truly know when you've grown up.

Bailey Fisher

My Room

I was trapped in a room, with barred windows and concrete walls, completely inescapable. At first it didn't seem so bad, it was the only thing I'd ever known and in many ways it still is. The room became my world, everyday the walls moving in an inch enclosing me just a little more. At first it was barely noticeable there was still plenty of room for me to move around, but eventually as I got bigger I outgrew the room, it became too plain, too empty. From those barred windows I got to watch everyone outside, walking around in repetitive motions, taking their freedom for granted. I watched kids with parents who still loved each other, who never had to compromise their relationship with one parent to please the other one. Kids who didn't have to grow up at twice the speed they were supposed to in an attempt to make life easier for their little siblings. Kids who had friends who were genuine, the kind of people who wouldn't leave them the second somebody newer or better came along.

My parents' divorce consumed more than half of my life. I wanted to find an experience that was all my own, and not something rooted in their failed relationship. As hard as I tried, everything seemed to lack the passion that I knew would distinguish me from everyone else. Any and all of my experiences seemed to orbit around the same poisonous center. My parents' abhorrence for one another reached a point that I didn't even know was possible, their relationship crumbled further and further leaving my brothers and I wounded and scarred. It reached a point where they couldn't even be in the same room without either a physical or verbal fight ensuing. My brothers and I getting caught in the crossfires of the only thing any of us have ever known. Thus explaining my countless attempts at finding a new topic, but once I'd realized how much of my life this had really overtaken, it forced me to see that I don't have any experiences that aren't related to it. So yes, in many ways this essay is directly about my parents divorce but in most ways so is my life.

In some ways I allowed their ignorance, I watched all these people and even though I yelled for their attention, I never grabbed at them or forced them to see me. I let things go when I shouldn't have, I allowed my room to get smaller and smaller, until it restricted me to a single position, all I had left to do was imagine. Imagine what freedom from my room would be, a chance to make new friends, and find real love that could surround me instead of the cold concrete that actually did.

I dreamt of the day where I could run free amongst the people who ignored me and find somewhere new, somewhere exciting that would set the course for who I'd be. A fresh start somewhere different where I choose not only who, but what I want to be.

As threatening as that idea is for me, I really believe that this will be my chance to live free of the toxicity I've been surrounded by my whole life. What chisels away at the concrete walls and allows me the opportunity to find out who I can be. The feeling of hope for my future is the small ray of light that I know will shine through the window of my room and illuminate the path to my future which is so quickly approaching. My freedom from the walls which have bound me for so many years will allow me to experience the many opportunities presented by the new world that was always waiting just outside the walls for me to explore with a new found freedom and a sense of determination.

Olivia Nelson



Isaque Brandao

Falling in Love (Will Kill You)

"You know I've been getting chest pains every time he leaves?" The Girl's friend stopped trying to untangle her headphones to look at her. "What?"

"It's the weirdest thing," she began. "I'm fine when we're together, but the moment he's out of an earshot it feels like an elephant is stomping on my chest and it hurts to breathe."

"That sounds like a heart attack," her friend said, handing her headphones back to her. The Girl rolled them up in a way that wouldn't get tangled and put them back in her bag.

"The other day he brushed my shoulder and it hurt to move it for hours afterwards. Whenever I think about him my head hurts!"

"Easy!" her friend said with a wide smile. "Don't think about him!"

The Girl shook her head. "It hurts more when I don't."

Her friend laughed. "I can only imagine what happens why he actually talks to you."

"Oh, I'm fine when we talk. But as soon as the conversation is over my palms start sweating and I'm shaking and —" She felt something pierce through her skull. The Girl doubled at the waist and grabbed her head, hissing in pain.

"Oh my god!" Her friend dropped in front of The Girl to look for any sign of damage. "What happened? Are you okay?"

"What's wrong?" The Boy said as he turned the corner. He ran over to the Girl, once he saw her.

The Girl took everything she had to breathe in. It was sharp and pained, but as soon as she exhaled, the pain in her head went away and she wasn't seeing dark spots in her eyes anymore. She saw her friend, whose face was frozen in terror, and The Boy.

The Boy.

"Um," The Girl tried. She rose to her feet, straightening her clothes and matted her hair down. "I-I don't know, but—" her words were caught in her throat when her eyes met with The Boy's. "I'm fine now," she whispered, smiling tightly to prove her point.

The Boy looked at The Girl, who could not meet his eye, and saw the beads of sweat at her hairline, and her shoulders rising and falling as she tried to even her breath. "Are you sure?" "I think I'm just going to take her home," her friend said, gently grabbing The Girl's arm in case she needed the support. The Girl and her friend started walking away, her friend turning slightly to wave back at him. The Girl and her friend walked outside, her friend having to jog to keep up with the Girl's walking pace. The Girl pulled on the handle to her friend's car until she unlocked it. She slumped in the passenger seat and put her head in her hands.

"I think I'm going to throw up," The Girl said as her friend rubbed her back. "What is wrong with me?"

"You fool," her friend said, "you're falling in love."

Anonymous



Madison Tuminaro

Creaks in the Floor

A walk in the woods A stroll past the rocks The throwing and building Of cheap cardboard blocks

Floral rugs and oddly designed couches Which match the curtains and the paintings that are mounted On the walls that are beige and the cartons on the floor Everything she collects almost crowding the door

A tree in the yard that's off to the right A mystical world which emerges at night Of magic and madness and running and flying Untamed imaginations which have no fear of dying

But now we are grown Caught up with our lives With no other choice Than to hide our inner children deeper inside

All we had taken for granted before Laying in front of us like creaks in the floor Praying and wishing to go back to that age When our lives weren't consumed by the world and its rage

The joy it would bring when we went on adventures To discover new boxes of old hidden treasures Things that our parents used before Before their memories too were just creaks in the floor

We're just too busy To go back to our place To visit the woman Who's stuck in that space

Special to us
But a trap to another
I'm sorry I haven't visited grandma
I hope she knows I love her

Olivia Nelson



Home

The day I came home light flooded through the house, windows opened, letting in the clean fresh air. Colors beamed from the walls surrounding me; bright blues, greens, and yellows bouncing off the newly placed tiles and freshly painted walls.

I started to crawl around the floors, the soft white rugs against my tiny new legs.

The house felt one of a kind.
It was one of a kind,
Built by us,
board by board put up,
nailed into place.
Stroke by stroke, the
fresh paint was applied.

But as time went by, alarms systems broke, screaming at us in our sleep; we up jump in fear from our noiseless dreams.

There began leaks in the ceilings, buckets scattered through the house attempting to catch every drop.

I no longer felt the soft rug against my feet, but the cold tile that laid under it hidden from me in my earlier years.

> As time went by, the house grew dark, slowly falling apart piece by piece.

I knew it wouldn't last, and soon we had to leave.
So my feet jumped out the door to the warm soft grass.
As my toes touched the dirt,
I looked up at the bright blue sky,
The sun beamed on my skin.
I took a breath of fresh air and set off to find my next
Home.

Brianna Martinez



Madison Tuminaro

In Loving Memory of Zaida Garcia - Make Mama Proud (Reprinted)

Yo trabajo y tu estudias

Mom never fails to remind me that she is working hard. Not for her, but for me

Tus estudios primero, amigas después

A Latina mom's favorite line.

Y si todos tus amigos se tiran por un puente, tu también te tiras?

The staple phrase in a Latino household. Causing the common curiosity to arise....would you?

My mother has worked days and nights, through holidays and storms, sick or tired

Works around 3-4 jobs a week

Monday to Saturday

Now where's my bonding time?

What does one do when your mother is being stolen from the adult world?

Nothing.

Mama comes home, wearing her typical Aeropostale shirt she got on sale and her comfy Skechers Abuelita got her for *la navidad*

Tired out of her mind and what does she do?

Cook

She takes off from working just to start working at home Never having a day off from either

Que quieres de comer?

Oh you didn't know? My mom is a chef!

A donde vas? Y si me mientas, ya vas a ver

Oh, I forgot to mention, she's an FBI agent

Si yo te ayudo con las matemáticas

Oops, and a mathematician

Aye dios, ya te vas a enfermar

Oh, and a doctor

Dame tus jeans, voy a subir la vasta

And a seamstress

I love you

Oh, and one last thing

She's mi mama

Yo trabajo para que tú tengas un futuro mejor
El mejor cosa es tener una carrera
A doctor! Help others, help mama
Yo hago todo esto por ti
Solamente quiero que tengas un mejor futuro
You then remember
Her dried out hands from all the cleaning supplies, her tired eyes from
working
She easily has a choice to stop it all
She can skip work and get a manicure
She can turn off the alarm and sleep more
She can do so much more
So why would she continue?
For me

I am her American Dream
I am the one who determines my own future and success
But she's always on my mind
Sueño de tener mi casa con una piscina!
Mom has dreams too, and I'm here to help
So I will buy her a house
With a pool, of course

No necesitas a trabajar
I want to help you out
No, tienes que enfocarte en tus estudios
She works so hard for me
She sacrifices her time for me
She does everything for me
How do you even repay her?
What job do I get?
Tu ya sabes lo que tienes que hacer
Oh, that's right!

Mama I need to work. I need money

Make mama proud

Sheymi Olivares Garcia

