



*Imagine*

2009-2010



# imagine.



Gabi Vanek

“IMAGINE”  
Literary Magazine  
Harrison High School  
Harrison, New York 10528  
2009-2010 Edition

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Lauren Warshauer

## MUSES

her voice  
is the source  
of enchantment  
a magical creature  
she inspires only us  
the beings  
such as me  
different  
she opens  
her eyes  
so we can see  
into them  
she closes her eyes  
on people  
who interrupt  
without an invitation

she plays  
a harp  
the music is  
solid gold  
the notes  
translate  
into words  
she is beauty  
and her music  
is triumph

her words  
become  
part of me  
she knows  
what to say  
she knows me  
knows my family  
my friends  
she absorbs  
my feelings  
and turns  
emotion  
into art

she has  
no purpose  
just intentions

Anonymous

## THE REALIZATION

Years without love will ruin every marriage. More divorces more problems. A country will not survive if relationships don't last. We need to love every child; we need to love them with all of our being. This was a sample commercial. For the product that was designed to be cupid. A cupid made of batteries and metal. A cupid that would change the way you dreamed. It allowed to people to dream together. They would dream in perfect harmony allowing them to express emotions they could not speak. It allowed them to love again. It worked in the preliminary tests. It worked like a charm. The most incompatible of people would talk for hours about a dream. They would fly together soaring through the clouds in beauty. It was Dreamscape. Dream-scape; the future of society.

How much money can one make selling synthetic love? How much money is happiness? How does one calculate emotions? We will never know but it matters little. Our love of love is more powerful than greed. Yet money triumphs all. It triumphs hope and joy and love itself; because money and greed are two different things. Not all who are greedy are rich. Not all rich are greedy. But the makers of Dreamscape were both greedy and wanting to be rich; so they cut costs and they shipped their product too early. With limited advertising and limited reliability one would call the first Dreamscape an admirable failure. But it sold as fast as one can imagine. And it created funding for Petscape.

Julia knew her marriage was falling apart. She knew Donald did not love her. She knew another marriage therapy class would bring divorce papers. So she bought a Dreamscape. The first night was incredible. A perfect view of what was happening. They dreamed about meadows and ponds full of history. Green valley's full of words flying expressing themselves their minds collaborated in perfect rhythm. His body moved with hers. It may have been love but it was probably better. When they woke she looked over and so did he and their faces met in a tangible embrace.

Julia and Donald were in love again. They knew their Dreamscape was the reason. Their voices changed, their ideas changed, their love-life changed. It was living life in an alternate reality where money is never an issue and bills are pieces of paper that can be shredded. It was beautiful and amazing they knew they would never get a divorce.

Secrets. People give up dreams in their secrets. So the government decided to use Dreamscape to test on POW's. If it worked, no more torture would ever be needed. They brainwashed the man first then they had him Dreamscape with their best interrogator. Yet it became a nightmare. And when one dies in their dreams they struggle to understand the real world. It wasn't because he was brainwashed that he dreamed a nightmare. It was because this POW had killed a man. If you kill a person you may never dream the same. The government realized that had a crisis they needed to get rid of all the Dreamscapes; their dreams were about to turn into nightmares.

Donald woke up in a sweat Julia was on a business trip; and he needed some fresh air. He stepped outside; it had been a while since the last time. His craving was growing. He went back into the bedroom and pulled out his knife. He was going to take a life tonight. Donald was a serial killer and he had not been caught for sixteen years. His victims numbered up the upper eighties; and he never left a trail. He did not know why he did this it was just him expressing his anger. He did not keep trophies of his victims, he did not torture his victims, he did not rape his victims, he did not hunt bad guys for his victims, all he did was slit their throats. Was he the crazy one?

## THE MISSING PIECE

As easy as breathing,  
Their negligence dominates  
The inner workings of their minds,  
Detaching themselves from right and wrong.  
The very essence of kindness  
Escapes every inch of their body,  
Which is capable of mending the  
Lives of those who are desperate  
For help.  
Starving.  
Heartbroken.  
Searching for a hint of positivity  
In their dim, lackluster luxuries.  
Having the very hand that feeds  
Cut from the same fabric of those  
Aware of the truth.  
We ignore,  
Refusing to call a claim for  
What should be fought.  
Pieces missing,  
Wandering.  
The tunnel ends with more darkness,  
Rather than the glow they deserve;  
No shoulder of comfort  
To sooth the never ending ache  
That settles in their hollow,  
Empty hearts.  
Tear-stained cheeks  
Are reminders of the evils in us  
That we neglect.

Jessica Rozycki

## MY HEART FOR YOU

*Two people are sitting at a diner table together.*

**The scene begins.**

It's growing, you know.

I really don't care.

Everyday it grows a little more.

Leave me alone.

Do you even know what I am talking about?

I really don't like you, or want to talk to you.

My love it grows for you...

Go away.

I will pull my own beating heart out for you.

I can't accept it.

But you complete me.

Listen, we are done.

I can't accept anyone less. From here on out my life will be filled with misery and hate!

Why?

Simply because I gave you my heart, and now I am, for lack of a better word, heartless.

So, is that why you can't love anymore?

No, just it will never measure up to my love for you.

But this doesn't make sense.

To put it simply, you are my soul mate; worth more than anything to me.

Why does that matter?

Even if I do fall in love with someone else, my life will be filled with gloomy memories of you.

I understand.

I hope you do, because...

What?

Never mind.

Hey you know, we can still be friends.

*Silence.*

I really treasure your friendship.

*Silence.*

Are you even listening?

No.

*Silence.*

**Danny Glass**



## A BIRD AND A TOAD

There is a bird  
On a tree  
Beautiful, poised  
For all to see.

And there is a toad,  
On the marsh shore  
With no one to love  
Forevermore.

And one day that bird  
Was swallowed by the toad  
Between the tree  
And the marsh shore.

And the enigmatic question  
Is how could a bird  
Ever fit  
In a toad.

**Marwan Bishtawi**



**Daniel Lichetnauer**

## POINT, CLICK, AND SHOOT

I still cook my own meals: chicken cutlets and pasta. Only now, I don't have to cook for "Junior." His name is the only thing that my father left behind. I still have not spoken to my father in almost ten years.

I'm reminded of his absence as my mother's coffin is lowered into the ground. My older sister, Brittany, grasps my hands and tells me, *everything will be fine*. It's hard to believe words of optimism during a time of sorrow. Within the year, my brother, Junior, has gone to live with my mother's sister, Aunt Patty, which is a zillion miles away. My life has become the plot for a banal Kate Hudson comedy: "Raising Helen 2: GED to Where Will I Be?" When the present seems so uncertain, the future is hard to plan.

Little pixilated images and black and white memories are all that I have left of my mother: pictures that I have taken and that have been taken. She looks off and rarely smiles at the camera. Did she know that she was leaving us? Only the still pictures are here, pictures that left a series of questions, just like my future. As my English teacher forces me to write a college essay, I try to avoid writing the words of my life. My parents never attended college, and Brittany dropped out of Anthem Institute after her first year. College? College never seemed like a possible escape. It never seemed like a possible chance at a future.

Freshman year, I joined the Reserve Officer Training Corp, (ROTC). For a ninth grader, such a club seemed to provide everything I pictured but never had: stability. My only escape out of this life was to turn to the Army for support and guidance. Get good grades. Graduate. And as soon as I turn 18, enlist in the Army. Start my new life, without looking back. That was until I became a senior.

I remember taking a black and white photo of Jeannine, my mother. It was a bright and sunny day. She suggested, "Karissa, lets go outside. You can't take good pictures inside. There is a whole world out there waiting for you." And then I aimed my camera, and peered through the lens; I saw my world. My mom was my world. I remember that very moment, the memory which was displayed in the halls of my high school. This was a reminder of life's possibilities.

Since I began drafting the personal statement, I continue to reminisce on that lone photograph displayed in the hallway and realize that there are options. That to allow a future develop, you have to focus on life's possibilities. This doesn't imply that I know what I want to be when I grow up, but I do know that there are options. Though the Army seems like a definite option, I am not sure if I will still enlist. That is always an opportunity that will never disappear. I am just a teenager with a lens and a hope for what may happen next. College is a possibility, I can be somebody, do what I love, be happy, and escape. There is more to this miniscule life that I am leading. It is all out there waiting for me to point, click and shoot.

Karissa Ragone-Gonzalez



Lucas Voltarelli

## OH... YOU

God, I wish I was Bob Dylan.  
I'd make you cry and laugh and sing and swing.  
I'd show you there was nothing to fear under the bright stars,  
I'd compose epic poems for you.  
You'd have no idea of my intent  
Until my heart was opened for you.

God, I wish I was a detective.  
I'd know how to use my head, my heart, and my fists.  
I'd get knocked out at least once,  
My face would be scarred and my heart would be hard.  
My world was in black and white  
Until you walked into it.

God, I wish I was an explorer.  
Maybe then I would have an excuse to actually miss you.  
I'd chart new territories as you manned the home front.  
There are no mailboxes in the middle of nowhere,  
So I'd be sending letters which you would never get,  
Knowing you will stay true.

God, I wish I was Bob Dylan;  
Maybe then I'd be good enough for you.

Zachary Mandell

*Hey Jess, come sit down and get a snack. I need to talk to you about something serious, but don't get scared. Mom and I have been going to a lot of doctors lately, and today we had a meeting at the hospital. The doctor told me that I have a form of cancer called Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. The survival rate is 51% percent but we found it early, thanks to you. The tumor is in the cyst on my shoulder that you told me to get removed. Jess, please stop, there is no need to cry. I am going to be okay. The thing that my doctor told me was that cancer is a very mental disease, so if I stay strong and believe, I will be okay. If I let my body down, I won't be okay.*

*I don't know why it happened to me, but we just can't change the fact that I have cancer. I don't know why people smoke, Jess. I know, it's stupid. People are putting themselves at cancer's risk when others have no control over it. Smoking is a horrible thing Jess, just know that. You have to help me push through this. We cannot blame others. All we can do is stay strong. I love you Jess, and I don't want you to worry. Everything will be okay. I will always be there for you and I know you will be there for me.*

\*\*\*

My dad has cancer? How can this happen to me? He's going to be bald? I don't know why this has to be me. Could this be a mistake? We are going to go out, and people are going to look at him funny. People will know he's sick. Wait, will he even be able to go out? Does he have to stay home for a long time? What will chemo do to him? Does he have to get chemo? What happens *after* chemo? When does the hair grow back? Will he be able to smile? Will he be in pain? 51% is a little more than half! What if my dad is part of the 49%?

\*\*\*

Yes, he does have cancer. But he is going to be okay. I know he is going to be okay. He will lose his hair, but it will come back. He told me he is going to stay strong, and I believe him. I have to believe him. He promised me he would be okay. If he stays at home, it's a good thing. He will recover, and he will recover faster. I know he will. I'm going to back him up. I will always be there. 51 is my lucky number and he's going to be in the 51%. I know he will.

**Jessica Segal**

## REBEL

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by ignorant compliance  
And the willingness to accept all that is heard.  
The initial independence of all is denied, tossed aside  
To apply those prudent ideas which have been so thoroughly beat upon them  
Since the day they were born.  
*"Study, play nice, do what you're told,  
Follow instructions, don't talk back."*  
The rebellion is pacified early on, the power of the adult is ensured,  
The laws have been set  
And are disobeyed only by the undergrowth of the group  
Whose refusal to abide results in their eventual outcast;  
Assuming their places in the gutter  
Where they won't poison the lives of the ordinary  
Who will head off to live normal, unfulfilling lives  
Filled with the ideas of those before them  
And none of their own;  
Only trusting what is written,  
What is spoken,  
What has been proven.  
But what of their minds?  
What of the thoughts that they have themselves?  
What do they really feel,  
What do they say, or what do they not?  
And who can access these thoughts, these beliefs?  
How can a person  
Who has been brought up to only speak when everyone is silent  
Set their mind free  
When the entire world seems to be pushing it back in their skull?  
So these brilliant, beautiful minds retreat  
Back into the thick heads in which they rest.  
Everyday, yearning for the outside,  
Yet repressed.

Anonymous

## ONE

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by hatred,  
One hurtful response, one distasteful thought, one disgusted look.  
The cold, out of tune notes, like rapid punches at the stomach.  
The feeling spreads like venom through veins after sharp teeth sink into soft skin.  
Pain. Pain of the heart and of the mind  
Turning joy into despair,  
No pity or forgiveness;  
It's only filled with sorrow and disgrace,  
Affecting not only those who hate, but those who are hated.  
They are beaten, hurt.  
Crying from the terror forced upon them,  
Screaming to be free.  
It's immoral, unjust, and not right.  
This was not always hate;  
Such a strong sentiment can only come from what was once bliss.  
Love, pleasure a great feeling;

And then as fast as a gunshot, bliss fades to something awful.  
A loathing feeling erupts into violence.  
Violence, not physical, but mental,  
Swarming through the mind and body,  
Changing the innocent to guilty, sweet to solemn, forgiving to merciless,  
As if it were a new person, a monster.  
Like the color black, it is dark as if to hide something.

Hate is strong word;  
It pierces the ears of the deaf,  
Stings the eyes of the blind,  
Turns dreams into nightmares,  
Continues to rot those riddled with disease,  
Takes away the joy of youth, and corrupts.

One hurtful response, one distasteful thought, one disgusted look.

Nicole Barletta

## BOY AND GIRL

It starts with a boy  
A question  
An answer  
A smile

The dreams begin  
She wonders  
She wishes  
She wants

To have it all  
His smile  
His hand  
His heart

Only once can  
She have her  
First date

The night comes  
She's dressed  
She's excited  
She's ready

In the mirror  
There is a dress  
There are shoes  
This is the night

All of sudden  
She notices headlights  
She notices him  
She notices butterflies

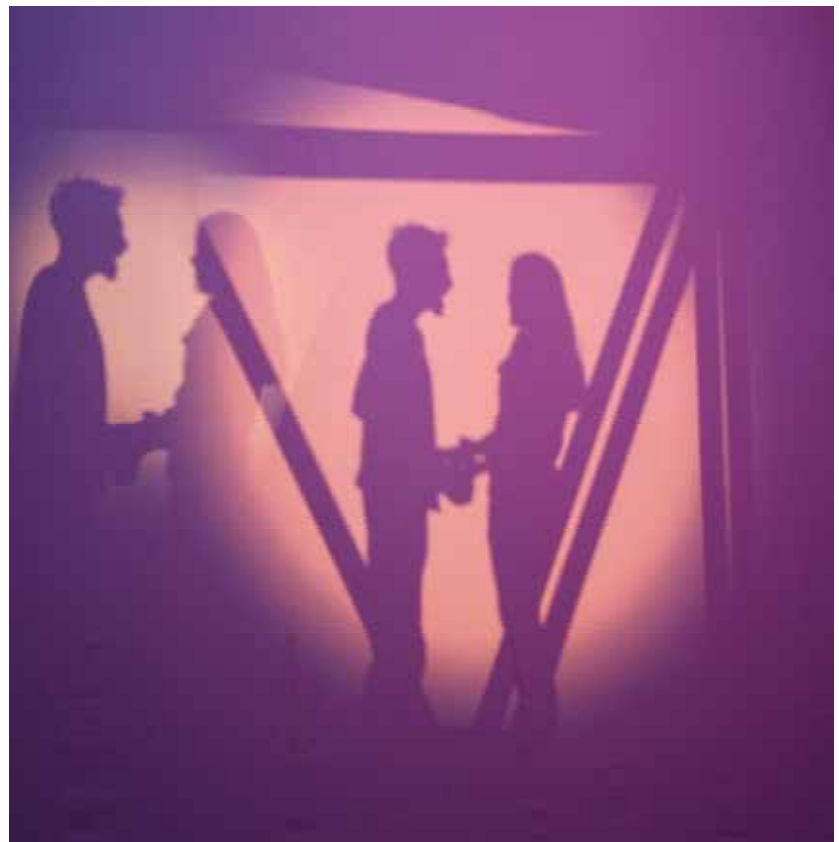
Only once can  
She have her  
First dance

Weeks pass  
Still there's fun  
Still there's joy  
Still there's a spark

Their eyes meet  
No sign of failure  
No sign of lies  
No sign of leaving

In her heart  
She feels strong  
She feels full  
She feels truth

Only once can  
She have her  
First love



Elissa Dellipaoli

Jessica Rozycki

## L'AS DU FALAFEL

Everyone told us about it. They gushed that it was the best in the world, that nothing else compared. So, one Sunday, when everything else was closed, we ventured underground and headed northwest.

The narrow streets were blocked off – no cars or motorcycles or bikes were allowed to pass through. Giant flowerpots lined the walkway. We sauntered along the cobbled streets, passing scaffolding and dimly lit storefronts. The air was warm and muggy with the lingering scent of stale cigarettes.

In the distance we could see people sitting on the side of the road with falafel-filled white waxed paper in their hands. They rearranged the bundle, trying to find the right way to handle the delicious monstrosity. Dressing dripped down their palms. Pants and sleeves turned into napkins.

The outside walls were white brick and a green and red sign spanned the length of the storefront. The wooden green door was held open by a tall, tanned man with black hair. He waved, beckoning us to enter his restaurant, greeting us with such enthusiasm that we might as well have been family.

He sat us at a table in a crowded room and handed us menus. We perused the list of food and all settled on *falafel vegetarian*. Our food arrived within seconds. The waiter placed the falafel in our hands and slid paper plates and forks onto the table, along with a large pile of napkins.

The sweet, salty, warm, mouthwatering scent of fried chickpeas filled the air around us as we rearranged the bundle in our hands, just like the people outside. After struggling with the first several bites, we decided to use forks. Three golden falafel balls sat atop a throne of crisp red lettuce, bathed in sweet dressing. Bites of eggplant were mixed in, concentrated toward the bottom, surrounding three more hidden falafels. The pita was warm, fresh-out-the-oven perfection. We devoured the meal and left wanting more.

We returned religiously – every Sunday and at least one other day during the week. Each time we were greeted with the same warm, enthusiastic welcome. The more falafel we ate, the more delicious it seemed to get.

On the day of our departure, we made it a point to go back one last time. We indulged in the salty, smooth fried chickpeas and shoveled dressing-bathed lettuce into our mouths.

It has been over a year since I last ate that falafel, and I can honestly say that no other falafel even comes close to the *falafel vegetarian*. I crave it constantly – both the food and the enthusiastic welcome that greeted me each time I returned.

When I venture back to that foreign city, I will make time for falafel. I look forward to being greeted at the door and guided to my table. I look forward to rearranging the bundle in my hands and trying to take a bite and eventually succumbing to the fork. I look forward to indulging and I am already dreading my departure.

Emily Singer



## REGRETS

My god, it's been five years.  
Five years;  
Five years time since I saw you smile.

It used to be so pretty; it used to be so bold.  
We're not all as evil as we seem,  
We're not all some dark pictures in a magazine.

My god it's been six years.  
Six years;  
Six years time since we've talked.

You feel like you've done me wrong.  
I know I've done you worse,  
I know you'll never forgive me.

My god it's been seven years.  
Seven years;  
Seven years time since I've loved you.

You regret just as much as I do.  
Where do the years go?  
Where did our love go?

My god it's been eight years.  
Eight years;  
Eight years time since I kissed you.

It's been a long time now.  
You cried as I held you,  
You told me never to leave,  
I promised I never would.  
Why did I leave?

Five years ago I left you,  
Ten years ago I met you,  
One year ago I loved you,  
Three months ago I loved you,  
Two days ago I loved you,  
Where does the time go?

**Zachary Mandell**

## THE FACTS

A few years ago, when I was fourteen years old, I never would have thought we would have been more than acquaintances. You didn't seem like the type of person I wanted to spend my time with and you earned yourself a bad reputation at too young of an age. You followed the crowd in the worst situations and I had little to no respect for you. Something must have clicked in your head one day because the girl you are now is nowhere near the girl you were then. You opened your eyes and stopped conforming to the idea of who people thought you were and showed them that you are your own person. Your courage in doing this opened my eyes and made me realize that change is possible.

We started talking on a daily basis. A lot of people didn't understand why. Strangely, I enjoyed talking to you, though I admit that I was afraid at first. I held back from becoming too close to you, but eventually I was able to abandon my judgmental attitude and move forward. We made plans outside of school and it became apparent that you were the kind of friend I had been looking for. You were the best listener, which was definitely something I needed at that time, as I was dependent on love from others at that point in my life. I put a lot of thought into the advice I gave you because I started caring about you and considered you to be my best friend, even though you didn't know it. I always tried to help you overcome your misconception that bad things only happened to you. I tried so hard to show you that everyone has their own troubles, whether or not they deserve it, so I told you personal family issues. This led to you betraying me and losing my trust.

It was clear that you looked up to me, and sometimes you would go out of your way to say great things about me to other people. For one reason or another, my family issues fell under the umbrella of things that were acceptable to tell people to prove that I'm a great person. It got to the point where people came up to me in the hallway, stunned that I had gone through everything you told them. I was stunned as well, but for an entirely different reason. The fact that you could share such personal information about me without realizing that I meant for only you to know about left me in a daze. My trust in you went out the window. I never wanted to tell you anything again, and because of that I didn't even see a purpose in us remaining friends. So I called you up and told you that we could no longer be friends and I wished her all the best in whatever the future held for her.

Months went by and we remained in a state of mere acquaintances. There was some small talk between us, but I would cut you off before it looked like I wanted a friendship out of it. I claimed to hate you to anyone that would ask, because a part of me really did. I hated what you did and I hated the person you became during those months we weren't friends. But in reality, I didn't hate you at all. I made new friends after our falling out and so did you, and ironically you befriended my current best friend. You two made plans for the weekend together and I had a decision to make: to be a part of your life or not. I didn't want to say anything bad about you to my best friend, so I let it be and joined in on the weekend festivities. I cleared the air with you, telling you that I had nothing against you, as all the drama was a long time ago and I was willing to make amends. We picked up right where we left off.

The first time we hung out again wasn't the slightest bit awkward. It was as if we had spent no time apart. We succeeded in making new memories and I can honestly say that I was happy to be on good terms

with you again. I told myself that even though we were hanging out again, I wouldn't tell her anything that others weren't supposed to know. I kept that promise to myself. She only knew what happened between me and my immediate friends. It was only a matter of time before things changed once more. You betrayed my trust for a second time, and I wasn't about to sit around and let you do more damage. This time, people joined me in hating you. Others became fed up with your actions and abandoned friendships with you the same way I did. I didn't care. In fact, I **wanted** people to hate you. I will never give you another chance, but I will hold on to our memories. **You** are a friend I once cherished.

Gianna Bruno



Sara Rozycki

## GIRL OF STONE

Hard as stone  
With hidden fears,  
She loves in silence;  
No one hears.

Eyes of ice,  
Never to melt.  
Locked feelings  
Never felt.

Spirit of steel,  
Never broken.  
Frozen emotions  
Left unspoken.

Heart of gold  
Sweet as can be,  
Beautiful soul  
You'll see.

Karissa Ragone-Gonzalez



Elissa Dellipaoli

## TO FIND A WAY

"You know, I was never sure how to put these kinds of things into words." The doctor was pacing back and forth, giving me his little speech. I knew what I didn't want to hear, but I had a feeling that my worst nightmare had become a reality. "I truly care about your health and well-being, Willow." My palms became increasingly warmer as I rubbed them together at such a rapid pace. I felt sweaty and disgusting and I absolutely hated it. At that instant, memories filled my mind. I tried to blink them back, but it wouldn't work. Memories of that unpleasant night replayed once more as I chewed on my tongue and thought about what he did to me. *How could he?* I always felt safe with him and now I can't even say his name without breaking down into a fit of tears. I remember how he handled me violently, not like he used to when I was a child. I used to feel secure in his arms and he used to give me that reassuring smile that told me everything was going to be okay. The doctor cleared his throat and looked at me with a certain look that made it seem as if he was about to vomit and said, "I'm sorry Willow, and it kills me to have to tell you this, but," his words began to fade away as thoughts of that night came back to me. It seemed as if my life came to a complete stop and everything around me froze. Every time I blinked, I saw a clear picture, too clear, of him. Flickering images of his face stayed engraved in my mind. *Why is this happening to me?* One second felt like a century, and one minute felt like a millennium. Suddenly, I was back at the doctor's office, sitting on a bed with scratchy, uncomfortable paper laid across it, listening to my doctor go on and on, procrastinating, making me more anxious. *As if that was even possible.*

After five whole minutes of the doctor's bullshit, he finally found some courage hiding in a corner of that scrawny body of his and said, "Willow." I already knew what was coming, I just wasn't ready to stare straight into the eyes of reality and admit that I was. "You're pregnant."

To be honest, I had no idea what I was going to do. *Should I keep it? Or should I give it up for adoption?* The thought of abortion crossed my mind once or twice, but I never actually considered it. My mother always told me that it was the worst mistake she had ever made in her life, getting rid of my baby brother. I remember that day, witnessing my mother purposely trip and fall down the stairs, and then having her lie to my face, saying it was all an accident. I knew she didn't want another kid. I was enough of a handful, and she made that clear by the way she'd direct her hurtful words at me. But I was young and I didn't know any better.

The doctor let me have a minute to myself, but that was the exact opposite of what I needed at that moment. The last thing I wanted was to be alone, but I guess he couldn't handle the awkward silence as I tried to take everything in. I collected myself as he walked in the room to tell me what was to happen next. I really didn't want to listen to what he had to say, so I asked him if I could just go home and come back in a few days when I was ready to talk about it. I really want to keep this baby, but I don't think I'm strong enough to look into his eyes everyday and see my own father.

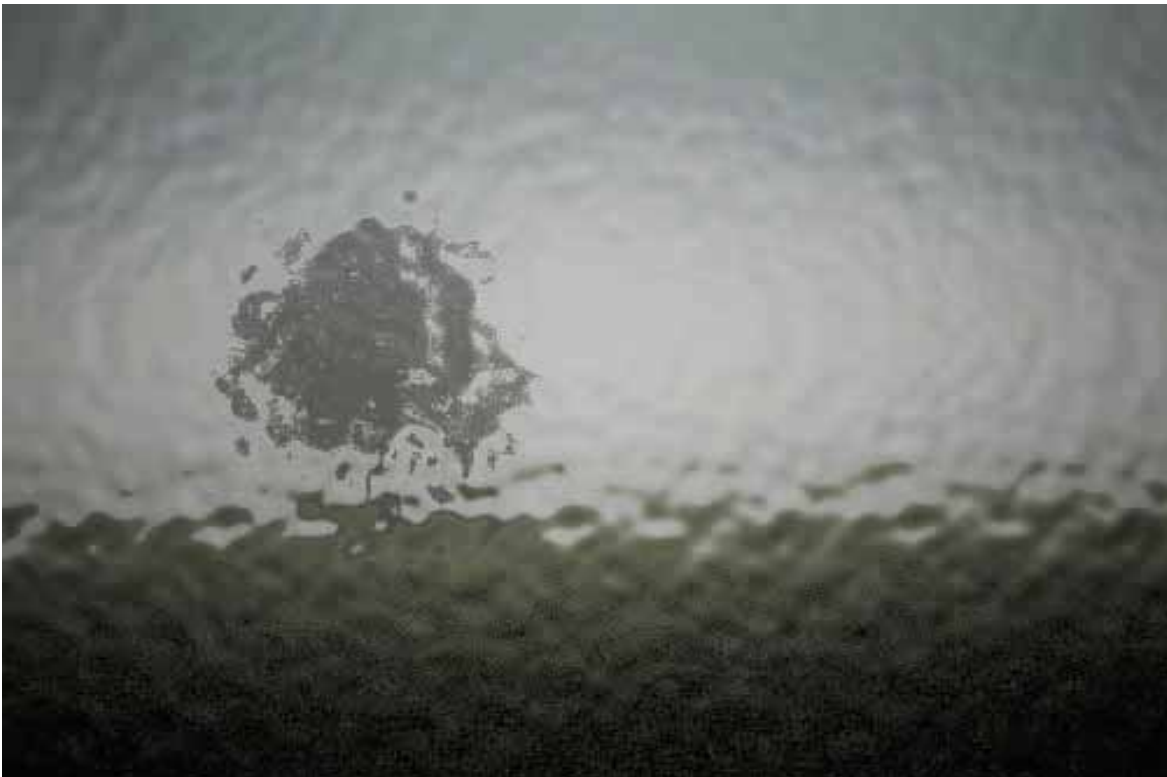
Sammi Rhodes

## A GIFT

I remember how my grandmother had always told me to live my life as if every day was a gift. There were days when I would question her outlook on life; there were times where I felt like life was more of a chore than a gift. Yet no one was more appreciative than my grandmother, who started off every day with a cup of coffee and a satisfied smile. Even during some of the darkest times in her life, she was still able to force a smile.

When my grandmother was diagnosed with lung cancer, the whole world seemed to stop. Distress and confusion seemed to destroy our sanity and overwhelm our home. But there was one person who kept her cool: my grandmother. She went on living life as if nothing had changed. Her spirit was strong, even when her body was not. Her last few days on earth were brutal. She was sicker than ever. She was dying. It was difficult to watch her suffer, but if anyone was to ask her how she felt, she'd crack a smile and say, *"Just fine."* I wasn't able to see my grandmother the day she died, but I could very well imagine how she looked. A weak smile would be spread across her face, accentuating her heavy, drooping eyelids. Her head would be propped up on a pillow and she would have viewed her last day on earth as a gift, just like every day before it.

Gaby Moreno



Lauren Warshauer



Karissa Ragone-Gonzalez

## BREAK DOWN THE FACADE

You stand there wondering who you are,  
 Where you belong,  
*If you belong.*  
 Whether you're Popular,  
 Or the Band Geek,  
 Or the Smart One,  
 Or the Jock,  
 Or anything at all.  
*Or if you're Invisible.*  
 Sometimes you'd prefer that;  
 Not having to put up a façade and be someone you're not.  
 Just be nobody.  
 You wish it wasn't like this, you wish you knew where you belonged,  
 But this is high school, and that's not possible.  
 You want to disappear into the background, you don't want to live anymore.  
 You feel dead.  
 But your real friends, the ones who don't care what you do or who you are, bring you back to life.  
 They show you they're happy with who they are, and that you can be too.  
 You don't have to be invisible.  
 But you've been playing this game for so long, you're not sure if you can stop  
 Trying to please everyone and not succeeding, allowing *those* people to bring you down.  
 Suddenly, stopping isn't such a bad idea, but it's a massive undertaking with limited chances of success.  
 One day, under the scalding water of your shower, it dawns on you:  
 Maybe it is okay to be someone else. It's okay to be the person I want to be,  
 I don't have to wear these masks, I don't have to put on these stupid faces;  
 I don't live to please people, and nor do I want to.  
 I can just be me.  
 I let the water rush over me,  
 And the hot tears that creep up on me and release themselves whenever the hell they feel like it  
 Stop.  
 It's the most comforting shower water, hot, but not in a bad way.  
 It is cleansing, and it frees me from this fraudulent life.  
 I don't have to hide anymore; there is no longer anyone to please but myself.  
 I am me.  
 I live for no one else.

Rachel Kaplan





Daniel Lichtenauer

## DESPERADO

She stood on the corner of the sidewalk, staring at the ground. The world around her crumbled, and left nothing but the still silence of loneliness and despair. In her blistered, broken hands, the heavy leather handles of her black suitcase left round red imprints, and a coat hung from her bony frame. Her shoulders rounded to a hunch, and the harsh winds of the cold city whipped around her, but she didn't seem to notice. Across the street was a heaping pile of her dismay: everything she had worked all of her life to avoid. The shelter held the men on the street who groped at her feet, begging for a penny or a dime. It held the skinny, starving children and the pathetic, poor old women who had been kicked in the shins more than a dozen times. No matter how much she tried to pull away from it, it would not let her escape. There would not be one more day without a meal, one more day sitting at the door, waiting for him to feel mercy, waiting for him to look outside and see her, see what she had become. She could wait no longer. It was too cold, and she was too weak. So across the street she walked, step by step, inch by inch. She allowed every bit of her integrity fall to the cement street behind her, leaving it to be crushed by the feet of the early morning commuters and pedestrians with their fancy shoes. They were part of a world she no longer belonged to, for she was now part of something else entirely. She was now part of a desperate cry for food, and money, and life. She was homeless.

Anonymous



*It's funny you know...*

The things we take for granted,  
The time we use up in our lives,  
Making us so frantic.

The memories that came and went,  
The thought we put into time spent,  
Festering in our minds.

The friends we make, the friends we lose,  
The laughs and drinks, we shared the blues,  
A funny thing time can be;  
And we forget it so easily.

*It's funny you know...*

How you can hold somebody's hand,  
Hold it extra tight. But when they meet someone new  
They fade into the night.

How our lives spin round and round  
Just like a ferris wheel, and everything moves so fast,  
You have no time to feel.

How smiles faint like photographs  
When sadness knocks on our door,  
But like fireworks, when the light explodes,  
Our hearts, they tend to soar.

*It's funny you know...*

These lives we live,  
The people who touch our hearts,  
The time we make to spend with them,  
And still we end apart.  
The days where we don't stop to reflect  
About the joy we've had;  
The weeks where we don't even blink  
To take pleasure in the past.  
For maybe our lives would feel more enchanted  
If we didn't take the past for granted.

**Jailenn Morel**



Lauren Warshauer

## BORN IN THE USA

A man in his mid thirties stands alone outside a deli. It is 5 AM, time for John Cole's daily garbage rounds. He is a depleted man, a white ace bandage wrapped around his right elbow to cover up the bullet that had never been removed. He wears a ragged Bruce Springsteen shirt with holes throughout and coffee-stained olive cargo shorts. On his feet are whatever is left of the old Chuck Taylors he bought last May. The memories still glisten in his mind, along with the emotions, the losses, and everything else that came along with 'Nam.

He thought he would be a hero when he arrived home. He thought he would be loved by the nation, a soldier who fought for the good of his country. But what he received was the opposite: neglect and a bed at the nearest homeless shelter.

At a young age, John was sent out to fight in a war nobody wanted. He left his small hometown in Iowa to kill the Viet Cong. He fought for ten long years before returning home to his indigent lifestyle. The memories still stick with him and follow him like a shadow each day. There was bloodshed, and lots of it. Despite all this, he still remembers the national pride he felt while dodging bullets and shrapnel.

After his morning garbage rounds he heads to the diner where he does not eat. Instead, he waits outside with a sign reading, "Spare Change for an Ol' Vietnam Vet" and a holds small basket for the change. He only gets a dollar a day, but it's enough for a soda at the deli or a bag of chips.

You see, there is no future for John. His future end ten years ago, with the war. The military told him he would be famous and cared for when he arrived home because John was a *war hero*, and *everyone loved a man who fought for freedom*. But that never happened. The only thing catering for him was the compensation money the army sent him. His girlfriend left him after he entered the army, and now both of his parents were rotting in the retirement homes of West Palm Beach. He would fly out to see them if he could, but he did not have the money. He had not seen his brother in twenty years, and would likely not be able to identify him if he saw him. He and his brother were as thick as thieves for the first eighteen years of their lives. They did everything together. They were inseparable. But when John told his brother he was going to fight in Vietnam, his brother changed. They argued constantly and soon grew to loathe each other. John wanted to make amends, but he did not know where his brother was, whether he had a family, or if he had made something of himself.

John had fantastical aspirations at a young age, but they all fell through the cracks. He wanted to be an astronaut. He wanted to explore space and discover extraterrestrial life and see the world in a different perspective. But he never followed through with it. He didn't follow through with much, which was the primary reason he joined the army: to prove something to himself. He thought the army would lead to other careers, but it only led to heartbreak and sorrow.

Now, John Cole walks back to the homeless shelter with visions of friends and foe dying and fighting for their lives running through his mind, and he asks himself, "*Was it worth it?*" He asks himself that question daily, and every day he is met with a resounding yes. He would not trade in his badge for the world. He still feels the overwhelming sense of pride fighting for the country he loves, and every morning when he awakens from his slumber at the homeless shelter, the first thing that comes to his mind is that was that he was born in the United States of America: land of the free, home of the brave.

## **GOD**

God,  
I wanna go to California.  
I wanna leave this entire scene behind.  
I wanna say I used to be there,  
But now I am here.

God,  
I wanna go to Boston.  
I wanna find somewhere new.  
I wanna tell all my friends absolutely nothing about my past;  
I want it to be a mystery.

God,  
I wanna be a Rolling Stone;  
I wanna have no home.  
I wanna have the wandering streets be the only things to welcome me  
As I go from place to place.

God,  
I wanna never feel satisfied with where I am.  
I wanna run away,  
I wanna start over  
And leave this scene behind.

**Anonymous**

## JOHN MALK

John Malk died today.  
John Malk was not named Franz Ferdinand,  
So when he died nobody cared.

John Malk's death did not cause war.  
It did not cause the poor splitting of nations,  
It did not cause anything, for that matter.

It did not lead to genocide,  
And poison gas, and proliferation of insanity.  
When John Malk died no super powers emerged.

Nor did global chaos ensue.  
Man rose and fell, but not because of John Malk.  
John Malk was just another virus.

By that, I mean a so-called plague.  
Humans are viruses. They consume and reproduce,  
Only until the very edge of extinction.

Then they unite in moments of togetherness,  
Working together until a fight,  
And the circle renews John Malk rises.

But who, really, is John Malk?  
His funeral was sparsely attended,  
His so called friends traded respect for alcohol.

John Malk died today.  
But from his ashes rose a dream,  
A dream that one day the cycle will be broken,

That evolution will cease to exist and  
Hope will triumph over nuclear weapons  
And misguided human emotions.

I will not kill John Malk.

Danny Glass

### JOURNAL #3

Blank space  
Blank people  
Staring into the eyes of nothingness.

Our lives are a blank canvas.  
We draw our own stories.  
Our stories are individual.  
They sum to a larger picture.

We may draw haters,  
Friends, lovers,  
Or even uncover  
A meaning much greater  
Than we could ever discover.

You don't have to be artistic to fill your canvas.  
All you need is an inspiration.  
A motive; something to live for.  
Do you truly care about it?  
Or will the rest of your life dust it over?  
It's all a matter of time.

My canvas is not filled,  
There's not even an outline.  
Only a mesh of colors;  
Bright and dull,  
Light and day,  
Day and night;  
The balance of good and evil in my world.

A full canvas depicts a full life.  
Death may be on the prowl,  
But fear has vanished;  
Gone from my mind  
So that when the day has come  
When I cease to exist,  
An impact will be made.  
I will be added to the larger meaning.

Anonymous

## LAKE BAIKAL

It was like standing at the end of the world.  
The largest freshwater lake; it catches people,  
Lures them into a trance, its water reflects the mountains.  
Here, anything is possible. You can canoe up a mountain, or across the clouds.

The icy snow runs down hills, like vodka, frozen.  
Senses are amplified; tears are frozen faster than they are cried.  
Emotions are contained. The desire to express oneself  
Is gone. All that remains is you and the lake,  
Isolation.  
Does it cause art?  
Or does this gargantuan remoteness cause insanity?  
Glancing behind, there is nothing but lake.  
Nothing could ever be more silent, and nothing could ever be more perfect.

Early in the morning, the sun reflects on the lake and coldness is achieved.  
An apex of Russia, a hidden national treasure.  
The only heat is that of the pounding heart, and words are frozen with no need to talk.  
The zenith of understanding, the only thought is of omnipresence;  
The evolution of self-realization, not spiritual rebirth.

One begins to grow, but something can be changed only so much.  
The hands are raised in the air: a silent outcry amidst beauty.  
I am here!  
I am man,  
Giver of life.  
I can create,  
And I can destroy.

Danny Glass



Charles Lichtenauer

## LOOKING DOWN

Wishing for what you can't have  
You barely make a sound;  
They say aim high, aim high  
But you're always looking down.

Wonder why, wonder why  
Things never go your way;  
Speaking tired words  
Colors fade to grey.

You have to turn it all away,  
Don't be afraid to say:

You'll see me shine,  
Just wait.  
In time  
Walls I break down will cover this town.  
Change will come,  
I'm the one.

And I'm done looking down.

Sometimes feeling shattered  
Keeps you broken on the floor,  
Sometimes all you need  
Is a voice to say you're something more.

Don't turn that voice away,  
Don't be afraid to say:

You'll see me shine  
Just wait,  
In time  
Walls I break down will cover this town.  
Change will come,  
I'm the one.

And I'm done looking down.

When all else fails  
Let them see the warmth of your smile,  
Let them hear the truth in your heart.  
When all else fails  
Make your mark.

Let them see your face,  
Make them want to say:

You'll see her shine,  
Just wait, in time  
Walls she breaks down will cover this town.  
Change will come.

She's the one,  
She's done looking down.



Gabrielle Padro

Jessica Rozycki



*Dedicated to Marissa Pagli*

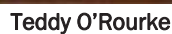
Her eyes a sparkling blue,  
They welcomed everyone she'd meet.  
A true "bandee" and color guard captain,  
She waved her flag proudly down the street.

She always provided a shoulder to cry on,  
Or lent an ear to listen.  
It was easy for her to help someone out  
She had a golden heart that glistened.

And no one can forget  
The one who was her fave.  
Another kind and gentle soul,  
Her boyfriend, Dave.

Although it's hard, there's no need to cry,  
There's no need to even frown,  
For Marissa is in heaven,  
She's safe and she's looking down.

**Jennifer Carpenito**





Amanda Nardozi

## STOPPED CARS

She sees cars stopping  
Slowly in the driveway.  
They stop and they sit,  
Maybe for five minutes, maybe for an hour.  
She wants to focus and just watch the cars,  
But the seedy van and the small sedan stand still;  
Absorbed in the moment.  
Who is in that car, or that one?  
The doors never open,  
They simply drive away.  
The suitcase, still at her feet, motionless,  
Containing a history of its own  
Just like the cars on the road.  
Stuck in its own personal vortex of confused pathways;  
Where to go and where they are going.

Questions are asked and different cars stop and move.  
A different seedy van, one window boarded up.  
The bumper, two nicks evidencing years of use.  
A traditional license plate advertises conformity.  
It stops. There is no camera in the window.  
It just stops, waiting there for no reason.  
Maybe there is a fight on the inside.  
Maybe a calm family is confused about where to go next.  
But the car simply moves on.

Every object, every person, exists simply to exist  
Every choice, every move, and every moment  
Are just points; points one must ignore.  
Getting caught up in the scenario of every stopped car  
Is pointless, and time wasted is time poorly spent.  
Our life expectancy is short, like one deep breath  
With a beginning, a middle, and an end.  
But when looking at the car, time stops  
And moments flick by faster than the speed of light.  
Then one finally notices what they missed and realize,  
*I'm late.*

Danny Glass

## SUNSHINE

Light breaking down the  
Dark abyss, taking control  
Of the breaking mist

Laura McKinsey



Charles Lichtenauer

## SKY

Empty,  
Yet filled with stars.  
Infinite crystal blue air,  
A vast mystery of wonders.  
Endless

Laura Senande

## BEAUTIFUL EYES

A gaze  
Deep and dark  
Imagining, judging, gazing.  
Dream of the future,  
Of power.

Laura Senande



Elissa Dellipaoli

## THE BASE JUMPER'S TALE

Sometimes I think I'm a real big idiot. Like right now. I'm about to jump *backwards* off a 951 foot high building, and *no* one is trying to stop me? Because as much of an idiot as I may be, there's no way I'm backing out on my own.

I try to avoid looking over the edge – I don't want to freak myself out more – but it's hard. I glimpse a few bug-sized buildings at what seems like a million miles below, before forcing my eyes back up, and away. Instead, I see my friend a few feet away, prepared to take a picture as I jump. Apparently he can't tell I'm freaking out. Some friend he is. So all I can do is throw an unbelievably forced grin in his direction and step onto the ledge, my back facing the open air.

My friend springs into action – he gets into this picture-taking mode, and bends a bit at the waist with his eyes looking through the camera lens. I take a deep breath, and with a brief prayer to God, launch myself into the expanse that is the sky of Malaysia.

The sense that my stomach is coming up into my heart and my heart is springing into my throat overwhelms me, and it's all I can do not to be sick mid-jump. And then comes the feeling that always comes eventually – the wind flying past my ears, the thought in my mind that if I can do this I can do anything (the rush I get from doing this, jumping off anything I can imagine). I smile and laugh at the thought that I was ever scared and pull out my parachute.

Rachel Kaplan

## SIMPLICITY

It was straight,  
Perfect.  
It created a triangle  
So perfect in length;  
An exact representation  
Of life itself.  
A delicate example  
Of minimalist expression.  
Words cannot  
Describe its beauty,  
And yet,  
It is just a piece of string.  
But maybe  
It is an example.  
An example of what could be,  
And what is.  
Maybe this example means more  
That what its material is made of;  
Just maybe.  
Maybe it is more than reality,  
Maybe soul meets essence  
In this simple expression of beauty.  
It was not a painting,  
It was not a sculpture,  
It was not an idea,  
It was more.  
Or maybe,  
Just maybe,  
It was just  
A piece of string.

Danny Glass

## MOAI

I have been here for 258,785 days,  
Unmoving, motionless, still.  
I am, that is. All else moves.  
The ocean waves beneath me crash  
And bellow  
Ephemeral, transient, everlasting  
Roars.  
The wind,  
Warm, sugar cookie air,  
Dances around me  
And my neighbors,  
Just as it has  
For all eternity.

I am Paro.  
I stand ten meters skyward.  
Or, at least,  
I used to.  
Now, I stand  
Face down in the dirt,  
Parallel to the Earth.  
Decapitated,  
Broken in half.  
And I have lost my hat.

My hope remains,  
Though.  
I know that one day,  
I will be restored and pieced back together  
And righted.  
Or at least I expect to be.  
After all, I deserve it.  
Or rather,  
My people do.

Emily Singer

## MY WINGS

I lay upon the ground with my eyes glued to the blue  
Feathered wings sing in my ears, sweetly humming their tune.  
Centuries of old hymns lay nestled in my breast  
I conjure them to my lips, rising from my chest;  
And the beating of my heart screams to angels at the sky.  
Their white coats of armor lift up my arms to fly;  
I soar across the heavens and wave my wings at the trees,  
Farewell to the mothers and fathers whom taught me how to breathe.  
The weight that rested upon my shoulders blows away like dust,  
Rising high above sea level and those red crusted horns of lust  
Large supple pillows brush my face, so soft you'd die to touch.  
I swallow gulps of air, as if it were my last, savoring every drop, yet it leaves me oh so fast.  
And with my final exhalation, I see the life I lived, and stare down upon the world, the pictures very vivid  
Stare into his eyes, I swear you won't regret  
Every sin I have committed, his eyes make me repent.  
As I shake his large, clear hands, a gentle touch that feels like sleep  
I think I'm home for the first time. No longer I shall weep.

Jailenn Morel



## LONGING

A woman, alone, struggling to escape the terrible horrors of her past. Her back bent, her head down. She looks at herself with disgust; trying to forget the past and look to the future. This woman has little to no hope for her future. She wonders if there will even be a future.

The road to safety is long and treacherous, filled with pain and anxiety. The woman travels alone, with no one around to reach out to. She relies only on herself: a strong, courageous woman. Days turn into nights, and soon she loses track of days. For months, and maybe years, she has been alone and forced to fend for herself. But now, she walks for freedom, for a new beginning. She dreams of a future, filled with success, family, and friends.

She wants to forget all that has happened to her, but the stress and despair is engraved on her face. The cold air burns her flesh and seeps through her clothes, filling her body with a chill. She dreams of warmth and a sense of belonging.

The road she walks comes to an end, but she walks across to a new road leading to a better life; a new start, a life full of new beginnings and dreams. She is determined to make something of herself and forgive her past. "What doesn't kill you only make you stronger", and by these words the woman lives.

**Elissa Santelia**

## ILLUMINATION

An enormous mountain stands alongside another,  
Strung together like a necklace of shining pearls;  
A bright, pearly white strand that can be seen from miles away.

On a lonely island they rest  
Among a wild, wild landscape of rolling hills.  
From atop the great mountain, a minuscule farm can be seen;  
And there rests a native Kiwi living off the land.

As the sun breaks through the clouds,  
A light streams down the mountainside;  
Illuminating the beauty of this land.

People come here from every corner of the world  
To lay eyes on a sight such as this.  
They whisper, "*brehtaking*."

JT Nangle



Lauren Warshauer



Lexi Backer

## OH, THE FLOWERS

Oh perfumed flowers,  
Oh, how you grow!  
You try to grow tall  
But you do not know  
That you should never reach  
The height of a tree—  
You will be trampled by blind beasts  
Who ignore your beauty.

Oh poor blind beasts, could you only see  
How beautiful a flower can be.

**Marwan Bishtawi**

## ON MY NECK

On my neck,  
Hangs both joy and sorrow.  
The joy I keep  
Until the morrow,  
In the vain hope,  
That I will loose the sorrow  
And have not  
But joy tomorrow.

Marwan Bishtawi



Roi Ankawa

## PAPER DOLLS

It can be said that we all begin as paper dolls. Indistinct, except for the physical things: the size of our nose, the curve of our jaw, the cleft in our chin.

Dimensions come later. They are born out of woe and of laughter, of purple sunsets, and stone colored skies. Our imperfections are fashioned from pinpricks, slippery concrete, and tiny indents which nick our fingers while we run them alongside chrome counter tops. Our passions are forged in blue dresses, still life paintings, silver lights hung high atop cast iron verandas.

It sometimes takes a while to shed our paper skins. They cling to fledgling bodies like pine thistles and burrs. Paper does not shed without reason.

When I die, I want all the paper within me to have disappeared. Paper will grow damp in the rain, turn soggy, and wash away. Paper is delicate. A person is wrought of skin and bone, with veins of silken steel. It is easy to tell when all of your paper has gone: it is when you can view storms as though they were made for us to sing in.

Emma Adler

## HER SONG

She woke up one day, looked into the mirror with tears in her eyes, and decided to brush her teeth.  
She thought to herself, what will make this day better than any other day?  
She opened herself up to anyone who pretended to understand her.

She was desperate for anything which could save her.  
The days passed and the only attention she got was the wrong kind, yet this was the only kind she knew.  
She opened herself up to anyone who pretended to know her.

She only knew how to entice the wrong attention.  
Mistaking the fast times of random guys as the deep affection she craved.  
She opened herself up to anyone who would pretend to feel her.

She walked home to a broken house every day of her life.  
Emotionally distant father, never really there, never really here.  
He only wished the best, but didn't know how to deliver.  
A mother who ran far, far away when she was little.

Every day she simply craved loved.  
Every day she mistook lust for it.  
Every day she simply craved affection.  
She only ever got the wrong kind of attention.

One night she took her father's gun, raised it to her head and pulled the trigger,  
Knowing, perhaps, that love would never fill her.  
Some many different guys simply used her. So many evil men felt nothing.  
I was the first.

Anonymous

## SECOND GUESS

Long, toothy, venomous smiles  
Filled green with envy;  
Breathing on the backs of black coats,  
Encircling their emerald hands around our gold,  
Sucking our chests dry;

draining the youth of their pride.

And his eyes, so big,  
Filled with our lives, our downfalls.  
His plans for us to succeed, to fail.  
His plans to steal from us, steal everything  
Are swimming in the pools,

of his black marbleized eyes.

We see him coming, walking towards us;  
Long legs pounding up the stairs,  
Big feet opening the door.  
And he doesn't even knock.  
How truly impolite he is,

leaving us and taking everything.

Causing grown men to bow their heads and weep  
Without food on the table nor bed to sleep,  
With children crying from indignity,  
And mothers crying from mortification,  
Only waiting for him to leave the safe,

they could have sworn they locked.

**Jailenn Morel**



## PRISONER IN RÍO PACUARE

Río Pacuare glared at us with her monstrous obsidian-colored eyes and we stared back, pleading for mercy. She bolted from the starting line, smacking the sides of our boat with full force. My friends and I already knew that we were not going to win in this deadly race.

"Everyone, get down! Get down! We're not going to make it!" Taz cried at the top of his lungs, clenching my bony wrist for dear life.

"Come on guys! Paddle! Harder, faster! Whatever you do, don't stop paddling!" Chris begged, flailing his arms around wildly in giant circles.

"Shut up! You guys better get down and pray this goddamn boat doesn't flip over!" Melissa's raspy-sounding battle cry mingled with the muffled applause of the charcoal clouds far off in the distance.

Against the backdrop of the jagged cliffs perched high above the maze of leafy emerald green palm trees, we all must have looked like tiny black ants squirming and writhing in distress.

I had never been white-water rafting before and although I was terrified, I convinced myself that it was absurd to even consider of the possibility of death. *I* was too young to die. *I* was too good to die. *I* deserved to live. I never imagined that *I* would face death like this. I was never going to be like one of *those* people who died because they couldn't control what was going on around them. *I* was better than death.

"*Respect the water and it will respect you,*" Taz had read aloud earlier from the torn and wrinkled contract. Is it even possible to respect something so cavernous and magnificent as a body of water without completely surrendering to it? It is amazing to think that someone can become a *prisoner* of something as pure as water. Water doesn't have boundaries or limits. It doesn't confine itself to small corners like the quintessential wallflower glued to the television set at a party. It can't sit still or behave like a naïve child in timeout. It doesn't abide by any rules and can't control its reactions. With a split second change in the direction of the wind or a sudden drop or rise in temperature, a whole body of crystal blue water can morph itself into a violent maelstrom of uncontrollable riptides and waves.

Staring back into Río Pacuare's amorphous body, I realized that it is impossible to control everything all the time. Río Pacuare had already decided my fate for me. I wasn't going to be able to fight against her or push her out of the way as if she was just some meaningless, powerless force.

Up until this very moment, I thought of my world as one giant circle of concern. The things I could control made up a mere ten percent of the circle. These were the things I knew about like the back of my hand, the things that made me feel comfortable about myself and those around me. Now, I finally realized that this small percent of my circle was holding me back. If I stayed locked inside this virtual citadel of fear, ignorance, and unhappiness I had created, I wasn't going to be able to save myself.

Río Pacuare began to angrily spew out broken fragments of chipped rocks. My teeth collided into each other, making clicking sounds like the tick-tock of my grandfather's cuckoo clock and I bit down on my tongue to stop myself from panicking. I felt my heart melting into a steaming, oily puddle of coppery tasting liquid that clawed its way into my esophagus. And then, there was nothing.



A blanket of perpetual darkness covered me from head to toe. I felt as if I was soaring through a giant pool of nothingness. I called out for help but no one heard me. I felt something heavy pressing against my chest and my head felt like it was going to explode. I gasped for air but I felt my lungs closing up with water. White stars twinkled like diamonds in the distance and a bright flashing light cast a soft glow over everything.

I couldn't control anything around me, but I realized that a special kind of peace existed in this darkness. I didn't have to answer to anyone or anything. I was in a state of complete bliss and I wished that I could stay in this moment forever. I closed my eyes one last time and let Río Pacuare cradle me softly, cooing her sweet lullaby.

Nicole Blum



Charles Lichtenauer

## SHADOWS OF LIFE

You showed me how to be proud  
Of who I am;  
How to look into the mirror  
And be proud of what I see.

You showed me the way  
When the world seemed invisible;  
How to accept everyone,  
And how to be less critical.

You laughed at my jokes,  
Even when we both knew I wasn't funny.  
You cared for me when I was sick,  
You'd treat me with sweet honey.

You bought me what I wanted,  
You said that's what money is for.  
You told me it was time to be myself,  
To show myself to the world.

You allowed me to be  
Everything I am,  
To experiment,  
And try the best I can.

You taught me how to smile,  
And realize that problems go away,  
At least momentarily, for a short while.

Thank you for being  
The person in my life  
That I am willing to do anything for,  
And sacrifice.

Thank you for being the one  
I can always count on,  
For trusting me,  
And for allowing us to build this bond.

**Laura Senande**

## SILENCED

Behold, I wait with the song on my lips  
And as I sing I am silenced.  
For though my song speaks of beauty,  
Mankind hath not the patience.

And behold, with the words on my tongue,  
I wait so that I may speak.  
And though my words are of truth and virtue,  
Mankind hath not the patience.

Behold I weep for I am trapped,  
And my tears are scorned.  
For though mankind hath silenced me,  
They repair not what they've torn.

**Marwan Bishtawi**



**Lauren Warshauer**

## TAKE THE PACE CAR, FOR ONCE

It's all a blur,  
This fast-paced world  
That has consumed our youth  
And is slowly sucking in  
The elderly.

It's all a blur,  
This racecar ride  
In this speedy world  
On this greased, frictionless track.  
It throws you back into your seat  
And it takes you a minute  
To figure out  
How to inhale the mach one air.  
And your stomach churns  
As everything inside is mixing and spinning  
And speeding.  
It's all so corrupting,  
This speedy high,  
The fast-paced rush  
Of everything modern  
And accepted.

It's all a blur,  
This speeding life  
That we have become so accustomed to.  
We can't live without the rush  
Of the ever-changing  
Everything.

But what would happen  
If we escaped  
From this speeding life  
And took a moment  
To slow down.  
The air would stop rushing,  
Stomachs would stop churning,  
And for once,  
We would be able to truly  
Live.

It's all a blur,  
This snail-paced life  
With so much happening all at once.  
But if we get the chance  
To just step back  
And take it all in,  
We'll be able to see  
What it's all about.  
Maybe we'll be able to see  
Past the modernity and ever-shrinking microchips  
And look into the eyes of others.

It's all a blur,  
This spinning world,  
And if we don't slow down,  
We'll miss it  
All.

## THAT VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD

Kid, look at you.  
You're a boy of sixteen;  
So impressionable, but so strong;  
Yet you fall to your knees,  
The voices you hear lift your head toward the skies.  
Boy, you're only sixteen, but my dear, you're meant to fly.

Young man, look at you.  
You're a youngling of twenty-one;  
So scared, but so knowledgeable;  
Your time is nowhere near done,  
Yet you fall to your knees,  
Lift your head toward the sky, the voices you hear plead.  
Young man, you're only twenty-one, but my dear, you're born to lead

Young father, look at you.  
You're a guy of thirty-two;  
So nervous, but with nothing to lose.  
Your children so small, and tucked under the covers,  
Your wife in your bed, you share eyes of sweet lovers;  
Yet you fall to your knees,  
The voices you hear lift your head toward the skies.  
Man, you're only thirty-two, but my dear, you're meant to fly.

Gentleman, look at you.  
You're a man of forty-five;  
So stressed, but so sure.  
There is wisdom in your eyes,  
Those children of yours have grown like you;  
They sing the same song in a slightly different tune;  
Yet you fall to your knees,  
Lift your head toward the sky, the voices you hear plead.  
Sir, you're only forty-five, but my dear, you're born to lead.

Grandfather, look at you.  
You're a man of sixty-seven;  
So frail, but so completed,  
Many tasks you have defeated.  
Your life was filled with woe and smiles,  
So much sweet dreams and success;  
Your pages stacked in piles;  
Yet you fall to your knees,  
And lift your head to the skies, the voices lift the burdens  
That traveled with you for miles.

Jailenn Morel

## THE BIRD

Hark the bird of sun  
Doth take its flight  
When the day is won  
And steals the night  
From grotesque foe  
And shrouds itself  
So we may never know  
Its vast wealth  
In beautiful treasures  
That which it keeps  
For its own pleasures.  
Treasures which seep  
Into the hungry man's soul  
And wealth so deep  
That they only extol  
The selfsame bird  
Who in its vanity  
Hath whirled  
A deceitful fantasy  
For the unknowing ears  
Of the poor men  
Whose fears  
Venture then  
To betray their tears.

And so the monster  
Flies with the night  
So that none may roster  
The terrible sight  
That which the bird  
Itself has wrought  
For the very bird  
Kills the flesh that it caught,  
Yet leaves the screams unheard  
So that the world may remember not.

**Marwan Bishtawi**

## THE TREE

Outside my bedroom, a tree grows,  
And I envy it, for it is free...  
And I tell myself "How foolish  
That I should envy a tree."

Why are there trees in the world?  
That rouse such feelings in men?  
No longer a wound in my heart,  
'Till one is opened again.

Why are there such feelings in men?  
Such pains are after all truth—  
Truthful affirmation that is—  
That the scourge of pain is youth.

And yet, that accursed tree grows,  
Out of the ground, a black spire.  
In the wind, its leaves billow  
And torment me in their fire.

That tree, that snake, that column  
Of fire, of venom, of power—  
Burns and poisons and tortures  
My soul. Prisoner of that tower.

And tell me *why* are there trees in the world?  
Oh they rouse in me such feelings of pain—  
No wound in my heart doth weep,  
'Till blood rushes forth again!

Marwan Bishtawi



Dan Wolfe



## THINGS I AM

I'm the magician  
Who runs out of tricks before the first act is done.  
I'm the umpire who calls the game  
Before the storm has begun.  
I'm the dog  
Who sees the door open and decides to run.  
I'm the man who went to work everyday for fifteen years,  
Only to realize that he's having no fun.  
I'm the composer  
Who only writes songs in a single note.  
I'm the singer who only sings songs  
That someone else wrote.  
I'm the lover  
Who bounces in and out of love more than twice.  
I'm the test taker  
Who studies hard, but seems to have forgotten that the test is about  
mice.  
I'm the actor  
Who can never remember his only line;  
But then again,  
I'm the guy who says  
*"Well this life's pretty good actually  
I think I am doing just fine."*

Zachary Mandell



Elissa Dellipaoli



## **WE CRY**

The face in the mirror isn't pleasing to her,  
But to the rest she shines.  
Worthy of nothing,  
Not even love,  
Everyday, she cries.

With her head and her feet in the clouds  
No longer willing to show her soul,  
She feels no more sorrow,  
But did she know that she was beautiful?

Who told you life wasn't worth the fight?  
Didn't we all tell you it was a lie?  
Keeping secrets wasn't you,  
Now we all cry for a girl we knew.  
She hid her beauty behind her tears.  
She hid her beauty behind her fears.  
She hid her life,  
And now we cry.

**Jessica Rozycki**

## ALWAYS ON MY MIND

I wonder what happened to my best friend. The girl who was once the one I shared every secret with, the one who told me everything would be okay, the one girl who abandoned me, the one who left me with practically nothing. I don't know where she ran off to, or if she's even alive; I just want to know if she's alright. I want to know if she misses me as much as I miss her, or if she thinks about the summers when we'd sit on my porch and talk about how great it was to be out of school, just like I do. I'm not quite sure if she remembers me, but I want her to know that I'm always thinking of her. She deserves to know that someone cares about her, despite all that she's been through. I can't imagine getting touched the way she was every single day for the two whole years. I specifically remember the day when the strongest person I knew broke down into my arms and told me what happened to her that week. I tried everything I could to hold back the tears, but listening to my dearest friend share the most terrifying detail of her life had to be the most difficult thing I've ever been through. I never thought that the very next week, I would be facing the world all alone, without my best friend.

Wherever you are, Willow, I need you to know that I'm barely making it without you.

Sammi Rhodes



Lauren Warshauer

## LIVING IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Some mornings I wake up to the sweet aroma of brigadeiros, a typical Brazilian dessert. After devouring the homemade Brazilian Hershey kiss I then tackle a self-made challenge: deciphering the Portuguese recipe and making the delectable treat all by myself. From a young age, I learned about cultures and traditions quite different from my own. I have learned to bow in respect to the Japanese and to kiss both cheeks when in the presence of Europeans.

In my modest two family home, I reside not only with my immediate family, but with individuals who come north over the equator, fly over vast oceans, and almost three quarters of the way around the world. In total, seventy-five individuals, from fifteen different countries have all crossed the threshold of the Grippo house. Coming from Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Spain, France, Slovakia, and Japan, these individuals have combined forces towards a common goal: to educate my severely autistic older brother, Steven, on the basic life skills and language necessary to be a participant in life.

During the past ten years, Steven has gone from the mental capacity of a newborn baby to the cognitive state like that of a five year old boy. This is a feat that doctors deemed impossible, except, for Dr. Gladys Williams. Originally from Colombia, Dr. Williams created an individualized program for Steven to be successful in life. Dr. Williams, or Gladys as I call her, does not believe in traditional medicine. Instead, she is a believer of B.F. Skinner's theory of A.B.A., Applied Behavior Analysis. It is Gladys' belief, along with Skinner's, that the way to alter one's behavior is through a simple reward and punishment system. Gladys' organization and clever wit enabled her to create a program based on my brother's needs, using a system of tokens. Once Steven acquires a certain number of tokens, he is rewarded with something he likes, such as going to the park or eating his favorite snack. Inspired by this innovative program, I enrolled in AP Psychology to learn more about Skinner, my brother, and the workings of the mind.

Friends and family agree, there is never a dull moment in my house. The teachers and Gladys are with my brother from the minute he wakes up in the morning until the time he falls asleep at night. These are the people who I share my home with, these are the people who I break bread with, these are the people who have become a part of the Grippo family. I have gained wisdom from their behavior. Even when my brother's obsessive-compulsive behavior is at its height, they are able to remain calm, cool, and collected. This patience is an attribute that I recognize in my own behavior. I guess it is safe to say that I am a product of my environment.

I live in a house where cultures meet and mingle, where the international becomes the local, and that has provided me with an eagerness to meet new people and embrace diversity. Although my home is certainly hectic at times, I wouldn't change it for the world.

**Jenna Grippo**

## SELF DESTRUCT

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by themselves, nihilistic,  
Brazenly careless  
Made cynics by tinted glasses and indifference, peering empty eyed over their parents shoulders at television  
screens  
Politicians in suits remind us who our enemy is, lest we forgot our duty is to them;  
Lest change come unbidden from scholars and radicals  
Shrink into the sofa shrivel up like a scroll it is hopeless it is not worth trying veil yourself from the pixel count  
The thread count, count 1, 2, 3, 2012  
The NASDAQ the Dow Jones, cold hard cash.  
It is not worth trying change is not worth dying for cloak yourself in apathy.  
If you are not with them you are nothing at all  
Time is measured, appraised, laminated documents in your father's office plastic paper pencil pen ink pride  
They are the future, you are the cautionary tale but you are accounted for, fractured one,  
You are solved sleep tight in a hermetically sealed plastic bag it is not worth trying  
Angel eyes it is not worth crying over  
The children of the revolution they are still here they are the shadows in rocking chairs  
Ashes to ashes dust to dust another day another dinner of rubbery chicken and frozen vegetables  
Where are your banners now? Where is your boundless hope? Where did it get you?  
Love lost hope spinning spiraling avoid the wake the fray the gunshots will ring out with or without you  
Another dead like his father like his grandfather like the ones who would not be still  
It is not worth trying  
Bright eyes, is it not worth trying?  
If the future continues to extinguish its own spark it is down down farther farther  
Realize no one can see when it is dark they can only hear  
You have a mouth you are light teach them how to breathe  
Let it be known molds are made to be broken  
That those shadows those creaking people they are still here  
That there are footholds even in the darkness that you can find them that you have a mouth and also legs and  
hands  
It is not worth hiding,  
Live eyes  
It is time.

Emma Adler



Karissa Ragone-Gonzalez

### FALLEN SOLDIER

Lonely mother crying.  
Fallen soldier lying.  
Dirt fills up a grave.  
Why must the dead ones be the brave?

Tears stream down her face  
Knowing her loved one cannot be replaced.  
Who is there to take the blame?  
All that is known is that nothing's the same.

What will happen to this poor mother?  
When she realizes there's no one to smother.  
How will this mother ever love?  
When she knows her beloved soldier hovers above.

The mother's fear is now a reality,  
Her son has become a fatality.  
The mother, all alone,  
Stares lovingly at a cold gravestone.

Robby Tiburzi

## FATHER DAN

The religion teacher monotonously droned on about Jesus and all his magic tricks. I wonder if he could pull a rabbit out of a hat or maybe some colorful confetti out of his nose. I heard that this Jesus was a nice guy, so He could probably teach me some card tricks. When would I get to see him though? He has all those statues of Him dead, but everyone in mass talks about Him as if He is there. I always thought His hair looked pretty funny, but I didn't get why His mom didn't make Him cut it. I asked my mom that and she said that was the style back then. I don't get how He could have played sports with that hair. The kid who plays right field on my baseball team has long hair and can never see the ball. Then I remembered a girl in my grade with similar hair to Jesus and she wears a rubber band in her hair when playing sports; that's what Jesus probably did.

I heard the slap of ball-on-mitt and my eyes are drawn to the window. Kids are throwing a baseball and they seem to be enjoying life. I wish I was out there. I need to be working on my knuckleball, because I bet my morning snack tomorrow with Reese that I could throw it. My heart drops to my toes. I get that weird feeling in my heart when I eat pizza and peanut butter too fast. The feeling where life stops and I can't breathe. My heart tries to break free. It's only been 5 minutes and I am already miserable. I remember the hell hole that I sat in for an hour and a half every Wednesday afternoon. I can't deal with this. I don't need to hear about this religion stuff anymore. I already have to read it during church on Sunday. I'm getting pretty fed up with all this giving stuff. All I want to do is play baseball. I'll make sure to be nice to my sister so the God, Holy Spirit, isn't angry with me.

I zone off and there is a constant drone in my ear like a mosquito. My head droops and my eyelids get heavy. My head bangs from my forehead to ears and I know that I'm set for a whole hour of torture. I know all I will be thinking about is how angry I am and then spend the next hour complaining to my mom about how much I hate this weekly torture. The religion teacher starts to move her hands in dramatic fashion as her spit rainbows from her mouth onto our desks. We all cringe in reaction to the shower of spit. We all know that we are in store for a 5 minute rant about the importance of Jesus, God, and Mary the Virgin in our lives. Unexpectedly, there is a knock in the door; we are saved.

The door opens and a smile creeps on my face as Father Dan walks into the room. His smile gleams and causes every kid in the room to inch forward in their seat and drown in admiration. He towers over my religion teacher (I still don't know her name). My eyes are then drawn to his golden guitar and it radiates good feeling and homeliness. His hand moves the pick knuckle-to-knuckle with ease and I envy the niftiness of his hands. He unconsciously has complete control anything near his hands. He has those sticky hands on the baseball field that my dad says some people just naturally have. I guess the glue comes off before he throws it, because the baseball sure flies off his hand. I heard Father Dan played college baseball. I bet he could've played for the Diamond Backs and met Randy Johnson. I think Father Dan threw it over 90 mph when he pitched to me. I couldn't see the ball. All I ever heard was the thud of the ball on mitt. Father Dan is amazing.

His voice booms, "Anyone want to hear a song?" He is met with a chorus of eager "Yes, Father Dan!" Music flows from his guitar and my spirits lighten. I totally forget where I am or why I was so depressed prior to his entrance. All I am focused on is how cool Father Dan is and how much I want to be like him. I wonder if I will ever fill the room so majestically while I stare at my own scrawny arms. Why did Father Dan become a Priest? He could've done so much and been so much better. I can just imagine him competing with Jason Giambi in the homerun contest. It's a shame. I wonder if I should ask this smiling and magnificent man what happened to him? Then I remembered my mom said never to ask people a question about their past, but that doesn't make me stop thinking. How could Father Dan want to be a priest? What is the point when you could be making millions of dollars and get all the girls? I don't see how he goes every day smiling when he knows he could be so much better.

I am interrupted from my thoughts as Father Dan asked, "What is faith to all of you?" He is met with an awkward stillness as the class is afraid of saying the wrong thing, but Father Dan is unfazed, "Come on boys and girls. What do you guys think God is? What does he do?"

Sam bravely answers, "Isn't He the guy who watches us?"

Father Dan smiles, "Well He does watch us, but how is He different than Santa? He watches us, but what else does He do that's important?"

I remembered my mom talking about God and how He was in my heart, "Isn't He in us, Father Dan?"

"Great, He's part of all our spirits. God is part of all of us. He made us. This is what I want to teach you about today. God has a special place in every one of us. He has a special role in all of us. In me, I felt God wanted me to be a priest. That's what I felt God told me in my heart. God tells our heart different things and it is important that we listen. Remember that kids, listen to your heart and live life with no regrets. Thank you Sister, for letting me interrupt," Father Dan walks out of the room.

I see him walking out and I think about where God is in Father Dan. Do baseball bats have heart? I'm scared that if I have too much God in my heart I'll get a heart attack. I think Father Dan has a lot of God in him. I wonder how He got it? I think it's brave of him to like God more than baseball. I kind of want to be like him and be happy like him.

**Robby Tiburzi**

## TRUTH AND ANSWERS

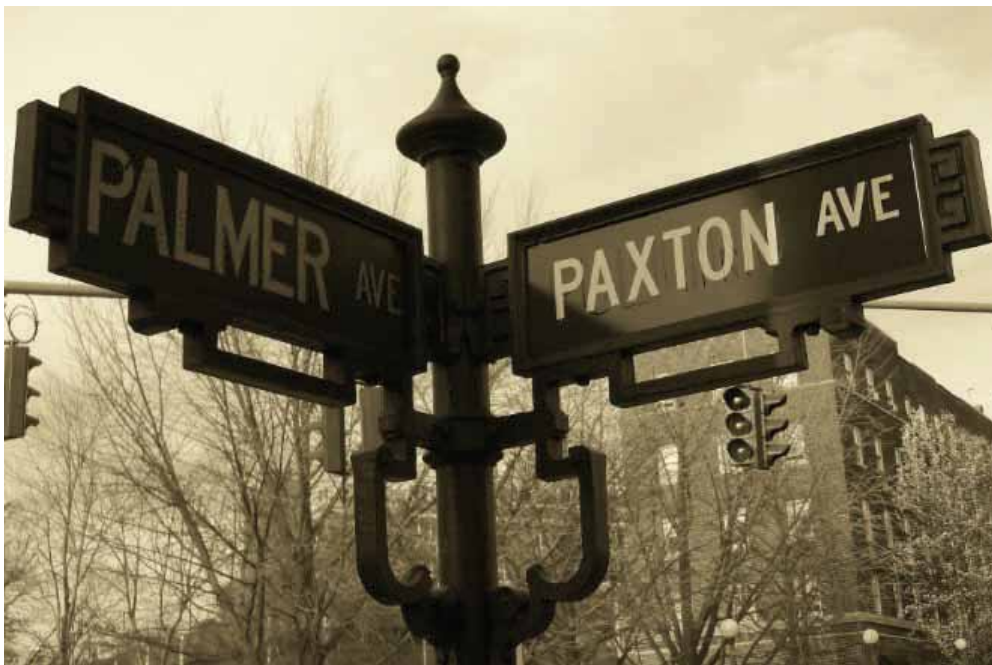
Honesty: honorable in principles;  
Showing uprightness and fairness.

(which in my opinion is very hard to find in the world)

So far, I haven't found an honest person.

All I am seeking are truth and answers.

**Karissa Ragone-Gonzalez**



Dan Wolfe



## ODE TO RIBEIRA

I love watching as Spaniards give a true attempt to speak English. I love that a 15 year old can drive a motorcycle but is restricted from driving cars. I love that someone would pick up a baby's shoe that may have fallen off and place it on the edge of the sidewalk. I love that it is completely normal to walk to four different cafes and only order drinks. I love that all stores close so that people can eat lunch and "tomar la siesta" (beauty sleep with a full stomach). I think it is smart that dinner and lunch are reversed.

I love that I can walk the streets of Ribeira and hear people telling the oddest stories. I love that everyone in the town knows each other's business and treats it as if it is their own. I love that gossip is just part of a regular routine. I love that feeling of being watched as I walk down the city's streets because my style is "estrano" (which may or not even be a Spanish word). I really love listening to the whispers that are spread among the people's ears commenting that I am an "Americana" (as if I would interpret that comment as an insult).

I love that you can buy a chicken and rain boots in the same Saturday market (which extends through the entire town's port and the sellers are all Muslim foreigners who do not show up the next weekend at the same spot to make sure there won't be any returns). I love watching as everyone crowds onto the bus. I love that you can buy a ticket for the bus for 1 Euro and that they drop you off where you tell them to.

I love waking up in the morning and walking next door for breakfast (although everyone seems to stare because I am still wearing pajamas. Is there anything wrong with that?) I love squeezing into a tiny elevator with 6 other people to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. I really love how stores don't open until 11 am (so that you don't feel as if you have already lost precious shopping time).

I really love how you can find five taxis lined up at 4 am and waiting for people to get out of parties. I love how concerts go on at midnight, in the center of town (although there are apartments with people sleeping, next door). I love how the night isn't over until you are finally tired.

I love how Sunday mass is like a town reunion. I think it sucks that no stores are open on Sundays so you are left with nothing to do.

Laura Senande



## IT STOPS

My eyes won't close,  
Yet I can't stay awake.  
My mind is like the Energizer  
Bunny,  
How much more can I take?

Amanda Nardozi

Mustn't speak a word,  
For my mouth's causing a commotion.  
Drilling my brain with questions,  
I admire your devotion,

Yet I'm sick of it at the same time,  
Struggling to rhyme, I'm speechless,  
Yet my pen keeps running laps,  
Writing of my stress, my mess.

As the tip of the pen caresses the page,  
I dream of a world without pain.  
Afraid to wake up,  
For I'm tired of going insane.

Don't feed me your lies,  
Don't tell me I'll be okay.  
Just listen to my heart's cries,  
As it does every single day.

With every beat, it burns,  
Like a bad movie, it flops,  
Weighing me down until finally,  
It stops.

Jennifer Carpenito

## A SAFE SUBSTITUTE

In a green field my eyes are closed  
I absorb the sun shine letting the warmth manipulate my body  
I trust this.

A breeze blows my way; sending a chill through my veins  
The breeze picks up a few leaves and intertwines them in my hair  
The suns warmth travels up my body, kissing my cheeks  
I remember this.

And I still feel this.  
The sun starts to tightly hug my body  
But the breeze still blows; swaying the grass under my palms  
I know this.

Slowly lifting my eye lids to gaze upon the pillows in the sky  
Blanketing over the light blue horizon  
The sun peaking through an especially large feathery cloud  
I still see this.

Your body's warmth and your gently breezy touch  
Lightly blanketing over my body  
Your fingerings intertwining in my hair.

And although you aren't here for the moment  
Your presence lingers  
Leaving traces of you everywhere  
It's as if you've been here all along.

All I need is to lie in a field of warm green breezes.

**Jailenn Morel**



**Charles Lichtenauer**

## OLD WOMAN

The train's rumble over the tracks echo in the distance as the old woman trudges to the beat set forth by the train. Her back curved with age. Her legs wobble from the long walk. All alone through the empty alley. No one to go to for support, no house to call home for shelter. She comes to this new city for a new beginning only to find a new end, a dead end. The bars on the windows restricted her presence, and limited her exploration. Her suitcase is an illusion, appearing filled, but only carrying her hopes and dreams; dreams of one day becoming something, or someone who is loved and accepted. This is now just an empty thought, an empty space. The suitcase doesn't fool, one can see through her self-made facade.

She picks her head out of the warmth of her scarf into the crisp winter air. Her puffy eyes begin to water and her cheeks turn rosy red. She shivers for warmth and sits down on the sidewalk. The watering of her eyes now turns into tears. She tries to hold back emotion, but they are too strong. She remembers pain, internally and externally. She remembers fear that she could never be alone, always watched. She remembers sorrow, never experiencing that feeling of love or family.

The old woman uses her suitcase as a crutch to rise from the hard gravel. Wiping the tears from her face she drops the suitcase to the ground and continues down the alley. She walks on, leaving her suitcase behind.

Nicole Barletta

## **SIMPLE**

My gaze falls upon a small daisy. They are so common...and yet that makes no kind of dent in its significance.

Where I am there is only one sound and that is the sound of rushing water. It glides smoothly over rocks and boulders and occasionally parting into seamless waves that create ripples; the river flows on regardless.

I can't remember why I am here, or how I got here, all I know is that I am glad I came.

**Sarah Lisk**

## THE OLD KINGDOM OF KINDERGARTEN

I stare blankly at my milk carton and try to not notice the spittle on my cheeseburger or my steadily intensifying headache. The main thing I was trying to avoid was how this was the last place I wanted to be, but of course that was the only thing on my mind. It's kind of funny when you get stuck in a place where you don't want to be, because right before it happens you always sense it. It's that animal's sense to run away from predators, but the thing is I am no chameleon. Instead, I am stuck.

"James," Danny pesters, "Can we have a play date tomorrow?" I roll my eyes. I do feel bad, but I cannot hang out with a kid who asks me to go on a "play date". Never mind the fact that I absolutely do not want to go to his house. I scramble for an excuse. For one split second, I am compelled to be honest, but it disappears. I mutter, "I have a swimming meet. Maybe next time." I advert my eyes. I don't know why. My heart gets a little heavy and my boredom turns into pity.

I try to shake it off, but guilt cannot escape me. I do not know the reason why. Why cannot I reach into myself to hang out with him for one day? I think that I could be noble enough to do that, but then a little voice inside my head tells me why; my nobility would be wasted. If I hung out with him this one time, then he would want to do it again and again. I could not risk myself to even more badgering and annoyance by the others. I couldn't get his hopes up for that would be wicked. I have to act on how I feel, but just not let Danny know that. You know what, I think that is the most noble thing to do. I am kind of protecting Danny that way. I am stopping him from getting hurt. He should consider himself lucky.

"James?" Danny asks interrupting my thoughts.

"What Danny?" I ask, afraid of what is to come.

"Well I was saying that I could trade you my Exodia for your Polymerization?" he hopefully asks. He seems unaware that I have no idea what he is inquiring about. I am as confused. I look quizzically at him waiting for an explanation.

After fifteen seconds of awkward silence, Danny clarifies, "You know. Yugioh?" My spirits rise with the mention of Yugioh. I find it hilarious that he just asked me that, but all the great memories of elementary school flood my mind, and I do miss the good old days. I reminisce of all the fun I had and a smile creeps onto my face. Once again I am interrupted, "Sooo.... Do you want to do the trade?"

What does this kid not understand? I don't want anything to do with Yugioh cards. I actually would love to have the empty on my shelf. I should just throw them out or give them to my little brother. Or I could do something a lot smarter. Back in the day, I was the Yugioh master. Maybe, I should make a profit. "Hey Danny, want my cards?" I inquire.

His eyes light up, "Oh would I ever."

"How about I sell them to you, for ummm... 50 dollars?" I prod.

"Sure!" Hook, line and bait. "Just let me ask my mom" he adds. Un-oh. I know my money scheme is ruined for no sane parent would give 50 dollars for Yugioh cards. Anyways, I kind of like my cards. I can show my children the collection when I get older. A token of my past. The good old days, dueling at the playground. I really had no worries back then. It was just fun. I kind of miss it.

You know what's kind of funny? Now that I think about it. My old partner back in the day was Danny. Though, let me honest, it really was a one man show. I remember all the days Danny could captivate the lunch table. He had our laughter at his fingertips. I remember how hard I used to laugh when he would take a banana and do a gorilla impersonation. In hindsight, not so funny, but to me back then, he was the king of playground. I was his subject. I admired him. I wanted to be as funny as him.

Rather ironically, the tables have turned and it is I who now sits at a higher perch. Danny sits there awkwardly as I remember his once former glory. I feel ashamed. What could have happened? I wish he could be like he used to be. I don't know what that is, but I wish he got it back. I don't know why he was so unlucky.

It is kind of his fault though. He got himself stuck in the past. He never moved on from those times. He never matured. He should've known. He should've seen what everyone else was doing. The poor kid just could not move on, while everyone else did and he was left with our dust in his face.

Everyone has to change because it is human nature. I changed not because I am fake, but because it was natural. I am not responsible for Danny. He made me laugh one day. I do not have to run a pity show. I have no responsibility towards his position. We are all independent. If he was dependent on me, he would weigh me down. The kid should've known.

The more I think about it, I notice how bad I sound. Maybe, I should've helped the kid out. I could've given him some pointers. Make sure he didn't do anything that bad. Hang out with him once in a while to keep his spirits up. He was my once idealized leader, but now I am his.

I stare at Danny and I notice how innocent he looks. It is not his fault no one taught him the new ways to live. If he had the chance he would change I am sure of it. It was everyone else's fault for just leaving him on the side of the road. This kid was unlucky. He just needs a chance.

"So James, how about next weekend," Danny pipes in hopefully.

However, out of habit, I remember how much I wanted to go to the movies that weekend so I say, "No sorry, I have a basketball game." His face drops, but I know he will ask again and of course I will get another chance. Right?

**Robby Tiburzi**

## DO THE RIGHT THING

A little girl once told her mother  
She broke a vase.  
She was ashamed but kept herself together.  
The mother gave her a kiss, and smiled.

A boy once ate a girl's cookie during lunch.  
Later on, he felt guilty.  
He bought the girl another cookie, and smiled.

A student once cheated on a math test  
Because he forgot to study.  
He felt the need to tell the teacher.  
He spent the next week in lunch detention, but smiled.

A teenager once had a party  
When her parents weren't home.  
When the party lost control,  
She kicked everyone out, cleaned up, and smiled.

A business man once came into his meeting unprepared.  
No one scolded him but he still felt embarrassed.  
The next week he arrived to the meeting  
With a poster board for a presentation and smiled.

A father once told his daughter she was to become a lawyer  
When she grew up  
She wanted to be an artist.  
The father paid for her college, with a smile.

A poor man once stole bread from a market.  
Within the next hour, he came back.  
He left the bread on the counter and gave the clerk all his money,  
Although he would starve that week, he smiled.

The best kind of happiness  
Is the kind that comes along with  
doing the right thing.

**Laura Senande**



**Lauren Warshauer**





## TWENTY-FOUR

Twenty-four hours.  
Twenty-four hours without

Texting

BBM

Phone calls.

Twenty-four hours without

IMs

Facebook

Google

YouTube.

Twenty-four hours without  
A life.

Twenty-four hours of self entertainment.  
Twenty-four hours of talking to people; face-to-face.  
Twenty-four hours of playing outside with my neighbors.  
Twenty-four hours of driving only to the places I know, for fear of getting lost.

Twenty-four hours without

GPS

An iTouch app.

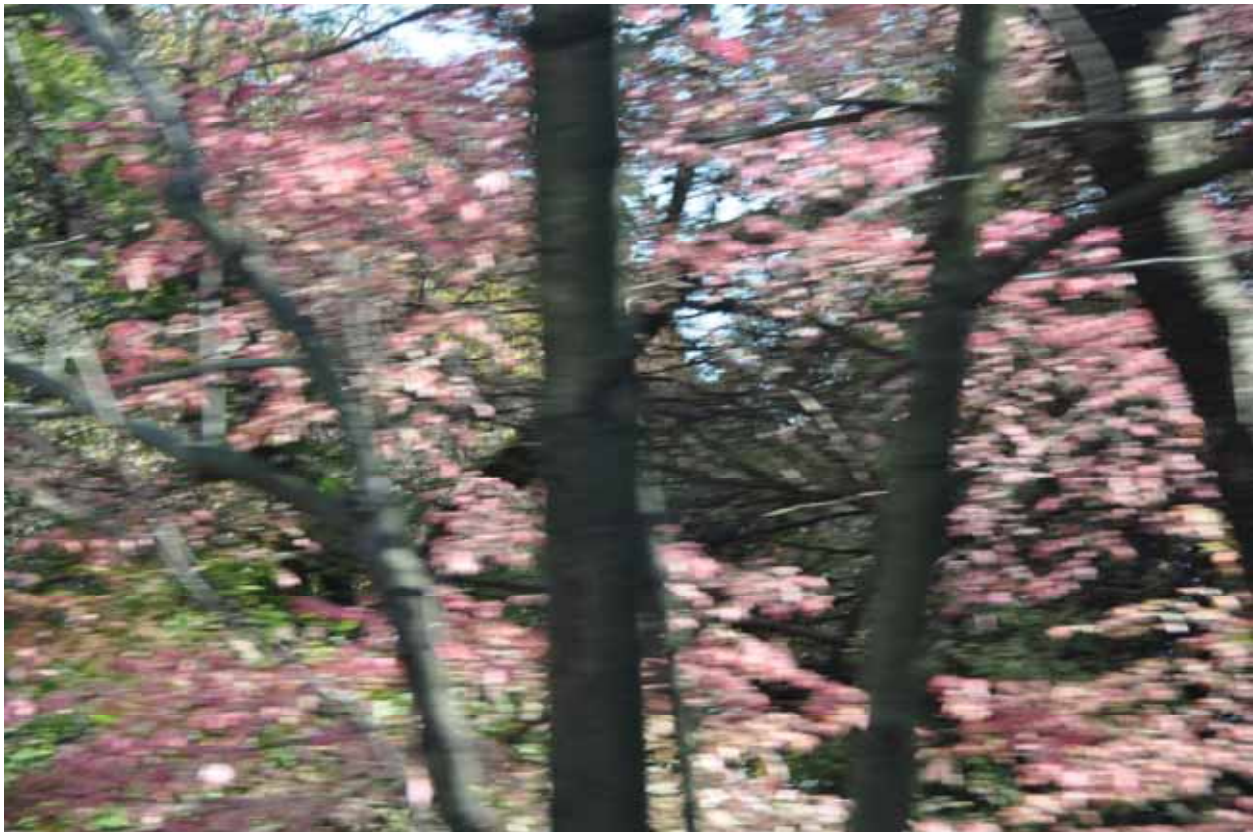
Twenty-four hours feels like forever.

Twenty-four hours of listening to my grandparents cracking jokes that aren't funny.  
Twenty-four hours of friends coming over.  
Twenty-four hours of not being able to watch movies.  
Twenty-four hours of eating non-stop to fill the boring hours.  
Twenty-four hours of an endless day.  
Twenty-four hours of walking in circles unsure what to do next.  
Twenty-four hours of pure boredom.  
Twenty-four hours without technology.

Twenty-four hours of peace.

Ashley Mueller

Jessica Rozycki



Immy Caird

## SHOW AND TELL

The faded frost white fur has now become a pale gray, it's cute round ears seem to have been beaten and yanked on, and even its loving, caring glare seems unfitting next to its deformed nose. Placing a hand on its head, feeling the bumps and torn stuffing within, letting a smile cross your lips as you move your fingers across the space where its button eyes once were, taking grip of its tail to sense the beads slowly fall out of its butt into its head. As those beads fall you can hear the slight drips and rattle of their clashing together and the soft whisper of its fur rubbing against each other. Laying a soft kiss on its downy paw you catch the flavor of stale powder and hackneyed earth that salty, bitter taste that stays and no matter how many times you wash it out it never leaves. The lingering scent of dust and age is stitched deep into its fur as well as the hidden aroma of peppermint from a forgotten memory.

Laura McKinsey

## ODE TO BROS

I love a good friendship. I love knowing I got a bro to count on.  
I love going to the club, chillin' and laxing with my bros. I love  
the ten bromandments.

I love going pipe-city with my bros. I love wearing turf-dogs, mid  
-calves, nice shorts, a lax pinney, and a sweet pair of shades. I  
love chilling on a boat with my bros.

I love going to Lacrosse Unlimited for a sweet d-pole shaft and  
then cutting it in half. I love being a bro. I love to "chay" with  
my bros.

I love Syracuse lacrosse.

I love being a bro.

The life of a bro is the life I live. And the one rule I live by is  
"Don't taze me bro".

**Brononymous**

## INDIFFERENCE IS BLISS

Time is defined by the change it brings.  
The 70's are the 70's, and not the 60's, because of what happened then that did not any time else.

Change parades its shining banner;  
Its clever slogan.  
It is good change  
It is spirited, lively, just,  
change.  
Yet it seems where the past is shunted aside  
Time does not discriminate between what is glorious and what  
is wrong.

Veiled behind tattered drapes;  
Grey cloth licking its toes  
The past is forgotten.  
Time never knows,  
In its prime,  
To the side its cousin is collecting dust.

Its destiny calls from the curtains.

Emma Adler

The bird outside my window is saying something to me. I can't hear him. I don't want to hear him. So I close my window. I lock my window. The glass keeps his twittering out. Out of my room; out of my house; out of my thoughts.

I don't like birds, never did, never will. They are filthy creatures—flutes to fond of their own whistle. No more their beauty rests with me than pleases me. I hate birds.

And that bird; that bird outside my window is no different. He is singing to mock me—to show that he is outside where the world can hear him twitter and flutter and fly from branch to branch while I am trapped inside with nothing. But I'm not going to give him what he wants, I'm going to stay inside and I'm going to shut everything out, and I'm not going to let nothing bother me in here. And as for that bird—well he can sing and flutter around from branch to branch 'till his little heart bursts.

We'll see what everyone says then! Ha! Oh man, I hate birds!

**Marwan Bishtawi**



Charles Lichtenauer

## THROUGH THE EYES OF A HAITIAN MAN

We have never been a wealthy country. For as long as I can remember, our cities have been overcrowded by native people, not tourists. The few visitors that we have seem to scope out our country like a science experiment. Our neighbors in the Dominican Republic always have visitors. The land they walk on is heaven compared to ours. We never did anything to anyone, but for one reason or another, we are the unfortunate ones who have been toppled and destroyed. The sudden influx of aid after our recent devastation frustrates me. Why now, and why not before?

My people are slowly vanishing—almost every battle we fight is a loss. Just look at me. My cinderblock hut has been shattered. I have no home. I struggle each day to get by and keep going. Everything behind me is rubble. My country has been blighted. My life must start anew. I can only hope to see this land pieced back together so that we can return to the happiness we once had.

**Samantha Angilletta**

## TURN A BLIND EYE

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by fear.  
The fear to leave their controlled isolation and understand  
What is possible.  
The meaning of reason outside a room, what is behind the curtain?  
What exists beyond the realms of personal power?  
Our history does nothing.  
We accomplish our existence; it seems life was granted upon humans  
And we wasted it. We do nothing, we suffer emotions;  
Emotions that blind us.  
But one emotion is more important than them all.  
It is fear. It blinds the form,  
Doing what you were told not to do as a child.  
They said "*don't drink this, don't smoke that,*"  
For the sake of experience, I implore you.  
Heed my words: if one does not try,  
The evolution of emotions will only grant us uniformity.  
We who refuse to taste the fruits of our land;  
Who refuse to understand what daredevils talk about.  
My fear is here, I feel it course through my blood.  
I feel it in every decision that happens to me, and happens to you.  
Stop contemplating, stop trying, and stop thinking.  
Just do it, just flow, life is a river.  
Don't let the dams of society obstruct your righteous indignation;  
Do you feel it? Does it change you?  
If it does not,  
You are way too far, way too lost.  
The moment we let our fear control us,  
The moment we let this happen,  
We lose what makes us human.  
Did this really happen?  
Did we turn a blind eye?

Danny Glass

## BROKEN FRUITCAKE

It was not like it wasn't broken before. The fruitcake lays crumbled on the ground and my mom drops to her knees. My sister starts to cry. My dad walks off to his room and I just sit there and watch. Not knowing what to feel.

My sister's sob have never stopped. I feel bad for her. We kind of really don't get along and I feel some guilt. Our relationship probably never helped the anger already present in the family, but I still loved her. I still knew what she was going through and I sympathized.

A student who stays up till 1 am and tries to learn. She tried to become a woman when she was still just a child. She really felt alone in this family. She really has done everything for herself after she reached 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Though we fight, she is still my second mom. It hurts to see how she seems to be so damaged by this episode. I don't know if she will ever stop crying.

My eyes now gaze at my mom who is still in a heap. Her eyes never leaving the strewn mixture of broken pot and burnt fruitcake all over our dining room floor. She is still crying. Her make up practically washed off. She is pitiful and my heart reaches to her.

It is hard to say if you can blame my mom. She is a mess. Her heart has slowly been snipped into tiny little pieces. Until all she was left with was the hope of pulling off one family dinner. The family dinner would ease away the fighting and the tension. She rested the future of this family on this dinner and by the state of the fruitcake you could tell how that ended up.

My mom always blamed herself for the mess of the family. She thought it was her fault. She messed up. That was her problem. She was trying too hard to fix something that was broken in the first place. This family was not meant to be. Even when my mom put every last bit of effort into ensuring this family dinner be a success, she still failed, and blamed herself. She was eating herself up with guilt.

I sit in my chair and let out a sigh. The reality of the events tonight slowly sinking in. I shake off the sadness and walk upstairs to be by myself.

As I reach the top of my stairs I stare into my father's bedroom. I hear him sobbing quietly to myself. He hears me come up and he glances at me. Our eyes meet awkwardly and then he cowardly averts my gaze. I walk off into my room.

My dad was the part of the family that I never really understood. This is mostly because I never saw him, but it still hurt. My dad was intense and persistent. He was great at his job and he loved doing it, but this obsession made him oblivious to his family as he worked long nights and woke up early in the morning.

When he was home, it usually meant bickering. For some reason my parents had lost whatever love and affection they had together when they got married. The connection between them had snapped and slowly the whole thing smoldered into the burnt fruit cake down stairs.

My family is hopeless and questions pondering my future come into my brain. I am scared. I am alone. I feel hopeless. It is a time like this why I see people commit suicide. They feel like everything is gone and that there is nothing worth living for. I may not be there yet, but I sense it. I sense the great sadness I keep bottled inside me.



What does the future hold for me? It is not looking too bright, but I do know that there is a future. I don't really believe in my family, but it is okay because I know there will be a time in my life when I am independent. I know that when I become old enough I will be free from the burden of my family. I can pursue my own dreams and have a function family.

I don't know what will happen in the near future and I feel the apprehension, but I do also know that I will be free one day and a smile creeps up onto my face.

**Robby Tiburzi**



Karen Cujar

## HOTEL LIFE

The house was sold. The furniture was in storage. Dad was around but no longer living with us. Mom was dealing with things in her own way. And Doug and I were left to organize our rooms, our feelings, and our lives.

Moving into Room 336 at Summerfield Suites was only supposed to be a short stay while Mom looked for a new house. But a few weeks turned into a month, a month into three months, three months into six months, and six months somehow became a year. A year in a hotel may seem like a dream situation, but it turned out that living the “suite life” was not an ideal situation for a recently divorced mother and her two young children.

My new home consisted of two bedrooms and a common room, which had a kitchenette and a small living space with just a couch, a recliner and a television. I was 12 years old, and it was unsettling having to live where nothing was ours; the furniture, the walls, even the dishes belonged to the hotel. I had to share a room with my ten year old brother. I did not have enough storage space for all my clothes, let alone any of my personal possessions, like my collections of tiny Limoge porcelain boxes and miniature perfume bottles. I had to individually wrap each of the 50 boxes and bottles so they could be safely stored. There wasn't even space for a computer, and no Internet, so I had to go downstairs to the computer room to do my homework. The one perk of hotel life was never making my own bed because we had maid service. We were at the hotel so long that the maid actually became a friend.

Living in a hotel after hearing the heartbreaking news of my parents divorce taught me to stay strong in adverse situations. I kept my grades up; I got involved in school activities; and I was able to make new friends in Middle School. My brother missed having my Dad say goodnight to him, and he became very emotional; he cried and whined a lot. I knew I had to put up a brave front for him, giving him a shoulder to cry on and reassuring him that we would get through this together. In fact, I am amazed that we are still speaking to each other after living in the same room for 12 months. Although we love each other dearly, we were more than happy to move into our own rooms when Mom finally bought a house.

I cannot imagine why I would ever need to make a hotel my permanent residence again. But if that did happen, I know that I would be able to get through it; if I did it at age 12, I certainly could do it as an adult. When we moved into our new house, Mom asked me to do one thing – make my bed. That's something that I happily do every day.

Melissa Shulman

## UNANSWERED

*Nana, what's your favorite color?*  
*Nana, what was it like growing up?*  
*Nana, what was grandpa like?*  
*Where did you work when you were my age, Nana?*  
*Nana, do you know how much we all miss you?*  
The questions people never get the answers to,  
Are the ones everyone's dying to know.

When Nana could talk;  
I couldn't.  
When I could finally talk;  
Nana couldn't.  
Bedridden Nana  
Couldn't see  
Nor speak  
Nor hear  
Nor eat.

We kept hope,  
Maybe one day she would get better,  
Because why would such a bad thing happen  
To someone with so much family,  
So many grandchildren.  
Years went by;  
until one day  
Nana wasn't in her bed.  
Nana wasn't in her house,

Sitting in the hospital waiting room,  
Uncomfortable,  
Eerie.  
Observing the families' that received bad news;  
Watching them break down.  
Never did I want to experience that sadness.  
*I'm sorry...*  
*No, no, no...you can't be sorry. There's no...sorry.*  
*I'm sorry, there was nothing we could do.*  
Tears began to roll down my cheeks.  
They ran down my face just as fast  
As the memories ran through my mind.

Nicole Kocher

## BLOWING OUT THE CANDLES

*"Happy birthday to you..."*

My family surrounds me and in the dark I can still pick up their smiles and I smile. Love shoots through the air. A celebratory dinner is finished. The plates are set out. The music is playing and my mom appears in the doorway.

*"Happy birthday to you.."*

The golden candles illuminate my mom's face. I stare longingly at the chocolate cake. I imagine the eruption of chocolate each bite will have in my mouth. The cake is placed ceremoniously in front of the birthday girl, my sister.

*"Happy birthday dear Tory..."*

My sister's eyes glow in anticipation at the sight of burning candles. Every candle a little torch symbolizing her coming of a new age; but she mostly cares about the attention and the presents-to-be.

*"Happy birthday to you!"*

My sister rears back, ready to blow herself to another year. She goes forward mightily, ready to extinguish the flickering flames, but my sister falls to the ground and the candles still burn.

An awkward silence follows.

**Robby Tiburzi**

## ODE TO PEOPLE

Why I love people.

I love that I once gave a person a hug. I love that I can yell at a person to clear my head. I love that I can love a person. I love that a person can make another person smile. I love that I can make people smile.

I love that a person can make another person cry. I love that a person can make another person scared. I love that I can make people scared.

I love that a person can teach another person things. I love that I can teach people things. I love that people can speak to other people. I love that people can be anything they want to be.

I love that people can go out and have fun. I mostly love how much the prices went up in order to go out and have fun. I love that people can be skinny, average, muscular or fat. I love that people can go places by car, feet, bike or scooter.

I love that people can make places better. I love that people can make new places. I love that a person can make a difference. I love that a person can change the world.

I love that a person can dress the way they want too. I love that people can make mistakes. I love that people can forget. I love that a person can lie. I love that I can lie to people to make them feel better.

I love that a person can marry another person. I love that a person can have a family. I love that I can marry and create a family with another person. I love that a person can take care of another person. I love that I can take care of people.

I love that every person in the world has a place.  
I love that every person in the world is loved.

**Samantha Angilletta**



Michelle Bracciodieta



