

Pen & Ink



2021

Pen & Ink 2021 was brought to you by...

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Special Thanks:

Shoutout to Mr. Mullen for helping us to find a sponsor in the fall, as well as constantly being an advocate for the book by (kindly) annoying people about the book and offering extra credit opportunities. Thanks as well as to Mr. MacConnell for offering to sponsor despite all of his other obligations. Ms. Grady, thank you so much for taking on the book in such a crazy time and helping us make our way through the process like never before. We also want to acknowledge all of the health care and essential workers who have made some semblance of normal possible. And, of course, thank you to our members, those who submitted their pieces, teachers who have in any way acknowledged us, and you, specifically.

Note From The Editor:

Last year's magazine was compiled completely over quarantine by Lucy and I. Comparatively, this year has been much more normal. We had meetings (albeit on Zoom)! We had club members who could find the time (and willpower) to work on a silly little magazine while a pandemic raged on. Obviously, we have faced problems, both new and old, administrative to technological, but here we are! Because of certain issues, the club got a late start this time around, and new problems ensured that every step of the process would be more challenging. This year, we ended up working exclusively off of Google Drive which one can imagine is not ideal, but it was the best we had for our circumstances. Everyone was able to compile their own pages on individual Google Docs, and an intricate maze of folders, files, and documents connected us all together digitally. Meetings were spent both talking to each other in the Zoom void as well as working on our separate pages, together. Gaffes and miscommunications were often. But so were breakthroughs.

Compiling everyone's work is an entirely different monster. As seniors, things only got crazier as time went on. Suddenly, it was nearing the end of the year (!), prom, finals. Events flew at us from all directions, we both had food poisoning (at different times), and senioritis of course stopped by to say hello. I'm writing this at 2 AM on June 7th, after working on this book for ten-hours almost non-stop, trying to figure out how we're going to wrap up this year's operations. You may have noticed that this essay is occupying the space where a table of contents should be. We simply couldn't get it done. And, anyway, with having kept everyone's unique formatting choices (That's right: there is not consistent formatting!), including something as rigid as a table of contents didn't feel appropriate. Our hope is that this experiment encourages people to look through the whole book and not just skip to certain works.

I'm optimistic for next year when things will likely be even more like the old normal. Maybe there will be some in-person meetings and opportunities for more organic collaboration. Maybe we can get back into the computer lab with our old fiend Microsoft Word. Next year, Lucy and I will not be here, however. This is our third year, and each time has been different, so we can only expect that continuity to hold. Now that we know how different things can get, we encourage next year's leaders to take advantage of every normality they can. One thing we would like to keep is the amount of creative output that has fortunately resulted from such challenging times. At 74 pages, this book is almost twice as big as last year's! Hopefully, we (meaning: you) can keep this energy even as we round the corner.

Rachel Plasky

Katie Gilroy

This I Believe

Some say that I'm fake or that I'm untrue
Like I'm a bird in a tiny cage promising
I'm really part of a whole zoo

I apologize when I offend, which I'm afraid is frequent
Because I claim to be one thing when people argue I'm not
Then I feel as though I must repent

That sickening, scorching, suffocating feeling that can kill
It makes one truly suffer, but silly and nonetheless
I've never truly felt it; for my faith holds still

Simply, I laugh along, for I know something that fills me with pride
That each person who wants to, He will let follow
With their own unique stride

Because I may not be perfect or fit your ideal believer to a T
But when I go to look at myself in a mirror?
I see Him standing beside me



Photo by **Katie Gilroy**

Ella Grygielko*Autumn*

The autumn leaves, like a fiery blaze
 Blows across the forest in the fall breeze
 Leaves on the ground, the woods is like a web
 Birds fly from tree to tree with ease,
 Gathering sticks and leaves to build their nest
 The rattle of the leaves and sound of the birds,
 Makes this forest the perfect place to rest
 The beauty of this place can hardly be put into words
 As I stroll through these woods, I can hear it say my name
 There is something special about the creatures here,
 All of them live side by side in peace

Ella Grygielko*Winter Feeling*

Winter shuffled,
 Through the streets
 Turning left and right
 Chilling houses on the route
 All throughout the night

Anonymous*Symbol Poem*

The rain pouring down
 Like the tears falling rapidly down her eyes
 Going on for a while
 Sitting alone as she cries
 Eventually they fade away
 But the darkness still fades over the sky
 And a sense of despair is over her mind

Anonymous*Abstract Poem*

A dove standing still
 With its white feathers
 The innocence and purity flowing through it
 Like a child before the storms of the world
 flood its head
 Knowing nothing of war and hunger

Just trying to live its life
 The children bright eyes ready to take on the
 word
 Until they get broken down
 By the horrors in it



Photo by **Eli Hockeppel**

Lola Kirkwood
Black in America

He is trapped
Trapped in his own body
Where he feels on edge
A constant reminder that he is beta
And the white is alpha
Who started this lie?
Who made him feel this way?
He tries to remind himself that he is great
But it's hard for him to believe it anymore
Help him

Julia Taylor

Kisses

K: is for the kindness you show people

I: is for the way you envision your future and what you want as a person

S: is for the way you show people your heart and who you are as a person

S: is for the way you show/express yourself and your passion for something

E: is for the way everyone may admire your hard work and how you present yourself

S: is for the way you share your thoughts with others and wanting people to know their voices are being heard and seen.

Klaudia Schuszter and Malena Duque-Baird

Inspired by the novel The Catcher in the Rye, one of my favorite 10th grade English assignments was "Four Days of Freedom". The assignment forces you to put yourselves in the shoes of the protagonist, Holden Caulfield, as he gets every adolescent's wish; freedom. You are to write a diary entry as if you were in Holden's situation. This next entry is from that assignment. Enjoy! -

Alex Lauff, staff member

Diary Entry #1 Saturday, 9:43 pm

Dearest beloved,

It is here. The sun hath riseth upon the skyline and the day hath come. I doth hath left my place of education from which I doth hath been expelled and am set to embark on this the journey of a lifetime. Okay, jeez, I can't talk like this anymore; it's not like I'm Shakespeare or something. Bottom line: I am freeeeee! I spent my last few hours at school last night packing and making a game plan for my four days of freedom. After much deliberation, I decided I would skip all of the "touristy" city shenanigans and just spend my days in the hotel. And, let's be honest, public transportation is terrifying, and museums get way too much hype anyway. I figured that, if I wasn't going to spend my wad of bennies on all that "touristy" hullabaloo, then I at least deserved a nice hotel. Thus, I present to you... the Millenium Hilton New York One UN Plaza! Jeepers, that's a mouthful if I've ever heard one. The website said it was only \$89 per night, which seems like a remarkably good bargain for a 4-star hotel in New York, if you ask me, so who knows, maybe I read it wrong and I'll end up getting charged \$89,000. Well, c'est la vie; that's why I brought the big bucks with me on this trip.

On this my first day at the Millenium Hilton New York One UN Plaza— wait, I'm just going to call it the Milly Plaza because that's a lot easier to say. Okay, anyways, I arrived at the Milly Plaza and did what any sensible person would: I took myself on a 2-hour and 46-minute long tour of the hotel. Need a hotel map? Bam! Not anymore if you've got me with you! Truly, I memorized the hotel layout down to the last ice machine. I'll still probably forget it all in 3 minutes, but hey, it was a nice adventure nonetheless.

And, now that I know every inch of this hotel (except, of course, for the parts that are "staff only"), I'll be able to craft the ultimate trip advisor review. It may seem like a waste of time, but it'll give me something to do instead of worrying about what my parents are going to say when I go home on Wednesday. I don't think they'll be *too* mad because, like, sure, this is the *millionth* time

this year that I've been kicked out of yet another boarding school, but they're my *parents*, so it's not like they can *despise* me. And it's not like I asked to go to boarding school in the first place! But hey, I guess we'll see. Until then, it's time for a brief TripAdvisor review.

Terrifically Tantalizing Trip Advisor Review (Part 1: The Hotel In General)

The Millenium Hilton New York One UN Plaza's list of amenities spans nearly as long as the hotel's name itself. It includes a pool, a gym, a multitude of (well, just three) restaurants, and room service. The pool is beautiful and large. Michael Phelps would certainly approve. As for the gym, I was thrilled by the amount of equipment. I don't know too many people who go to the gym on vacation, but if you are one of those people, you will thoroughly enjoy the array of treadmills, dumbbells, and yoga balls galore! So far, this supposedly-4-star-hotel has 5 stars in my book!

Well, diary, that is all for today. Tomorrow, I plan on stopping by the convenience store kiosk that I saw on my way into the hotel. It's right next door, so no scary subways or busses are required.

Gotta boogie!
-Malaudia

P.S. I've been testing out different names for myself, so I think I'll experiment with how I sign-off on these diary entries. After all, things could go seriously downhill once my parents find out I've been kicked out of school, and I may need to go into witness protection. So, it feels like the right move to get another name lined up myself, just as a precautionary measure.

Diary Entry #2 Sunday, 11:36 pm

Hey boo,

So, I began my day by venturing down the elevator down the hallway. I clicked every button so all of them would light up all pretty. Every time the door opened on each new level, I got to see the corny stock images framed on the hotel walls. The ride was a little long though. My plan was to find the little convenience kiosk right next to the hotel and spend some of my extra dough. On my way there, I ran into a homeless man, as you do in New York City. He was wrapped in a raggedy old blanket with his fluffy dog who looked like a golden retriever. He also had a cardboard sign in front of him that said "Homeless and Hungry." I felt sorry for him, so I kept him in mind when I was in the kiosk. It was filled with typical NYC merchandise: I ❤️ NYC t-shirts and baseball hats, endless amounts of keychains and shot glasses, and then a little corner filled with toiletries. I got the amazing idea to make little gift bags for my hotel neighbors since I have so much moolah. I bought a box of Ziploc bags and a bunch of goodies and snacks I thought the people would enjoy. I also picked up a hot pretzel and a coffee for the man and a hot dog for his dog, as a little act of kindness.

That adventure took quite some time, so when I got back to my room, I decided to bust out the room service menu. I have never gotten room service before, so I *had* to splurge. What caught my eye on the menu was the chicken alfredo pasta, as well as the garlic breadsticks. New York cheesecake was my choice of dessert. Shiz was bussin'. After I inhaled my meal, I got to work making my goodie bags. I asked the Amazon Alexa to play a nice little jazz playlist, as that is very much the vibe New York City at night gives me. I thoughtfully filled each Ziploc bag with candy, a keychain, or any other presents I purchased. I also wrote little messages on sticky-notes for each bag. I had way too much fun doing all of this.

Terrifically Tantalizing Trip Advisor Review (Part 2: Room Service)

The Millenium Hilton New York One UN Plaza's room service is something you cannot miss out on during your stay. The menu has such an abundant selection of decadent cuisine. Whether you choose the sweet or savory path, you will experience a beautiful symphony of flavor for your taste buds within every bite. The grub is guaranteed to hit different. This is definitely a 5-star experience.

I will now be going to bed as I am pooped from all of this grubbin' and gift wrapping.

Peace, love, and pogo sticks,
-Klaudialena

Diary Entry #3 Monday, 10:52 pm

Greetings & salutations,

I crashed pretty really late last night since I stayed up for so long packing the gift bags for my fellow hotel-goers. Because of this, I ended up oversleeping and missing the hotel's continental breakfast. In fact, I even forgot to set an alarm on my phone last night because I was so tired! All of the hotel signs and pamphlets said the breakfast ended at 9:55 am, but I woke up at 10:02. Of course, I could have just ordered room service and enjoyed having slept in, but I was determined to make a waffle in the big fancy waffle maker that has a timer and goes "beep!" when you have to flip it. And, just for kicks, I'd *have* to get some cereal from the fancy spinny cereal dispensers because those are just too fun.

So, I shuffled into some sweatpants (a more ~sophisticated~ look than my flannel jammie pants), pulled on a hoodie, threw my hair in a bun, popped on some socks and shoes, and speed-walked down to the breakfast lounge. When I got down there, breakfast was over and Gary the custodian was wiping down the sadly empty tables. I mean, I wasn't *too* disappointed, because I had expected this to happen. I did *not* expect what happened next, though! Just as I was turning around to return to my room and order room service, Gary put down his rag and stopped me. He told me he had saved one of everything from the buffet just for me! What?! Gary?! Gare-bear?! That is just so nice!!! I took the two styrofoam boxes up to my room and gobbled— ew, no, "gobbled" is a weird word. Let me restart. I took the two styrofoam boxes up to my room and enjoyed my breakfast. (Mkay, "enjoyed" was definitely a better verb. That was a good call on my part. Go, team!)

Anywaysssss, once I had eaten my delicious breakfast (thanks again, Gaz¹!) and gotten all clean, fresh, and clothed, I began assembling the little gift bags for my fellow hotel neighbors! A Statue of Liberty keychain here, an I ❤️ NY mug there— ya know... all the things! Once I had assembled (ooh, fancy words!) all of the bags, it was time to start delivering them. Could I just walk down the hallway on my feet and leave the bags in front of each hotel room door? Yes, yes I could. But could I instead snag a decadent gold luggage cart from the lobby and elegantly ride my tall chariot down the hallways whilst distributing my goods to my fellow neighbors? Yes, I could do that, too. And so I did! It was really fun riding around the hallway. That's the kind of thing I'd always *say* I'd do but then never do it. At this point, though, what do I have to lose? That's right... not much! So, all in all, I'd say it was the right choice.

Once my hallway horseplay had come to an end, I hopped on over to the pool for a quick swim. It was around dinner time, so everybody was down at the hotel's restaurant, and I was all

¹ Okay, wait, can we just take a moment to talk about how "Gaz" is a nickname for "Gary"? Um... what? Since when?! That is so weird but also so fabulous!

alone in the pool. Even though being alone is scary in general, I must admit that it was pretty relaxing and peaceful. After my swim, I took a shower and got all cozy in my jammies. Then, for dinner, I took a more classic route and went with a cup of ramen that I had bought at the convenience store kiosk yesterday. Tonight was one of those cozy curl-up-in-bed-with-a-blanket-and-ramen-and-a-movie nights, so that's exactly what I did. I had gotten a movie from the RedBox next to the ice maker on Floor 5, so I wasn't stuck watching the R-rated movie with lots of fight scenes and crying in the rain that was playing on the cable TV.

I'm getting tired, so I will leave you with three questions and a Terrifically Tantalizing Trip Advisor Review, and then it is off to bed for me. 1. Did you know that people still use RedBoxes to rent movies? 2. Who puts a RedBox next to a hotel ice maker machine? 3. How do the movies get inside of the RedBox? Is it someone's job to go around to all of the RedBoxes and refill them? I guess we'll never know... unless we Google it or something.

Terrifically Tantalizing Trip Advisor Review (Part 3: The Custodial Staff):

The quality at the Milly Plaza does not stop at the pillow chocolates; rather, it can be seen all the way to the custodial staff! The custodians are very kind and generous, and they also do a fantastic job at keeping the hotel clean. If I could give them 10 stars, I would. In fact, I will. 10 out of 5 stars, Gary! You know who you are! My icon! My legend! My king!

Love ya, broski!
-Mdia

Diary Entry #4 Tuesday, 5:06 pm

Helluuuuurrrr!

I decided to begin my day by taking advantage of the hotel gym. During my tour on my day of arrival, I saw a couple of those typical fit, healthy, most likely vegan New Yorkers, and they really encouraged me to attempt a quick little workout. I also really had to work off the alfredo from last night. Definitely grubbed a little too hard. I ran on the treadmill for a few minutes, then got embarrassingly tired, embarrassingly quickly. I attempted to use some other random machines, but they were wayyy too complicated to figure out. After I decided I had enough, I discovered a sauna next to the little locker rooms. I was shocked, but at the same time disappointed in myself for not finding it during my exploration the other day. I of course had to spend a solid hour in there. I love how boujee New York can be. It was so relaxing, and no one came in while I was in there. It really helped take my mind off what was to come when I arrived home.

I decided I was ready to go home today, because I had already done all of what there was left to do in the hotel, and I feel prepared enough to take the upcoming heat from my parents. I checked out of my hotel, and decided to make one last stop; the Cat Café! I figured my best option was to rent a Citi Bike, since it was not too far, and it would be fun to explore the city a little more. I biked past more street performers than I've ever seen all together in my entire life. They were all so talented! It really brightened my day, at least before I have to face whatever will happen at home. I finally arrived at the café and I could already see all of the cats and kittens inside. I got so excited! I have a pet cat at home, but I haven't seen her in so long since I've been away at boarding school. I entered, and immediately at least four cats ran up to me. All worries: instantly gone. I ordered the Cattuccino, literally just because of the name. I took my grand ol' time in there, as one should, not just to procrastinate seeing my parents, but so I can't meet as many of the cats as possible. My favorite was the fluffy white one named Milo. He even curled up in my lap and took a little nap at one point. I am not gonna lie, I was very tempted to take him home with me. Or, who

am I kidding, I wanted all of them. The Sphynx cats could stay, though. Those ones are kind of creepy looking, although still very sweet.

Unfortunately, the time had come. I decided to order an Uber, as I still somehow had a decent amount of cheddar leftover. I have only ever ridden an Uber once before, so I was very much nervous. I have heard some pretty wack stories about them, but the driver is actually so sweet! I am writing this diary entry as I am sitting in the back of the Uber. This lady is definitely taking the longest way possible; even *I* know my house isn't *this* far away from where I was staying at the Milly Plaza. But that's okay, I would do it too for a check! AH OH MY GOSH. We almost just crashed into a streetlamp. Jeez. That was intense. Okay, I need to go and focus my attention on not ending up in a fiery car crash. But before I go, here is one last Terrifically Tantalizing TripAdvisor Review, just for kicks and giggles!

Terrifically Tantalizing TripAdvisor Review (Part 4: The Cat Café):

This café combines the aspects of flavor and fun to create an unforgettable experience. Not only are all of the cats absolutely adorable, but the items that make up the menu are truly remarkable as well. 10 out of 10 cattuccinos for sure. The calming jazz music played throughout the café really is the final cherry on top.

Catch you on the flippity flip!
-Klna



Photo by Eli Hochkeppel

Anonymous*Yesterday*

Yesterday was a year ago

The time ran away like a thief in the night
 Leaving us all in anguish and spite
 Our sorrow diminished, for we are all
 grieving
 But what is life if not painful seething

Getting there feels so hopeless
 But we keep pushing through the motions

How much longer can this last,
 Before we are dragged back into our past?

A year spent in the gutter
 And we are left to ever wonder
 Will our ticking clocks continue on,
 While time stops moving on?

Yesterday was a year ago
 But how much longer till tomorrow?

Amaya Burson*Grey Sickly Dream*

She woke up, the harsh grass poking into her skin like needles. Looking up at the grey sky, she felt as if rain was going to rip from the sky at any moment, drenching the parched grass along with her in it. She sat up slowly, realizing she didn't know where she was. In the distance, were two grey houses that almost blended in with the sky. She could find help there, she thought. Clumsily making her way across the brown sandpaper, she came closer and closer to the houses. But she felt dizzy, the grey sky, grey houses, and sandy grass contorting in her view. She was falling, she realized, her last feeling of raindrops running down her cheeks like parallel rivers. She sat up with a start, coughing in the swirling dust, hay poking her back, water dripping down her face. She ran to the window hoping, just hoping. But it had all been a sickly twisted dream.

Amaya Burson*The Grand Canyon*

Looking down you see where you want to go
 The warm brown tones mixing to form a smudged picture that is textured
 The crescent mountains stretching for miles
 No sound except the huff of breath as you exhale a cloud of black smoke
 The closer you reach your goal the warmer you become
 Shedding layer by layer
 You look around miles to go
 But all you think about is the present
 The quite
 The feeling that you could go on for miles all alone yet still be surrounded
 You change as you reach your destination

Into something you never thought you could become
 Something better
 You always thought there was no such thing as "a life changing experience"
 One moment that could change everything
 But you were remarkably proven wrong

Amaya Burson

Your Own Perspective

You fight your way through the crowd in a whirlwind
 You try to fix whatever's not broken
 You cover up whatever's not spoken
 You look at yourself imagining what there but it's not
 What you don't realize is
 You're perfect
 You're worth it
 You're everything to someone in this world
 You don't need changing because there's nothing to change
 You need to except yourself
 Love yourself

Amaya Burson

When You Dream of Rain

Deep rumble
 Bright flash in the charcoal sky
 Rain
 Pouring in
 Clouds sobbing for something they've lost
 Sirens in the distance
 View on the street
 Streets painted in clear glossy coating
 Shadows and reflections turning the city into pieces of art
 Car down below
 Creating a splash zone in its wake
 Raindrops on the windows
 Rolling down in an uncalled race
 Only to find that when they reach the bottom
 They'll be swept away to start the everlasting cycle once again

Maddie Gillespie*My Summer*

Sun shining on me
 Endless ocean and bay swims
 Countless ice cream scoops

Sea Isle City
 My summer home and abode
 82nd street

Biking to Juice Pod
 Breakfast of 2020
 Acai bowl please!

Rising and shining
 Got to get my workout done
 Pre-season, bring it

Sunrise on the beach
 Perfect days perfect people
 Sunset on the bay

Summer come back now
 I can't wait any longer
 To live my best life.

Anonymous*The Hallway*

Mark didn't let on that he was scared. He was supposed to be the adult. His young daughter, Suzy, clutched his hand. They scurried through the dark, open space, sliding their feet on the hardwood floor. The hallway was wide, long, cavernous. In the distance, they saw the faint light of a candlestick next to the wall. Their eyes adjusted. They saw no door. No window. No place to escape or get out.

Clock! Mark heard someone coming. *Clock!* The sound of their footsteps drew closer and closer, but they were still far away. *Clock!* This step vibrated through Mark. A chill ran up his spine as he looked frantically around.

"Hello?" Mark gasped for air. *Clock!* They drew closer. Mark covered his ears. *Clock, clock, clock!* He fell down to the ground.

“Mark?” Suzy screamed. “What’s wrong? What do you hear?” Her voice faded. All he could hear were the footsteps. *CLOCK CLOCK CLOCK CLOCK!* They were running now. Mark curled up on the ground. They stopped.

“Suzy,” he whispered, “the person, are they gone?”

“What person?”

“The footsteps. You didn’t hear them?”

“No. She didn’t,” said the voice of a thin woman.

Mark felt the cold breath of the woman on his ear. He was still on the ground, but now he lay motionless. In the distance, he heard Suzy call out.

“Mark? Where’d you go? I’m scared.”

His eyes peered at the woman. She was but skin and bone, wearing tall, black, high heels. Mark tried to talk, but his mouth wouldn’t let him. He tried to breathe, but his lungs wanted to fall. He lowered his brows at the woman, angrily.

“You have no chance,” she said, “but she does.”

A light flickered a few meters down the hall. Suzy crying next to it. Mark blinked. The woman was still there. Standing over top of him. The candle went out, the woman still visible. “Maybe you will see her again,” she said and walked toward Suzy.

Suzy looked up. Through the tears, she saw the blurry image of the woman.

“Come on darling,” the woman said. “Let’s get you home. The hallway opened and a doorway appeared. Mark blinked and they were gone.

A loud speaker came overhead. “*Test subject 46.Fail.*” Mark heard the announcement, and let out his last breath.

Alli Henry

The Deer.

Shy and timid.

Strong and beautiful.

Graceful and peaceful.

Fears its weakness.

Afraid to show who it really is.

Scared to let others in.

Loves to be out in nature.

Loves to be alone.

Afraid of reality.

Grace Kurtz*Behind a Door*

Behind the hidden door is a house. You can't see it from the outside because it is tucked inside a luscious mountain. You open the door and it leads to a warm living room decorated with antique paintings and geometric carpets. There is a woman. She welcomes you with open arms and a gentle smile. You feel safe. It is the first time you have felt comfort in a very long time. The scent of baking bread fills the air and right up your nose. Delicious. It has been hours since you last ate. A brush tickles your ankle. It is a soft kitten. You bend down to pet its back as it lets out a precious purr. You wake up from the dream. You are back in bed at home. You traveled to your happy place.

Cara Flynn*California*

The sky is orange
Harbingers in the shape of
Clouds watch over us

Elise Doherty

The beach is like a home away from home.
When I am there, I am as peaceful as a humming bird on a tranquil Spring morning.
By the end of the day, my skin is as pink as the sky during the eight o'clock sunset.
My hair color is like a freshly groomed young yellow lab.
The feeling of walking through the sand is as calm as the sky moments before a storm.

Elise Doherty

I am a dolphin
Jumping high towards the sky
Feeling like I could fly

I stay with my pack
Never thinking of turning back
Always around my friends
The party never ends

Someone Like You

I have heard that thou hast since settled down;

Thou hast' found a lady but now married



I heard that in thou'st sweet dreams, truth was found;

Harp, she giveth what I hath not carried.

Dear friend, wherefore art thou v'ry much dainty?

'Tis strange thou art hideth from starry stage;

If't cometh out of blue, shall I beest plenty?



I couldn't stay afar, holding back my rage.

I had hoped that thou would seeith my face;

And thou's heart bid, for I, love 'tis not o'er.

Nev'r mind, I'll findeth one like thee f'r thou's place

I grant thou, a wish of luck, if a goer:

Prithee, forget not me, thee hath said what

Love either lasts still 'r 'twill wound by it's cut.

Grand Central, 3:18 P.M.*Kara Gardener*

When I saw the station screen light up with “BOARDING” I wanted to feel some sort
 Of relief
 Some sort of weight lifted off my shoulders
 No more stress of your words coming back to
 Hallow
 Haunt me,
 No more or your
 Gracing
 Glancing over the city streets we used to rule
 A train to many is a bridge, a beam, a river
 A light that connects one thing to another
 A train to me is a eulogy, a funeral, a mourning
 The dawn of a morning without you beside me may be the darkest of all to bear
 The truest truth about trains though
 Is that no matter how long you chase your missing piece
 Down the platform, waving through a window,
 The concrete will, must, has to give way
 You and only you are left to face the burden of what has moved on

Eyes to the Sky*Anonymous*

A star glows through darkness
 Like holes poked into a paper plate.
 Specks of light scattered
 Like eyes guided into the universe

Fireflies glow through the night
 Like stars for smaller eyes
 Flying light pulling back the dark curtain
 A glance into the show.



Numb Darkness
Amaya Burson

Photo by Katie Gilroy

Surrounded by people

Electricity in the air

Bouncing from one person to another

But stays away from one

Stand in the crowded room

Face blank

Expressionless

Reach out to grab a smile

But miss and feel nothing but the darkness of the cool empty air

Cry until the tears run out

Cry until you feel numb

Numb

Watch as they walk past
Never taking a second glance
Take the time to ask a simple question
"Are you okay?"
Look up into worried eyes
And finally, find someone to confide
So ask the question when the time is right
Or walk away and change nothing
Help no one
Although were there any signs in sight?

THINGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY JOURNAL

ELLA GRYGIELKO



Us*Lola Kirkwood*

As we speak to each other
 We know what the other is thinking
 There is something deeper than what is heard and talked about on the surface
 That only we know
 Those around us can't tell
 Unless they are mind readers
 Unless they are told
 But they are neither, they are clueless
 Only we know how we're feeling inside

The Cookie Jar*Jonah Sun*

The world often can be represented by a cookie jar
 Always a very desiring temptation
 The cookies can look very tasty
 A little bit can be okay
 A lot can be detrimental

Everyone fights for the last of it
 Sometimes no one will reach for the jar
 This however is when there are only crumbs left

But it always starts again
 The Jar gets refilled almost as soon as it is emptied
 The same patterns the world can fall into
 Despite what history tells us

The only way to stop the patterns
 Is to take only what we need
 And be content with the treasures already in ourselves
 The Cookie Jar

Innate by Christopher Potter

Born to be oppressed
 Put in a cage right from the start
 Did he do a wrong?
 Perhaps they know he did not
 Perhaps they don't even care.



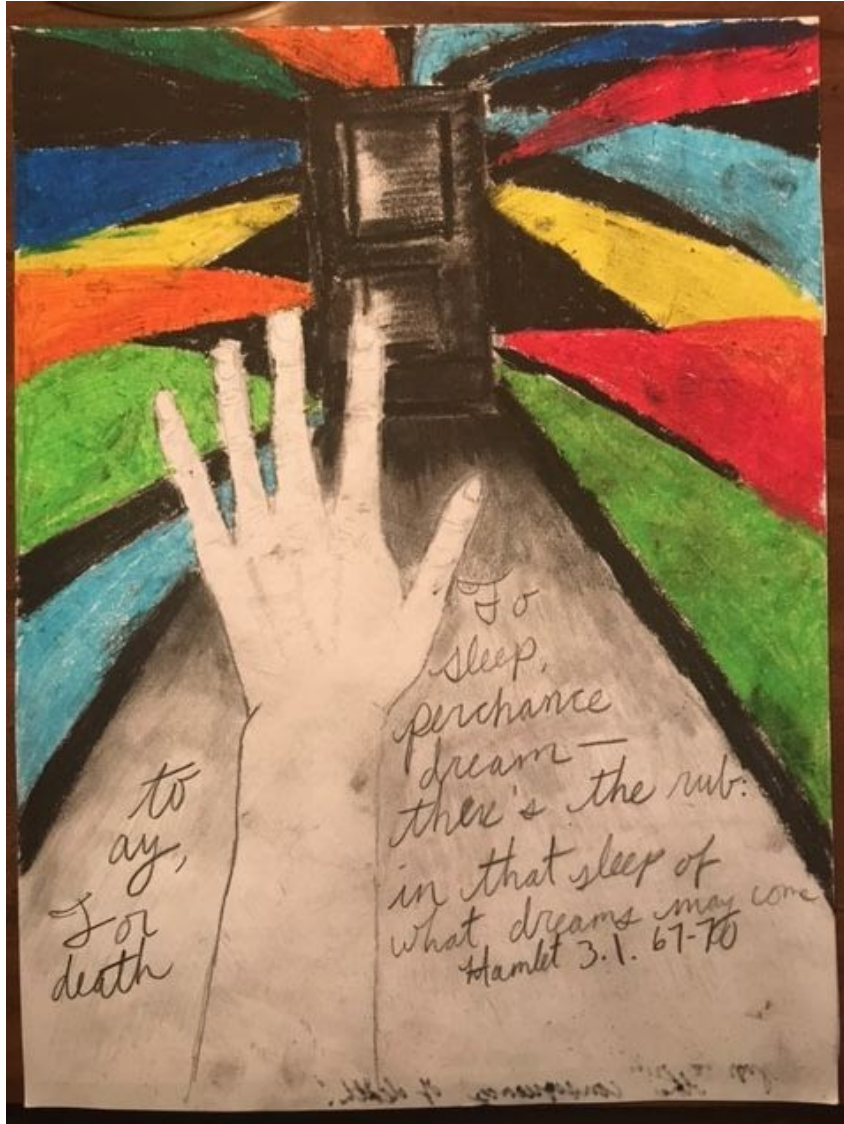
Table by Chris Mainardi and Aidan Friel

Crushed Girl Scheming

Kara Gardner

I can see you in my peripheral
 The red dust track swirling around our feet, sun beaming through the mist
 Blood in the air
 Last summer, I was naive
 Baby, innocent
 Fool
 You lead me to the city and took me to all the best shows
 Let me hold the map and decide where to go
 Took me up to the bars and the stars that I thought I could finally reach
 Took me up to the rooftop and swept me off my feet
 Swung me around till the sky blurred
 Let go of my hands, just another dream deferred
 Crumpled and cracked on the city streets
 The stars blotted out and the moon obsolete
 I lay there in silence, paying the price
 I watched as you cackled and then slunk away
 Back to the present and a revenge that's mine to seek
 I can see you now

Sharper, shinier, sleepier than before.
 Before the moonbeams and toasts and galas galore
 I see a wolf, a hunter, a killer
 But under this porcelain mask there's a girl
 Who knew she was wronged
 And now you're right here beside me
 And this time
 It's personal



Art by Alex Lauff

**The Park Across The
 Street**
Natalie DeFrusico

The creaky swings break the
 silence like crickets in the
 night.
 The crows perch themselves
 on the small dugout.
 Noises from the woods
 emerge like something is
 watching you.
 The fields were overgrown
 and unmanaged.
 I sit on the home bench as if
 I'm playing a game.

Lost baseballs are scattered all over the field like they are landmarks for memories.

Photo by Katie Gilroy



Why I stay up at night. Allison Walker

He is why I stay up at night,
He floods my mind with that damn smile.
Am I on his? a common question I ask myself.
The answer is yes.
He and I against the world.
He waits for me and I run to him,
he smiles knowing I will,
he gets me to laugh my sorrows away.
The darkness consumed me,
he pulled me into the light,
making me forget the craziness that is my life,
helping me remember the joys I once felt.
He guides me through the hard days,

and walks by me through the good ones.
 Through all my ups and downs, lefts and rights,
 through every rollercoaster of emotions,
 he stays by my side.
 He lives in me,
 his love, care, and support is the blood in my body.
 I walk tall and hopeful because of him,
 and my smile is now real because of him.
 He floods my mind with that damn smile.
 He is why I stay up at night.

Anonymous

The crowd goes wild, another touchdown for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Will sighs and tries his best not to get agitated. "It's not that hard, just take them down," he says under his breath. He has been a die hard Ravens fan since birth and now with this game, his blood is about to boil. Will hears yelling to the right of him and takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and turns to see a bachelor party going on in full swing. "Great," he sighs, "just what I need." The guy sitting next to him turns and says, "You know, my buddy is getting married and I would appreciate it if you would not sigh every time somebody breathes or blinks." Will clenches his fists and his breath starts to get shaky, "Sorry for your 'buddy' over there, it's hard to watch people continue to get trapped and lose power in a marriage." The new guy ignores his comment and continues to party with his friends. The crowd roars, the Ravens are getting demolished, Will can feel himself losing control. The guy turns back and says, "It's just one game, you never know they could still win. I'm Joe by the way," as he sticks out his hand. Will tries his best not to roll his eyes and he reluctantly shakes his hand, "Will." "Well, Will we better get to know each other. It looks like we will be here for a long time. These Ravens are getting destroyed," Joe says with a little chuckle. Will does not find this matter funny, not at all. How could the Ravens losing be funny to any one, especially some drunk groomsmen. Will suddenly stands up and blandly says, "Haha. Well, excuse me, Joe but I need to run to the bathroom." "What an odd guy," Joe mutters to himself. Joe was secretly a Ravens fan but he never told anybody. Not that it truly matters but everybody he knows is a Steelers fan. He would get kicked out of his group if they found out, he is able to speak Wookie in his group and he is able to escape from the world. Not many people realize that he can speak Chewbacca, only "nerds" can speak it but Joe is not a normal nerd. Joe has always been good looking, popular, and considered a jock. He was a nerd in disguise as his friends say. The Ravens get the ball and start carrying it down the field, "GO, GO....I mean... GO GET THEM STEELERS," he cheers. Luckily his friends were so hung up on trying to get a picture they didn't hear him. Will comes rushing back and slams into Joe. "Woah, what's the rush," Joe exclaims with a laugh in his voice. "Sorry, my bad, I didn't see you there," Will says embarrassed. "It's definitely a little hard to miss me standing up but whatever floats your boat, haha." "Uhhhh...yeah sure haha," Will says quietly. Will sits down with a sigh, hoping Joe won't bug him anymore. Suddenly the football stops, "What's going on..." The announcements come on, blaring it states, "Everybody please move to your closest exit in an orderly fashion please.

Everybody please move to your closest exit in an orderly fashion please. Everybody..." Will looks to his right and sees Joe start to cluelessly follow his friends and leave. Will follows him and taps him and says, "Joe...right? Do you have any idea why they are making us do this?" "Yeah, I have no clue, but I mean everybody else is going so might as well," he says with very little confidence. Will is suspicious, this has never happened before at a game. He sees a group of police officers and after a few seconds of wondering if he should go up, decides to talk to them. "Hey, do you guys know why we have to leave?" he asks politely. "There was an anonymous tip....but you didn't hear that from us," the police officers state and then quickly change the topic. Will has been a detective for his whole life, so he lived for this kind of stuff. He was going to figure out what and why this is happening. With a determined look he turns around and starts to look around but he runs right into the back of Joe. "Woah, calm down man," Joe exclaims. Will mentions for Joe to come in, he quietly whispers, "There was an anonymous tip.." Joe pops his head up and starts to yell. "SHHHHHH." as Will has his finger over his mouth. "We need to figure this out, I am a detective, I do this for a living but I need you to stay here and distract everybody," Will says in a very hushed voice. This was Joe's time, he couldn't hold his secret back any longer he had to tell him, "I can speak Chewbacca, I'm coming," he demanded. "I'm sorry, you what," Will says, holding back a laugh. "Whoever this person is, we need somebody to be able to communicate with him or her. I am coming," Joe says strictly. "Well, no fighting with that, you are coming," Will turns arounds and mentions for Joe to follow. Will watches very carefully as the police officers turn their backs to him, he creeps past them. Joe stumbles and kicks over a trash can.

The Wolf In Me by Christopher Potter

As the sun starts to set
 The wolf starts to lurk
 The grind to collect
 It is no easy work
 The wolf must hunt
 Must search, must pry
 The Wolf must do
 It's best to survive
 And if the wolf
 Can find its way
 And stay out of
 The devil's play
 The wolf will live another day
 Its coat a smooth, silky grey.

Boardwalk Blisters - Kara Gardner

Can you reminisce about a past that never was?
 Can you fondly recall events that you've conjured up just in your lonely mind?
 Sometimes I like to imagine it.
 All of us, together.
 Each summer, we'd grow up in our own kingdom, a shingled palace by the sea.
 A flock of seagulls, a gaggle of sisters.
 It would've been waves and freckles and reunions.
 Would have been.
 If I shut my eyes tight,
 I can almost hear the waves.
 And if I forget all that's between us,
 I can almost convince myself it happened.

Yanna Spirokostas

Lanky,
 Skinny and boney,
 Small
 Fragile
 Is the polar bear.
 Temperatures are rising,
 Ice is melting,
 Food becoming unavailable.
 Climates that used to be sustainable
 Are quite frankly no longer
 Climate change.
 Affecting the animals,
 In cold severe weather.
 The polar bear.
 anorexic,
 as it scavenges
 For any food it can catch .
 Its body in shock,
 As a drastic change in lifestyle is catching up.

Anonymous

The sun shines brighter

World turns into a fire

There's no time to play

There goes wildlife

Fleeing from the to-be-hell

As the earth warms more



When Doves Fall - Amaya Burson

Looking in the pale grey sky
 Watch a dove fly
 White as a ghost
 Angelic as the heavens
 Blending in with the sky
 Find peace
 Watch it fly
 Squint to see its figure
 But see a line of red rose blood
 Moving swiftly the dove is streaked in red
 In pain
 In death
 The red dove is weighed down by blood
 And falls
 Never to rise again without revenge

Marilyn Matthews

Trees so sweet and strong
 Swaying in a broken breeze
 Killed by our cruel poison
 Daft is the filth floating in water
 Choking creatures of the deep
 We ride on into the dim horizon
 Unaware of what we trample on the way

Photo above and below by Katie Gilroy



Anonymous

A bench beneath me
 Wood sturdy like that of
 The trees
 Surrounding me
 In every direction
 A creek burbles to my left
 Water flowing as if it had somewhere to be
 Children laugh like the birds cry
 Then birds laugh as the children cry
 Knees scraped and bruised from
 Falling off the swings
 Or tumbling down the slide
 Children always fall down
 And they always get back up again
 Like a salmon swimming upstream
 In a creek
 That burbles to my left





2 above photos - Eli Hochkeppel

Xihu Lake - Sarah Yang

The gleaming yellow
moon
Peeks through the thick
clouds.
Its yellow hue illuminates the
evening gloom.
The glassy waters of the lake
lay perfectly still,
As if frozen in time.
It reflects the image of the
glowing golden orb,
Like a mirror made out of the
clearest glass.
Delicate lotus flowers float
Lazily on the lake surface.
The fragrant aroma of the flowers
Smells like the sweetest candy.

Spaced Out - Anonymous

My mind remains blank

I stare out in front of me

Nothing meets my gaze

Happy Breaking Girl - Anonymous

There's a scream trapped in my head I open my mouth and words come out but the scream stays in the back of my throat

Like an afterthought that never disappears I can't keep it from crawling out from my ears
Years do nothing but continue the scream it gets louder and louder louder still

Breaking breaking an eternity of silence

But it's never been silent never been quiet just a forever of white noise that sounds like a voice but the voice is your own reaching, reaching for something and the dark crescents under your eyes aren't lack of sleep anymore it's you you're breaking cracking around the edges you're a perpetual paradox always on the edge of alive and dead always reaching grasping for god reaching for the burning inferno of the sun always barely grasping the unknown factor there is no common ground there is only eternity copious amounts of space but no space you're cramped a never-ending cornucopia of thought but you can't speak your thoughts because thoughts are the biggest scream of mankind only the scream will never touch the surface it will always just float



Senryu - Anonymous

Tears start falling
 Sadness overwhelms me
 I shut my weary eyes and sleep

Christopher Potter

The River flows downstream
 Like a man on his way home
 But what could it possibly mean?
 The man may very well know
 The River is him, his present and past
 Learning to let go
 And when he feels he's free at last
 The ocean he will know

Photo - Eli Hochkeppel

Four Days of Freedom Journal – Maren Evans

Saturday, December 10, 2019

Okay, so I'm dead. Mom and dad, if you somehow find this, I'm sorry. I'm gonna try to make the most of this, but I'm so darn nervous. I kinda just spent the day checking into this hotel that I found. I couldn't make myself check all the prices and all that stuff, so I pretty much just chose the one I was closest to. It cost me 500 bucks, so I still got a ton of money leftover. I got a pizza for lunch and ate the whole thing, I have a habit of stress eating, and this is just so darn nerve-racking. The morning was the most stressful part, I gotta say. I got some tokens for the train from a friend at school, and then I booked it. I was so paranoid about missing the train, so I got there extra early. This was like 7:30 by the way. I finally got on the train for one of the first times in my life, and I went to a place near Central Park and checked into the hotel I'm at now. It's around 5 pm now, and I'm just thinking of watching whatever movie or show I can find on this tiny TV in my hotel room, and calling it a night. I also ordered some Chinese food, it'll be here soon. Oh, also, the wifi here is terrible, so I can't talk to my friends or anything, that's a bummer. I'll make sure to write in here tomorrow. Peace.

Sunday, December 11, 2019

Hey, I'm back, and I'm still crazy nervous. This morning, I literally spent an hour rehearsing what I'm gonna say to my mom and dad when I get back on Wednesday. I have no idea how they'll react, and that's one of the big reasons I'm so darn anxious. Will they not talk to me at all, or will they bombard me with questions? Will they send me off again, or ground me till the end of time? Who knows? The suspense is killing me! Last night I went to bed surprisingly early, and I got a good amount of sleep. I thought I'd be up all night, but I was just so tired. Around 10:30 after my nerves had settled a bit, I had a buffet breakfast from the hotel, and let me tell you, it was a million percent better than my school's breakfast. I had some eggs, a chocolate chip muffin, and some coffee, and it put me in such a better mood. My nerves didn't suddenly vanish, but I at least felt like goin' out for a bit. I went on a walk around central park, even though it was freezing, and stopped by another pizza place for lunch. Hey, after suffering through boarding school food, it felt nice to eat whatever I wanted. Then, I went ice skating at a rink in Central Park for the afternoon. Not to brag, but I was the #2 player in my junior hockey league a while back. I skated for a couple of hours, actually, and stopped for hot chocolate a couple of times. After that, I went back to the hotel room, got some takeout, and called it a night. I wanna go on a tour or something tomorrow, just to see the sights while I'm free for a bit, so I'll make sure to do that tomorrow. It's practically 11:30 pm now, so see ya!

Monday, December 12, 2019

What's up? This morning, I went on a cool little scenic tour of the city, it was nice. I savored it because it's not like I'm ever gonna be allowed to do what I want again. I got some lunch and all of that after too. Then, after lunch, I got tickets to a techno concert!! I had seen signs for it around, and I had to go see it, so when I finally got good wifi, I bought a ticket. My parents absolutely hate that kind of music, so I knew that this was my only chance to go to a concert like this. It was absolutely amazing. It was in this big open venue, and I heard a ton of my favorite tracks. It's like my remaining nerves just melted away with the synths and 808s or something. I'll never forget that concert. Man, now I really just don't wanna go home and face my mom and dad. But, I gotta, or else they'll be even more worried and disappointed. I'm writing this at like 3 in the morning, I had no idea I was at the concert for so long. It's like time just flies listening to techno. Good night!

Tuesday, December 13, 2019

Alright, I'm gonna be honest here, I'm even more nervous now than ever. The concert last night was a nice distraction, but I feel like this is it. I have to leave bright and early tomorrow morning. All-day today, I kept thinking about whether my parents got that letter yet. I wonder what their reaction will be. I didn't do much this morning, I kinda just hung around and watched a movie in my hotel room and got a few tacos for lunch. Then, it started to snow. I decided to buy a sled at some toy shop I saw yesterday, and I went out sledding. I went by this hill in Central Park and had a good time. It reminded me of the snowball fights and fun outdoor stuff I used to do back at school. After that, I showered and warmed up with some hot chocolate and went to a nice Italian food restaurant for my one last dinner of freedom. Man, I just know I'm not gonna get any sleep tonight. But, bye for now. I'll write about tomorrow, if I live to tell the tale, that is!

*Top photo - Katie Gilroy; Bottom
photo - Eli Hochkeppel*

Breathe - Sarah Wachs

take it slowly.
each day,
one breath,
one step.

i let sun beat down on
my skin,
i feel breeze tousling my
hair as i speed down an
empty road.



music etches into my skin, each note cleansing my mind like no coping mechanism ever could.

i listen to voices-
the heartbroken,
the fearful,
the strong.

i find solace in the lives of others,
shared experiences,
pain and joy and just-
breathing.

i live for others.
my ribs ache as my heart crashes
against them, my brain swollen
with thoughts and ideas and
defiance,
anger,
power.

so much in my mind.
so i learn to take it slowly.



The One it Takes - Ethan Parmet

Hope is a thing with feathers
 Gentle, but easily swayed
 The breeze can pick it up
 And spread it, every which way
 The wind, the clouds, the higher it goes
 The further hope will spread
 But one shot down, must all come down
 Hope comes out another day
 The one it takes
 To bring hope up
 Reaches out to the clouds, and up to the sky
 Just a lift is all it takes
 To reach its former high
 But it always takes more to stay afloat
 To soar for all to see
 The hope you give, helps us all
 Join in, and let hope fly free.

Jonah Sun

Swimming through the deep blue
 I know where I'm going
 though it may not always look like it
 I always have a purpose
 Distressed human in the sea
 Had to gather my friends because it might as
 well have been me
 All my life has been about helping others to a
 certain degree
 Being a dolphin in the ocean makes me feel so free
 But sometimes being able to help others isn't a guarantee



Art - Jordan Barbee

Bathypelagic Bogeyman - Shavonne Mirre

In the soupy thick of night
 An artist rose from bed,
 Mind filled up with unearthly fright
 And visions of thalassic dread.

Yet the nightmare persisted in his core
 Wrestling rest from his objective
 Inflicting inspiration like never before
 All-consuming, it became his directive.

The accustomed tools would not do,
 This midnight piece was peculiar
 Shrimp-tail brushes, paint of seaweed goo
 A sail-shred canvas from the port sewer.

The delirious artist set to work;
 From darks and lights he rendered
 A finned abomination in the murk,
 A magnum opus engendered.

One final flick of a prawn
 to finish the slimy chin
 and then something had been drawn
 That never should've been.

'Twas a bathypelagic bogeyman!
 With a needle-toothed, gaping maw
 And bulbous eyes giving the room a scan;
 Climbing off the sail, it ate the artist raw.

Untitled - Ella Cetintas

Accompanying photo - Eli Hochkeppel

Hidden at the bottom of a stairwell that began on the street, a small Danish bakery sat hidden away with its red and white striped awning. Looking down from behind the iron railing you could see the swirling cursive font that decorated the large shop windows and, looking just past that, you could easily spot a crowd of hungry New Yorkers waiting for their mid-morning bear claw.

The bell hanging from the door chimed as I pushed it open and stepped foot into the place that was beginning to feel like home. I was immediately greeted by a plethora of delightful aromas and the chatting of a few dozen people trying to decide whether or not they “want a coffee with that.” As I



walked past the long counter I peered into the glass displays to find a sweet that would hit the right spot. The glare of the glass was strong but I had already committed the bakery's menu to my memory, I simply enjoyed peering at the delectable baked goods. Looking past the counter, I caught a glimpse of the oven being opened past the window that led to the kitchen and suddenly I was overwhelmed with the scent of cinnamon and freshly baked pastry dough.

One of my earliest memories as a child was sitting at my grandparent's kitchen island watching my grandfather bake cinnamon buns. Both the counter and I always ended up covered in flour. My grandmother had always insisted that I save the sweets for after lunch, but what she had always failed to realize was that my grandfather had already let me lick the icing off the spoon. My grandfather would just wink at me and my tiny self would burst into a fit of giggles.

I felt a nudge from behind and realized that I was next in line to order. As I was greeted by a woman with a thick Long Island accent, I decided without hesitation that today I was getting a cinnamon roll, and yes, I want a coffee with that.

My Rock - Christopher Potter

You have been my rock for longer than one can imagine
 Anytime I needed help you swooped in like Aladdin
 Anytime someone got me down, or tried to make me sadden

You were there for me, you'd pull me out if I was in a casket
 You were always the first to be there if something were to happen
 Now you're with me and I'm calm, got the eggs all in my basket



Art - Jordan Barbee

Decision Making - Duncan Riegler

There she was, standing in the
 doorway.
 Waiting for my next move as if her
 life depended on my decisions and
 she had no mind.
 Merely a silhouette that scoffs at me.
 As she yields to my thoughts, I notice
 her figure which forms that of the
 vital muscle.
 The human body relies on the heart
 for so many things.
 Responsible for emotions and pulsing
 of blood.
 Except, that is what they want you to
 think.

While vital, a muscle is all it is, all it ever will be.
 Pulsing is the objective, of course, but emotions entitle falseness behind it.
 Like how we view it from labs of study and research; a hollow looking muscle.
 The brain is actually responsible for those emotions.
 I wouldn't even be where I am without it.
 This decision to walk through: why is it challenging me ever so greatly?
 I can't let my emotions toy.
 I refuse to be ventriloquized as a lost soul and demand I make my decision based on the trueness of
 self.
 The heart is not hollow.
 I lied.
 Just a solid sac of deteriorating muscle we once thought we needed.

The Open Field - Connor Knorr

the wind blew
 through the long, overgrown grass
 of the open field.
 the combination of the sights and sounds
 was as peaceful as a chorus of doves.
 a small drizzle began to fall,
 as refreshing to the grass as a glass of
 lemonade
 on a hot summer day



Left photo - Eli Hochkeppel, Right photo - Katie Gilroy



Unnatural Hunting - Connor Knorr

one great big horn,
 valuable as all,
 searched for by many,
 this animal,
 countlessly hunted,
 by animals it shouldn't be hunted by.
 it's rough skin offers some
 protection,
 yet not all,
 against an unnatural form of hunting.

The Golden Girl/Beauty at the Beach
By Lola Kirkwood

Her hair is golden
Undulating as she walks
Little waves placed perfectly throughout her butter-colored hair
Her face is fair and clean
With piercing blue eyes, but not just any blue
Blue like the color of a flame that pops in and out of a fire,
The blue that amazes those who look
She lays on her towel and stares at the sun,
Her hair unifying with the sand as one golden whole
She rests her eyes, hiding the blue from everyone
Making the world a little less colorful



Lotus Feet
By Jordan Barbee

Alone & Lonely
By Anna Rogomentick

Being lonely,
And being alone
There's no one around
Just you in your home

Alone is a word
So hollow and bare
Lonely however
Means people don't care

Alone in a room
Or lonely at heart
Although they are different
It's hard to tell them apart

So try your best
To keep others around
But if they don't stay
Don't make a sad sound

You don't need others
To make you feel wanted
Because if you depend on them
When they leave you'll be haunted

Dollhouse of Brain Objects By Ella Mottola

It seems like seconds are the units of your lost innocence
 Mere units of fragile, fleeting remembrance they are
 These units are quick but they are captivating
 A second can feel like a shock
 The wind weaving it's way past your face
 A reminder that you were never a risk taker
 a second can be a trigger
 which scares you
 it feels it should be slow
 like your stream of thoughts before you fall asleep
 It feels like it should be more special than just a transient moment
 because you feel so strongly for it
 Smells are buttons on the remote of your conscience
 And sounds are light switches in your house of brain objects
 In your doll house your barbies have pretty hair, and pretty skin
 And pretty skirts, and pretty plastic heels to match

I guess you're lucky your barbies taught you beauty and affinities
 Cause you've always loved simplicity
 But you have yet to find it
 for just a second you do feel you're lucky



Urban Anxiety By Jordan Barbee

Metamorphosis
By Kara Gardner

What happens when you cut to the core of a bad person?
 Once you make it through the muscles and skin and bones
 Are you left with a filthy skeleton?
 Is the ribcage tinged with greed?
 Are their ligaments attached with bad deeds?
 Some people would tell you that the heart would be shrunken
 Maybe green with envy or white like the dying embers of a fire
 But I think it would just be red

Raw

Vulnerable

Just another wound, waiting for time to heal what it cannot fix



Grief
 By Brooke McCloskey

Grief is a permanent
 open-wound.
 Always bleeding,
 Never fully healing, and
 Forever painful.
 Grief is suffocating,
 Surrounded by nothing and no
 one,
 Yet slowly drowning
 Everything and everyone.

Art By Grace McAlexander

*"The days resembled the nights, and the nights
left in our souls the dregs of their darkness."*

- Elie Weisel, Night



March for Their Lives
By Jordan Barbee

Night Significant Quote Poem

By Nathan Grzesik

Life is but a story, a constant motion,
There will always be a man in my place
before me,
Good is merely a notion,
What is done with it is up to our
emotions,

There will always be shadow in light,
Always a firefly in the night,
Always a cave even on the brightest of
days,
A star just beyond a telescope's gaze,

What we do as humans defies other,
Whether people will be able to see their
mothers,
Good cannot just be understood, written,
or spoken,
It must be practiced everyday until
success

Hatred toward others can only cause
stress,

Why hate when you can love?
Why follow when you can lead?
Go on and create your own path and
preach good
To those in need.

Trials of Winter (and art) By Thomas Ross

Within my home of black ceramic,

I stare longingly at the window.

I've spent many seasons on that sill,

Where light streams down onto fleshy limbs.

But now thin arms reach toward the clouds,

Hands clasped in prayer for better weather.

I am met with a grey sky, whispers;

They are clouds that won't bear any fruit.

Without its sheer, blinding radiance,

How can I be expected to see?

My arms fold, trying to preserve warmth.

Soon with nowhere to bask, I will die.

How I long for spring to come early.



Storm God
Anonymous

Silk clouds roll over.
The landscape already drenched
In her excellence
Awaiting the purity
Held in her hands, blocking light.

Watching

By Paul Johnson

I awoke in the void of life, an endless abyss. The air was cold and gravity was only a memory. I existed in a new plain. There were no smells or physical feel. The sensations I knew to signify life were suddenly gone. I was dead.

Opening my eyes, I saw the world around me, or the lack thereof. An open space that seemed to go on infinitely. The sky and ground morphed into a large canvas of grey. Alone in the void existed a black, ghostly figure. If my sanity was to stay intact, I had to make contact. As I walked, I felt no ground or earth yet still was propelled forward.

"Hello?" I stuttered. The voice that came out of my mouth felt almost alien. The figure turned. Close to 8 feet tall, it towered over me. It had no real face besides two red eyes which stared through me.

"Where are we? What is this place?" I pressed.

"I am Mortem," the figure bellowed. "An angel of death, I am here to lead you through this stage of the afterlife. Because of your actions in the mortal world, you are to watch over the lives of those still there," the ghostly figure said.

"What did I do?" I asked, slowly realizing the haunting reality: I didn't remember anything. No life, name, or memories, I was, both figuratively and literally, a ghost.

"Follow," Mortem commanded. We walked forward only several feet. There was a hole in front of us, as a split in realities. The angel put its hand forward and an image swirled into existence through the hole. It was a street corner in a city. A taxi had stopped at a red light as a businesswoman crossed the street. I smelled hotdogs. I saw all these things yet remained in the cold void. It was so surreal, like the most immersive movie ever made. With its hand still stretched out, Mortem snapped and the hole became significantly bigger. Without skipping a beat, it walked right through and gestured for me to follow. On the other side, it felt like regular life, or at least what my mind told me a regular life looked like.

"Here, they do not sense nor perceive us. We are ghosts," Mortem said. The taxi turned a corner and stopped. A man in a blue winter jacket stepped out holding a briefcase. He handed the driver a \$50 dollar bill, smiled, and walked away. His brown hair was in a neat and tidy buzz cut, though he clearly hadn't shaved in days. Walking at a brisk pace, the man made a sharp turn into the apartment building to the right of him. We followed. Inside, he walked up to a man with a grey beanie and vest on.

"Goddammit John, what took you so long?" the man in the beanie said.

"Sorry," John said, lighting a cigarette. "Some pig booted my car last night. I had to take a cab."

"I could'a picked you up," the man in the beanie said. John shrugged and the two walked over to the elevator.

"Who are these guys?" I asked Mortem.

"Paragons of lawlessness," he said. I nodded and continued walking. When the elevator door opened, we went in. On the ride up, John whistled in between puffs from his cigarette. Shifting his weight, he couldn't keep his eyes in one spot. Then suddenly, he turned to the man next to him.

"So, uh, Tony, who is this guy we're meeting with?"

"Lyle Roth. He's a decent lockpicker with less than stellar aim, but the guys got connections." Tony said.

"So how do you know him?" John asked.

"We had seventh-grade english together. I didn't know him then. I met him at this one dive bar a month or so back. Don't sweat it, he can be trusted."

"You better be right," John said under his breath. After several seconds of silence, the elevator rang and the two stepped out, turned to the stairwell, and went to the roof. I stopped and looked at Mortem.

Up top, the wind was strong and sharp on your skin. To our right, Tony introduced John to his associate. Wearing a wife beater and black sweatpants, he had what seemed to be a pitiful attempt at a sole patch.

"Well I'll be damned," he laughed. "So you're John? Boy, Tony has told me too many stories about his little brother. It's great to finally meet you" John chuckled and threw a glance at Tony who was staring at the ground, probably avoiding eye contact. "I'm Lyle," he said.

"Nice to meet you," John said with a smirk. Looking up, Tony stepped forward.

"Alright ya' queens, let's get to business. Jordie and his crew will be down in the alleyway making the deal. When he snaps, we fire, so watch closely. John, I know you got this. Lyle, you're back up. Just watch the ground with your binoculars and call me if things are off. Is that okay?"

"Yeah sure," Lyle said, pressing his lips together. "Where are you gonna be?"

"I'm on the ground as back up for Jordie," Tony said. "Cool? Cool. I'm heading down, you guys get prepped. John, I'll call you on your burner when it's time." Tony threw a jacket on and went downstairs.

The awkward silence on the roof was strong and crushing. Eventually, John turned to his suitcase and started to unpack. With his weapon assembled and his mat down, John got in position, Lyle to his left peering down at the city below. What

sounded like a phone began to ring. Reaching into his jacket pocket, John took out a flip phone which he hung up. Nodding to Lyle, he looked through the scope to the alley below. By squinting I could barely make out five or six figures. A minute went by and there was nothing but silence. I could hear John's breath. Inhale, exhale. Inhale Exhale. Suddenly, he stopped, clenching his muscles. Then like a bolt of lightning, the gun fired. Bang! Without scrambling, he reloaded and fired again. Bang!

"Damn John, you're a natural," Lyle chuckled. Desperate to see something, I turned to Mortem.

"What's going on down there?" I asked.

"Two men have been shot," Mortem said. John fired again. Bang! "A third man has been killed." Firing a fourth time, John inhaled, paused, and then exhaled, this time putting his gun down and standing up.

"M'kay that's it," John said, wiping sweat from his forehead.

"Nicely done my friend, that was beautiful," Lyle said. "Pack that crap up and we'll head down to see Tony." As if he knew it by memory, John placed each piece back into the suitcase perfectly. Before shutting it up completely, he removed a small plastic water bottle. "You're a damn good shot. Y'know that, right?" Lyle said.

"People have mentioned it," John said, taking a sip from his water.

"Heh, yeah, I'm sure they have. Where'd you learn to shoot like that?" John froze in place, losing any semblance of a smile.

"Army. I served for a few years. I liked it, but things didn't work out."

"Yeah? What was the best part?"

"I don't know, the adrenaline rush, maybe. It gave my life purpose, y'know."

"Yeah man, that makes sense. I used to-" Bang! A gunshot coming from inside the building rang out. I'd never turned my head faster. The door to the roof burst open and a man in a black hoodie and revolver stepped out. Without missing a beat, John reached for the pistol hidden in his coat. Bang! Blood covered the door and the man slumped over.

"Holy crap, John!" Lyle shouted. "What was that?"

"Let's go, we can talk about it later," John said. He was strangely calm and collected for someone who had just killed another person. The two criminals exited the roof, leaving the man's corpse sitting there. Silence covered the rooftop as I stood with Mortem. While I knew nothing about Mortem, I felt a shared shock and horror with it. Humanity truly was a strange, often disgusting race.

Michael Lion

Death

Life

Gently sleeping now
Forever at rest peacefully
Soundless nights by it

Helping those to grow
Who seek out the best in you
Knowing the best way
Flowing through the wind to help
Those who cannot grow themselves

“High Tide” by Eli Hochkeppel



“Rapids”

By Anonymous

Sharp white whipping waves
Tumble me like a ragdoll
“Hope I don’t hit rocks”

“Recipe for a Reputation”

By Kara Gardner

I worked on it for years
When I found you, your name was a dingy, dark thing
Coated with webs and dust
It reminded me of a crumbling mansion
Once beautiful before its abandonment
No one wanted it
Your reputation was a poison that spread by association
But I braved the disease
I fought tooth and nail for an eternity
And I cleaned your name up until it shone
I wept for an eternity

Because the minute I got it shiny,
 You dipped your fingers into a vat of things I would've rather not known
 And you rendered it tarnished
 Again.

“Untitled” by Yanna Spirokostas

As I walk on the deserted beach
 The sand seeps through my toes,
 Like water does to cracked ceilings during a thunderstorm.
 The echo of the ocean,
 Tip toes its way to my ears like a whisper.
 The sight of no one around;
 Lonely.
 But peaceful as I enjoy,
 And take in the beauty of nature.

“Twins” by Anonymous

“Sisters”

By Anonymous

Two identical flowers bloom in a field
 And with them, the world gets brighter
 Their roots grow like vines of ivy in the
 hearts of all who come close to them
 And I am not an exception
 Life is a cold winter without the flowers
 Filling the air with perfumes of laughter
 I begin to understand the dreads of Demeter

**“Bionic Eyes and Cybernetic Hands” By
 Eli Hochkeppel**

A young girl, about twelve years old
 with freshly sheared hair, cried silently into
 her arms as her cybernetics vibrated in her
 skull. The supervisor had his hands full with
 a pair of young students who were hogging
 the flight simulator. Biei's eyes focused for
 just a second, and she saw a shadow in front
 of her.

“Ayya.” she said, a common
 greeting in the tenement she had grown up
 in.

“Greeted.” a tiny voice responded, and Biei heard rustling. The shadow was crawling
 under the table with her.

“Who is it?” she asked.



“Kaliq.” the shadow introduced herself.

“I’m Biei Collection HK4- HK5- ummm...” Biei wiped at the tears that fell down her face, but they didn’t stop coming.

“I can’t ‘emember my numbers either. Does Biei mean Bionic Eye Implants?”

“Yeah.” Biei sniffed, hard.

“I know because Big Government wanted to change my name to Cap. Cybernetic Arm Prosthetics. But there’s already four Caps in class, and I have a real name. Do you want a real name?” Kaliq asked.

“Biei is my real name.” Biei said, with a surprising amount of venom. Kaliq squirmed and held herself tightly. “Sorry. I like being Biei. My favorite animals are bees, and my mama called me Baby Biei, and- I miss my bunny bee.”

“What’s is a bunny bee?” Kaliq asked.

“It’s a stuffy my mama made me. Gov didn’t let me take it with me.” Biei sobbed, and her eyes whirled painfully.

“I think I can fix your eyes.” Kaliq said, crawling onto her knees in front of her new friend. Biei looked up. “The white spots surrounding them is how you make adjustments, and my hands can innerface with Gov tetch.” she said, and Biei raised her face so Kaliq could access her eyes. Kaliq gently held her thumb over Biei’s cheeks and her pointer finger over her eyebrow. Biei’s cybernetics whirled again, getting smaller, and she could see colors and shapes again. She blinked the last of her tears from her eyes, and she saw Kaliq smiling clearly in front of her.

“Thank you.”

“Welcomed.”

Biei’s cybernetics vibrated painfully in her skull. The girl had become a woman, with streaks of gray in her short chestnut hair. She stared at the holographic news screen in front of her, boasting another interplanetary war.

“Biei?” Kaliq asked as she entered the living space and bedroom with a pair of steaming mugs. “I made you a decaf.” she handed her wife the mug, their rings glowing when their hands came in contact. Kaliq smiled, always grateful they purchased the proximity ore.

“I’m worried about this war.”

“Ah, babe, we’re not serving anymore. Besides, Ambassador Theia will smooth things over with the diplomats, those tabloids just want more clicks.” Kaliq said, looking up at the photo of the both of them at their wedding, with the famous Ambassador Theia as officiate for the two veterans instrumental in ending the war between the Earth and Burkek. The rest of their outfit cheered them on in the foreground. Biei rubbed her cybernetic eyes, but they didn’t stop oscillating.

“Darling, could you do that thing again?”

“Hmm?” Kaliq summoned up her own holographic screen and shut it just as quickly.

“That thing you did when we first met, at the soldier prep academy.” Biei asked again, rubbing her eyes harder. Kaliq stood up and moved her wife’s hands off of her face with her silver and white prosthetics. Touch was all Biei needed to realise Kaliq wasn’t wearing the new, top of the line pair she had bought as an anniversary present.

“You know, I didn’t really do anything. I had interfaced halfway with your eyes when I realised my tech was outdated.” Kaliq held Biei’s hands.

“I guess it was fate.” Biei raised her lips to meet her wife’s.

“Rest” by Eli Hochkeppel**“The Turtle” by Sarah Yang**

A turtle lies on the sand,
 The fiery light of the sunset
 Glinting off its smooth dirt-brown shell.
 It's four floppy fins stick out from the shell,
 Motionless against the sodden brown sand.
 It lifts its pimply small head,
 Gazing at the waves creeping towards him.
 Tired black beaded eyes reflect off of the water,
 Full of wisdom and experience,
 Of a life filled with adventure.

“Judgement” by Jonah Sun

Easy for all of us
 But none of us are the same
 And none of it is what it seems

You might think someone is going through one thing
 But they are through things that you could never know

You may think they are going through one thing
But it is not anything like what you assumed

And when you get judged
Remember that to change the world

You can take little steps to show mercy
And not get angry
Because you have already done it too much in the past

To show people what they don't deserve
And show everyone love despite what you might think
Is what can make the change in the long run

“Whimsical Academia Hall Monitor” by Miranda Hochkeppel



“Stop The Hate” by Chris Potter

People may be different but everyone knows pain
How else can we honor the people who've been slain
Humans look at humans and start to feel disdain
How can that be possible when we are all the same

Standing up for what is right will bring us to success
 Can't be alright with anybody doing any less
 Prejudice and people saying they're all just like the rest
 I know plenty more just like that and trust me, they're the best

"Shadow Of The Colossus" by William Tabb



"Searching" by Audrey Bucak

He looked up across the dinner table
 And just past their eyes
 Out the window
 And over the sprawling green lawn
 Through the trees beyond it
 And around the hills that there rose
 Across the highways
 And the blaring televisions
 Above the emptying beaches
 And the entire ocean
 His gaze continued on
 So far that the curvature of the earth became apparent
 And the horizon dropped
 Land became sky
 And soon he could see no land at all
 He looked past the moon and past the stars
 And past even the edge of the Milky Way
 He looked further out into space than humans have ever been

And still he did not find what he was looking for
 He knew then that he never would
 And upon this realization
 His heart broke
 And his mind was set free



Photograph by Katie Gilroy

I Am From
By Hannah Swirsding

I am from weathered books
 From chapstick and post-it-notes
 I am from the wizened grass of the old park trails
 Stale, shrewd, raw under bare feet

I am from May bells,
 Delicate, modest, gentle as the kiss of a lover
 I'm from birthday brownies and summer freckles
 From Elizabeth and William

I'm from the springtide allergies and crooked smiles
 From the wild things dancing in the night and florets that house quaint little towns
 I'm from lapsed Catholic practices, no vestige of an unspoken prayer
 I'm from Wynnewood and Harold's bough
 Teacakes and pineapple casserole

From the man who did not share my blood, yet came bearing the gifts of love and fatherhood
 The woman who draped her motherly devotion over my shoulders and wove it into my soul

On top of the dusty bureau in the den hazy with sleep
 A shoebox is bursting with curios and relics of life
 Murmurs of forgotten kin

Pictures worn with age
 Flimsy, yet vivid with the images of a life lived long ago
 I am from the sprigs of ancestry
 Foundations of my entity

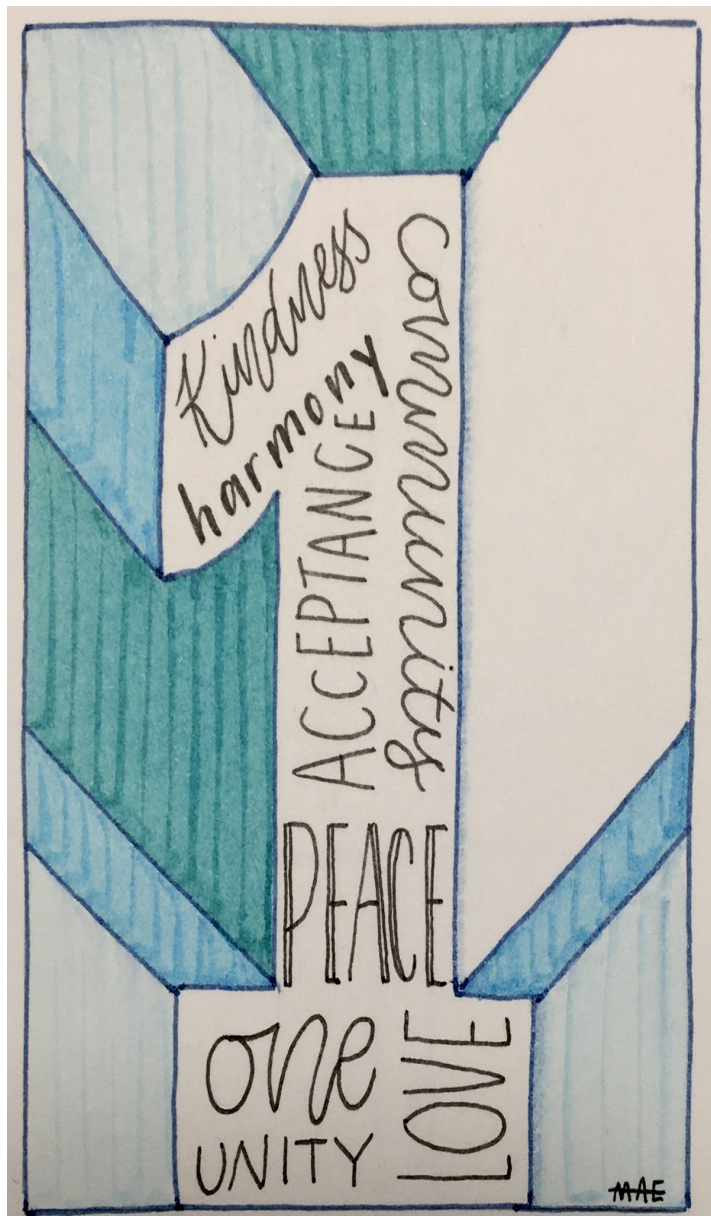
Melissa Hogan

1. The sky starts to get dark, specks of thunder started to emerge from the dark clouds above and then a loud crack hits the earth's surface. Lightning Hits the surface causing chaos and destruction. That is all I feel. The feeling of no control and unexpectedness.

2. The sky was cloudy and foggy almost like a mixture of paint had been poured together all at once. The paint-like effect made the sky seem as real and intense as ever.. What would come next no one would know except maybe a new color perhaps when the sky is ready to accept a new appearance

Drawing by Maren Evans

**Memoir By Ella Grygielko;
 Accompanying Photo by Eli
 Hochkeppel**



and built-in knick-knack shelves. I will always remember the smell of that house. The clean and refreshing blend that has subtle notes of citrus combined with lovely floral notes of lavender and jasmine. This amazing fragrance filled the house with a background of wood notes and musk. The

rooms contained old wooden furniture that will someday be vintage. It was old, creaky, drafty, hard to maintain and more difficult all the time for Grandma to maneuver because of the second story. My grandparents ended up retiring and moving to a nice condo in Charleston, South Carolina.

Even still, I am coming to terms with the loss of this house in our family. My first memory with makeup was sitting at my grandma's vanity. I started lightly applying powder too light of a shade and vibrant lipstick all over my face. I next started to dig into the colorful eyeshadows my grandma would hardly use in her palette that I would apply all over my eyelids. I couldn't do this for too long before my grandma would notice that I was making a complete mess. Another memory in her room was spraying her Chanel perfume I would take from her golden vanity. It had a floral fragrance featuring pink pepper, jasmine and amber undertones. Heightened with vanilla notes, the scent was bold, fresh and flowery and often made my tiny nose shrill which would make me sneeze.

In their old house I had many memories in the kitchen. The kitchen would smell of cinnamon raisin toast in the mornings and warm Italian food at night. I would sit around and eat rich, delicious, plum sized tomatoes in the kitchen while my grandma was cooking. My grandma always taught me tomatoes were important in Italian food so she would let me sit there and eat them. My grandma and my dad taught me Italian food was characterized by its simplicity, with many dishes having only two to four main ingredients. Italian cooks rely on the quality of the ingredients rather than on elaborate preparation. Sitting around the table at dinner with my family felt exciting. Family style serving and calm but interesting conversation interspersed with laughter. As a kid me and my cousins would fool around and laugh at our compact table and try not to cause any real problems with each other. I don't remember even one time of drama or fighting in our family gatherings. That is one unique trait we have. I love my family because of that. We all loved each other and, while things in our individual homes were not always perfect, our times together reflected that we loved and cared for each other. Another memory I had at their house was going in their hot tub and getting in trouble for dunking my head under the water. My Pop-Pop would always have to pull me out of the bubbling warm water. After soaking in the hot tub in the morning we would spend a nice day as a family at the beach.



I have not been to the beach there in awhile because my family goes to Avalon but I still remember how their beach felt different. Crashing against the shore, large waves washed seaweed and shells onto the land. The untouched golden sand covered the floor as far as your eyes can see. I would soak my feet in the sand. A soothing and gentle sea breeze would rustle through your hair. The warm smell of the salty sea would rush through your nose as you breathe in fresh air. At night we would go through a poly bag my grandma had of tickets for deals on the boardwalk. I

remember getting excited finding micro sized violet tickets with deals for the roller coasters or spinny rides. The boardwalk has always been a lively place that made me feel like a teenager when I was only around eight years old.

I miss going to their house in Point Pleasant but I realized my grandma and pop pop brought the spirit of that old house with them to Charleston. The peace, the comfort and the joy are all there and it is always a pleasure to visit them. They have brought that spirit with them because they are that spirit of the old house. The house had that feeling because they were there. My grandparents are always calm, peaceful and happy people. And now, their condo has that spirit, too. They are the matriarch of our family creating a spirit and fostering it through the generations. Wherever they go, the spirit of our family goes, no matter where they live. I do miss visiting the old house in Point Pleasant, New Jersey but I can say I love their new condo too. I can't wait to see them again.

After Whale Fall By Cara Flynn

Photograph below by Eli Hochkeppel

Inside a ribcage, you think you'd be squished.
 Not here, no,
 Here you could dance like it's a ballroom.
 The decaying heart next door -
 Bigger than you -
 Makes good food for your new friends.
 So does the skin that makes the walls of your ballroom.
 When new decay sets in, there's just a new
 skylight.
 It's dark enough this far down,
 Under the water and inside an elegant
 corpse.
 You don't mind new skylights.
 You don't mind tripping over bones, either,
 So maybe you're not the best to judge.
 Decadent this is not, but you can pretend.
 Deep-blue skin and fishes coming in
 And out,
 Like sparkles across your vision.
 You are okay here,
 The weighted blanket of 1,000 feet under
 the sea

Hugging you,

And the critters that float about
 Keeping you company.
 In this whale's chest, there is
 A morbid
 Sense of Peace



The Green Door By Sarah Lisanksy; Accompanying Photo By Eli Hochkeppel

The green door seemed formidable, a guard to whatever laid inside. No one dared go near the door. It was obviously locked for a reason so who were they to mess with it? That is why the door still remains untouched and unlocked, a daunting barrier from the outside world to whatever is laid behind it. However, she knew what was behind the door. While others ignored the door and the gate surrounding it, she couldn't help her curiosity. So on that very fateful afternoon she grabbed onto the overgrown vines and hopped over the walls landing hard on the ground below her.

Looking up she was greeted by a striking sight. Rows and rows of overgrown bushes and flowers surrounded her. She felt like Alice, falling down the rabbit hole for the very first time. Color popped out in every direction, the garden itself something out of a fairytale. Man-made, but reclaimed by nature. She wondered if she was the first to be beyond that door in years. Remembering the door she walked to it's other side. Confusion flashed across her mind as she realized the door was locked from the outside alone. She wondered who or what was needed to be kept in, not only by the heavy door, but by a lock as well. She decided she did not need to dwell on the mystery of the door and set off to explore the garden.

Finding herself in the middle of the maze of plants she sat at the smell bench, picturing herself as a gorgeous princess, having an afternoon tea in the royal garden. Giggling at her own antics something on the table caught her eye. A key! It gleamed in the sunlight, and she was overcome with ecstasy. She wouldn't have to hop the large garden walls everytime she wished to visit. It was now her little place. Her and only her would have access to the garden and its large, daunting door. She wondered why the key was inside the walls and how the door could possibly be locked if the key was in here. How did whoever left the key get out? Not caring enough to think much longer about all the unanswered questions of the garden and it's locked door, she raced back to where she got in, scaling the large wall with ease.

"I must stop doing that" She said, to no one in particular after once again falling to the ground, hard.

Taking her key in hand she placed it into the garden door, hearing the satisfying click of the lock turning. She could hear many gears and locks clicking and falling into place. Once again she was struck with curiosity wondering why the garden needed so many locks to keep it closed. Wouldn't one be enough? She didn't have time to dwell on her thoughts because at that moment the door finally opened with a pop swinging open as she quickly jumped out of its way.

Her face fell slack with shock. She stared at the sight beyond the door. Shock rushed through her body and she sat in confusion.

She can say now, with full confidence, there was not a garden beyond the green door.



Time's Running Out By Madeline Williams

Tick

The bomb counts down until it's
explosion

As glaciers melt, sea levels rise, and
trees burn

Tick

The air we breathe gets thicker
Smoke-clogged lungs fight for
oxygen

Tick

12 years

They say we have 12 years to stop it

Tick

But government officials don't
believe the facts

They don't believe the scientist
projecting 250,000 deaths a year

Tick

Big corporations want money

They want to keep emitting fossil fuels into the atmosphere

Tick

There are many ways to end this issue

But we need support, open-minds, and flexibility

Tick

The Earth is a ticking time bomb

Tick

How are we going to save it



Photo by Katie Gilroy

A Happy Place By Madeline Williams

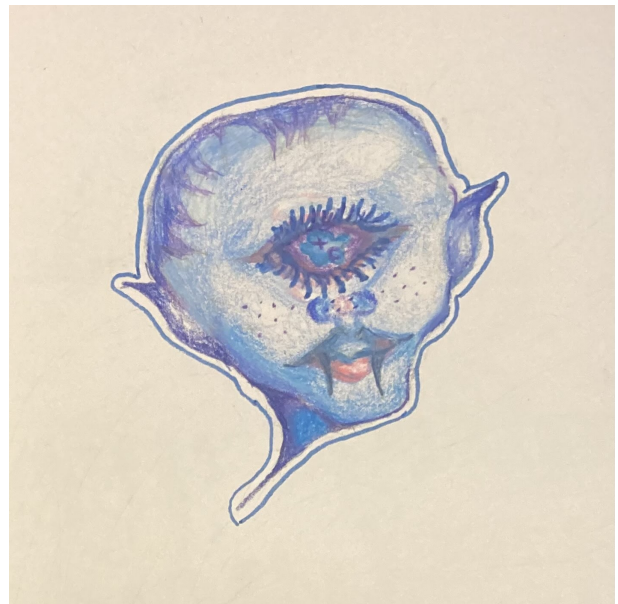
As I stand by the edge of the ocean

I feel the water gently wash my feet

It is as cold as ice

The sun was beating down on me

With heat like fire



Drawing by Annie Westrate

Excerpt by Eva Ruark; 2 Accompanying Photographs by Eli Hochkeppel

There were at least five paragraphs in the strongly-worded essay Terry found himself absentmindedly building during the hearing. He couldn't help but be overcome by that awful feeling that he was being tied into knots. Knots that never snapped the cord, no matter how tight they got. They just constricted and tightened until Terry could hardly breathe.

At least five paragraphs. *Just five deep breaths to calm down. . . . Four, three, two, one.*

At least four white men sat before Terry. He would know for sure if his eyes were open, but that was not the case. Two in the jury— one wearing a distinct pale blue suit, Terry could remember. One whose graying hair had been lazily combed and gelled over, probably hiding a bald spot. The judge, gavel in his hand, coldness in his voice, and prejudice in his decisions. And one witness. A younger man who had seen what had happened, but out of fear had not told the truth.

At least four white men. And at the same time, four people that Terry needed to be there for. For his pregnant wife. His young daughter. His sickly father. His grandmother, who would sing his praises until she was on her deathbed, which she was.

Three decades on the line. If somehow proven guilty— something Terry still had hope would not happen— he would spend thirty years imprisoned. At the rate things were going, that might be half his life. Maybe more. Thirty years for a crime he did not commit.

And three hours before the jury returned with their answer. The courtroom held its breath. . .

. . . Suddenly interrupted by two sharp bangs of the gavel to reconvene and settle the room,

which was already waiting on its tiptoes. At least, it felt like that to Terry. The faces surrounding him— pale faces of those that did not care, or were otherwise too preoccupied with their own worries to concern themselves with Terry's future. A passionless, impressionable jury and a life-ruining allegation did not mix well when the defendant was a black man.

Two words Terry hoped to hear. Not guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty. He pleaded and prayed to a God that, under the impression of many white people, had no more power in His name to save him. A black man, however innocent, couldn't be saved by someone so hypocritically adopted by prejudiced groups.

One wrongful conviction. But with it came infinite consequences. Two gentle



hands lost to harsh confinement. Two children missing a father, whose futures now rested solely on the shoulders of their aching mother. A father whose son would likely not be there to see the last of his now hopeless days, and a grandmother whose life and memory were already long gone, but with her grandson went her remaining will to live. Countless dreams crushed to bits. Intricately weaved friendships that would crumble like old fruitcake, frostbitten and moldy from sitting in the back of a freezer for a few years too long.

But Terry was still hoping and thinking and praying even as he was handcuffed and led away. He still held out hope that someone, whether it be a white or black person or any other color, could fix this broken system eventually, face the men on top and the God they claimed to worship. Someone with more courage and tenacity than Terry did had it in their power to set this right in a way that he wouldn't be able to after thirty years as an inmate. It was the one thing he still had hope for, not for himself but for descending generations of black and brown people. For people who believed in the great scruples of the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, which were ironically not the morals of the men who wrote it.

He met white men in jail— convicted of almost the same crime, which they'd told him laughingly, as if it were just a joke— white men who only had to serve five years, sometimes ten. But Terry had thirty, despite the alibis and evidence in his favor. By the end of them, he understood why white men laugh in jail.

They're privileged enough to know they'll still have a future afterwards.



Where I'm From By Kara Gardner

I am from bookshelves

From chlorine and Jiff peanut butter

I am from the white-washed front porch

Pollen-coated, welcoming, sounding like brunch chatter

I am from seashells

Those glossy cones that are telephones home

I'm from root beer floats and scoliosis

From Jena and Omi

I'm from the better not pry and the wonder whys

From sit up more's and swim harders

I'm from the bumblebees of church, buzzing in and out with no real destination

I'm from Germany, peanut butter cookies at Christmas, and the stollen I refuse to touch

From the little boy who

The teenage girl armed with a lacrosse stick

The dusty albums with smiling faces

And in each one I see where I get my right dimple and my stubborn streak

A Cherry Blossom Childhood By Katherine Engleka; Accompanying Photo by Eli Hochkeppel

Do you remember the cherry blossoms? Eight of them lined the path we would walk down to school every day. There was a time when we were encompassed by them. We would find their blossoms in our hair and our shoes and our school books. They littered our path on our walk home from school and we would follow their pink petaled trail back the next day. We marveled at their vibrancy, how simple and beautiful they made the world seem. So empirically divine like the world is through a child's eyes. Our art teacher had a collection of photos of the trees taken throughout the seasons. I would stare at the four stamps of time above her desk, admiring their bare branches and

watching how they would transform into leaves and then to blossoms. It seems that most often whenever anyone recalls memories under cherry blossom trees it is almost always in the spring, their beauty is barely recognized in the winter, overshadowed in the autumn, and too ordinary in the summer. I fall subjective to this point of view sometimes, don't you? I miss the spring far more often than I would like to admit, now that it is almost summer. I now hear the winter whispers. They say, remember how they blossomed, so fresh with change. Remember how we used to play and dance as the petals fell. It's a shame it's over, isn't it? The playful intimacy that is obtainable only then. When the grass is green and the sun is warm. The expectations of summer still whole and eternally preserved in fantasy. Does it scare you that spring is almost over? That we will never again smell the dewy morning or see those vibrant colors as we do now? They are no longer so all encompassing, only preserved in a photo on our art teacher's wall. Even when we come back next year those blossoms won't be ours, and then what will we have?

I think about those trees that held the beauty of spring and it unlocks a flood of memories. How your breath smelled and the books we read together. The bike rides, the playground days, the watermelon on field trips, our halloween costumes, the dirt we built cities out of, coming back only to find that the toothpaste cannot be put back into the tube. The picnics, the birthday parties, the pumpkin carvings, the snow days. Grocery shopping, dance recitals, christmas mornings, summer camp. Biking down the mountain and looking back up from the bottom only to find that it is barely a hill.

Looking back, I wonder at how far the sea of minutes has taken us from shore. I hold onto the cherry blossoms that we kept under our tongue so they would not float away. The secret ambitions, the feeling of a sting in the bridge of your nose the moment before you start to cry, the dreams from a thousand nights under the salt strew. Every day we have spent together for years on end and now the threat of a million miles separates us indefinitely. One day, maybe we will meet



under the cherry blossoms and gather more petals until they spill out of our mouths and fly desperately up into the sky.

Everyone assembles to watch the lovely days of another spring unfold after their long harsh winter. They watch the petals grow into leaves as they try to dodge time while it orchestrates the same changes on themselves. They struggle to catch a glimpse of the world as they once saw it, trying to decipher who they were to understand who they are. I hope they never cut them down. If they do, there will be no incentive to remember the loveliness of spring, there will be only summer to bask in, autumn to change in, and winter to settle into. And those petals that stuck to the bottom of our shoes, I will keep pressed between the pages of a book along with the petals forever melded with my skin and stuck between my toes as I walk the thousand miles away from home.

Summer 2021 By Madison Culbertson

It all started summer of 2021
 The second I saw you I knew you were the one
 I walked up to you which I had never done
 Your baby blue eyes lit up in the sun
 So beautiful and strong
 I knew I had won

Days went on and all I thought about was you
 The long days we spent together
 The memories we go through
 All the love letters
 I knew I was in love with you too

Marilyn Matthews

I see you
 In a prison of glass
 Your eyes shining wistfully
 With emotions of the past.
 Your great paws tucked in,
 Your tail limps towards the side.
 A vessel so elegant
 But lifeless inside.
 I see you



Photo by Eli Hochkeppel

Or rather, what you were;
 A creature of beauty,
 A muzzle from the earth.
 Whiskers so brisk
 Yet soft and sad.
 You were left by the curb,
 You were hurt so bad.
 I sense you
 Bleeding by the road,
 Months in recovery
 Until you were sent home.
 I see you
 Stalking gracefully across the
 grass.
 Another vehicle approaches

 And the rest is in the past.
 I see you
 Imprisoned
 For the eyes of indifference
 To glance upon your body
 And ignore the reminiscence.

Invisible Secrets By Amaya Burson

She sat in the room listening to all the voices drown each other out. She picked up little bits and pieces of each conversation.

"Did you hear..."

"Did you see..."

It was all nonsense. All of them vying for another's attention, using gossip to become the center of attention, like those seconds were what their life depended on. Throwing away the subject when they realized it wasn't gaining anyone's snake eyes. She sat silently, it was better being on the outside. Always hearing what others had to say, but never being the focus of the conversation. She did feel left out at times, hearing others make plans, laugh, smile. But it didn't matter that she had no friends, no attention; she had the most powerful weapon of all, secrets.

~A Walk by Alex Lauff~

I walk along a moonlit path to see
 The concrete glowing in the silver light
 A little puddle shimmers like the sea
 Reflecting Yue's face into the night.
 I tilt my head up at the sky and squint;
 A thousand yellow eyes stare down to earth;
 Bewitch my soul into a golden tint,
 Their kindly glimmer fills my soul with mirth.
 On high they weave a tapestry of flecks
 The moon observing from her resting place
 The lines of gods and monsters they bedeck
 While she stands stoic in unmoving grace.
 As I walk home I feel her icy glare,
 And wonder what she did to get up there.

Photo by Katie Gilroy



~Hizumi by Christopher Ross~

Mark had no choice but to carry on through the forest. *What the hell was that thing?* He thought to himself. He had no other option other than to jump off the ledge, where it wouldn't be able to follow him. Now he was limping on one leg, dragging his broken foot behind him and supporting himself with two sticks he found on the ground. It was twilight and the light was fading fast. The wind whistled through the trees, producing a high-pitched, unnatural sound. His mother had told him not to be out here after the sun had started to set.

"The one time I don't listen to her and look where it gets me," he muttered to himself

through gritted teeth. He had to get home to his family. It was his little sister, Maya's, birthday and he couldn't disappoint her on today of all days. Although, more importantly, he had to get out of this godforsaken forest. Mark felt a haze wash over him. He could feel his mind and body slowing down and it felt like he was moving through a thick mire. *As if trying to get out wasn't hard enough. This forest is trying to trap me here. It's like one massive entity with a mind of its own*, he thought as he limped onward.

Mark glanced upwards and noticed something. The tree branches were slowly twisting and snaking out from their trunks. A subtle, hypnotic dance that, if you saw it, you would become entranced. He found himself walking towards the tree but stopped before he could reach it. As soon as he had snapped out of it, he sensed a sinister aura coming from the tree before him. He backed away and kept his head down as he continued to walk.

Suddenly he heard a mixture of a howl and a scream behind him. It was unlike anything he had ever heard before. It was unnatural, something that couldn't and more importantly, *shouldn't* exist. That noise was wrong. It shot through his mind and sent a shiver down his spine. He whirled around, his eyes searching the trees wildly, trying to find whatever dreadful creature could be making that sound. *I gotta get the hell outta here and fast*, he thought as he felt a tightness grow within his chest along with the worry already building inside him. Turning around, he pushed onwards.

Eventually, Mark heard more shrieks and quickly looked behind himself to find three wolf-shaped creatures off in the distance. He could just make them out. Their forms were vaguely visible to him, despite their distance. These creatures were darker than a simple black; they seemed to absorb any light they touched - an anomaly. The remaining twilight from the setting sun bent around them as if trying to escape their influence.

Mark looked on in horror as the leader of the pack began to shake and groan. An instant later a large eye was gazing at him, supported by a stalk that was just as inky black as the creatures themselves, protruding from its back. He could feel it staring at him, gazing into his being. He put a hand to his head and shuddered. It was piercing his mind, breaking all of the mental barriers he tried to put up to protect him from its glare. The eye was exposing and exploiting all of his weaknesses, invading all of his thoughts. The alpha let out a guttural wail and the betas began to charge at him. Still reeling from the eye, Mark was slow to notice their charge. However, once he did, immediate terror shot through him.

He started limping as fast as he possibly could. It wasn't enough. In less time than it took for Mark to even begin limping off, the creatures had closed the tiny gap that Mark had made between himself and them. The trees began to sway faster and faster as the ones closest to him began to twist their branches around each other, winding together in order to block his path in all directions. There was no escape. The betas were standing right behind Mark while the alpha hadn't moved from its position. He could finally make out the "wolves" features. They had no fur, their surfaces like a broiling mass of black void. In some areas, it was perfectly calm and in others, the blackness was bubbling and rippling. A drop fell to the ground, making loud sizzling and popping sounds. It chewed through the ground, letting off a vapor that smelled distinctly of ozone. The abominations had swirling black holes where their eyes should have been. The betas' legs were a writhing mass of tentacles climbing and wriggling around and over each other like a clew of black worms entangled together, fighting with one another for nutrients.

Tearing his eyes away from the gruesome features of these monsters, Mark turned in front of him. All of a sudden, he found that the alpha wolf was then standing in front of him. Mark hadn't seen it move at all, it was just far away one second and right in front of him the next. The

eye glared at him again and he could hear a voice in his head,

“Begone from this forest,” it boomed, sending a ripple through Mark’s head, shattering his will to go on. Mark slumped against the tree behind him with a pale, emotionless expression adorning his face. He was empty. The tree recoiled and all of the branches instantly shot away from him. It shook, throwing him away, almost like it was disgusted by Mark resting upon it. The tree slowly went back to its swaying dance. Mark was finished. He had lost any will and strength he had to put up a fight.

The alpha stood over him, its posture giving off an arrogant and threatening aura. It seemed to be judging him, a lower being whose mind was too small and fragile to even begin to understand such a creature. If Mark tried he would go insane. The creature started to rumble, its skin starting to violently bubble and gurgle. Then its head split in half revealing a full galaxy of stars. Large swaths of inky blackness punctuated with millions of bright, shining stars. Hundreds of supernovae going off one after the other. Comets and meteors whizzing past solar systems, each with planets, moons, and stars. Pulsars radiating blinding concentrated beams out into the darkness. Individual black holes devouring all light that came into contact with them.

No blood came out of its cosmic wound. There were only a few inky black drips that landed on the forest floor. The abomination let out a growl and Mark suddenly felt a violent tug towards its maw. There was no use in fighting it. He knew there was no escape, so he gave in and accepted his fate. *I’ll never be able to see any of them again. I’ll never again be able to see her innocent smile. I’m finished. There’s no hope for me now,* he despaired. *No, I can’t just give up like this. Not after all that I’ve gone through.* In an instant, Mark felt a wave of strength flow through him and he had a newfound vigor. One of the dancing branches was close enough to where he was laying to the point that he could grab hold of it. As soon as he did so, it straightened immediately and the tree began to rumble angrily. It then started up its dance once more, this time significantly faster and more violent. The branches whipped Mark around, dragging him up into the air with them, swinging him around like a ragdoll. He held on for dear life, *there’s hope yet,* he thought.

The eye was back in his mind once more, “There is no use in fighting back,” it roared. The tree kept swinging, going faster and faster. Mark could feel his grip loosening. The betas let out a howl and the tree suddenly stopped its wretched dance for a moment before slamming Mark into its trunk. His hand slipped from the branch he was holding onto and he crumpled to the forest floor with a newly broken rib. *That was my last chance, my only option,* he thought, *now I can’t even stand.*

The alpha snarled and Mark started to feel the tug once more. This time it was a pull of curiosity. The call of the void. An irresistible urge to throw himself into the abyss. It overpowered every other emotion. All of his fears and pain went away. There was only the curiosity to see what lay on the other side. *What would happen if I just... went in,* he wondered. He crawled closer to the alpha, entranced by the celestial bodies floating inside it.

“Accept your fate, come closer,” the eye spoke more softly this time, approvingly. He had made it to the creature. He reached out his hand as if to grasp the stars. The creature beckoned him closer, almost as if it was taunting him. Excitement began to build in Mark and he became more frantic. *Everything I ever wanted could be in there. The infinite truths that unravel the mysteries of life. I have to join them! I can hear them calling out to me!* His thoughts exuberated in his mind. He lunged forward with all the strength he had left in a final, last-ditch effort.

The creature jolted forward to meet with Mark, its whole body splitting in half just before Mark passed right through where it used to be. Just as quickly as it had split, it pulled itself back together like magnets with opposing poles. It molded itself around Mark’s body, smothering him.

He was engulfed by a black void with no escape.

Mark could no longer see any of the stars that had shone so brightly just moments before. There were no more supernovae erupting into brilliant flashes of light and vibrant color. He had been fooled by that vile monstrosity. He cursed himself for being so foolish for being so enthralled by an illusion. Or was it? He didn't know where he was anymore. He was simply floating in black nothingness. There was nothing else in there but him. Then again, he didn't know what or where *there* was.

Mark abruptly felt a familiar tug dragging him in all directions. He could sense his body being stretched far more than it should be. Soon he couldn't feel his fingers or toes any longer. Then it was his hands and feet; then his arms and legs. The next thing he knew, he wasn't anything. He could no longer feel anything. As far as he knew, he had no body anymore, he never had a body to begin with. This was how things always were. A singular mind alone in a vast expanse of nothingness. Nothing to care about, nothing to worry about. Mark was no more, and in his place was an incorporeal being, not tethered to any mortal body.

It floated around searching for nothing in particular, for it was a blank slate. A singular thought broke free from the monotony and wondered, *is this what death feels like?* The mind disregarded this as quickly as it came about. It had no need to think about such things. It had no capacity for such thoughts. It continued on its futile, eternal journey through the endless abyss for the rest of time, unaware of what it used to be.

Fords Forward by Christine Sunzeri



~One's Love by Victor Pham~

Like a meadow laying on a field of lavenders,
I wonder if our affection has turn into sickening leaves,
How I lay wondering.
Our eyes meeting like the earth gazing upon the moon,
A star beaming onto us.
Has our love turned into disdain?
Am I not enough my love,
Why have you fallen for a mortal girl that does not have as the eyes as
we do?
My heart breaking into ashes as I see you walk into her arms,
My love, I may be no longer the person you'd wished I turned to be,
But I will make your heart burn for me once more.



Photo by Katie Gilroy

The Balloon

By: Natalie DeFruscio

I once found a balloon.
 It tied itself to my wrist.
 It was a little annoying at first,
 But I decided to let it be.
 As the days went by,
 My balloon got bigger.
 It worried me for a moment but I decided to let it be.
 The balloon just kept getting larger, I couldn't get rid of it.
 I told my family about the balloon and they just said,
 "Everyone gets that at your age."
 So I let it be.
 The balloon was big and mean.
 The balloon came with me everywhere I went,
 I was surprised no one noticed.
 I just let it be.
 A few years went by and my balloon is now the size of my bed.
 It's there when I sleep and when I wake up,
 When I go out and when I stay in.
 I tried talking to my friends about my balloon and they said,
 "Well everyone gets a balloon nowadays, it's normal."
 So I let it be.
 I just hope one day my balloon will go away,
 I want to make it stop.
 But I'm afraid that I can't and it will just...
 Pop.

Adrienne Tuft

Anticipation as I smell the shore
 Fishy salty air
 The gulls meet the indigo water
 And scurry across the sand
 Hot as embers for my bare feet
 The hot sun will soon set upon the ocean

Adrienne Tuft

Swinging weaving
 vines between trees
 They fly through the air creating a breeze
 Bouncing and bobbing across the grassy ground
 Hey that's like me dancing all around
 They jump and they scurry
 They leap and they hop
 Even when they're tired
 They don't want to stop
 But when the day ends and they're plum tuckered out
 That's when they know it's time to logout



Photo by Eli Hochkeppel

Tiger-World Problem by Vivian Chan

The tiger is brave
 Protecting his family
 Being the king of the jungle
 But it's like living in fright
 The tigers can't protect
 everyone
 And it starts everyday,
 Trees being teared down
 Animals scattering
 Homes abandoned
 Water is now filthy
 Continuous human
 interference
 Made the forest to now be
 narrow
 Many suffered for years
 Why did we become so
 heartless
 The animals are waiting for
 help

Eyes-All colors are beautiful by Vivian Chan; Photo by Eli Hochkeppel

Her eyes are blue
Yours are brown
Hers represent the ocean
Yours represent the ground
You've always hated your eyes
And wished that they were blue
But brown eyes have a tint of gold
So rare that it's true
So yes, her eyes are blue
And yes, your eyes are brown
And both are beautiful colors
Brown eyes also hold the riches
That are buried in the ground
Blue eyes also carries storms
And rages like the sea
Every eyes carry earthquakes
That bring mountains to their knees
Maybe her eyes are blue
And yours are brown
But both hold the purest riches
The world has ever seen



Tragic Strength by Griffin Quay; Table by Chris Mainardi and Aidan Friel

It's moments like these that we learn the strength of our nation
Moments like these that allow us to stand tall and together
While tragedy strikes and it will strike again
We know we can overcome it and come together in the end
For we must ensure we are educating, explaining, and envisioning
So our young generation can understand and put an end to these events that are
plaguing our nation
As we move on to our daily lives we must not forget
We must remember the events, the lives, and the love we no longer get
As we move on with strength and unity
We must always remember the forces that act with such impunity
While this problem is not one that can be solved in one night
It is one that will be stopped
We will put up a fight
While people will try and try again
This nation will not crumble it will live on and won't end
For the evil beings behind these events are the minority
And this sovereign nation is ruled by the majority
We are not defined by these mass shootings and loss of life that plague us
We are defined by our strength in overcoming these tragedies
We are defined by our ability to stand strong and come together
We are defined by our nation's unique diversity and the love we hold as citizens
for one another
So I ask you all to come together with unity and to stand strong
For this life is full of love and we must protect that because this life is not long



*"Art is the highest
form of hope."
—Gerhard Richter*

