

# IMAGINE

2015-2016





"IMAGINE"  
 Literary Magazine  
 Harrison High School  
 Harrison, New York 10528  
 2016 Edition

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Julia Souza

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*Love*

Enjoy it now  
While you still can,  
Before they turn on you.

Before they turn  
to eat your flesh,  
And crack your skull in two.

They like it when  
You hug them back,  
And laugh at the jokes they make.

Make sure to recite,  
All eight "Hail Mary's"  
When you're burning at the stake.

Some of them  
Like when you are there,  
For them in their time of need.

These are the ones  
That will tie you up,  
And have you begging on your knees.

But whatever you do,  
I suggest you don't tell  
Them about what you feel inside.

'Cause once you do,  
I swear to you,  
They'll make Hell and your life collide.

Chrisey Kulinski



Jun Mattison

*My Last Day With Justin*

We were both dreading this talk more than anything else in this world. We've been putting it off for way too long, but today is the day it finally is going to happen. I'm a mix of emotions; terrified, sad, nervous and even a little excited. Although I know this conversation is going to break my heart, I can't help but be excited about the new chapter of my life I'm going to be entering on September 1st.

Originally, me and Justin planned on having this talk in the small cafe in town, that way we are pretty forced to keep it together. With much thought, we finally decided it would be best to drive together to the empty parking lot that only we (or so I think) know about, along with a couple of our friends. We spent many summers with our friends sitting on the back of the pick up trucks drinking cheap beers in this parking lot. Everything about this place and these memories were amazing, but in a number of minutes it is all going to come crashing down. The red pick up truck pulled up to my house and I hop in, trying my best to act like I'm still my outgoing self, even though I already feel my heart breaking.

"Hey", I say, smiling.

"Hi" Justin replies, looking out the window.

I look around the truck nervously, not knowing what to do with my hands because whenever he drove, he always held my hand. Today, both of his hands are placed tightly on the wheel, he has yet to look at me and I think I might vomit. I fiddled with the radio... Any other time I did this he would either switch the station to get me annoyed, or we would both scream whatever song came on at the top of our lungs. Today, no reaction came out of him. We finally pull into the lot. He hops out and walks around to my side, opening the door for me. He opens up the back of the pick up truck and wraps me up in the fuzzy plaid blanket that is stained with the cheap beer and some coca-cola. I'm glad at least this scene hasn't changed, except for the fact that his arm isn't around me.

He tells me to go all the way into the back of the truck and sit against the back window. He jumps in and closes the back so we are facing each other. I don't think we've ever been this far apart and it's killing me that this is what the next few years are going to be like. We will be miles apart. I'm attending Roger Williams and he is attending Boston College. He takes a deep breath.

"So..." he says.

I feel my sweat starting to form, so I gently take off the blanket and hold it in my lap, also giving me another excuse for my hands to do something.

"Listen Justin, you know I love you more than anything in this world, right?"

He looks away and slowly nods. There is a brief silence. "I know you do Hales, but I feel like if you really did you would have at least tried to apply for Boston. You know this has been my dream ever since we were twelve and I'm sorry but I'm not stopping my dream just for you."

That stung. A lot. It stung, but I understood completely. The truth is, I did apply for Boston but I didn't get accepted. I've always struggled in school and to think I'd make it in there was such a joke, but if I did make it in, I wanted to see how proud he'd be of me. He was the only person that made me believe I could actually make it in there.

"I need to tell you something..." I start to say. "I did apply for Boston." His face seems to brighten up a bit, with the small hope that I may surprise him and say that I'm actually joining him in Boston. When I see his eyes gleam, I look down, hinting to him that no this is not the case at all. He rubs the back of his neck and looks away.

"I didn't get in." A tear falls from my cheek, "I didn't want to disappoint you."

He comes over to me and rubs my back and turns me towards him, now holding my face.

"Haley... You could never disappoint me." He looks deeply into my eyes. His eyes so blue, glowing. The sunset perfectly visible behind him. All this was so beautiful and I don't want it to end. "I wish you told me because now I feel like a total jerk, but even though you didn't get in I'm still so proud that you even took this chance! It shows me how much you are willing to do for me and I love you so much for that."

I start playing with the hair on the back of his head, something he loves that I do that is so comforting. "I love you too," I say.

We lay there in silence, watching the sunset. We know there is a lot more talking that we have to do, but just for this half hour we are going to lay off on making this decision just for now. Finally the sun has set, and he places me on his lap. He puts a strand of hair behind my ear. Even this brief move still makes the butterflies in my stomach go crazy.

"Are you ready to have this talk?" Justin asks.

"I guess I can't put it off for much longer. But before we start, no matter what we decide I want you to know I will always love you and care about you. You will always be the first thing on my mind when I wake up and the last thing I think of before bed, no matter what happens after this."

Krissy Moschetta



Anne-Marie Dillon





Franny Forgione

### *Labels*

We are born not knowing race or any other label  
but we're taught the labels  
and we become  
labeled.

Parents say show no discrimination towards someone who looks different, sounds different, IS different than you,

but then why were we taught that there even is such thing as different.

Babies cry at the sound of another baby's cry,  
not because of how the other looks, simply from sound,  
symbolizing we are all connected on a deeper level than just being human.

If we are all under one sun, one moon, one set of stars,  
why aren't we all considered as one, one collection of beautiful humans joined together.

You are not black, you are not white, you are not Hispanic, you are not Asian, we are one.

Destroy the lens restricting you from seeing differently.

Why is it that there are guidelines that if you're a certain color you are known to act a certain way, talk a certain way and overall be a certain way.

Why is it that those who can only see black and white, those who are restricted from color, are more accepting of what they can't see, the colorful world around them.

Why are we defined by what we look like?

A name tag does not say "hello my name is white," or "hello my name is black".

Rather "hello my name is beautiful because I am a beautiful human with a beautiful history and a beautiful future, but live in a blindsided, judgmental and at times a hideous world".

Emily Fournier

*Life's Enigma*

I am five -  
With both arms, I send the box flying above my head,  
Millions of pieces.  
I've never tried this puzzle,  
Each piece seems like its own boulder.  
I can only imagine how big it will be when I'm done,  
It will take me a long time,  
I might need some help-  
But the puzzle pieces seem impossible to conquer.

I am nine -  
With arms outstretched,  
I envelop the biggest piece of my puzzle so far.  
It's beautiful,  
It smells of pine,  
It's filled with happiness.  
I have never loved anything more,  
I will relish in this piece, and cherish it.  
Even when I have to leave it aside-  
Because the puzzle pieces seem impossible to conquer.

I am fifteen -  
With both my hands I text away  
My eyes dart to the familiar pieces  
Unfinished.  
I cannot find my beloved piece.  
Frantically searching,  
All I uncover are frayed, monotone masses.  
I want to finish the puzzle,  
But there's no one here to help me -  
And the puzzle pieces seem impossible  
to conquer.

Samara Lipman



Lake Vayo



*To Myself; Final Epistle*

Sinead Rynne

The sirens' warning still rings amongst the rubble.  
 The aftermath of the touch down, a ruined home.  
 The Storm has passed beyond this realm.  
 Lavender in its first breezes, unlike its tempest strike,  
 Which ravaged any tranquility that withheld this home.  
 Curse this vulnerable human existence,  
 Why must all beautiful dramas derive from tragic endings,  
 Void of any shine or sparkle to be seen?  
 I write this letter to not my prior self, an elixir of red, blue, and black;  
 But rather my future self, a being of heavy pressures and heavier hopes,  
 Who must repair these damaged foundations, cracked to the core.  
 The storm may have past, but I was left with a sad home.  
 Empty yet full.

Rebuild.  
 Paint your soul every day, to match the kaleidoscopic horizons.  
 Patch whatever holes that linger in our heart.  
 Do what you must.  
 Take shelter in what remains standing; this, your fortitude.  
 No longer associate with the rubble, as your caring soul demands,  
 Or become its sad epilogue: broken, forgotten,  
 Incomplete.  
 Disregard those doubtful whispers, home to shaded hearts,  
 And walk, however weak your knees may be, towards **your** light.  
 Don't worry about me;  
 I'll follow along my own solid ground.  
 Now go, there's much wood to collect before dusk's dew.  
 Make this home anew, and fix your gaze towards dirt no longer,  
 But upon horizons, no matter how red they may be,  
 To find the deep lavender hues.  
 Pioneer through those uncharted seas.  
 For the clear sapphire sky awaits you.

Adolfo Viruet



*Foreign Creatures*

Those creatures we look upon with mild interest and curiosity,  
Those creatures we look upon with occasional disgust at their nature,  
Those creatures we look upon with intrigue and awe at their culture.

Yes, I'm talking about they who dwell in jungles of steel and boroughs of concrete,  
Those interesting fiends who square off a piece of land to use as their canvas,  
Where the rivers are painted with bright black oil, the sky's tinted a strange grey, and the  
ground coloured by decade old waste.

Oh Yes, those creatures which I describe, who are equally capable of both good and evil,  
Both simultaneously capable to create and to destroy,  
Those are the creatures that I wish to talk to you about today.

Yes, those creatures have permeated the world, replacing all competitors at the top of the  
food chain,  
Dominated all other animals and even rendered some subservient,  
And learned to use this world's resources... and in turn may have destroyed it.

Oh Yes, those creatures have grown beyond nature's intentions for them,  
They have learned to fly without wings, breath water without gills, and run without their feet  
ever touching the ground,  
So advanced are they that they can even wipe themselves out with the touch of a button.

Yes, these creatures have constructed strange contraptions,  
From catapults to take them up to their trees, or walls that allow them to see what isn't real.  
But none so strange as their societies themselves.

Oh Yes, those large herds they have created defy all reason and explanation,  
Especially the ones which are most proud of themselves,  
For they, in all their false glory, they are the strangest of them all.

Yes, those strange little places that consider themselves "modern,"  
I talk of course of that blob of land that calls itself a continent,  
And the two supervillains found on either side of it.

Oh Yes, those tribes which I describe would like to believe they have superpowers,  
But the only power they have is to cause more evil than they do good,  
For every action they do, for all the good it does for themselves, if any, always hurts another.

Yes, for they have little concern for the welfare of the other tribes,  
Whom they deem to be strange and foreign while those same tribes label them the same way.  
But while these societies are strange enough, nothing is as strange as the creatures them-  
selves.

Oh Yes, for their habits are so foolish no other mammal could possibly understand what they  
do,

They wake up when we normal ones sleep, and sleep when we normal ones wake,  
Feeling more comfortable under the light of their artificial suns than they do under the light of  
the natural world.

Yes, for they believe themselves so superior they do not even recognize nature as something  
     other than a force to be bent to their will,  
 Others look at it and see it as foreign, others still as an enemy.  
 Yet they do not understand that they can never rule that which does not want to be ruled.

Oh Yes, those creatures in all their magnificent pride, they are the ones we and the world  
     around us are stuck with,

And so, we have no other option but to make the most of this pesky interlude,  
 And continue to eat popcorn as we watch these fools save the world, or burn it trying.

Amr El-Azizi



Michael Rozell

### *Gravity*

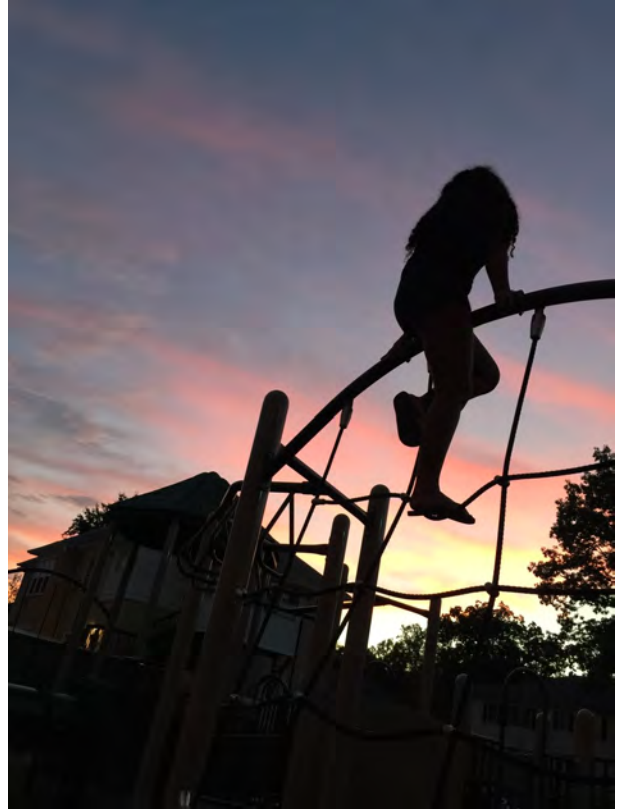
Do you know what it feels like to swallow the sky? To take the moon in its entirety, and have it slide down its beam into your chest? And when it glows can you feel the magic? The starlight and its haunting glow, the iris of the sky. When you can't see your own hands in front of your face and shadows become perfect company. When you listen close next to the cold windows and watch entire galaxies and dimensions filter into your eyes. The rustling of the trees outside, catching the moonlight and slumberous leaves. The feeling of swallowing the sky whole. The entire universe in her eyes, and every constellation in her face. I could tell the history of mythological beings by just staring into her eyes in a short-lived twinkle. A perfect generation of entities and psychics reside in the tips of her fingers, and I am always listening. She makes me believe in the unknown. Something here but not quite here. I can almost reach the mangled strands of hair, matted down from the wet of the sea. And I could almost believe how she swoops down and grasps every soul ever born between one white-knuckled fist. Just to hear the roar and cry of the celestial machine. Swirling into stellar whimsy and wonder. She makes me feel like I'm swallowing the sky.

Alex Marsh

*The Bronx*

This place was my home,  
Which had all my friends.  
I told them all  
"I'll try to see you again".  
It didn't work out.  
Now I'm all alone  
In this big and beautiful  
Westchester home.  
They don't speak to me  
But I understand why.  
I didn't keep my promise.  
Even though I tried,  
And did all I could.  
But I made new friends  
And I told my Bronx friends  
"I will see you again."

Kimberly Pena



Kimberly Pena

*The Mirror*

Her gaze slices the sultriness like citrus and penetrates the paper novella.

The prose is French and evades her. But she does not read the language. She reads the shadows that fall upon the page. She pauses, examines the surrounding garden, and angles the book so that it becomes a stage for a stagnant laurel branch. With lightness she casts the form of it dutifully upon the white page and animates it, part for part, until the space, dressed as form, reveals itself. With this it concedes an impending absence, like a sleep, which swallows the shadow along with the memory of it. Only the absence lingers, suspended in emptiness by her gaze. She holds it there, like a child crossing her eyes, deluged by the sheer-ness of duplicity, by the fact that nonlife could be bound to life in spite of everything. Presence and absence, presence and absence. This is what she reads. *C'est la vie*.

But she can never fully evade words. Language is inexorable. She must be called, and she must call herself. For now she is free, amongst untapped citrus and unread words. The world calls her beyond name, beyond language, in lurid colors and openings and closings.

She unfurls the brass appendices of the triptych mirror apart, as if performing a dismemberment, in a swooping winglike motion. She finds herself translated into a sharded remembrance of dancing light. She gazes at her trichotomous portraits—herselves. And then, of nothing, she births a nebulous energy, an absence, like a blank sign along a highway that means nothing and does nothing but nevertheless *is*. *A directionless pull, an entreatment, as if another time has just entered through a crack in the sky to ask, Do you remember?*



Her gaze has always been her weapon, direct and unwavering. But it is, after all, an extremity of body, a tendril of flesh, and, aging every day, her line of sight now waivers like streams of hot air. She feels apparitional; as if dressed in a translucent veil, which ceaselessly clasps her ever and ever more tautly. In reverie she imagines a tear in the tightness, from forth she, who could now be anybody, would seep out in liquescent pillars, and ripple outward forever.

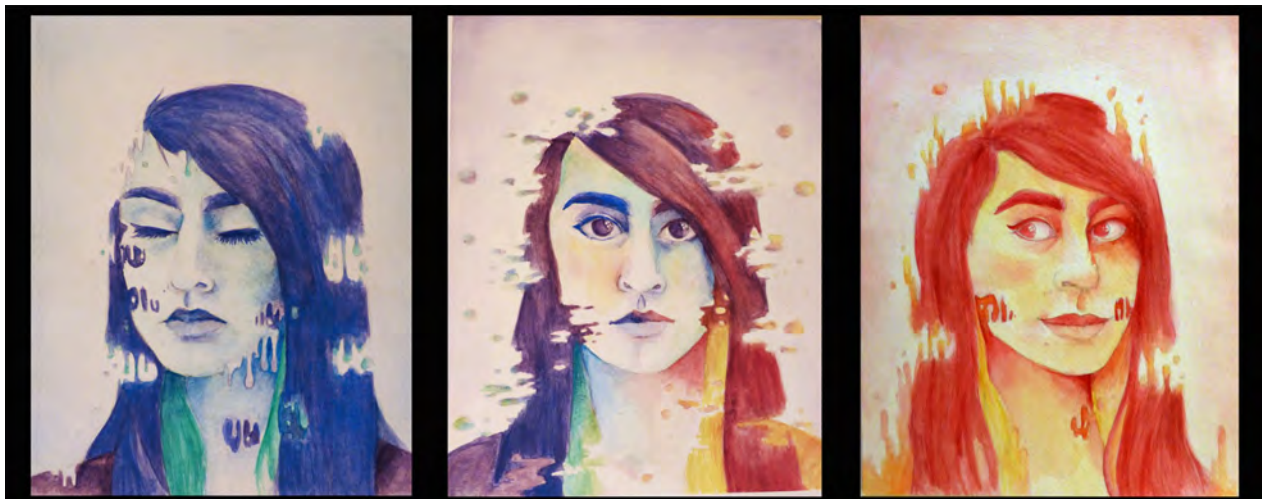
But she has been taught singularity. Taught in a language that is not spoken nor written. There is one God to call us above. There is a beam of light to call all insects. There is a cross to call Christ. The male body rises as if to call. Even sapphic lovers cannot escape this rising—the world calls them upward, in spires of Mosque and Church and tower. That which is erect summons that which is not.

And suddenly, she sees her cross, her light, blazing into existence. It triplicates within the mirror. She cannot coalesce these Divinities, this fragmented trinity, into God. Her three crosses gaze at her. One holds her blackness, another her femininity, and another her soul.

They ask her, in languages unknown, *Which will you bear?*

She is agape, rapt in the allure of severance, of complete and utter unrecognition. And then something penetrates her veil of existence—a surfacing, a rising. It is everywhere. She feels it, feels her tactility towering, beyond flesh, beyond parameters of body. She feels it in every gleam of life, every laurel branch. The hottest star beams her umber skin prismatically, in pallidness, beckoning her to burst, to arrive at herself and speak.

Daniel Schapiro



Katelyn Daher

*Violet Skies*

As I reach towards the antiqued  
Dust covered shelves  
My body shivers.  
Neither with delight nor sadness,  
But with the touch of pure memory.

It jolts me,  
Electrical currents running over my veins;  
Creeping under my skins.  
The cold waters of youth  
Seep into the palms of my hands  
And travel into the base of my spinal cord.

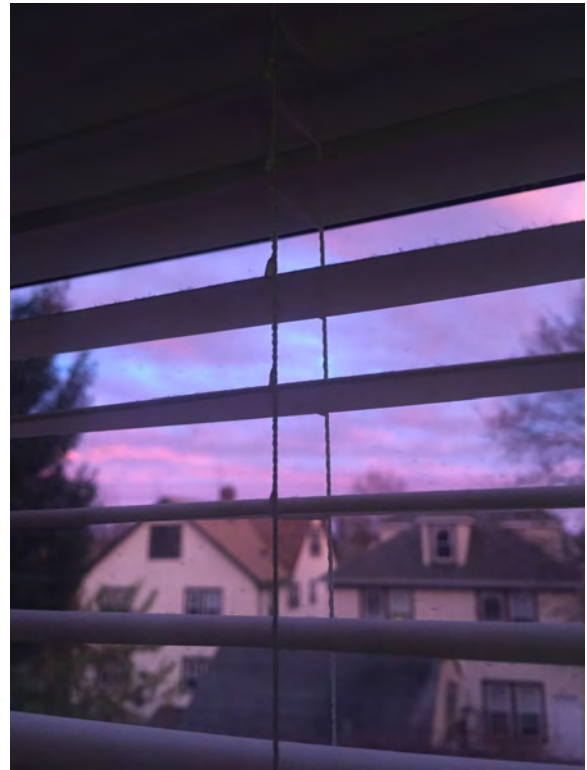
My lips flash a violent blue with chill,  
But my chest burns a bright orange  
As the child in me awakens  
From her old, forgotten slumber.

As my fingers stroke leathery paperback books  
Floods of thrills, tears, laughter, and excitement  
Spray color into my mind,  
Like humidity on an August afternoon.

I can feel her walking through the heat  
With her undersized red blanket  
Dragging on a nonexistent floor.  
She reaches to sniff each little memory  
Each cloud of mist,  
And every time she does there's a sharp  
Soft pulse that shocks my soul's body.



Paula Ventura



Emily Vaccaro

And when I withdraw my hand  
The intense heat cools itself,  
And I see the little girl turn to me.  
Instead of saying words that don't need to be said  
She grabs me with her brown eyes,  
Begging me not to let her go  
To remember –  
But soon she vanished too.

And I'm left there sitting on the floor,  
My mind sewing shut a time gap  
That I wasn't finished wandering through.  
I weep in for the loss.

But she's not gone,  
She lives in me; a deeply rooted seed.  
Ready to sprout at her chance in the years to  
come.  
She lives in the books,  
In the dust,  
In the leathery paperback,  
Inside the memory  
But she's alive.

Celia Spana

*Orbs (Broken Lens)*

I am sixteen.  
 For eight years I have been an outcast.  
 An unknown species. An innocent prisoner. A toy without a label.  
 Used excessively until I break and become useless.  
 Most consider me useless.  
 Misunderstood.  
 A rapid ghost in the halls.

I don't serve a purpose in this decaying teenage wasteland.  
 I often find myself drowning in a giant wave of fake smiles and deceiving expressions.  
 Groups of sticks standing hand in hand.  
 Yet I'm curved without hands to grab.  
 Hashtag eyes, media heads, trend-suckers, and quarter-wits,  
 mimicking and completing each other;  
 lambs masking themselves as lions looking for a shepherd.

A giant wave of slaves adhering to the social caste.  
 Dozens of living bodies forced to hide their madness.  
 Preparing for a life of being kicked to the curb.  
 Something I am not a part of.

A shadow destined for something great just to return to form.  
 Pitchers full of alcohol try to force me under their influence.  
 People have tried to seduce me, but I've stood my ground.  
 Demons, scams, and endless amounts of spam plague me.  
 Smoke blowing me into a false form of heaven.  
 Trying to force distortion into my vision.

Vanishing souls waste their lives away on spirits.  
 Spending money on inevitable invisibility.  
 While the ones who try end up nowhere.  
 In an empty line, an undefined space.

So what if conformity is an expectation, a law?  
 Arrest me if you ever so desire, drag me to hell while you're at it.  
 Continue to breathe in the fumes of illusion.  
 Vape until you blend into the smoke.  
 Until only an echo remains.  
 An echo of what once was.

Justin Brian Santiago



Lena Malmstrom



*The Odyssey of Eternity*

Bang—the universe made into existence with a single blow,  
 creating history in every course of action.  
 I watched vigorously as the very first planet was bred, and last sun destroyed—rippling  
 throughout the seamless void of space.  
 I was there to watch the birth of mankind,  
 and all the corruption instilled within it.  
 I've seen man grow—from the stone age to a time far beyond comprehension.  
 I know all the answers to your conspiracy theories,  
 such as having knowledge on who fired the first shot at Lexington and Concord.  
 You can call me the founder of your history books,  
 for I have made up the idealism of history.  
 Your inconceivable minds stare blankly as you try to piece together each fact I throw before  
 you.  
 You question who I am or even what I am.  
 I will say this;  
 I am no man, yet close to it.  
 Not a God, yet right before it.  
 I lurk in the shadows of evening bright as daylight,  
 mirroring the reflection of your incompetence to strive for your full potential.  
 I am the walking abyss filled with nothingness,  
 but still I surround the entirety of life before you.  
 I end life in an instant, but not before bringing back another.  
 I'm insane; my hands are spinning.  
 You know this, you've witnessed it before.  
 I know you better than you know yourself.  
 I have seen the succession of your greatest dreams, and the failure of them fall harder than  
 Gatsby.  
 While I've now gained your attention to so desperately know who I am,  
 the truth is you already know that answer.  
 And as you have already guessed, I'm not going to tell you that easily.  
 So here's a little riddle...  
 You have undoubtedly grasped me, yet you never have touched me.  
 You have of course watched me, but you never have seen me.  
 I have started wars and ended them, fought in them, yet never touched a soul.  
 I've brought down nations and built new ones mightier than you can imagine.  
 I threw down plagues that have obliterated you, and cures that will made your live twice as  
 long.  
 I spread upon to you innovation and advancement, and watched as you gained only a frag-  
 ment of my intellectuality.  
 If what I stated is true, you should know my name by now.  
 After all, haven't I given you enough *time*?

Anton Guastella

### *Contemplations*

Contemplating who I could've turned out  
to be  
if he stayed,  
if he loved,  
if he listened  
to the little girl he  
was ought to teach lessons to,  
demonstrate what made a good and loyal  
man  
take out and treat like a princess.

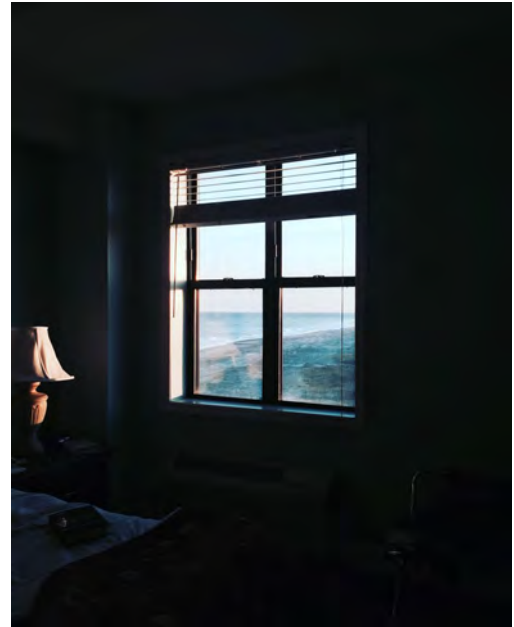
Who would I be?  
if he contributed,  
if he called,  
if he visited.

But I guess it's too late in the night.  
The thoughts rush to my head  
faster than blood  
rushes to your head  
after just being upside-down.

who am I  
now,  
that he didn't stay.  
He didn't love.  
He didn't listen.  
He didn't contribute .  
He didn't call.  
He didn't visit.



Paula Ventura



Isabella Lopane

I can't stop the thoughts,  
they keep rushing in.  
Why was life so cruel  
to a three-year-old girl,  
one who could barely even spell love,  
but knew that the love  
demonstrated in her house  
wasn't a true kind of love?

What control do I have?  
what he did  
was what he did.  
It's over  
all said and done

would he have changed?  
can he change?  
do I want him to change?  
what if he was still here?

but as for now  
I am simply  
in the dark room  
typing away  
late at night.  
contemplating. who I could've turned out  
to be,  
and who I am to become.

Emily Fournier

*Ubiquitous Juncture*

Tick Tock  
 Tick Tock  
 My head is ringing  
 My foot is tapping  
 My stomach is churning  
 My body doesn't feel in sync with my head  
 I feel my heart thumping against my chest  
 Click Click Click  
 The sound of my fingers clicking against the keyboard  
 My hands are jittery  
 The world is shaking  
 And there's no earthquake  
 Euphoria  
 Resentment  
 Is it possible to feel both all at the same time?  
 Adrenaline is my coffee  
 Tick Tick Tick  
 My psychological clock is ticking  
 Click Click Click  
 My foot is tapping  
 My mind is lingering  
 Boom Boom Boom  
  
 The explosions within my soul  
 The dog in the back of my mind is barking  
 The cat in my heart is meowing  
 "Laura are you even listening?" my biology teacher screams.  
 Back to reality.

Laura Nikolla



Tiffany Medina





Marisa Gazzola

### *Common Core*

Common Core. The official common core website states, “Preparing America’s Students for Success.” But is that really their goal? Are they just trying to receive money to fund other aspects of NY State? Common Core should be banned from all states in which it has been implemented.

As a student, it is immensely frustrating to be placed in Common Core classes. My grade and I were always considered the “guinea pigs” of standardized testing and changes in curriculum. For two consecutive years, we were exposed to various learning techniques of which contradicted each other and made all concepts more complicated than necessary to grasp. I was forced to take both the Common Core exams and the regent’s exams for mathematics. Notice how I utilized the term ‘forced’? My parents attempted to opt me out of the Common Core exams, however, if I didn’t take the “Common Core Algebra I” test in early June, I was NOT permitted to take the “Algebra I Regents” in late June. Thus, being forced to take an exam because Governor Cuomo decided to spontaneously change the system in order to “prepare” us for success. In the Governor’s intention to prepare us for success, was he aware we didn’t learn the curriculum on the first test as “guinea pigs”? Or was he aware that in students being ironically, unprepared for the test, it became an evident, inaccurate evaluation of our test taking skills and understanding? No! It feels as if the government is sneaking up on both the students and the educators, and changing everything that was original and simple, into new, irrelevantly complicated, systematic methods. As the Common Core curriculum has gradually grown to be the only thing taught in our Math and English classrooms, the intensity and complexity has only brought upon hardship for students, even those used to receiving high ninety’s, such like myself. To all the parents, all who can take control of the situation and reform the program, would you want this for your children?

Those that think that Common Core focuses on critical thinking skills, which are used in order to prepare students for college, are not wrong in belief. It is clear that Common Core exposes students to deep, intricate, analytical techniques. However, such techniques fail to improve one’s critical thinking. It appears to be illogical, unrelated ideology at times, which takes the students to an area far from simply critical thinking. But if the objective of this issue is to prepare students for college, then why not enforce a more intellectual method such as “International-Baccalaureate” or an insightful, sophisticated approach created by the state? Such solutions could potentially enlighten students and teachers since they bring about topics that are thought provoking and useful throughout life.

In addition to students encountering hardship from the program, parents and teachers are incredibly worried and frustrated with the Common Core. A New York State teacher stated, "In New York the common-core-aligned tests have created a new era in which what passes spuriously for "rigor" defines the majority of our students as failures, with unnecessarily complicated test questions and very low citywide proficiency rates" (Sacks, *Decoding the Common Core: A Teacher's Perspective*). This teacher firmly believes that Common Core inaccurately assesses students' academic ability. He also claims that in the end, the whole system makes the state (and the U.S.) appear to be even more incompetent than other countries deem them to be in the first place. Furthermore, I've primarily experienced multiple teachers stating the poor aspects of common core on their behalves. I was told that the state sends spontaneous curriculum additions or changes to the educators last minute. Giving them little to no time to learn it themselves, let alone have to teach it to the pupils in a comprehensive manner. If the educators gather the curriculum so quickly, then how do we know if they are reliable? How are we assessing students if the teachers have not yet been assessed on the same things?

Following the recognition of the outweighing negatives in comparison to the positives of Common Core, it becomes very clear that this program should be expelled from the U.S. It is simply more burdensome for all involved in the process including parents, and especially students and teachers. The most important result of Common Core to the political participants is the resulting test grades, of which are statistically proven to be lower than standard regents exams. Therefore, the Common Core is an inaccurate presentation of both the students' and the teachers' performance, and does not increase the level of academic ability of our country. Thus, Common Core is not beneficial, especially for the reasons by which it was enforced and it should not be obligatory. The United States should take the initiative and officially end the Common Core.

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*Decoding the Common Core: A Teacher's Perspective." Education Week. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Jan. 2016.*

Megan Margiotti



Isabella Lopane

### *Trapped*

A place where our fears are realized.  
 A nighttime haven where our deepest darkest thoughts are realized  
 and secrets leave shadows.  
 A place where your screams echo.  
 A place where you are drowning in your own tears.  
 It's all black with no sounds...  
 Scary right?  
 Well, that's where I'm trapped, in my mind with nobody to call.  
 A little sound would make me feel better.  
 I hear my name, turn and see no one; nothing.  
 How can I escape this gloom?  
 I guess I can holler for help.  
 Help! Help! I shriek.  
 But my sound just echoes.  
 Someone come rescue me!  
 Am I even being heard? Are my screams and cries just ignored?  
 How long will I be trapped in this place of the unknown?  
 "Jenniviv, Jenniviv, wake up." I hear a voice.  
 I finally open my eyes.  
 Oh right...I'm still in class.

Jenniviv Bansah

### *Red Cap*

A boy with a cap  
 Peddles his bike  
 Through the quiet streets  
 Of his quiet town.  
 His right shoe has become untied  
 And when he pedals the laces  
 Sweep the ground  
 Before lifting  
 Backup.  
 The boys cap is a red-orange,  
 Like hot coals,  
 And his head bobs  
 And ducks to the  
 Rhythm of his peddling.  
 His cap is so bright  
 Against the quiet, gray  
 Town,  
 That from afar  
 It looks as if his head's  
 Aflame.

Darya Khodakhah



Keysi Romero

*My Story*

As a child, life was solely simplicity. I consumed whatever was in sight. I played with anything within my reach. I wasn't exposed to technology except for the programs of which I learned from television. I observed all unfamiliar images and identified beauty the world brought to my eyes. I laughed and sought joy in the small, yet important pieces of life. I initiated all of my five senses within this time, and gathered a sixth, imagination. Although I have faced discouraging tones from society, I chose to embrace my imagination, allowing me to pursue my dreams, to be open minded, to innovate, and explore the unknown.

Imagination exceeds limitations. My childhood included playing games, reading stories, and interacting with others. I was often entertained by hide and seek, tag, jumping on the trampoline, playing on the swings, and making up games of my own. I always imagined myself in fairytale situations. To complete my chores at home I always pretended I was Cinderella; a beautiful, kind princess willing to help and hopeful for a fairytale future. When I was outside playing in the fall and winter I imagined myself in Narnia, ready to explore a new piece of the earth every day. In the spring and summer I simulated Wonderland in my own backyard. I gathered towels to build forts and picnic food to have tea parties. My love for literature expanded my ability to imagine. My imagination expanded my ability to create. I became adventurous, and composed stories and games, generated imaginary characters and dreams. All of which are from my imagination, my unique competence in establishing something from nothing.

As I grew up, I made the choice of not changing my character, creativity, or imagination for society. I chose to imagine. However, my imagination eventually took a different form. I began performing professionally through singing, dancing, acting, and modeling. I discovered why I felt so passionate about acting. Over time I realized my fear of reality. Reality frightens many, and its connotation does not include the concept of dreams. Acting takes me to a new world, a new life; it allows me to become whatever I want to be. It provides me with freedom to interpret. The choice to imagine and incorporate creativity into the remainder of my life has positively affected me. By deciding to imagine I will never lose my childhood. Through imagination I've gained positivity and a wide perspective of everything. I've attained the belief of miracles, fate, second chances, and endless possibilities.

Despite my infinite imagination, I'm knowledgeable and understanding of reality. My imagination also pertains to the real world. When situations overwhelm me, I breathe and think of a positive outcome, or I take myself to a calming place and relax. I slowly fade out of reality and appear in a memory of my past. The soothing sounds and images calm my nerves and lead me back into the real world, which surrounds me. This rare quality positively impacts my life as a whole.

Although I perceive my imagination to be inspirational, powerful, and helpful, others recognize me as weird or unreasonable. As a result of my open-minded commentary people claim I am strange because I view things in an artistic, diverse point of view. For example, some of my Aunts and Uncles look at me in an odd way when I state my opinions. They perceive me as inferior and believe that I generate opinions unreasonably. Others lack the ability to understand my positivity, leading them to make unnecessary assumptions about me as an individual.



I imagine the world with peace throughout. I imagine various music filling the ears, minds and souls of all humans. I imagine bravery, courage, and selflessness amongst all, not just the heroes. I imagine risk takers, who challenge their own ability. I imagine nature and society as one. I imagine faith, hope, and eternal love. I imagine acceptance of all because all are worthy, all are equal, and all are creations of something from nothing. I imagine simplicity.

Megan Margiotti



Daniel Schapiro

### *Visualizing a True Past: The Role of Imagination in History*

...Historians use imagination not only to construct abstract connections, but also to reconstruct the lives of ordinary people in the past. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich is one such historian, known specifically for her book *A Midwife's Tale*, which focuses on Martha Ballard, a woman who lived in Maine in the late 1700s. Martha was completely unknown, and still would be if it were not for the fact that she kept a diary that Ulrich used to reconstruct Martha's life. Before even beginning the writing process, Ulrich used imagination. She created data sheets, and kept a tally of seemingly mundane events, such as the number of days Martha was home, had company or was away. Coming up with this idea used creativity, and required the ability to imagine the effect this system of note-taking would have on her research. Even though the process was tedious and boring, Ulrich stuck with it because she imagined useful outcomes that might come of gathering such data. The outcomes she imagined became a reality, and the data sheets allowed Ulrich to construct the framework of Martha's life that she used to assemble the rest of her life...

<sup>1</sup> Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the past*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.

<sup>2</sup> "About A Midwife's Tale - Interview." *About A Midwife's Tale - Interview*. Web. 19 Dec. 2015.

Madeline Rawson



Jonathan Crozier

*In Control*

Emotions  
Enslave  
Our minds

Feelings  
Dominate  
Our actions

What prevails.  
Thinking an individual has power over their  
emotions is  
futile

Time Out -

Desire  
The victor of  
reason

pointless  
waiting for it to dissipate

Succumb  
The emotion will  
Triumph

*Now read this again going back up.  
It's strange how a single direction change can  
alter one's perception.*

Samara Lipman



Heeyeon Kim

### *Perception of Color*

The way that I see color can be entirely different than the way that you do. How do we explain that? A rose red that looks more orange to you and more red to me. There is no possible way to describe the way you see a color besides by what it's already called. We call it rose red with no other description but that. The way someone sees that color for the first time is how they would always perceive it from then on. One way of looking at this would be if a person always thought that cats were called elephants and they told someone else "you should get a pet elephant! They're so tiny and fuzzy." The person being told this would be really confused and ask to see a picture of what they think is an elephant. The problem that they have the same word for two different pictures would be solved once they see it in a photo. With color, you can't solve this problem by looking at a photo.

We call the colors we see what we were taught they were. Even if green doesn't look like what we call "green," it's still called that because we can't tell that it's different than the sight of the person right next to you. If someone saw the color blue but it looked purple for their whole life, they would still call it blue. It's blue to all of us but in different ways. My form of blue can be entirely different than yours.

A person comes home with what they believe is a magenta sweatshirt right from the store and all of their friends and family exclaim that the sweatshirt is purple. This is where the thousands of versions of purple that all get thrown into the same blender and mashed together. It's hard to differentiate what a color actually is when we all see it differently.

Imagine looking through your friend's eyes. You see a blue sun and a purple sky. The grass is orange and the pavement is yellow. The grass could be perceived as another color than green. Even though we all call it the same thing, green can look really different to two different people but how could we tell? If only we could see what another can see.

Demetrious McMullen



Mariella Vecchione

### *Gender and Language*

In the English language words are not gender specific, thus they are usually not associated with being male and female. However, in many other languages, certain words have masculine or feminine articles associated with them. Essentially, the gender of words shapes the way we perceive what their meaning is, which can have an influence on perceived gender roles. In a study done by Lera Boroditsky and her team out of MIT and Stanford, specific objects were described by people who speak different languages to investigate a correlation between word gender and language. They hypothesized that the gender of a word causes people to be more inclined to associate that specific word with the gender used to describe it. In the study, they asked German and Spanish speaking people to describe a “key” and a “bridge”. The word “key”, being masculine in German and feminine in Spanish, was expected to be associated with more masculine words for German-speaking people and more feminine words for Spanish-speaking people. They discovered that German speakers were more likely to use words such as “jagged”, “metal”, “serrated” and “hard”, while the Spanish speakers used words like “golden”, “intricate”, “little”, and “lovely”. A bridge, however, is a feminine word in German and masculine in Spanish. The same result was seen for the word “bridge” as the Spanish speakers associated it with more strident words and German speakers associated it with softer words (Lera Boroditsky, 2009). The study’s findings indicate that the gender of words is influential in the way we perceive those words and form knowledge around them. Even the most arbitrary of concepts, assigning gender to a noun, have an effect on people’s distinct knowledge of their world. More specifically, the presence of gender in languages reflects gender stereotypes. This brings up the question of, “Which came first, did gender in language subject people to view a gender in a certain way or do gender norms shape one’s perception of a noun associated with that gender?”

Jackson Shultz



*As I Speak*

As I speak from the darkness  
 Begging and pleading for mercy  
 I know deep down  
 I did nothing wrong

I stood my ground focusing on what's right  
 In the eyes of the true overseers  
 Those who have the true power  
 Over the animals of the earth  
 Those who try to take over

True heresy embedded in the public  
 Plaguing my innocent actions  
 But to most it is subjective  
 Supposed immaturity in all ends  
 Nothing but a blame game

As I speak from this chamber  
 I have yet to be silent  
 I know deep down  
 I have taken action

I'm still human  
 You are too  
 Just because you have gold on your mind  
 Doesn't make you valuable  
 I know what I have done

I am who I am  
 Right means everything  
 The truth will bend  
 But the moral stays strong  
 As strong as the ship you claim to sail

As I speak  
 As I get closer to my last breath  
 My last memory will always stick  
 I am mortal but my actions are immortal

Justice lies in the hands of the people  
 Anarchy lies in the hands of the animals  
 Fate lies in the hands of above  
 All culminating in nothing  
 Nothing but a revolution

Anonymous



Katelyn Daher

*humidity: a snapshot from simpler times*  
dedicated to A, F, and S.

everything was that tawny color;  
twilight at midnight and mosquitoes  
pinging against the screen.  
the air was humming,  
sticky and sweet, singed,  
and i tasted the electricity between  
my fillings; the  
kitchen floor was cold, we  
sprawled like starfish  
across the tiles, blending in with  
beige and shine. off--white moths braid our hair.  
fleshbumping in shrouded dark,  
sweaty, rugburnt.  
i saw the night through tunnel  
vision, copper--lenses,  
we waded through moonlight, tiptoed  
as to not wake the impending autumn.  
in the meantime, the clothes came off,  
toes rooted in cool silt, salt water stung so  
nicely, anchored me in the current.  
we were crass, expressive, and  
ultimately trying; youth shone pink under  
our skin, sparklers in our kneecaps,  
wearing barbecue like cologne and  
mesh like whores.  
bruised knees and scabby shins,  
some shabby car--rides, ink--poked  
thighs; these nights  
run lavender, the scent of cherries and  
pavement bleed through,  
this much i remember.  
yet, sickness spread like heatwaves,  
like smoke, like  
pickpocketing in rancid subway tunnels; pooling  
oil sweats, cold sweats, piss drinks  
and intimate, showerless days.  
wet chestnut eyes of my adolescence,  
windows into backyards, into tents so distant,  
lantern--lit, through foggy summertime,  
choking summertime, nauseating forest green  
summertime.

Cyle Rockoff



Danny Del Tufo

الشفاء  
 باليت بكاء عيني شفاء  
 وقلبي لحزني ليس وعاء  
 وحزني لقلبي شفاء

شكاني كريم

### *The Cure*

Oh, if only the tears of my eyes were the cure,  
 And my heart to my sadness, is not a vessel,  
 And my sadness to my heart, is but a cure.

Kareem Chikani



### *Rain*

As the rain poured down on the ground, my tears followed the rhythm as I am deep down in this cage where light is not an option.

As soon as the sun rises the wall becomes warmer, it makes me remember the sweet touch of my mama; it was warm and kind like the first rays and wind of spring. But I still feel cold and lonely, my shadow already disappeared and left me uneasy. I was alone but he still was my companion, him not here makes me one again; me being one makes me no-body!

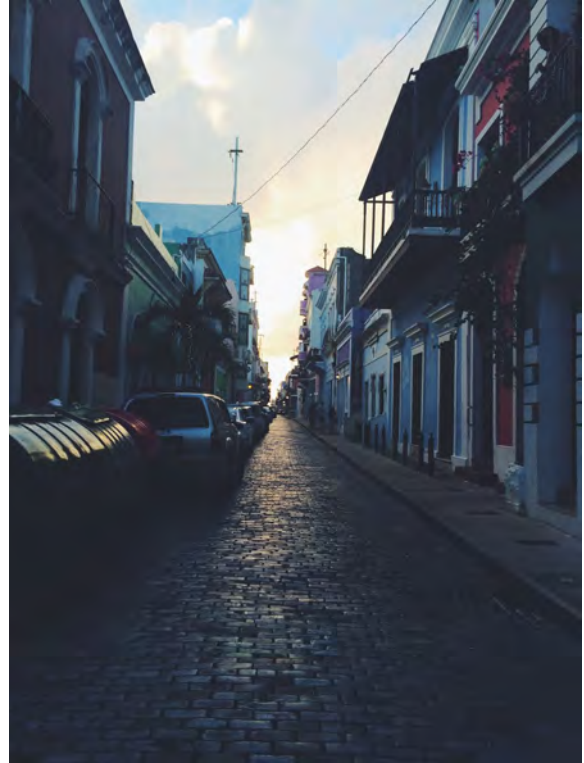
Again as I realized that my tears stopped flowing, the rain stopped pouring, and at last, my heart stopped seeking for something that's never going to be needed anymore.

Japhet Ndong Ella

Alexis Malota

*Time has Stopped*

It was as though some enigma had swept us away from the metal clanging of machinery and the rustic smell in the air; from the artificial scents that filled our veins to the countless drops of sweat that sparkled before hitting the floor, none of us had ever heard of the dream called "music" before. And it just appeared in front of us, in the center of our clan, a wistful yet cheery feeling as though the near helpless now could become the past. The mysterious being wore fabrics of nightshade and cloud with fabric that sprung from their chest like wild poppies blooming in a blank field. Her hat was different in ways we couldn't understand, it maintained the same vibrant colorlessness that her clothes represented. With sky eyes that could swallow the world if she so pleased and crystal hair that strung for miles, she played something that produced sound after sound wave of mythical illusions which I couldn't comprehend farther than her pleased notions about the break in white noise that she could emit.



Sara Barbieri

Next to her stood an old fashioned record-player which was something so rarely seen by the public, it held a certain wonder to its entity as it stood there with its metal horn to emit the frequencies made by the disk beneath the reproducer. It played something which harmonized with the sounds she made and it was as though, just for a moment, she frowned a tragic smile she then ignored as the crank continued to turn for the songs' elaborate scheme. Before any of us knew, parts of the mob shook in excitement as the blurred hope played onward, it drifted from fury to a coarse lull as time went on; the tone of the air thickened with emotion with every passing moment that the music played. It colored the world in its dismay to illuminate the monochromatic contraption that has become reality.

It painted the day with more than the dull browns which swept the vicinity, it dampened the scene with the autumn moon with blue skies and dark rains and like the changing leaves of the switching seasons, her song brightened the world with small shades of color. The moment the crank stopped turning and the tone-arm drifted off the record playing the accompaniment, it was as though the air surrounding every individual nearby stopped dead in its tracks; yet, the musical contraption she had been playing continued ever so brilliantly, and I was mesmerized in my tracks. She was a siren who successfully gouged every person into their trap; I was a part of the onslaught which was lucky to reach this encounter. She was a puppet master which incarcerated those around her to be strung to her will. She did it ever so beautifully.

The music she played, yelled for others to listen- for the ones beyond the horizon to gather closer to her gaze. Her arms moved swiftly yet gracefully, the passion for her whimsical spell shone like the light of the twilight's horizon. It was that same passion which took my breath away, it filled me with an empirical fear which overwhelmed my body enough to allow me to remain frozen in her gaze. Almost as though time halted, that moment felt like an eternity had enveloped my being in a web of immortal frequency.



The record skipped as my heartbeat stopped when her arm slowed in motion off the strings of the strings- her arm swung sluggishly as gravity pulled her limb into place above the ground. Though gravity held her arm in place, her gasp on the bow was firmly placed on it as though her life depended on it to have some purpose. Her frail body stood firm on the chilled floor before me, I stepped forward to gain a closer glance at the enchantress who stood so close yet so far away from my glare. I wanted to ask the bounty of questions that stirred my present state of being. I fumbled forward a tad from my spot and lifted my arm upward a notch to reach for the rarity beyond our time and our current state of mind. I near immediately stopped myself from approaching her- I was unworthy of her grace.



Kierra Cutri

### *The Future*

George Miyajima

When people are asked what they think the future will be like;  
 The typical response usually contains the predictable grouping of ideas that there will be advanced flying cars with an innumerable amount of buttons and gadgets overwhelming anyone who lays sight on it, sleek and glossy buildings covered in a coat of glass, hover boards soaring through the sky, and that we will have the cures to most of the dreadful and lethal diseases by then, saving millions of lives.  
 When I'm asked though, I can't imagine such an impeccable place.  
 What I do imagine is:  
 Crumpled up newspapers pushed to the sides of the streets thanks to the free street sweepers, otherwise known as feet.  
 Walking right past the beaten-up tin soda cans, not thinking once about picking it up and maybe throwing it in the garbage.  
 On a daily basis, thin, plastic, eggshell white grocery plastic bags cling their handles onto the ends of long, weak, dried-up, twisted branches of a dehydrated tree after traveling through the winds of the contaminated air.  
 Piles upon piles of trash can be seen from a bedroom view, commonly mistaken for a mountainous region, accompanying the sky.  
 The once luscious blue sky will be no more, and instead, will be replaced with a less attractive, light grey sky  
 Casting its regular forecast of filth.  
 Plastic tin can dividers slithering through the waves of the ocean like eels,  
 Creeping up on a victim and becoming hazardous death traps to others around it.  
 Plants will be going extinct.  
 And all the air that we breathe will slowly be killing us, decaying our insides.  
 The significance of the issue will frighten most of the people by then.  
 But by then it will be too late.  
 That's what I see in the future,  
 A filthy, grimy, unhygienic, squalid world.

Lauren Barbulescu





Setting Goals

RESPECT

Love

The Desire of Success

HAPPY

FRIENDS

image

PEACE

FUTURE GOALS

Family

family

CARING

Day

Dream

IMAGINE

LOVE

LOVE

FAMILY

100%

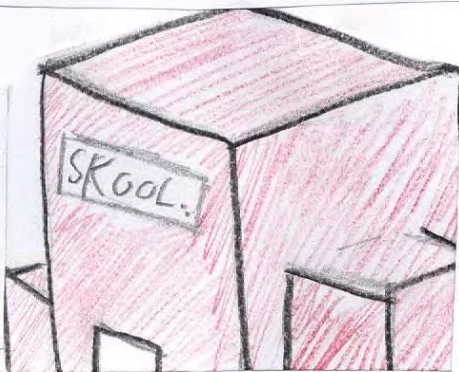
WHAT

YOU?



What keeps me down...

HA HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HA HA HA



Ariana Evangelista



# Sisters Family



Wake me up  
(wake me up inside)  
can't wake up  
cable me up inside)

SAVE  
MEEF

Thoughts of an amazing  
Future  
Anime

ANITY

## Fear of unknown

## Judgement?

Lack of  
motivation

Friends  
Chores  
life  
Sleep  
health  
School  
Dogs  
**ANXIETY**

Driving  
MATH  
BAND  
CHOSES  
FAMILY  
Insecurities



Morals

TOMORROW



Memes



SELF EXPRESSION



*The Victory of A Loss*

The setting sun made him nervous  
 It didn't feel right  
 How the sun seemed to sink lower and lower into the horizon  
 while the air grew so cold that his skin it would bite.

He had always been the quiet one.  
 Shy and reserved, he kept everything to himself  
 But the things now pushed against him, trying to find a way out  
 For these feelings barricaded feelings wasn't good for his health.

*Today's the day, he told himself  
 For now is the time  
 Feelings can't be held in forever  
 And why hold them in at all if they aren't a crime?*

One thing kept the boy stable:  
 A girl without a name  
 And it was no coincidence at all  
 That from her his insanity also came.

She had never felt the same way  
 All along the boy knew that  
 But despite his greatest efforts  
 He had ignored that straight off the bat.

For he loved her with all of his heart  
 For her, he would give up his soul  
 Why, he already had  
 Lately he had seemed to become a void of some sort, a great gaping hole.

Nothing stopped him from loving her, though  
 And today she would know  
 That her greatest friend  
 Would soon become her foe.

Because she couldn't love him, you see  
 It wasn't her fault  
 She had never grown close to people  
 Something that had caused her relationships to come to a screeching halt.

The boy was determined to change that  
 For he couldn't live without her  
 But she couldn't let go of her ways  
 From the deep sleep of her past she could not stir.

They met each other after dark  
 The sun had long since passed  
 She was apathetic  
 But, through that, he thought his feelings could last.



Fabrizio Migone



But they couldn't break through  
 For what a wall she had put up  
 She was always too negative  
 To see a half-full cup.

"I don't love you," she told him  
 "I never could  
 Please let me be  
 I promise you I would."

So the boy had no choice but to go home  
 Though home didn't feel like it without her  
 And he was encroached by agony, loneliness, sin  
 Such feelings that made his time feel like anything but a blur.

She never loved him, he came to realize  
 Nor had he loved her  
 For who can love such a girl  
 Who good people she can deter?

The boy got over her  
 It wasn't an easy task  
 But he worked hard to forget her  
 And those feelings he would mask.

The girl recovered far too soon  
 For she had never truly suffered at all  
 During that night, with the stars out to watch  
 Out of many he had been just one call.

It was okay, the boy realized  
 To feel so strongly for someone who doesn't feel the same  
 Because it will pass, someone will lose  
 And winning does not make the game.

For the sun still rose and set in the sky  
 And the wind would still bite his skin  
 But he no longer was the quiet, bottled-up one  
 For in this situation, he felt that he had done nothing but win.



Anthony Tiso

Sofia Goldstein

*The Interview*

Father **ALLAN 46** interviewed  
By son **DREW 15**

Recorded in West Harrison, NY

*Drew:* What have you learned in life?

*Allan:* It doesn't matter what career path you follow. Choose something that you enjoy and be the best at it and you will be successful.

*Drew:* Have you regretted any decisions you made in getting to where you are now?

*Allan:* There are always things that could be done differently. I've made decisions that didn't always turn out the way I anticipated. Being regretful only impedes on future successes so in that manner I have no regrets. That being said, I have made mistakes and have tried to learn from them. Usually, once I make a decision, I do my best to stick with it.

*Drew:* So you have no regrets at all?

*Allan:* Absolutely none, I just believe that I have made mistakes and I have learned from them.

*Drew:* Do you mind telling me about a mistake that you made?

*Allan:* In 2007 I left a job that I had been at for 12 years where I was very successful. I pursued my own business opportunity at possibly the brink of the worst time for financial markets. My mistake was in timing not in my ambition. It took me almost two years to get back on my feet.

*Allan:* What did that experience teach you?

*Drew:* It was very humbling. I learned many things. Most importantly, to recognize when you have a good thing. Many people, regardless of your stature or place in life, would gladly have what you have. It doesn't matter if "the grass is greener." It usually isn't anyway. Appreciate and respect that no matter how hard you work that if you let your guard down you can lose what you worked so hard to achieve. I also learned that it is important to take risks; calculated risks. I have no regrets and am thankful for what I learned.

*Drew:* Are there any rules or mottos that you go by in your life?

*Allan:* I will always remember two things that my father always said to me. First, you can't learn if you are talking. It's always better to be a good listener than a good talker. Next, power is not given, power is taken. If you want to be respected as a leader then you must act like a leader and people will follow. Nobody goes after #2.

*Drew:* Are there any significant moments in your life that you have learned from?

*Allan:* My marriage and the birth of my children taught me that nothing else matters unless you have someone you love to share it with.

*Drew:* Thank you for your time.

*Allan:* You're welcome.

November 3, 2015

**Reflection:**

I chose to interview my dad. When I was younger in Elementary school we had projects that were based around your family. Most kids would interview their grandparents since they are the oldest living in the family and remember their parents and their grandparents. When I did this I was able to connect with my grandparents. Since my dad works long work hours I don't get as much time to speak with him compared to my other family members. I thought one way I could connect with my father was to interview him and see his views and insight on certain things. I chose to ask him those certain questions because I wanted to learn something that can help me and so I can pass that knowledge on to my kids. The lessons I learned are to always work and try your hardest, stay humble, and most importantly share your knowledge and experiences so people don't make the same mistakes that you once made. I am grateful for my father to take time and do this with me not just for the extra credit but because I was able to connect with him.

Drew Grauer



Hamza Hamid



## Emotion

I am a nerd. When I was six years old I knew I my obsession with reading biographies at recess was unique. However, I became brutally aware of this when I was mocked by one of my peers for being a “nerd.” Initially I was devastated by this comment. That emotion rooted itself deep inside of me. From that devastation, immediate determination exploded from inside of me, which manifested itself in my quest for knowledge. My emotions drove me to want to learn more information about iconic people in history, in order to one day show those who taunted me that my knowledge allowed me to rise above their ridicule. This example of my personal quest for knowledge raises the question; what role does emotion play in the pursuit of knowledge?

Sophia Pirinea



Christine Prezioso



### *Gris*

Cuando pienso en Gris,  
 Recuerdo la vez que  
 Ella me dio una manzana amarilla  
 Que estaba pintada con los colores del sol  
 Y cuando la puso en las palma de mi mano  
 Yo podía sentir el resplandor de la textura.



Emily Araujo

La manzana olía madura.  
 La fragancia besó mi nariz.

Era tan perfecta,  
 Pensé que podía sentir el pulso del árbol en mis manos.

Era hermosa,  
 Mi piel rogó tocar los aceites de oro  
 Que goteaban de la manzana.

Ella me enseñó,  
 Que es importante encontrar la cosas más dulces de la vida  
 Y saborearlas.

En ese momento,  
 Mordí la manzana  
 Dejando que las los jugos lamieran mi cara.

En el corazón de la manzana,  
 Mi lengua probó algo que me dio ardor

La miré con expresión sorprendida,  
 Y allí vi pequeños copos de chile.

Me encanto como ella guiñó el ojo  
 Detrás de su pelo oscuro,  
 Que podría ser fácilmente  
 El escenario para la luna.

Y me dijo,  
 Que la vida no puede ser tan dulce  
 Sin un poco de picante.

Sofia Noejovich

*She Made Him Forget*

There once was a boy named August  
 Who sat under the moon  
 He had his hands behind his head  
 Singing an awfully low tune

Every night he'd lay in the same spot  
 On the top of the highest hill  
 Against the great oak tree  
 Silence; a calming pill

He had always been so lonely  
 But it's not that he was sad  
 Isolated from society  
 But it wasn't all that bad

When he had come home that day  
 8 years ago in June  
 He'd never see his family again  
 But somehow he saw them in the moon

So that's why he looked up at the sky  
 The night a blanket of black  
 And on these nights, though he wished  
 They never did come back

But he still laid up there  
 Not once did he bring someone with  
 Surrounded by only nature  
 A world with love, was a myth

But on one peaceful night  
 There was shuffling against the grass  
 And then there laid someone beside  
 him  
 Their face reflected like glass

"I see you every night  
 you lay up here for hours  
 The moon illuminates your face  
 Does it have some sort of powers?  
 My name is Luna  
 I needed help with something"  
 So he went down the hill  
 But when he got there, there was nothing

So this is how it worked  
 Every night she'd come to visit  
 Bringing him further away from the hill  
 Maybe she was freedom's ticket

And sometimes he wouldn't even go up  
 And waited at the bottom  
 Every night it had gotten colder  
 Summer was turning to autumn

Weeks have gone by  
 And months turn to seconds  
 He slowly forgot about the hill  
 she was more important he reckons

And there was no need for the moon  
 Because he had found one for himself  
 Because Luna was his moon  
 As she had said it herself

Julia Souza



Michael Rozell

*Finding Jessica*

*"In every conceivable manner the family is the link to our past, and the bridge to our future."  
~Alex Haley*

"Jess!" I call out to my little sister. "Come up here!"

I hear her light footsteps tap the wooden stairs, making a small fragile sound. I turn just in time to hear the old door creak open, and a face pop into the crack. My sister stands there looking at me, quietly. Her blue eyes staring ahead of her, her head tilted to the side almost asking me a question with body language.

"You can open it." I say raising my eyebrows.

She stands there another moment, almost unsure of what to do. Her eyes move around the room as though she is tracing her future path, I speak confusing her even more.

"So... first you put your hand on the doorknob, then you push the door until it op-" she cuts me off dismissing the sarcastic tone in my voice.

"I know how to open the door." she reassures me rolling her eyes.

"Then why don't you do it?" I ask.

She looks at me and giggles softly smiling at my remark. She stands there another moment. Her petite body takes small steps toward me, her curly shoulder-length, shiny golden hair follows her, bouncing in rhythm with her steps. We look absolutely nothing alike, never have, and probably never will. Although the way we think is practically the same. I have straight long dark brown hair, green eyes, and broad shoulders. We've both been asked on more than one occasion if either of us were adopted.

When she reaches the place where I'm sitting she already knows what I want her to do.

"Fishtail, French, Dutch, twist, or, ladder?" She asks me.

"Surprise me," I say in a playful voice.

After about three minutes of silence, she speaks, breaking my train of thought.

"Nat?" She says with a scared tone.

"Yeah, what's wrong?" I say, now a bit scared myself.

I feel her fingers grip on my hair, pulling it slightly. I look ahead of me where a mirror sits propped up on a desk. Her face is turning red.

"Ow," I say. But she ignores me, gripping my hair even tighter.

"Why aren't you looking for me?" she says fearfully.

I'm mortified by these words, though I'm not sure why. I try to turn, but her grip on my hair has gotten even tighter, and has made it so I can barely look anywhere except ahead of me.

I feel her warm tears hit the top of my head, burning my scalp. "Why aren't you looking for me?" She says louder,

Then louder and louder and louder...

Reality starts to kick in...

My head starts to pound, I'm panicking, I can't move, I'm completely restrained, crying, and screaming...

Everything goes silent...

I feel Jess' tiny fingers loosen in my now tangled hair.

My breathing slows at the comfort of her touching me. Her grip softens. I slowly turn, awaiting the appearance of her narrow body. Everything is blurry. My body is turned completely around now, but Jess is not Jess, not the old her anyway. Her hair is tangled and dirty, her face is bloody, and her smile is replaced by a harsh frown. Darkness creeps over us, and she leans in close to me and whispers,

"Help me."



Franny Forgione

Those words, those small words, drive me back into the spiraling panic attack in which I had been. My heart pounds so hard it feels like it's coming out of my chest. My eyes start to sting, the presence of my sister is gone which makes it spiral faster, then harder, I'm gasping for air.

"Jess!, Jess!, Jess!" I repeat, getting and more scared each time I say her name.

Now overlapping is a different voice, it's not Jess's, it's someone else's. I can't quite make out what the voice is saying, but I know the voice. All of a sudden it becomes clear to me.

"Natalie, Natalie, Natalie! Sweetie, it's okay, it's okay"

It's my mother. She hugs me close to her chest, and rocks me back and forth hushing me gently. I'm covered in sweat and it feels like I'm drowning in an endless stream of tears.

"Which is the true nightmare, the horrific dream that you have in your sleep or the dissatisfied reality that awaits you when you awake?"

-Justin A

Olivia Nelson



## Colors

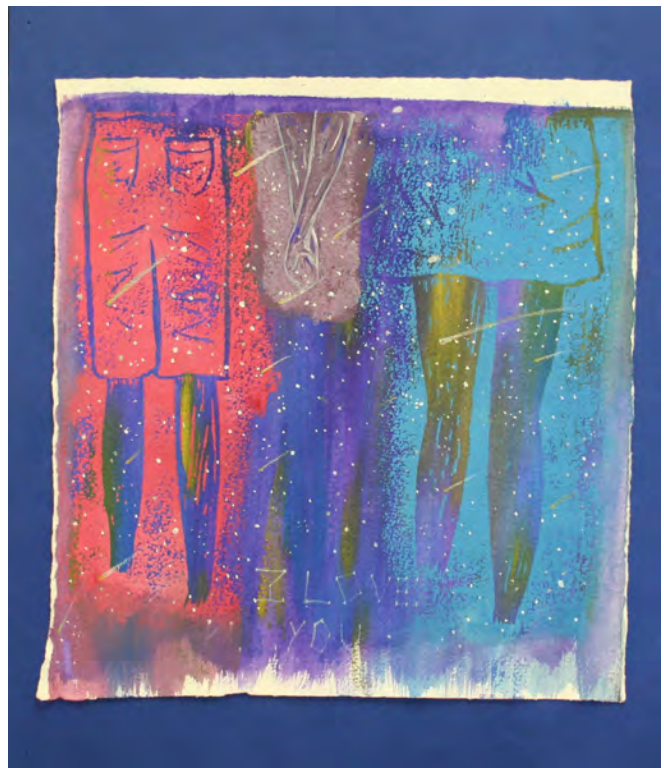
### Blue

The color of the veins I trace at night  
 As if they can reveal a hidden part of me  
 As if there's a butterfly inside my skin waiting to reveal  
 Its colors to the world  
 My veins curl through my body like the caterpillar they are  
 Waiting to be transformed  
 Into the success I've been told I could be  
 Just waiting for the itchy, thin membrane holding them back  
 To split open and let a beautiful creature crawl out  
 Spread its wings in the light of the sun  
 And fly from the carcass it leaves behind

### Red

The color of the bleeding heart that cracks my ribs  
 Breaks my skin  
 And falls, pulsating to the ground finally  
 Escaping the prison that is my body  
 And finally feeling what it was meant to feel  
 Pain  
 The pain of the cold, hard reality of the floor  
 The pain of knowing that it did something wrong  
 And the pain of realizing that it can never go back  
 To the cushion of sinew and fat and blood  
 And the pain of feeling the phantom of what  
 was once called love  
 And is now an empty space with only red  
 Dripping from the walls.

Madeline Rawson



Celia Spana

*Gatsby*

West Egg, where the palace stands tall  
 During a time of prosperity, parties  
 And a ton of alcohol.  
 From the marble floor pool,  
 To the toilets made of gold,  
 Who lives in this mansion?  
 So we will be told...

A man by the name of Jay Gatsby  
 Acquired his dough  
 Through hard work, dedication  
 And some things you shouldn't know.  
 Giant parties every week  
 You must think this man is crazy.  
 All done for a purpose,  
 To impress his ex-lover Daisy.

His motivation and drive  
 Is out of this world,  
 Any action he partakes in  
 Is all for one girl.  
 Leaving his love, for the army  
 Himself, he won't forgive,  
 Because across the water in East Egg  
 Is where her husband Tom and her live.

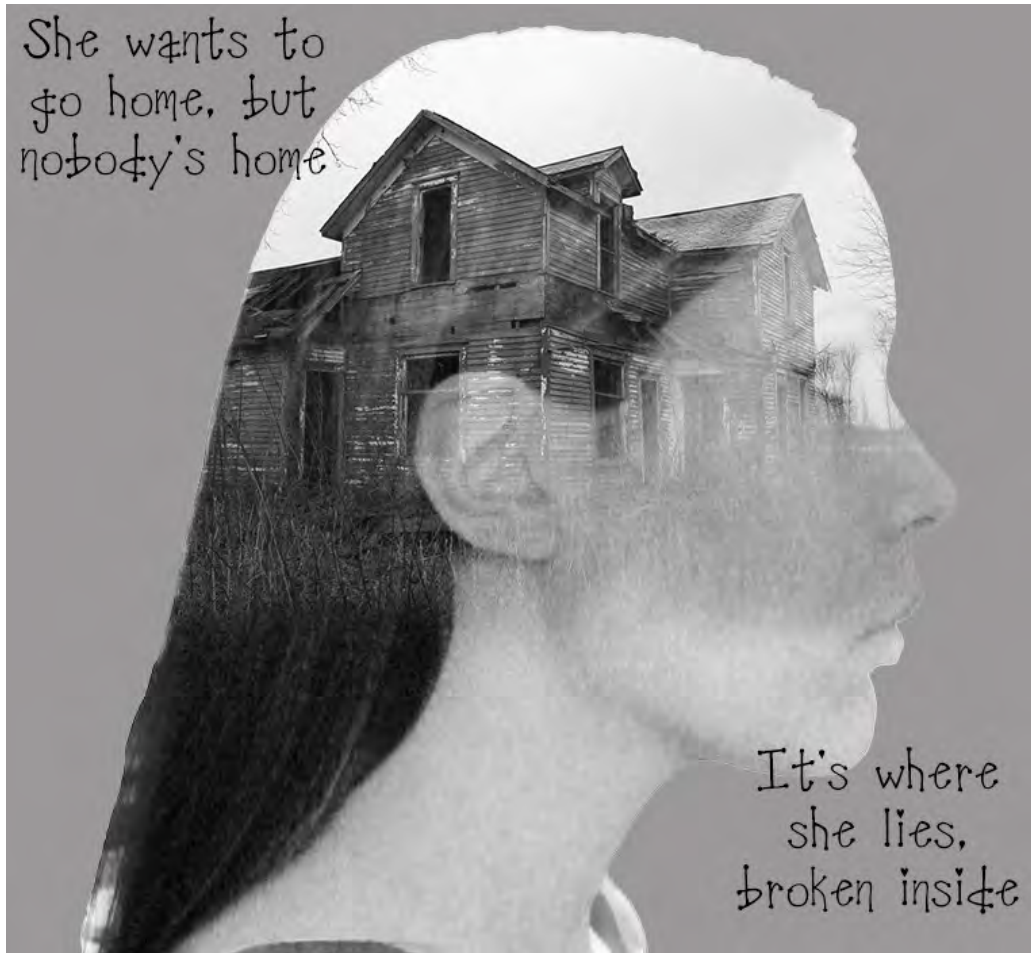
Gatsby's repeated actions  
 Characterize his persistence  
 From Daisy's house to Gatsby's  
 A green light shines from a distance  
 Symbolizing comfort, knowing that she is near.  
 His love for Daisy is strong,  
 He makes that extremely clear.

Realizing his dream is unrealistic,  
 Lowers his self-esteem,  
 Makes the reader's question  
 The possibility of the American Dream.

Daniel Klein



Thomas McAdam



Adriana Darcy

*I Need to Tell Him*

I need to tell him, I need to. If I don't he will never get the closure he deserves. Laying here in this cold, dreary hospital bed not saying anything. God, I wish I could speak. I need to tell him. This thought creeps into the back of my mind every second. The image of that night in the back of my mind is so vivid yet so unclear. I need to tell him. I try to talk, I try and try every time he comes here to visit but, I still fail.

It was late and we were driving home under the heavy snow-filled trees as fluffy white snowflakes hit the windshield repetitively. His eyes wander... The next thing I remember is waking up here. In this cold, grey, depressing hospital room. Not able to speak a single word yet my thoughts are so loud. I hear them talking about me... I hear them all, doubting my life, doubting that I will make it.

He is okay. Every day and every night, he returns by my bedside. He is barely able to get any words out; tears flood his eyes and restrict his throat. The sadness in his eyes kills me. I need to tell him... It was not his fault. Not his fault at all. It was mine.

Krystal Shaw

*Signals*

The heart beats every second  
the mind thinks every second  
without the heart, we wouldn't love  
without the brain, we wouldn't think  
without the heart, the brain wouldn't function  
without the brain, the heart wouldn't function .  
They work together, but one is wiser than the other.  
The heart brings love and care to the body and will never stop beating  
but there's only so much it could take  
The mind sends signals to the body when something is not right  
but the heart keeps beating to provide dangerous comfort  
The mind then realizes that the problems are toxic but the heart won't think the worse  
as time goes on, the heart still provides toxic comfort and didn't stop  
to read the signals  
The person begins to feel the poison spread throughout their heart, body, and mind  
but it's too late to send the signals of a  
broken heart.

Rachel Loguidice



Giana Hubbard



*Letters from Blackgate*

**Jack N.  
Blackgate Penitentiary (D-Block)  
March, 1988**



Edgar Leonardo Villalba Cabello

My Dearest Jeannie,

I miss you so much. Things have changed immensely since you left. I no longer live in our South Side apartment. You left too many memories there and I can't bring myself to go back. Oh, Jeannie nothing's the same without you. I remember when we first met in high school. You were my everything. All I ever wanted was to make the world laugh but you were the only one who did. You became my whole world Jeannie and I failed you. But you always said "Look on the bright side, Jack! You'll get em' next time". Look at me now! A corrupt, vile man begging for your forgiveness. No, you were always too wholesome for me; too kind. After we got married I did everything to prove myself to you. I looked high and low for employment. As I'm sure you recall I even sought out work in a run down comedy club. You know the one that penguin guy owned? That one. Remember when you told me you were pregnant? All I could do is cry. What kind of a father would I be letting my lovely wife and unborn child live in poverty? I tried everything Jeannie but sometimes the corrupt way is the only way. Penguin set me up with a group of guys that called themselves the Red Hood Gang. The afternoon that you left and took my child with you I sat down to discuss terms. They had planned to rob Axis Chemicals. You know the one owned by Wayne enterprise over by Indian Hill. I was so timid when that squad car pulled up out front. The officer and his partner just walked right in and asked who Jack was. I still don't know how they knew I was there. I lied to you Jeannie. I never went to work that afternoon. I slowly raised my hand and they rushed over and told me to go outside. Was I going to leave my wife and kid behind? Was I going to be arrested? HA! Not yet my love. They told me it was an electrical fire. That a spark had caught one of our drapes. Just like that you left me and took my son. My whole world stopped. I had no purpose anymore. I tried to back out of relations with The Red Hood Gang but they refused. Said they'd "carve me up like a turkey" if I didn't do it. So you see I had no choice. Things didn't go quite as planned and I was injured. If only you could see me now. You'd be horrified. Those chemicals really did a number on me. But the thing is Jeannie, now I see the bright side. Now I know that sometimes a life of crime, violence, and chaos is only one bad day away. We can all be pushed too far. Now I'm always smiling.

-J

Gia LaVista



Thomas McAdam

### *The Race*

The beginning was small, writing poems in class and that was all.  
 I thought it was going well, but "well" was not satisfactory.  
 The haters were too many, thinking my effort wasn't enough  
 But in spite of that, I never gave up  
 You might have heard I did but that stuff was just made up.  
 Life is like a race, you run and leave a trace, and let the chosen ones follow in your footsteps.  
 While walking in my path, you'll find different people who have walked with me or times I fell on  
 my face  
 But I will not give up this race.  
 Because in this place, it's ok to fall on your face.  
 With all the stress, I might have messed up but I guess it never stopped me.  
 All the yelling never mattered because I knew I would excel.  
 I'll reach the finish line with a smile on my face,  
 No longer caring about how many hurdles I faced because I am done with that race  
 But, for now, I'm still in the race, and I have to pick up my pace.

Jenniviv Bansah

*Lost and Found*

They're all and nothing but stars  
Shining bright in the darkness  
Regarded as beautiful for lighting the way.

I would rather be a lost planet  
Unable to be regarded as beautiful because no one is there to see  
Ignored out of ignorance.

Stars are expected to shine bright  
And made a fuss over when they don't  
I'd rather be a lost planet  
If I could just be.

Let them be stars, while I am a lost planet  
Circulating in space to my own beat  
Coming in contact with my own rhythm.

To exist at all, to own a place in this universe  
And then be suffocated by expectations  
I wouldn't bear.

I'd rather be lost than light the way for others.

I'd rather exist in the unknown  
Hidden from view behind layers and layers of darkness  
Watching the stars stumble and fall  
Working so hard to please the people below them.

I'd rather be a lost planet  
being the only one yet to have found myself.

I'd rather be a lost planet because  
to be lost does not always mean to be losing.

Sofia Goldstein



Miisa Mida

*An Interview With My Mother - 9/10/2015*

I am interviewing my mother Laura in my room. I am asking her about her experiences on moving to and living in South Africa.

*Christian:* When did you first decide to move to South Africa?

*Laura:* When your father had a job change, and had to move from one project that had finished up to another project. There were two opportunities - one in Australia and one in South Africa. I suggested that South Africa would be the best opportunity.

*Christian:* Why?

*Laura:* Because South Africa was a place that had always been intriguing and interesting at a very unique historical period of time with apartheid. Nelson Mandela and was much more unique from our known U.S. culture.. Australia felt very very similar to everything we already knew.

*Christian:* What did you first think of South Africa when we moved there?

*Laura:* I loved it from the minute I got there. I thought the people were wonderful, and the country was beautiful. But when we first got there we didn't yet have our place to live. We were living in temporary apartments and it was a little scary and a little lonely. Because Daddy went straight to work on Monday, I was sitting by myself and had to figure out what to do. That took some getting used to.

*Christian:* How long had you lived there before you had Harrison? (Harrison is the oldest of my three siblings; I am the youngest)

*Laura:* A year and a half. Long time.

*Christian:* When did you first move into our house?

*Laura:* Well we had two houses. So, we moved to South Africa in September of 1995 and we moved into the house we rented in Parktown North probably in November of that same year. We lived in that rented house for two years. We bought a house we knew we liked and we were going stay. Harrison was born and we moved into the new house in April of 1997, the week before he was born.

*Christian:* What was the scariest aspect of living in South Africa?

*Laura:* There was a lot of crime. There was absolutely a lot of crime. We had to be very vigilant and we had to know that our house was set up and safe. We had to be aware of where we were going and what we were doing.

*Christian:* What was your favorite part?



*Laura:* I loved the whole thing. I loved the country and I loved getting out on safari. I loved the people and I loved traveling all around to Cape Town and to Durban. I loved swimming in the Indian Ocean and getting to go to places we would never normally get the opportunity to go to. And, you were all born there.

*Christian:* Thank you so much for letting me interview you on this, Mom.

*Laura:* It was my pleasure.

Christian Steins



Jonathan Crozier

### *Collections*

I never thought of myself as a collector of the things I collect. The term "collector" always seem to refer to someone more concerned with the money of it all. The "value"; how much something is worth. I collect many things but I look for the beauty; the way it makes you feel when you look at it or use it.

I call myself an enthusiast: an enthusiast of rocks, gems, minerals, CDs, music memorabilia, programs, playbills, every tangible thing that reminds me of an experience. The reason my mom thinks I'm a hoarder and never throw anything

away. I keep things because of the feeling they give me. They take me back to memories I wish I could relive. The one thing I always regarded myself most as is a doll enthusiast. Most people think they're creepy, but I see them as beautiful imitations of life. Making up personas or applying the people you know to controllable items. I used to use dolls as a representation of who I wanted to be because I could make them do anything, which made me think I could do anything. If my dolls had friends, I could have friends. If my dolls had beautiful hair, I could have beautiful hair. I didn't have beautiful hair when I was younger. I had a condition. That's all anyone ever thought of me as: someone with a condition. When people talked to me, it was about what was wrong with me. When people looked at me, it was because they couldn't look away. My next door neighbor Karen was the only person in my childhood who treated me the same as all the other neighborhood kids. There was only a small fence separating Karen and mine's houses. She always talked to me, even from my bedroom window she would call up from her yard just to see how I was doing. Looking back, she must have known how difficult things were but she never knew what was coming.

I don't remember how Karen had died and I don't even remember how I found out. Before long her husband had gotten into a house accident and the house was sold to a new family, one that didn't seem to care much for neighbors. They built a tall wooden fence and I could no longer see the backyard that I used to look into for comfort. Her presence was gone in an instant. We moved out of that house a couple years later and I hadn't thought of Karen much, but one day my mom had bought me a baby doll to add to my treasury, and coincidentally, it had the same hairstyle and stout-ness as Karen, and I was immediately brought back to the comfort of a neighbor that was always there when I needed her. I named the doll Karen and whenever I started pitying myself and thinking about the dissatisfaction of certain things in my life, I looked to Karen and held her tight. The doll is an emblem of her presence.

These childhood memories of comfort in objects that I wasn't able to find in people is what is why I get so attached to things. So maybe people give me a weird look when I talk about my love for dolls, but I can only hope that they have something that they find beauty and comfort in.



Lake Vayo

*Identity*

Inspired by Noboa Polanco

Let them be as swans.  
Always strong, beautiful, adored,  
but tethered to a lake.

I'd rather be a sly, evil crow,  
soaring above others, like a stream  
gliding through dark, shady forests.

To have pierced the veils of  
secrecy, to feel the rush of curiosity  
in the endless mountains of trees.  
To be caressed by the fingertips of a pillow of  
clouds,  
supporting my wings, my spirit,  
over walls of struggle and into the wrinkles of time.

I'd rather be disliked by everyone, and if  
then chased away by everyone,  
than to be an elegantly poised swan,  
swimming placidly with its head high,  
where they're photographed, applauded and  
yearned  
for by chaotic human minds.

I'd rather be hunched, dark and oily  
then to be pure, angelic white.  
If I could stand solitary, pronounced and free,  
I'd rather be a sly, evil crow.

Darya Khodakhah



Isabella Lopane



Giselle Bravo

*Alliances*

Remembering past alliances,  
None worth revealing my inner artistry.  
None of their mindsets were leveled to match mine  
and none seemed to convince the mind of credibility.  
In other words, their so called trustworthy character  
Wasn't worth the effort of creating intellectual senses.  
Where minds merge to create a thought or feeling,  
Appealing to emotion was never the plan.  
That's the type of world in which we live in today.

Toni Lee Ramos

*Downfall*

"You haven't touched your dinner," Maverick says, watching his wife skeptically from across the dinner table.

"I'm not hungry," Jane replies curtly. Maverick drops his fork, causing the glass plate to chime throughout the silence.

"Alright, what's wrong?" he demands. "This entire week I've been doing everything you've asked. I come home early for dinner; I leave for lunch. We spend weekends together when I could be working! Dammit woman, what do you *want from me*?"

Jane says nothing, turning away from him. Maverick runs a hand through his hair, knowing what would come. This has happened many times before. Jane begins to sob, and buries her face in her arms. Maverick does nothing, but watches her crumble again. Following the sequence, he would usually leave Jane in her current state and retreat to his office, where he would do what he does best; work. Depending on how severe the argument was, he would sleep in the guest bedroom, leaving his wife to sleep alone. This time he stayed, observing her.

"I just want you to be happy," he says.

Jane looks up, hesitantly. She knows it's a lie, it's been a lie since they moved here. "Do you?" Maverick nods and exits the dining room soon after, finally giving up on Jane. She assumes he went to his office again, furiously typing and staring at the bright screens. Jane was alone to think about where she was right then. Jane thought about what she would do if she left. It's been six years; how could she? How much money she would get from a divorce? Would that be enough to get a decent apartment, maybe even a house? Jane was no longer begging to stay. She realized it was better for her this way. Being in the gargantuan home would only feel like a prison if she stayed. However, Jane didn't want to leave. She wanted to remain there in hopes of things going back to the way they were before; when Maverick wasn't so successful and Jane just graduated college. She remembers it vividly; twenty-six year old Maverick working on an internship in a three by four cubicle. Jane was self-employed, making realism paintings she sold on the sidewalks of New York. They would come home, tired and full of defeat, never exactly achieving what they wanted. One of them would say "It'll come for you soon. Soon you will reach your goal", or something along those lines.

One day, Maverick came home with a bottle of champagne in his hand, exclaiming that he was promoted, and got his own office. The new position wasn't exactly CEO, but it was the step he had wanted for so long. Jane was overjoyed when she noticed bills weren't a struggle like they used to. No longer needing the extra cash, Jane was able to drop her other job at McDonald's and work on her art full time. Two more years passed, and Maverick came home with a larger bottle of champagne, exclaiming that some guy quit and Maverick got his position. He went on about how much money he would be making, and how Jane wouldn't need to paint anymore.

"I can support us both now, like I've always wanted to." he would say.



Less than a month later, Maverick decided they would move. Jane didn't want to, she wanted to stay in the small apartment she grew to love.

"Can't we just move to a nicer apartment?" she would try to protest. Maverick would always decline, saying that they could, like they've always wanted to. Like he wanted to. So they did, a house too extravagant for only two people. A house isolated from the bustling city life Jane was so accustomed to. Maverick surprised her with a beautiful monochrome room with ceiling-to-wall windows all around, saying "You can paint in here, I'm sure this can give you excellent inspiration." And it did, but she realized that it was simply a distraction. Jane soon had a room filled with paintings and no one to share them with. She painted the view from the every window in the room. She painted the view during sunset and sunrise. While Maverick wasn't home, she wandered to other places of the windowed home and painted the view from there. It reminded her vaguely of her early art times, where she would take pictures of people in a park and draw them. She painted what she saw, whether it was in a dream or on a street. When Jane's birthday came around, she asked for a drawing table.

"You don't do architecture," Maverick pointed out.

"I want to start."

And when Jane turned twenty-five, she found that table in her art room. She tried to call Maverick to say thank you, but she got his voicemail instead. She drew houses. Suburban houses that she hoped to one day live in. Her favorite was a large home with a tree house in the back and a fence surrounding it. She drew the tiny model bedroom of her first child, with a rocking chair and mobile. Maverick thought it was a good idea. It kept her busy.

Meanwhile, Maverick was in the office for twelve hours, only to come home and work for three more. Their downfall continued on for years. As much as Jane hoped, she couldn't bear all the rain that would come before the rainbow. She didn't want to.

Maverick didn't want to believe that he no longer loved Jane. He almost felt guilty for thinking this, he made her move out of her comfort zone and into a house that really wasn't her style (she preferred homes in the suburbs, not hillside). He took her away from her work place, and didn't give her a car to transport her to the destination. Maverick lost his spark five years into their relationship, when he started to dread coming home from work. Who wouldn't want to come home from work and into the arms of their significant other? He didn't do anything about it, thinking it was simply a "rough patch". It was rough for him, but he made it rougher for Jane. He began to ignore her calls and texts, and avoided her in the hallways of their home. He decided working more would make things easier. He stopped getting paid for overtime.

"This house is a mess," Maverick said on the one nights he came home before ten. The house was actually spotless, (thanks to Jane, who had nothing better to do) but he just wanted a reason to be mad at her. Maybe that way, the crumbling of their marriage would be her fault. And maybe Maverick wouldn't feel so guilty. On and on he complained about every inch of the marvelous home, and Jane did nothing to defend herself. To this day, he wonders why she can't stick up for herself, as all she said in response was "okay" and "sorry". He remembers seeing her curled up in the dining room chair, sobbing. He pretended to not notice, he continued to neglect her.

"I want to move to a neighborhood," Jane had said before. She described it as 'thinking ahead'. Maverick said it was too far ahead. He never thought about children. When that happened, he was still in his late twenties and had just moved into a new apartment. Maverick wanted to focus on the main things, and children wasn't one of them. He wanted to build up his empire, and there would still be time when he got there. When they moved homes, it would've been the perfect time. Jane painted a family portrait one day. Herself and Maverick were clearly on the picture, but the two kids between them had no faces. Sometimes, in his free time, right before he falls asleep, Maverick thinks about what they would look like.

"Do you think three kids are too much?" Jane wondered on a night where she couldn't sleep. Maverick said no. Partly because he was half asleep and was only staying up to keep his wife company. He never thought about those topics, and he doesn't think he ever will.

The next morning, every trace of her was erased from the mansion after Maverick spent the night packing up Jane's things. So stealthy, he spent the rest of his night getting rid of all her clothes and put them in suitcases while she was asleep, practically right under her nose. Maverick filled most of his luggage, since Jane's belongings weren't enough to fit in all of hers. He hoped there wouldn't be any business trips coming up, Jane woke up the next morning to find all of her things packed away by the front door. Maverick, who was already off to work, wrote a note for her, "*a cab will be here at ten*" on one of the suitcases. Jane crumpled it in her hand, making a fist for the note to suffocate, as if it was Maverick himself.

Brianna Jackman



George Miyajima

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art<sup>1</sup>/ɑrt/ 

noun

1. the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.
2. the various branches of creative activity, such as painting, music, literature, and dance.

”

*Art*

What is art?  
 Art is everywhere.  
 Art is everything.  
*We are all artists.*

*We all create,*  
 or take part in  
 other's creations

The wooden chairs  
 We sit on have been  
 sketched, planned, and built,  
 painted, polished, and sold.

The annoyingly catchy  
 elevator music has been  
 written and played,  
 recorded and distributed.

The movies we watch have been  
 edited and perfected  
 ceaselessly before they released to  
*us: the savages of criticism.*

But since *we are all artists*,  
 interpretation is art itself.  
 Our commentary just triggers  
 Imagination, creativity and drive

*Art evades definition,*  
 The ones who try,  
 fail to acknowledge their  
 misconception.

Art is subjective.  
 There are countless perspectives,  
 and sometimes the process  
 is the art itself.

The technique is where  
 we learn about our passion,  
 and the final product is the  
 way in which we choose to convey  
 it.

Placing a price tag on the art  
 does not measure its value,  
 because to *us the audience and*  
 the creators the process and the  
 product  
 are priceless.

Art enables us  
 to lose ourselves ----  
 only to discover  
 and shape who we are  
 as humans.

Anonymous

*A Personal Narrative Of The Struggles Faced by Adrianne Dolan*

My name is Adrianne Dolan, and I was born in April of 2000 to John and Mary Dolan. I am the grandchild of Irish immigrants and the great-grandchild of Italian immigrants. I was born in Greenwich, Connecticut and lived there as an infant prior to my parents purchasing a home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I remained an only child for four short years until my sister Daniella was born. I lived in a lovely home with my parents, sister, uncle, and dog. My parents both had jobs that paid well so my sister and I never had to worry about our financial situation. I had family that lived relatively nearby and I had many friends to look towards for support. I was a spoiled child, but my life was still ordinary. However, that all came to an abrupt halt when I was ten years old.

I was in the car with my father on a Sunday afternoon. We had just left a carwash that my school had organized and when I was finished participating in it, my dad came to get me and I sat in the front seat. We were heading up the hill and were having a regular discussion when I saw two older boys ahead riding their skateboards. I did not think much of it at the time so I never said a word about the boys and then as my dad was about to pass them, one boy took his skateboard and jumped directly in front of my father's car. However, my father could not see the boy because of the way he had jumped in front of the car, causing him to drive over the boy completely. The moment that I remembered vividly of that incident was the way that the car moved while the boy was underneath, moving harshly from side to side as all four wheels ran over the boy's body one by one. My father pulled over right away and left me in the car while he went over to the boy who was currently lying motionless in the middle of the road.

I stayed there in the front seat crying like an absolute maniac because my brain just could not comprehend everything that happened. I repeatedly turned back to try and see what was happening but I was never able to see what was going on, which terrified me even more. I remained in the car for a while, shaking and crying uncontrollably as my innocence was brutally ripped from my soul. I watched my father run over a boy. I felt the car move as the car ran over his body. I saw that boy lying stiffly on the floor. I felt as though the life had been completely sucked out of me, like the world around me no longer looked or felt the same anymore. My mother came and met my father and I at the scene. I stayed in the car until she told me to get into her car and she drove me home with my sister next to me. When we got arrived home, my mother dropped us off and headed back to my father while we stayed with my uncle who was pacing back and fourth trying to understand what had happened. It was a terrible day, to say the least.

By the time I had turned eleven, my whole life was in shambles. I did not know it at the time, but from that day forward, everything became different. My father never recovered from the accident. He could not go on with his life and started to drink, which lead him to become an alcoholic. My father became more distant and I did not see him as often. He went out more on



Isabella Lopane



weekends and would not come home until after midnight, and I got into the habit of staying up late to wait for him. Eventually his actions succumbed to cheating on my mother multiple times with multiple women. I was completely unaware of everything that was happening until I grew older and learned the truth.

My family was broken beyond repair. My father was busted for drinking while intoxicated and stayed in prison overnight, which would seem worse if I hadn't grown accustomed to it after the first three times that he was caught. This wasn't the man that I knew to be my father, it just couldn't be. My father was a man who would show up at every single dance recital that I had and every single competition that I had for cheerleading. He would sit with me on Friday nights and watch Scooby Doo and drive me to the bus stop every morning at 6:45am. My father enjoyed spending time with me and was someone I could always count on. This man was the complete opposite. This version of my father never went to a single cheerleading competition that I had unless he was forced to drive me there in which case he would disappear for most of the day and then reappear when it was time to take me home. This man went out every Friday night and would not return until one o'clock in the morning. This man left for work early every morning so that he would not have to face me. This man never answered even one of my phone calls and never responded to my text messages. I didn't know this man and yet I was supposed to refer to him as my "father" every day.

My life only spiraled downhill even more after that, if that could even be possible. By the time I had entered high school, my parents were filing for a divorce and my father was kicked out of my house. I almost never saw my father and I spent all of my time and energy blaming my mother for everything that had happened. I was too naïve to see that my father just did not want a family anymore. He did not want me anymore. He would come to visit my sister and I every once in a while but the situation just felt so uncomfortably wrong. My family was supposed to stay together, my parents were supposed to be married, and my father was supposed to be living with me in the place that I call home. I don't even know if I can truly call that place my home anymore, not after everything that has happened. I know that I live in that house, but every time I enter the house I feel nothing. There no longer is any joy and laughter to fill up that sad excuse for a home anymore because there is nothing to be happy about. All of the memories made in that house turned to dust as my family fell apart, and with that went my sanity and soul.



Kelly Brabant

I would be lying if I said that everything that has happened hasn't changed me, because it most definitely has. I find it incredibly hard to trust anyone anymore in fear that when I become too attached, they will just leave as easily as my father did. I'm terrified of not being good enough because I clearly was not enough of a reason to convince my father to stay. I hate to be apart from my mother and sister because I feel as though they are the only two people there anymore. My uncle moved out shortly after my father did so I rarely see him, and my father left without looking back. I am fearful that if I separate from my mother and sister for even a second, they will leave like everyone else does. I need to feel secure again and that has proven to be a difficult task when the first time you felt secure, everything came crashing down and I lost a part of myself in the chaos.

There are so many things that I wish could have happened instead, but the thing is that if all of these events had not happened, then I would not be the person that I am today. I like the person that I have become, I am more aware of the world around me and I have become stronger than I ever thought could be possible. I may be emotionally scarred for life with a long list of insecurities and fears, but these aspects are what have made me into who I am today and that is something that I would never want to change. I rose above from the ashes of my old life and became a force to be reckoned with. I know who I am now and that in itself brings me joy and fulfillment. These events that I experienced taught me how to be strong and to push through the bad to find goodness in my life. I have great friends and have become close to my mother and sister. I may not have a picture-perfect life anymore but that is okay because life is not supposed to be perfect and easy. Life forces you to challenge yourself to the extreme, you just have to choose whether you are ready to fight and prove your strength or give up and let these negative aspects eat you alive inside. I chose to be strong and fight against all odds during a time in my life when I never thought I could survive through all of the pain and agony. I fought hard and I won, and that is something to be proud of.

I am Adrianna Dolan and this is my story.

Adrianna Duffy



Kimberly Pena



### *Lost Desire*

Eros has yet again cursed me,  
 Plaguing my dead heart with beats.  
 Beats of hope, promising life.  
 But I've seen this dream before,  
 In a once erratic youth,  
 Willing to take the leap of faith.  
 He barely survived that fall,  
 Not with his past scars,  
 Deep and crude.

Leonard Milano

Eros! Why do you still pursue me,  
 Looming forever over me?  
 Do not remind me the feeling  
 Of one's lost love!  
 Bleeding out hearts  
 Was always your specialty.  
 Your alluring, enchanting tunes  
 Threaten my sanity once more.  
 I wish not to destroy this sanctuary,  
 Home to this drained, tired heart.  
 I'd rather die loveless  
 Than enslave myself under love itself!  
 Unshackle me, I say, Unshackle me!  
 No longer subject me to this torture,  
 You crazed madam!  
 I will say this once and none more:  
 I'm but a fool, bound by impossibilities.  
 If thy holds truth of human hearts, stop,  
 For the sake of these fragile feelings.  
 Allow my shadow to hang over them,  
 Sheltering this one-sided love forever.

Adolfo Viruet



*On Reading the Stories of the Refugees from Syria*

On reading the stories of our victimized brothers and sisters,  
 Of a bread and butter of violence, abuse, and torture,  
 Of a daily existence of religious, ethnic, and personal persecution,  
 Of a diet that consists of slave labour, blackmail, and constant fear,  
 Of a situation so grim that even the most horrific writers would never dream of it,  
 Of a reality identified by barbaric punishments for crimes so facile that you fear walking lest  
 you act out of line,  
 Of a life defined by a constant struggle to escape and a desire to start anew,  
 Of a destiny so bright and beautiful snuffed out by the barrel of a gun.  
 Of a fate written out in the blood of the tortured on parchment of victims bodies,  
 Of successes and failures, life and death.

On reading the stories of incompetent responses,  
 Of a world where the only attempt to solve the problem uses the same mentality,  
 Of a world where violence is the main weapon in the war on violence,  
 Of a world where drone strikes claim more civilians than they do terrorists,  
 Of a world where fleeing refugees are seen as terrorists because both groups worship the  
 “same” religion,  
 Of a world where politicians are so caught up in their prejudices they will let people die to  
 maintain their bigotry,  
 Of a world where humans are diminished to horrific “waves” and “swarms”,  
 Of a world where any governmental attempt to help is a mere symbol for bragging rights,  
 Of a world where it takes 5 years to get a court appointment so that you can actually start liv-  
 ing,  
 Of a world where asylum seekers are kept in pens like livestock during their transition,  
 Of a world where animalistic treatment by their “saviours” is the norm,  
 Of a world where people forget that refugees are humans too.  
 Of a world where people forget that Muslims are humans too.

At this point, I don't know if I'm looking at the news anymore or if I accidentally switched to a his-  
 tory textbook,  
 Can't tell if I'm reading the stories of Syrians fleeing from terrorists to xenophobes,  
 Or of Christians escaping from the grasps of hostile Jews straight onto roman crosses,  
 Unsure if I'm looking at stories of persecution led by a group that claims to represent and de-  
 fend the religion of the region,  
 Or of that brought about by an Ottoman government seeking homogenization by the extermi-  
 nation of a prosperous minority ,  
 Unable to differentiate if these are stories of humans fleeing labour camps, torture, and abuse  
 over a treacherous sea,  
 Or of Jews attempting to escape Auschwitz and their literal hell on earth.  
 We're having the same debate over freedom of religion we had in England over 500 years ago,  
 Wake up people!  
 When one third of the population believes that Muslims should carry ID's I become less sure if  
 the U.S. was against Hitler or just trying to replace him,  
 Wake up!  
 If people who do not know history are doomed to repeat it then clearly no-one in power has  
 ever touched a history book,  
 It's time to wake up!

On reading the stories of individuals,  
 Of the terror brought about by kidnappings, assaults on family, and the isolation of individuals,  
 Of the confusions that leads people to be just as afraid of incoming drone strikes as occupying  
 footsoldiers,  
 Of the desperation that leads people to trust the most deceitful smugglers because the other  
 option is death,  
 Of the fear that leads people to clamber aboard plastic boats because at least if they die out at  
 sea the burial is already arranged,  
 Of the families that get separated on the journey because the boat sank and they had to swim  
 without knowing how,  
 Of the people that faced more trouble from European authorities than they did from their own  
 governments,  
 Of the people who had to fight a greater struggle in “modern” jails than they did with ISIS.  
 Of the little girl who was terror struck when a friendly stranger asked where her mother was,  
 because she did not want her to get hurt, did not want to lose her.  
 Of the same little girl saying “I love you so much” to the stranger for showing some daily re-  
 spect,  
 Of the misery that turns a common courtesy into a great show of respect.

Of a world so shaken by war that the concept of basic human decency is a miracle.

#### Addendum

On reading the stories of hope,  
 Of people who wake up every morning thinking more about others than they do of themselves,  
 Of volunteers that spend more time improving the lives of those in pain than they working on  
 their own,  
 Of open hearts who drive down to beaches with bread, water, and food in order to alleviate the  
 suffering of refugees,  
 Of parents who care more for the impact on their children than they do about the horrors that  
 they have endured,  
 Of kind souls who rise above bigotry and xenophobia to  
 recognize the similarities that we all share.  
 Of humans restoring faith in humanity.

Amr El-Azizi



Julia Souza

*Personal Cartographers*

Paradoxically, this world is composed of various, discipline-specific worlds, many of which remain unfathomable and uncharted because their knowledge so bluntly deviates from deeply ingrained perspectives, prompting knowers to close their minds to the possibility of that knowledge's truth and application. If knowledge manages to permeate one's senses, it can still be crowded out based upon criteria like practicality and group evaluation. Yet despite a potential loss in external value, knowledge's innate value—the idea that knowledge is inherently good because it is knowledge—is immortal. Knowledge, traveling via sense perception, reason, imagination, or any other way of knowing, may be forced to proceed through border control, as well as compelled to remain concentrated in a specific region if society deems it to be of negligible importance. Thus, knowers must take it upon *themselves* to combine the worlds of different disciplines in order to discover knowledge's value. As Lyndon B. Johnson once said, "The land flourished because it was fed from so many sources—because it was nourished by so many cultures and traditions and peoples."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, for the sake of diverse worldviews that add dimension, originality, and individuality to the lives that we live, we must draw our own maps rather than allowing others to arbitrarily sketch the world's frontiers. Our possibilities are endless.

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<sup>1</sup> USA, Government Printing Office, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965*, vol. 2, series 546 (Washington D.C., 1966), accessed February 10, 2016, <http://www.liblib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/651003.asp>.

Ella Eisinger



Kelly Brabant





