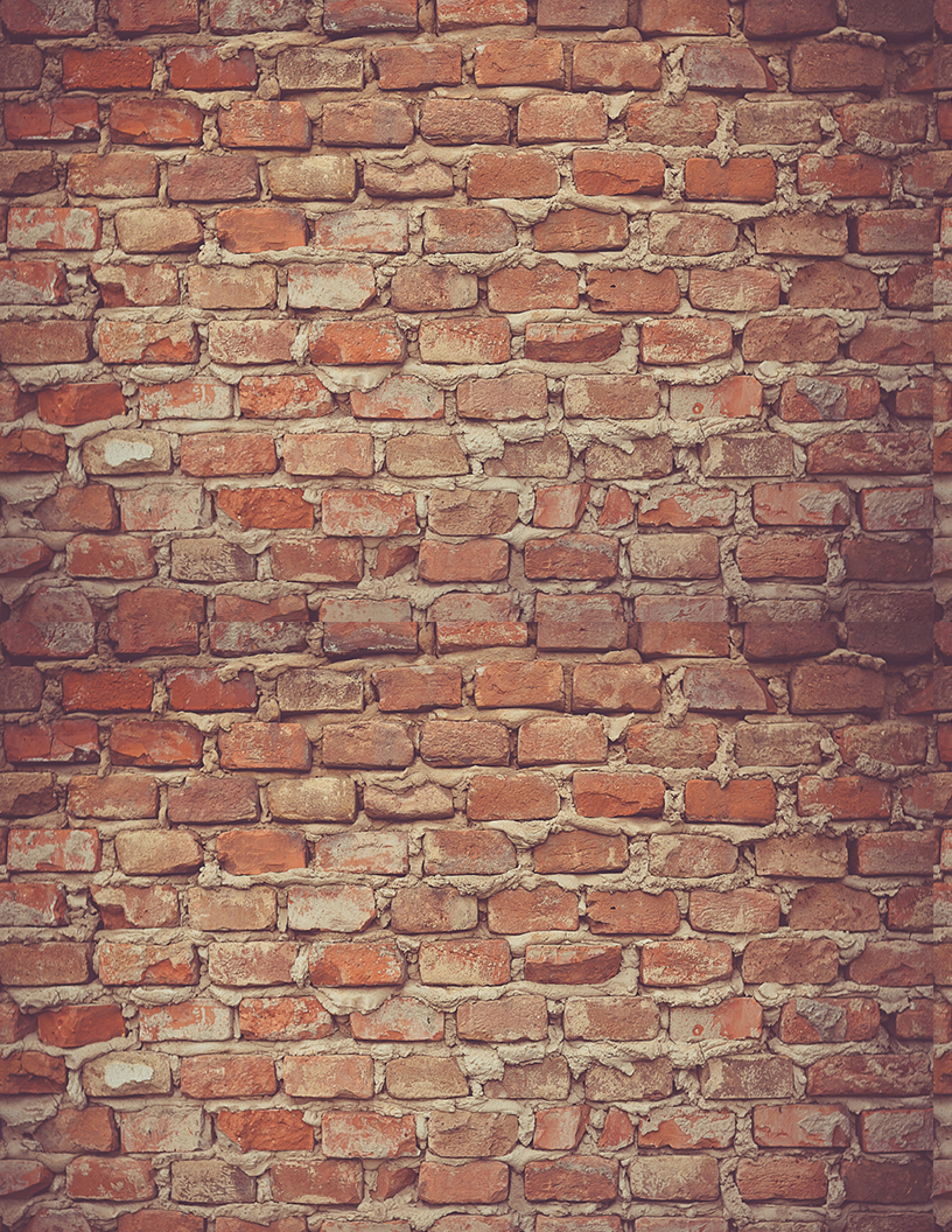




Roundelay 2021



Roundelay

— 2021 —

C o o p e r ' s l i t e r a r y a r t
m a g a z i n e t h a t c e l e b r a t e s
s t u d e n t s ' w r i t i n g a n d a r t .

▼ Contributors

Aicha Souare

Alex Reynolds

Asnas Osumo

Christopher Gage

Cyrus Jarjay

Eboni Dawkins

Elizabeth Menges

Emily Burke

Grace Hambike

Kimberly Lamine

Makayla Hott

Son Vuong

Symira Horton-Conecin

Tajannea Jenkins-Crumble

Tarnue David

Zoey Morris

...and thank you to our

anonymous contributors.

▼ Roundelay Advisor

Megan Murphy (Gosney)

Towards Identity

Nelson Stevens. *Towards Identity*, 1970. The Art Institute of Chicago.



"...to be born black was one of the best things that could have happened to me because I am the blueprint of the past, the present, and the future."

- Symira Horton-Conecin

I don't think there is such a thing as being "too ambitious" especially if we're discussing black women. I do believe that there is a thing called being "more ambitious" and that's what I see black women do every day. I see black women sacrifice, put others before themselves, and still reach their goals and chase their dreams. Since we live in a predominantly white and male-dominated society I believe that there is fear when black women achieve and succeed more than what others expect from them but they continue to show black girl magic. There are many ambitious Black women in my life like my mom, my grandma, my aunts, and many more black women. They never fail to surprise me When they open up doors for themselves and their children. My mom's ambitions are to be a grandmother, go back to school, and work in human resources to help people especially children and I know that other black women have some of the same ambitions. As a black girl I have my ambitions like becoming financially stable to support my family, owning my own business, going to college, building my community, and breaking generational financial curses; I just really want to help the people that I know I love the most because they continue to help me become the best version of me. There is black girl magic everywhere you go. It's not always right in front of your face but is there. I think black girl magic is in everything we touch, smell, hear and see because black women have such a powerful essence and presence. The black culture tends to be the trend especially if it's black women culture, everything black women do is looked down on but when somebody else takes it is praised, But black women have the upper hand in that situation because like I said the essence of a black woman is everywhere even the other races and cultures. black girl magic is bigger than anything we ever imagined it to be; we just haven't opened our eyes to see it at its fullest form but to be a part of it is one of the best things that could have ever happened to me, to be born black was one of the best things that ever happened to me because I am the blueprint of the past, the present, and the future.

Symira Horton-Conecin

I see you.

Layered with thorns, but I'm not afraid to touch.

If loving you means pain, then let me bleed out.

Lost, that's what you are.

You have nowhere to go even though there's many routes.

But I said? Let me take a trip through your mental and understand what's real,

See what's dismantled.

You have a disk running high within your mindset,

And it showcases a ruined canvas that's portrayed what's vengeful.

Hurt? It's evident.

And you wish to be transparent, and that— you are.

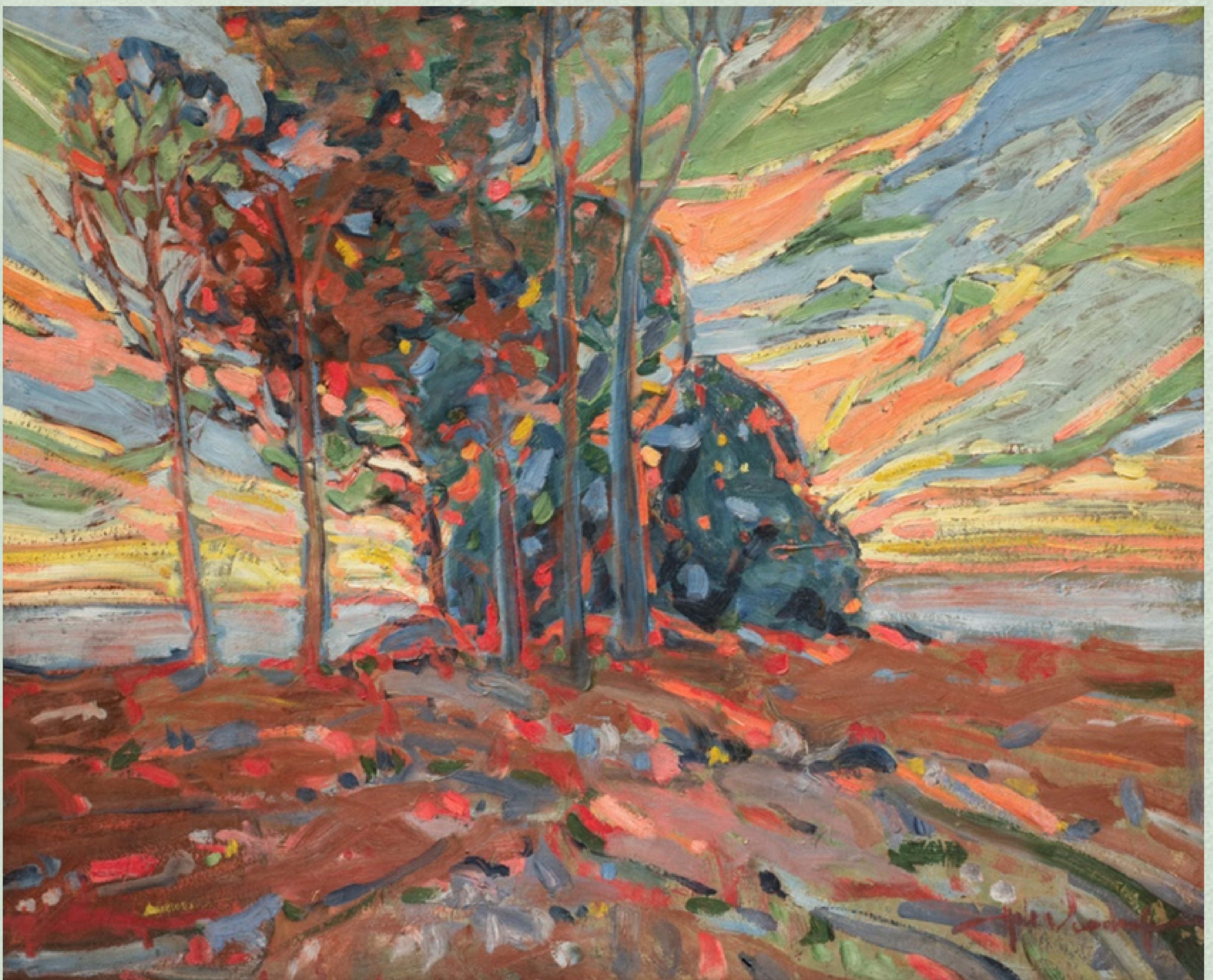
But, I see you.

And trust me, you'd know why.

Because, I'm looking in the mirror.

Kimberly Lamine





Hale Woodruff. *Twilight*, 1926. The Art Institute of Chicago.

The trees that weep.

Several trees I seem to see are shallow.
Waist deep, each color of every tree basks in despair.
Wavering leaves, some wet, some dry, never fail to please.
Please my eyes, spark my interest, we'll receive the closure we
need.
Dusk 'till dawn my trees, no need to weep.
I'll keep on walking and in some way, I hope to see.
I'll endure closure on this path I tread and if not,
then I'll be grateful I saw these trees.

Kimberly Lamine



Kori Newkirk. 2001. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Void of Silence, Father/Brother/Son



“Kori Newkirk, based in Los Angeles, examines common cultural signifiers associated with black American identities through self-reflexive images that depict plastic hair beads, braided hair extensions and pomade, basketballs, and elements of hip-hop fashion. Ironically pointing to the mythologies that revolve around these tropes, Newkirk destabilizes assumptions about identity. *Void of Silence, Father/ Brother/Son* directly remarks on the dual nature of symbols; crossed fingers can represent a wish for good luck or a safeguard against the consequences of a lie depending on their position relative to the body” (The Art Institute of Chicago).

Four Boys.

**Black boys walking with their hoodies over their heads,
Their dreading the factual that's dismantled within their mental.
Each black boy feeling different in a world that their supposed to belong in,
The color of the skin doesn't care to show them mercy.
They ain't holding weapons when they crossing the street,
But the color of their skin couldn't be more threatening.
Each black boy with a fake smile on their portrait,
Walking down the street hoping the cops just forfeit.
Why does it matter how they dress? Why does it matter how they look?
Why does it matter that their posture ain't perfect in your picture?
I see why. Cause these boys was sculpted and
Came out of the womb entitled as a culprit.
The color of their skin disrupted y'all's peace, huh?
But what about their peace? What about their safety?
One day these black boys won't have to worry about
Being able to think once about going outside without
thinking twice that they might end up shot, three times.**

Kimberly Lamine

Montgomery street.

Let the children come out and play.
Let their smiles signify no more tears.
No more weeping, for the elders say.
No more raining that leaves the eye
of the despaired.

Montgomery street has been repaired.
Inside, it's a happy home mama says.
She's singing now, tunes of soul.
Abiding by the peace I feel,
I'm smiling now.

They used to yell;
Montgomery street, enraptured with no peace,
where the sun comes out to shine,
but with no light for the children to smile.

And the elders speak,
they say be a child, be the blessing of
the picture painted, that I anointed.

Be the visionary, see the bigger picture,
because within it today? The children are smiling,
the elders are singing, all on Montgomery street.

I made it happen, the picture speaks.

I
MADE
IT
HAPPEN,
THE
PICTURE
SPEAKS.

Kimberly Lamine

Speak

Performed during the student-organized walkout on April 19th, 2021 in response to the death of Daunte Wright. The school-wide walkout was also implemented around the state by 20 other high schools.

Bodies misused, then minds confused
We swallow these lies they tell us
Overzealous just to gun us down
Compel us not to mourn with sound
But we're sound enough to **speak up**
Cooper, there's been so many deaths lately, I can't even keep up
I'm tryna hold my head high, but their knee's **stuck** on my neck
With each breath that I (breathe) get, there's **anxiety**
No sleep without waking up to **death**, there's no sobriety
Don't be **deaf** to what's going on; Nigga they'll take **you** down quietly
Who are you if Breonna can get killed at home, in her **own** privacy
Police slave catching again, they're **killing** brothers and sisters unjustifiably
& the news keeps **reminding me** I have no rights because of the countless
bodies by bodies, the **floods** of Floyds, and the wrongs unto Wrights I see
(It's a pandemic over a pandemic, don't get it misconstrued
Bodies misused, then minds confused
We swallow these lies they tell us
Overzealous just to **gun** us down,
Compel us not to mourn with sound
But we're sound enough to... **speak up**)

R e s t i n P e a c e , D a u n t e .

Cyrus Farjay

When Great Trees Fall

Maya Angelou



When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly
sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.

We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable
ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

Painting by Son Vuong



**"They existed. They existed. We
can be. Be and be better. For they
existed."**

- Maya Angelou ("When Great Trees Fall")

Life of a Teen



"When you're alone, you think. When you think, you remember. When you remember, you feel pain."

- Asnas Osumo

Images and Scars

You have an image on your mind.

An image that's a nightmare.

A nightmare you can get rid of no matter how hard you try.

You have a scar, a scar that scares you, a scar that you try to get rid of but you can't.

A scar that makes you have nightmares.

A scar that will stay with you for the rest of your life.

A scar that makes you have nightmares about yourself, a scar you can't get rid of!!!!!!

Aicha Souare

Shadow

You sit alone in your room, getting ready to go to sleep.

You turn off the lights, make sure your door is closed, check under your bed like every child did.

You get into your bed and all of a sudden you hear a voice screaming in pain but only you hear it.

You get out of bed to turn on the light but this time the voice is gone, so you turn it off and get to bed,

but this time you see a shadow screaming in pain.

You try to look away but you can't, because you can feel the shadow's pain.

A pain you once felt.

Aicha Souare

Grief of a Mother

Have you ever heard the grief of a mother?

Crying, feeling guilt, screaming while running wondering what had happened to her child.

Feeling guilty because she blamed herself for not protecting her only daughter.

The guilt in her veins.

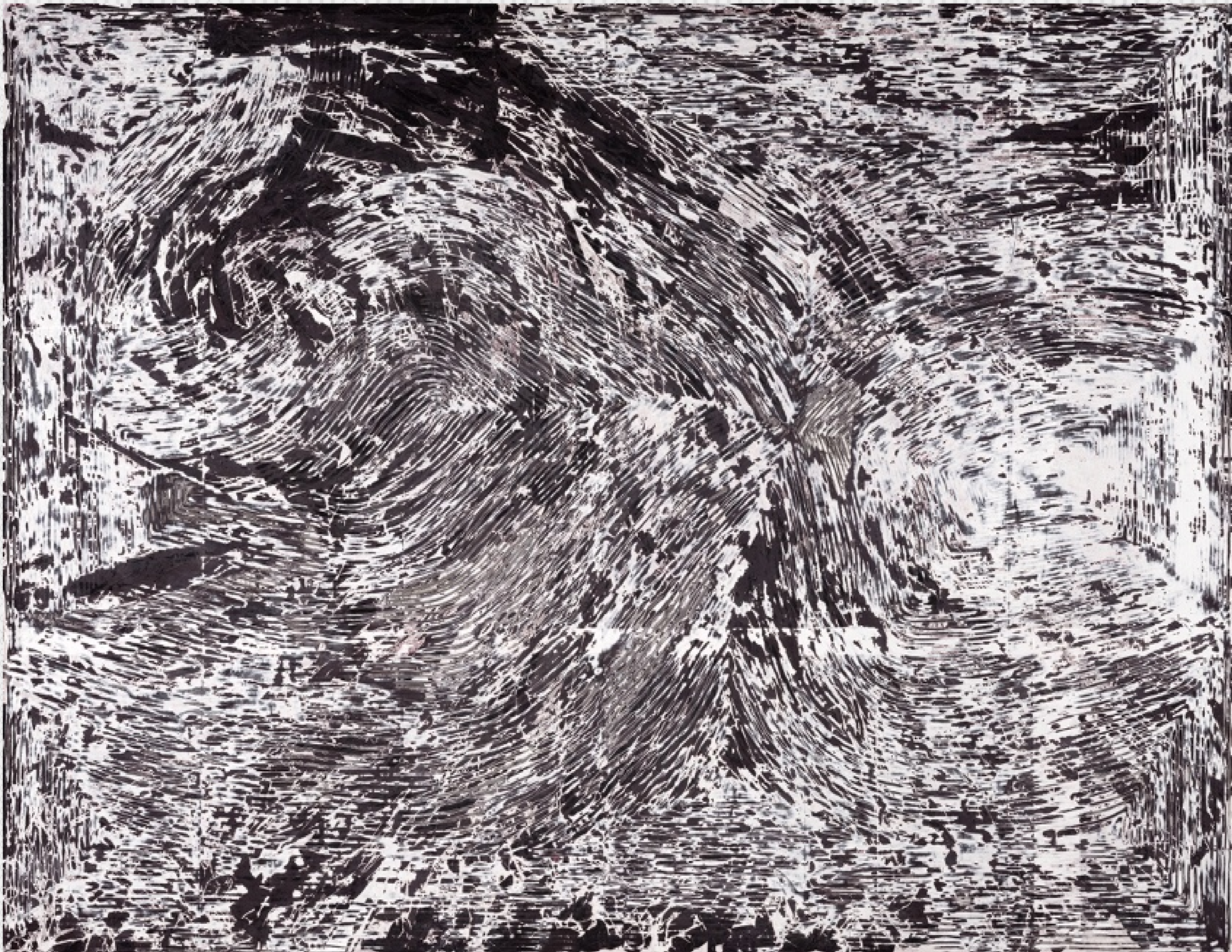
The sorrow of her cry.

The pain in her heart.

Her tears like the rain falling none stop.

Her heart is pure but filled but filled with the guilt and sorrow of her only daughter.

Aicha Souare



Mark Bradford. *A Siren Beside a Ship*, 2014. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Broken Wing

A pink butterfly with a broken wing

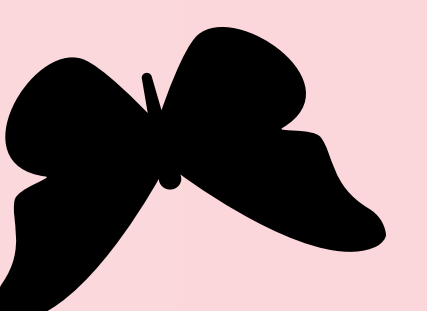
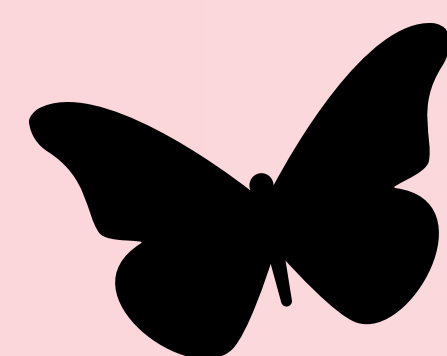
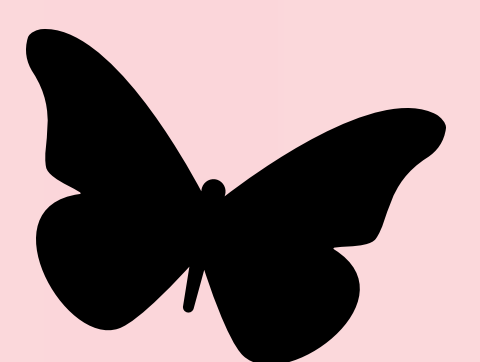
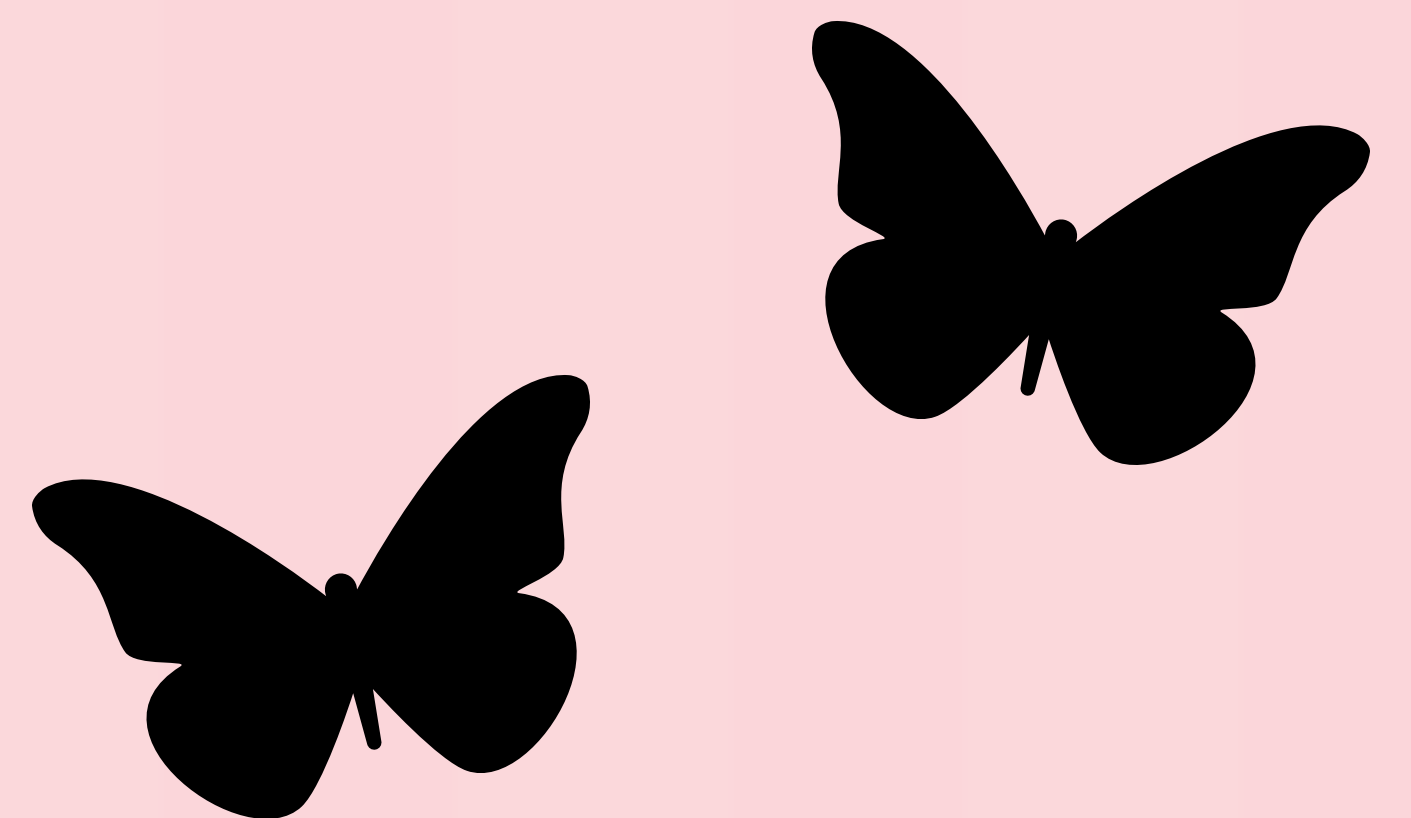
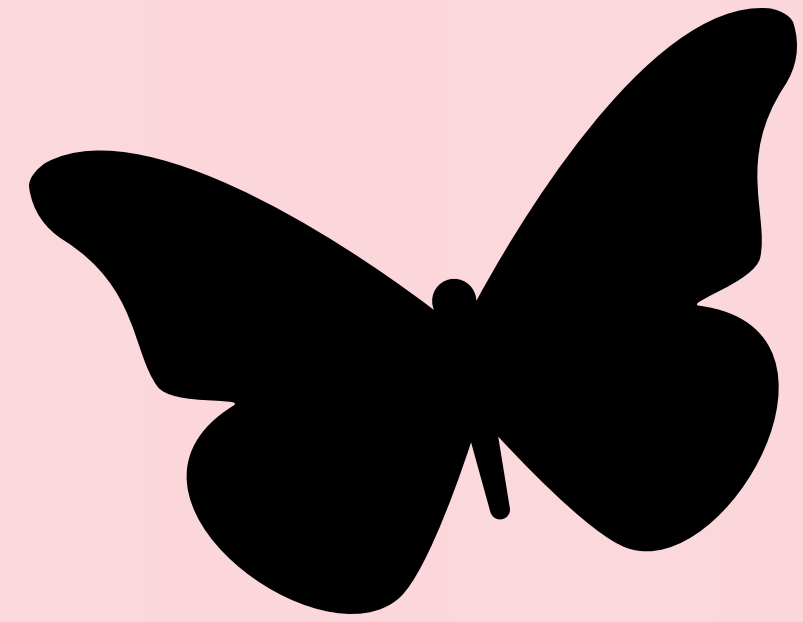
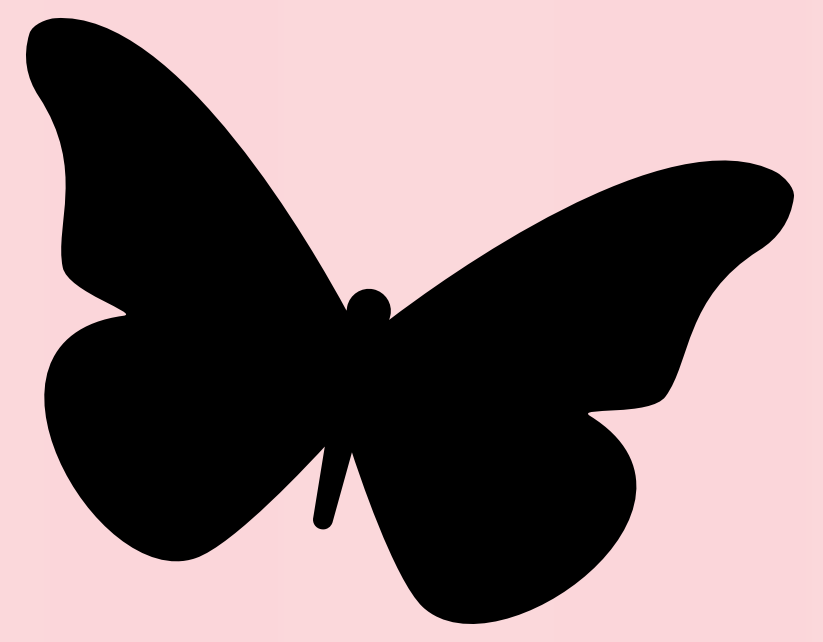
Broken wing

Broken nest

No friends, all alone

It rains no shelter for the broken wing butterfly, all alone pink butterfly dies.

Aicha Square



Butterfly

*"I would
like to say
goodbye."*

when the sun shines down / on the forest green trees

I make my way / through the forest and see

how everything / unfolds before me

sometimes it rains, / sometimes it snows / and sometimes the hail / falls as the winter winds /

blow inside of this forest / I see two paths

one where the thistles and thorns / and the destructive weeds grow

and one where the birds / sing and the flowers / bloom

and the leaves of every color / fall onto the ground

and the mushrooms / grow with a red sunset hue

a path where everyone / walks down. so I decide / that I'll go too

but as I keep on walking / I notice that my bag gets heavy / like a weight

and it begins to feel / like I've got a lot / on my plate

so I take off my bag / and toss it into the river, knowing that / if I kept carrying it

it would only make me even more bitter / like a lemon

the sour taste would seep / into my veins, like the venom of a snake

oh, what a big mistake / that would be, to never let go / of the past

so as I watch my bag flow along / with the stream

I close my eyes, and let myself grow / like the chrysalis of a radiant caterpillar

and as I finish shedding / my skin, I decide to start anew

let go of my old life, and pretend / it was something I never knew

I emerge / as a butterfly / and hope to fly high into the sky

and to my past self / I would like to say "goodbye"

Christopher Gage

*"I can't think of
breath because my
chest has no air."*

My Enemy or My Friend

*Days go by and I'm alone
Yes people walk by, no one notices me and I feel like I'm on my own
Run to my room to lock my pain away
But no one has seen me move
Tears pouring down my face
Like Seattle on a rainy day
Why can't I make it all go away?
The one question that runs through my mind everyday
My body betrays me
I can't move I don't know if I'm frozen here because of me or you
I have a pain inside me I can't explain
It cripples me, I can't think of breath
Because my chest has no air
My mind is muddled
It's funny, grey is my favorite color because that's my world
Depression the worst part of you
I'm screaming why can't they hear me
"You're fine"
How long until that razor becomes a trusted friend of mine instead of an enemy of mine
How long until I lose me?
If that's even me
Depression my worst enemy but the only one who sees me*

Tajannea Jenkins-Crumble

"Ha-ha ha (childlike laughter)."

Growing up is a very interesting thing, when I come to think about it.
A few years ago I was just barely 4' 2", then I *grew*, now standing at 5' 10,
It's crazy the way I look now versus back then.
When I look into the mirror, I see those same curious brown eyes, they've dimmed a bit over the years due to the nulling of life, but still they shine bright.
I notice my hair, twisted up into burnt hot cheetos, faded at the sides,
remember when I used to bald headed, now that choice is mine. Freedom...
No maturity, it's an area of life I wanna *reach*, i'm sitting here looking to You to *teach*,
There's so many levels that You have for me to beat. So many new things, new people to meet.
It's like hitting shuffle on Spotify, hearing all the new songs, it no longer becomes about I.

But I, want love. I thought I wanted love for so long, I chased after it and it got twisted up and we did it wrong. The two of us lost in the bliss of us, it was crazy the feelings were just too much. I took that passion and it grew till it bust.
Like the many pimples on my skin, God you know all of my sins.
I found You. No You found me because I was lost, so lost in this world, blinded by my lust, full of so much vanity my life was a cuss, till I found the one who gave it all for me, at such a great cost.

I'm growing, growing into a man, sorry Peter Pan, but it's not for me no not Neverland. Never again will I get this opportunity. I'm growing.
Into a man, I'm becoming. I'm in the race, and I'm running. Working on my form, trying to learn how to sprint right to be better than the norm. The ball's between his feet a new opportunity for him is born, my father used his talents to make it to that college dorm. But he failed, in Hebrew a sin. He had a son, maybe this time I'll win.

I want a daughter, I want to love her and hold her in my arms, to be her protector, to raise her, to show her how beautiful her soul is to God, and how precious she is to me.
But first her mother, I wanna find a wife who will love me despite the fact I fear her, who won't use her powers to oppress me, who won't put me back in that pit of pity.

I'll wait. I'll do it for you dad, I won't let another female get me like you had, even if they come for me and in my back they stab, I'll hold onto my promise, God help me to prove it to my dad.

I'm growing, growing into a man, sorry Peter Pan, but it's not for me no not Neverland. Never again will I get this opportunity. I'm growing.

Love was skewed by lust, having her was a must, but in the end she broke my trust, I tried so hard to continue to love, but in the end she was just too much.
But God you never gave up on me, no you didn't you loved me continually. Even though I cheated in your face, and in your name I fooled myself into a disgrace, God you loved me.

Teach me that love, show me who I am. I wanna show my daughter and my wife, and prove it to my dad, through my life. And show it off in their face, kill em with kindness instead of using a mace. Love covers a multitude of sins, and in the end love always wins.

Love is an action, it took me a while to see the common denominator of that fraction.

I'm growing up. Something that only happens once, something so beautiful and enjoyable. I love my friends, my family, my athleticism, food, clothes, Your peace, Your love, God i'm so grateful.

Dang!
Help me to grow and become who You want me to be.

Tarnue David

Don't Compare Me

Grace Hambike

It's nice that I remind you of someone you know
I don't mind having common traits and interests
But once you start saying things that make me feel like a replacement
That's when it burns
It makes me feel like a cheaper version of your original perception
I feel like I am not myself anymore
I mean, don't get it twisted, I am not jealous, I'm just irritated
That I can't reach the level on the social scale you have created
But I feel nervous for if I say something
I might make you feel as if you had done something wrong
I want to be honest with you and say that
I feel asphyxiated, self-conscious and reluctant
I thought I was safe with you, but you treated me like the rest of society
I thought you were that one person that saw me for who I truly am
But I guess I was wrong
With the swoosh of wind
Your ignorance and self-involvement grew like a breezy fall evening
I can't keep taking this, I am out here uttering wild cries like a creature in pain

It is 2020 and things are supposed to be different
I, like my brothers and sisters, feel asphyxiated
By the constant turmoil that is associated with having dark skin
In my early teens, I truly believed that if I could be transparent
Life would be better for me
I had to learn to reprogram my mindset
Years of being told I was below average in the beauty department
These changed me
The pressure to be perfect is hard
When it's constantly shoved in my face every single day
People splattering their perfect lives on our screen
I just can't help but compare myself to them
I can't go anywhere nor do anything without being fearful of not being perfect

At school, I fear exams!
Being told that,
“You need perfect scores to get into a good school”
Does nothing but stress me out more
Why do we need these pressurized expectations?
Why can't we be ourselves?
We need to be true to who we are and embrace our flaws
For they make us who we are
Yes, you will have people try to bring you down
Your family and closest friends can turn against you
But, at the end of the day, you need to have your own back
We are all warriors whose spirits can't be crushed!
Regardless of your skin color, gender, and all the other factors
That society loves to judge us based on,
Remember that you are unique and beautiful inside and out
You are doing your best
You are enough
You are not a mistake
Your feelings and thoughts are valid
The panic you currently experience is temporary
You are worthy of love
And blessed beyond measure
Your body deserves kindness and love
Tomorrow is a new day
Keep your head up
Never forget how far you have come
As well as everything you have gone through
All those mornings you felt like not getting up yet did
Proves how strong you are
All those sacrifices you have made
Proves how amazing you are
I want you to always remember
Don't ever let someone's comparison or expectation of you
Define who you are and will become
I love you and God loves you
And you most of all need to learn to love yourself!
Change starts with you
And you need to understand
It doesn't matter who you are
Or what you have been through
It does get better!
Share love and acceptance
Hatred and division is what brings us all down
We need to start building each other up
I have chosen to rewrite my star
And so can you

Grace Hambike

(emotionally lost)

have you ever been lost
maybe even confused
you just don't know how you are
wondering why I feel like this
am I physically tired
mentally tired
I just assumed I'm just physically tired
but really I'm mentally lost
I just don't why I'm like this
I just lost myself again
it's not like hurt or anything
I just don't feel myself
I'm just emotionally exhausted
emotionally confused
I don't know/how I feel
I always confuse myself on how I feel
either I'm happy, depressed, lonely
I'm tired of pretending
I'm tired of convincing myself I'm good
when really I'm not
I act like it's nothing serious
every night it hits me
hits me very hard
wondering why
why I feel like this
why I'm confused
why am I tired
is there something wrong with me
can I ever be genuinely happy
"When you're alone, you think. When you think, you remember. When you remember, you feel pain."
that's how I feel every day
it's like I can't control my emotions
I can control them
but I just get weak at a certain point
and let me emotions control me
take over
it's like a person in me
who controls me
makes me weak
makes my lose myself
makes me depressed
but I overcome that person
I try to be strong
but it's just keep coming
it never leaves
I can never be genuinely happy
I can never understand my feelings
or know where I stand and my emotions
why can't I consistently mange them

Asnas Osuma



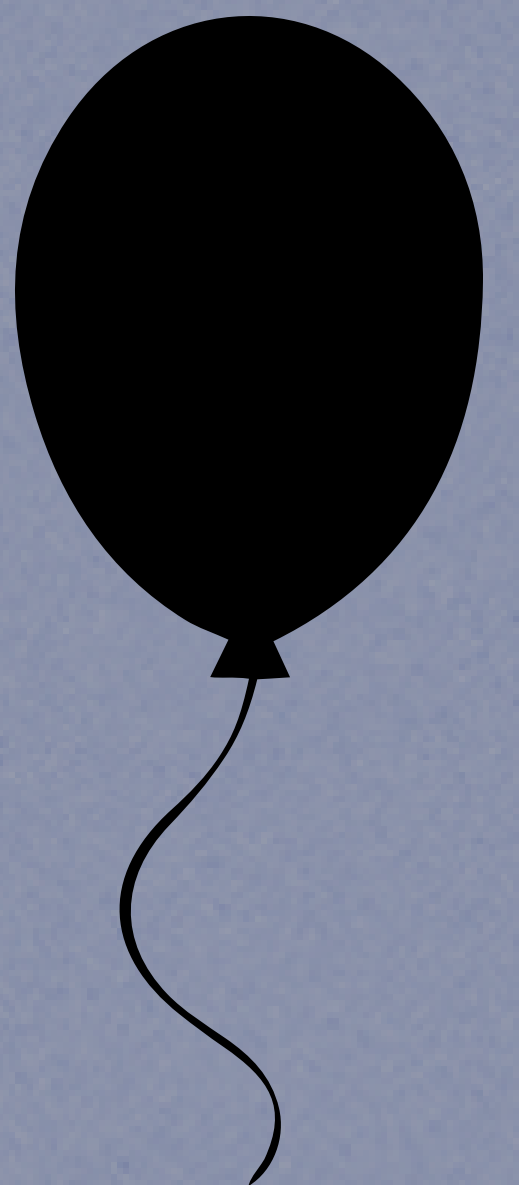
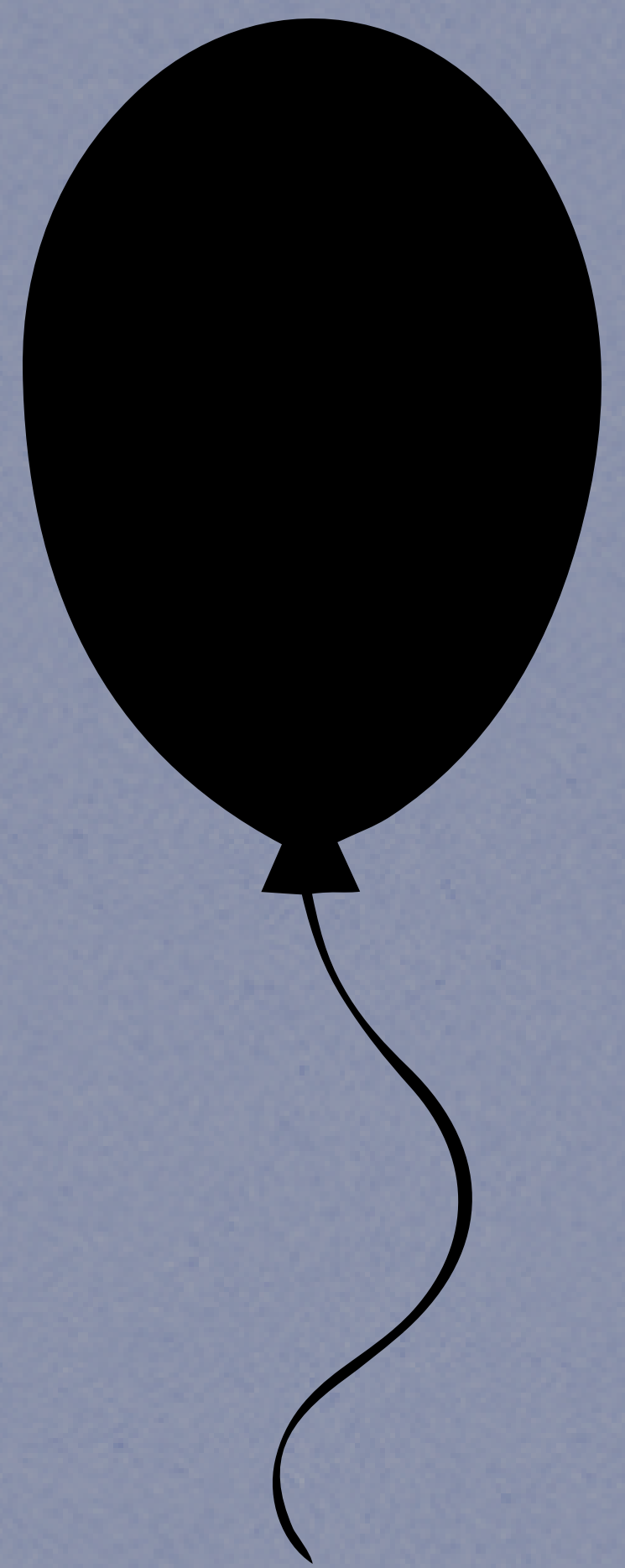
HATRED

Hatred is the worst drug anybody can do. Hatred is feeling anger towards everybody and everything. When you just can't help but to ruin someone's day because you are so full of hate. Hatred is powerful and more common to the world than most know.

Ignorance is the lack of knowledge everyone has on the world. One person could be ignorant and ruin a day just because they don't feel loved. Not being loved can break people. It can lead to not knowing how to love. Not feeling like they are good enough for people. Feeling like everybody they come across they have to push away and not get close because it's going to hurt them in the end when all they are trying to do is just learn how to love. Not knowing how they should be treated in a hateful world. How everything comes with a lesson. Things that happen to people change the way they see things. They become more aware of their surroundings. They become more protective over themselves. They look for danger before it happens. They are brave fighters. The cause of ignorance and hate is because they don't love themselves enough to care for others.

Makayla Hatt

As my mother's belly grew,
So did my anguished pleas,
Longing, yearning for an eternity
Of countless hushed whispers
And the mother's love I could only dream of.
The same love that was so easily handed to him
Spread nothing but detriment and pity
To those without his button nose.
The same lips that planted a kiss on his forehead each night
Pursed in disgust at anything unfamiliarly challenging.
The same ears that responded to his cries for help
Tuned mine out so that they wouldn't ring or cause a migraine.
The same hands that wiped his falling tears
Delivered not-so-kind blows to the faces and hearts of her own.
The same eyes that met his in a time of need
Looked the other way when it came to me.
The same voice that soothed him into contentment
Built me up and broke me down without a hint of guilt;
No intonation, no afterthought.
The last thing I want is for anyone to feel the
Way I did.
The way I do.
So with this voice, I will provide you with a lifetime of reassurance.
There will not be a second of the day
Where you will willingly doubt my regard for you,
Or your place in this world.
With these eyes, I will see the bigger picture.
I will ensure you will not be disregarded like a gum wrapper on the streets
Of New York city.
With these hands I will take hold of every
Moment and cherish them as though they'll
Float away like balloons.
With these ears I will not only listen, but I will hear you.
I will not discern your pain,
Your agony,
And stand by.
With these lips I will utter only words that will
Convince you of your worth.
I'll sing lullabies that bring you peace of mind
And I'll kiss away the pain if need be.
With this love,
The love I could only dream of,
I will love you like no other.



Eboni Dawkins



Sacred Deceit

Preacher

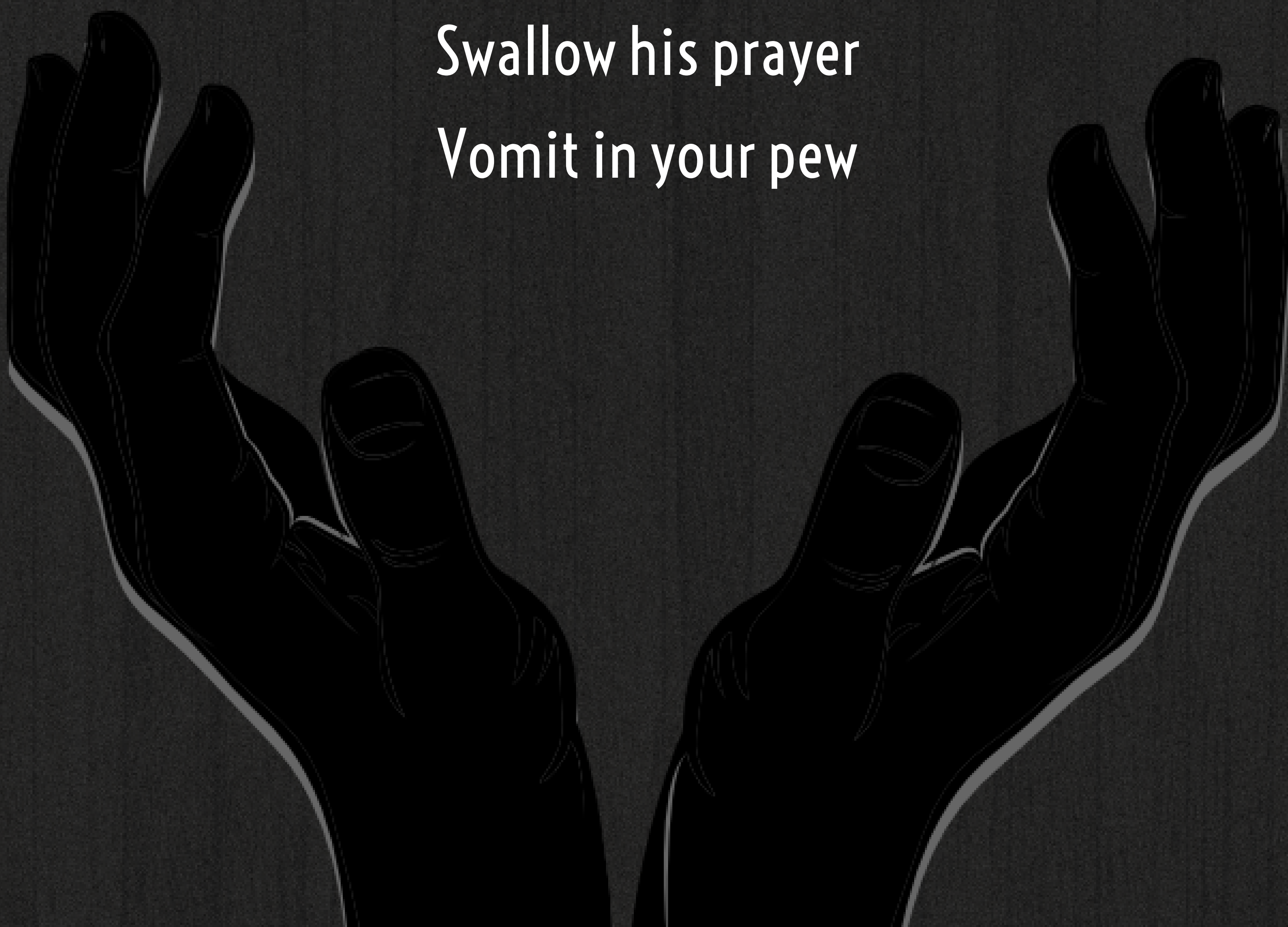
A liar and a preacher

Solemn yet sinful

Unholy but divine

Swallow his prayer

Vomit in your pew





Being female is something that is scary in this world.
We are told to cover up
Be cautious when approached by others
But why?
Why should we have to be scared?
Why aren't men held accountable for what they do?

“Boys will be boys” They say.
But that isn't an excuse for the rape
The sexual assault
Constant harassment
The anger, the hurt
That we as women have to experience on the daily.
Why aren't they held accountable?

Laws are made to ban abortion
But why should a women be forced to give birth,
To a child from a pedophile or a rapist?
Men act that they know more about female bodies,
Then a female is.

“Don't show so much skin”
We should feel confident and comfortable
In what WE want to wear.
Why should we have to cover up?
Why can't they control themselves?
A women is called a slut
But men are classified as players.
Why?
Women should feel free to express themselves,
Without the fear of getting hurt in the process.

Zaey Morris



I r e f u s e t o w r i t e a p o e m

Alex Reynolds

I refuse to write a poem

Every year they make us write poetry

It's always dumb and trivial

"Here's how you make one, it's really quite simple

Just take the topic you didn't pay attention to

And squeeze it like a pimple, make time rhyme dime,

Mime a sublime war crime, but be sure to be ontime"

I refuse to use fancy punctuation like a colon

Or rhyme words

Ya No, spelin is a constukt to so let git rid of it.

I hate poetry, and this isn't a metaphor for anything

I truly hate it

There is no hidden meaning

I hate poetry

"Oh it's just satire and irony"

I just hate poetry

Send it to the void I shout, but eh, it's only 10% of my grade

Who cares if

I refuse to write a poem.

The life of a teenager

Scary some say
Fun some say
Important most say
But what do I say?
I say all of the above
I say it is what you
make it
I say you do what's
best

The high school drama

The fights
The bullies
The crazy peer
pressure
The drugs
The drinking
All got me thinking
Could never be me

The new friends
The school events
The fun trips
The long summers
The weekend plans
These new memories
To last for centuries

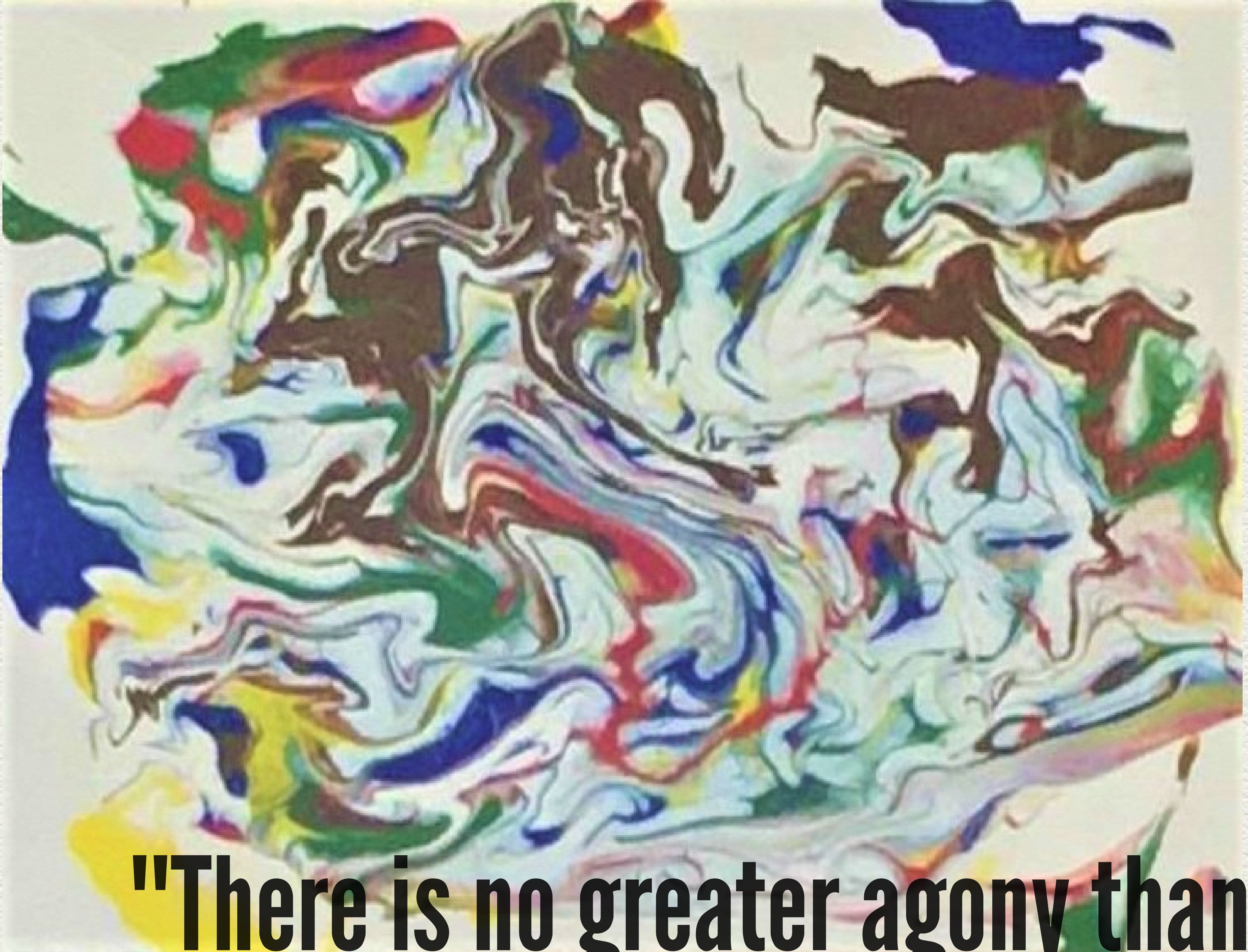
The early mornings
Crowded hallways
Hearing sleepy voices
Seeing moody faces
Some fed up
Some give up
Some heads up
Refusing to give up

The exam days
The finals week
The late night studying
Stressful some say
But worth it I say

The Life of a teenager
Is part of a journey
But not just any
A journey to remember
A journey to progress
A journey to success



Painting by Son Vuong



**"There is no greater agony than
bearing an untold story inside
you."**

- Maya Angelou

Tania Marcus

By Elizabeth Menges



The following is my slice-of-life story based on lengthy research of the Holocaust. Even though Tania Marcus was a real person who survived the Holocaust, this story is merely my interpretation of how the events unfolded in her life.

It was a year after we were transported to our second ghetto that I woke up to the sound of gunfire. My mother, sister, and brother were already awake with wide eyes as a man in an SS uniform yelled at us from our doorway. He spoke in a language I didn't understand, but I saw my mother nod in understanding before her gaze landed on me.

"He says we need to go outside. Now." My mother said worriedly as she ushered us out of the apartment quickly as my mind started to spin. I looked back to see the man forcing the family we lived with out the door and behind us. I whispered to my mother, seeing the panicked expression on her face.

"Why do we need to go outside? What do they want with us?" I asked while looking to see many more residents were with us with even more officers pushing them out.

"I don't know, but you shouldn't worry about anything. It probably is a new drill they are practicing" She assured us, though I could tell she was lying by the way she bit her lip while turning her face away from us.

We finally were outside, the cool night air making me shiver as my mother grasped my hand tightly while my little brother took my other hand in the darkness. Lanterns were lit and I could see dozens of SS officers wearing smirks near their trucks as everyone evacuated the building. I could see hundreds of more people coming out of the street from other buildings too. Soon, everyone was outside and the officers were talking with one another, though it was even more unintelligible from the sea of surrounding murmurs among the other people. I heard my mother suck in a breath, and grasping my hand even tighter as we waited in our own silence for what was to come next.

Suddenly, hundreds of shots rang out.

Everyone screamed and ran, and everything quickly turned into chaos.

Mother dragged everyone to keep up with her as bullets started flying through the air around us and into the night. I could feel the blood underneath my bare feet as I ran across the cobblestone, I closed my eyes to stop the spinning in my head. All of a sudden, I heard a bullet and the 'thump' of it hitting its target very close to me. I opened my eyes to the direction I heard the sound, and my heart dropped.

"Nathan!" I screamed as I saw my little brother on the ground with my hand still holding his. I noticed the bullet hole in the middle of his head and the blood that was pooling on the ground around him. I turned back to my sister and mother who looked back at me with tears in their eyes, and only then did I notice that tears were streaming down my face, too. The screams and gunfire around us brought us back to the present, mother started tugging our hands for us to keep running. I nodded and reluctantly let go of Nathan's limp hand and ran with what was left of my broken family.

Betrayed

She never saw the betrayal coming; most people never do. It had been a cold Monday morning. She had just gotten up and was getting ready for her first day of high school in freshman year. This was a day that she had been excited about with her best friend, like a kid in a candy store.

“I can't wait to see what high school will be like,” her best friend said.

Once everyone arrived at school, they were all given time to walk around the building, meet new people, and visit different classrooms. As Alexa was walking around, she noticed her best friend talking to some of her old friends who she claimed to be really mean to her. Alexa then talks to some of her middle school friends as well to catch up about how everyone's summer was.

“My summer wasn't that bad it was actually kind of fun,” a middle school friend said.

The bell then rang and everyone headed off to their first class of the day. A few hours later school was now over with and everyone went home. “Finally I get to go home and get some rest,” a classmate said.

“Why are you looking very sad mom,” Alexa said.

“Well unfortunately we have to move out and find somewhere else to stay,” her mom said. Her heart then dropped to her feet like going down on a long rollercoaster. Moments later they had packed all of their things and moved into a hotel for a very long time until they could find somewhere else to live. Alexa then became very depressed and sad but at school she did not show those emotions because she didn't want to draw suspicion and ask questions, like "what's wrong," or "why do you look like that." As time went by, it became harder and harder for her mom and older brother to find a home and Alexa soon realized she couldn't get the things she had gotten before like new clothes, shoes, and hair. So she tried to find a way to get a job but she was too young to work to try and help her mom once she found a place to pay the bills.

A couple days later at school it was lunch time and Alexa went to talk to her best friend but discovered that she was talking to her other friends. Alexa then started to feel a weird vibe from her friends and tried to warn her. It's like a strong feeling that is in your gut telling you to make the right decision.

“They are just using you for money, they are not your real friends especially if they did you wrong in the past like you say,” Alexa said.

Her best friend just ignored her and acted as if she didn't even exist and didn't even listen and take her advice. So she just then walked away from them and went to another table with her other friend. Once she was done talking to her friends, her best friend then came to the table and sat across from Alexa. She then tried to act like everything was okay by starting a normal conversation with Alexa. When Alexa was ignoring her and not responding back, her best friend knew that something was wrong with her. She then asked her what was wrong and Alexa responded with an attitude saying, "YOU KNOW WHAT YOU JUST DID DONT SIT UP THERE AND ACT INNOCENT." Alexa feels her body starting to get hot as if she is outside in a very hot temperature.

“Okay well you don't have to shout at me. I can hear you perfectly fine from here,” her best friend said.

“Whatever, just leave me alone there is no point in us talking to each other anymore,” Alexa said.

The bell rings and everyone was now going home for the day. Once school was out, Alexa went to the hotel to discover that her older brother had found an apartment and applied for it and had to wait for the processing of his information.

Two weeks later, his information had been processed and they then found out that they may be able to move in sooner than expected, but they still have to give all of his information to the final boss. Unfortunately, he found out that he needed more paperwork so now he had to find whatever paperwork he needed to get a copy of it from somewhere before the day ran out. He could not get a copy of the extra paperwork needed before the day had ran out, and so the move-in date had been pushed back and they had to gather more money to get extra nights in the hotel. After that long and stressful day the next morning, Alexa then went to school to see that her best friend was still acting as if everything was okay and pretending to be nice to her and hanging out with her. Her best friend then explained to her that she and her other friends now had a problem with each other again.

“So now you want to come back to me because you're not cool with your other friends. It's like you're just using me at this point,” Alexa said.

“It's not like that. I really do care about you. I have just not been in the mood the past couple of days,” her best friend said.

Alexa's mind then started to race and she felt angry because she felt like she was being used for her kindness and forgiveness and on top of that she was praying that she would have a new home.

Moments later while Alexa was in class she got called to the office to find the principal holding the phone saying her mom wanted to speak to her.

“We don't have a new home, the place declined his information because some of the paperwork was in his name,” her mom said.

“Okay, mom. Bye, see you later,” Alexa said.

Alexa then went back to class and saw that everyone was glued to their phones in large groups laughing and some in shock. A boy in her class showed her a video that showed her best friend fighting someone who was supposed to be their friend. After the video went around the whole school, everyone her best friend betrayed her for turning their back on her and started making fun of her. Alexa then got angry and even more sad because she told her this was going to happen but she didn't want to listen to her and now she wanted to act like everything was okay between them, but it wasn't at all. But, she didn't say anything and kept all her feelings inside.

It was now winter break so everyone now had a two week break from school which was good for everyone to take a brain break. Alexa then went back to the hotel where she and her family were staying and found out her mom and older brother went to the grocery store. This then gave her time to sit and realize that she needed to stop hanging around certain people and allowing them to treat her any kind of way no matter who they are. She learned to stop letting people disrespect her and treat her like an option and let people only talk to her when they need something. Also she learned to go with what made her feel happy and comfortable and not do things to please other people. Lastly, to just stay to herself and never open up to no one else because they use that as an advantage to try and control you and take over you. Her mom and older brother had got back from the store with some snacks and food for her and everyone else which kind of lightened the mood.

By Emily Burke

The Music Never Stops

Through my little 6 year old eyes I've always seen music as my safe place and something that kept me calm when I was fuming with anger or had tears streaming down my face. And hearing music when my mom was going through a tough time in her life and relating to it now through my 17 year old eyes. Growing up I have always sang and did my own performances for my family. I have some memories behind songs dancing around in the living room in the hot summer with the ac blasting and having a good time with my family and our parents laughed at us while we were performing because we looked like dorks. Now through my 17 year old eyes I use music as my outlet to express my emotions each song or genre is based on my different emotions at the time and my memories with music are all of me being myself which I try to implement now because now I can be myself and I don't care about what people think of me or how they view my crazy personality. I am a caring person with a tough side so I am like a jelly bean hard on the outside but soft and gooey on the inside. When I am with friends I can make more memories with the song we listen to or a song reminds me of a specific friend and we keep our friendship stronger with music. We remember that certain song or we laugh or have a flashback in our heads. My Nana usually says do you remember this when the family came to your apartment and my uncle and grandfather got paid and we got food and had a "family night." I remember one time me and my cousin were in my room and we were talking about a flashmob she was like, "Emily how about we do a flashmob?" And I said, "What is that?" Then she explained to me what a flash mob is. And I was down with the idea. We went out into the living room and pushed all of my brothers "baby toys" out of the way and into the corner of the living room. My cousin asked my mom to play music and she said, "Hey, Bernadette can you play As Long as You Love Me?" (That's a song by Justin Bieber, by the way.) She said, "Yeah, I can." Then we went out into the living room one by one and did our own performances, even the adults were participating. We had a good time that night and those random family nights are what I am gonna remember for the rest of my life: those good family memories surrounded by music. I can always remember what song was playing and the concept for the music never stops. I've listened to music my whole life and throughout the years. I still listen to music and it's always been here for me and it's been a big part of my life. I use music to express myself and my feelings and I wanted to write music but I can't come up with the "flow". I could always sing but I have stage fright but everyone who has heard me sing says I should keep doing it. I remember one time me and my mom and my brother (Max) were at Walmart and I was singing and this random lady heard me sing and she said, "Keep doing it, keep singing your really good." I smiled and said, "Thank you!" With a smile on my face and my eyes squinting from my smile. This is my story of how music has been a part of my life and how the music never stops.

Thunk! Thunk!Thunk!

Elijah stood in the center of the archery range, spinning and letting go of an arrow at each target he turned to. He stuck a couple perfectly, more missing completely, which only shortened his fuse to microscopic level. He turned around once more to shoot the target behind him but instead his arrowhead met the tip of his older brother's chin, who had his hands raised slightly in defense.

"I come in peace." Eric said calmly, looking his baby brother in the eyes as if he wasn't pointing a bow at him. Elijah paused, bow still drawn breathing heavily through his nose. They stood in silence for a couple seconds before Elijah barely moved the bow over Eric's shoulder and let go. It zoomed past Eric's ear with a *whizzzz thunk!*

A perfect bullseye.

Elijah lowered his bow keeping angered eye contact. "I'm not going to accept your apology, so I'm not sure why you're here." Elijah finally spoke, his tone flat and cold. Eric let out a sigh.

"I know and you can hate me forever. I-I..." He stuttered, scratching his head. "I don't blame you okay. I messed up badly, I recognized that the moment I told them. I instantly felt sick." Elijah squinted.

"If you knew how terrible of a choice that was, why did you do it?" Elijah asked, turning to the bow rack on the side of the field. He tossed his gear on top of it instead of his usually neat placement, he spun back around at Eric now a good amount of distance between each other. Eric paused, Elijah could see the gears turning in his head as he tried to come up with a good enough answer.

"There was just... a voice in the back of my head that was worried about you. This felt dangerous to me. At the moment I thought it would help." Eric responded, taking a small step forward. The younger prince crossed his arms, unamused.

"Eric." Elijah spoke looking down, kicking at the footprints in the field dirt. "Mom and dad have decided every aspect of my life. Where I sleep, where I eat, my friends, my hobbies, how I talk, how I walk, my studies, all of it." He looked up, holding up his pointer finger. "I had this one secret Eric. This one personal choice. I finally felt like an individual, and you ripped that from me." Eric opened his mouth to speak but Elijah cut him off. "I don't care if you thought I was in danger or that he was gonna use me for our money. Tell me Eric what is so dangerous about a shy gardener with an aggressive speech impediment and no other friends?"

Eric stood there defeated, he was terrible with words, as much as he faked it with his speeches and radiating confidence. It was all a show. Elijah gave him a squint, Eric could see the fire in his eyes.

"And don't act all high and mighty like you tell dad everything. Tell me what's your secret Eric?" Elijah could feel the anger oozing out of him like tree sap. Eric gave him the death glare.

"Don't." Was all he could muster.

"Don't what? Say it aloud? That'd be terrible cause then maybe it'd finally be real for you. I know Eric, me of all people you refuse to tell?"

Eric stood there, looking down at his now dirty dress shoes. He itched the back of his neck with a sigh. "They aren't gonna want two of them Eli. Especially not their golden child." He spoke in lowercase, like he was afraid even the bugs in the ground would spread the rumor.

A Note From the Editor

Thank you so much for reading and engaging with this year's publication of *Roundelay*. It was my honor to receive these pieces and share them with our Cooper community. Please consider adding your voice and your art to our literary magazine next year. Thank you to those who contributed. Please continue turning to art throughout your life, and always share that art with your community.





Alma Thomas. Red Rose Cantata, 1973. National Gallery of Art.