



# IMAGINE

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MAGAZINE 2022



**"IMAGINE"**  
**LITERARY MAGAZINE**

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# EDITORS' NOTE

Danielle Vella  
and Adriana Sliney

After a year of being isolated at home from what felt like humanity, we were forced to find something to do and we were desperate for something to care about. This year the magazine showcases the different minute details that people have made meaning out of. We hope you'll be inspired by our magazine this year and take some time to appreciate a random small detail that normally goes unnoticed!



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A person with dark hair, wearing a dark t-shirt and light-colored pants, is seen from behind, leaning over a wooden cabinet. They are looking at a mirror on the wall above the cabinet. The mirror is cracked, with a prominent red star-shaped crack in the center. A bright light source is visible through the crack, illuminating the scene. The room is dimly lit, with a blueish-grey color palette.

# isolation

Georgia Robb

# Behind the Scenes

“Lights Up!”

“Roll the film!”

This is a story, that's all  
That it is. Fabrication.

A character, whom  
You have the choice  
To love or hate, in  
Which you feel the need  
To objectify and judge.

As it's supposedly

All on tape,

But never when

The curtain closes,

As identity does

Not equal privacy

Feelings, fabricated.

Personality, fabricated.

Life, fabrication.

All blinded, by the

Shining lights, camera

Clicks, and the words,

All in black in white.

To some, fake

Is real, or maybe

Just love fantasy.

They

Are in control.

They

are dependent.

But aspire

To be the same.

Stepped on the  
Walkway to hell, to  
Congregate with devil's  
Goons. Expected to be  
Behaved, as wrong  
Slips lead to one's end.

Maybe for days, maybe

Weeks. At least,

Until they get bored.

“Speech!” They cry.

But why do you

Need to answer

To the strangers,

The ones who,

For some reason,

You feel you

Need to care for.

Madison Delgado



**DEMOLITION**



The creature of will, of wonder, as

She twirls and turns, as  
she smiles and swirls, as

She waves around,

Feathers falling all around,

Stop and glare, of the grotesque grace,

Scream and scare,

The dripping of the whispering, wondering,  
watering

rains that fall from the sweet, saintly, sky,

Upon her dancing daring soul

waving the arms to the sky,

You hear a point, you feel a glare,

you see a laugh,

Yet

The dancer tingling,

tripping,

the passion of the winged creature

Her broken beak of raging lies,

She dances in the sky,

For the pity that she cries,

Full of hope, trying to cope

Yet,

You feel

the laugh,

you sense

the snap,

You hear

whispers of whipped hatred,

For the broken bird that just wanted to dance

For the crooked world that wanted a jarring  
glance.

Like a soul being crushed, Like

they stare in disguise, Like

they own the world, Like

they want to quarrel

When will they let it go?

Of the naked souls

Of the haunting holes

no hunger for lushing love,

no wanting of kindness

in a world full of brittle blindness,

Trapped by the thirsty laugh of vain

Trapped by the murderous bathing reign

The shaking, squirming, screaming wing

of hope,

*This is the wicked way in which they*

cope,

So she falls to the ground, like Bloody

Carrie did, like

The Black fallen Swan did, like

The Joker did, Like

the enemy that wanted to try,

Like the world that haunted their minds,

To her angelic forgotten dance of hope,

To her lost fall

of the hideous, hidden bird.

Galle Blaustein



Christian Ames Yancey

Being humbled by tragedy  
Really questions the morals of the thing.  
Is it just to experience pain, only to be tolerable?

It's unfair to have to love something so  
Truthfully that you need to be content with  
Loss.

We carry a rage on our necks, knowing  
One day  
We won't know what it means to love

But in the absence of knowledge, and in the  
Heart of chaos, there is only  
Serenity, stillness and  
Quiet.

The ill flower is  
Growth, we know we'll never be the same again.  
Even if they were worse for wear,  
Our brains have made fools of us, with the  
Melancholy comfort of the past.

But imagine being remembered?  
That'd be terribly wonderful.

But only words are immortal.  
People die and memories fade, but when the  
Forests young are old, and the  
Unruly oceans are calm, the words  
I love you don't change.

I loved, I fought, and I lost.  
But before I lost, I loved and I fought.

Anonymous

And for what?

We forget what we are, we forget  
what we've done,  
We forget love

So I love you, and it's unfortunate.  
But isn't that what love is?

To be so unfortunately taken by  
something that  
There is no other option but to fall.

And here we are,  
On the edge of uncertainty and  
chaos,  
A universal rain

For what I've done, and all that I am,  
I could live a thousand years and  
It will all come back to you.

We ruined each other.  
But it's not the worst thing to be  
ruined, and  
Far from the worst to've been  
Ruined by you.

Well why not? There's something a little beautiful in nothing where everything once was.

Charles Zenhausern





In the dark, I remain  
Losing my sight of the sunflower I once knew  
Oh Sunflower  
You laugh and giggle with the other flowers  
You seem to enjoy the sun much more  
With me, you don't shine or grow  
You look at me with the confusion  
I look at you with weariness  
You're somber and boring with me  
You wilt and drool with the cactus that I am  
I'm no longer patient  
I've gone too long with no water  
I begin to hate my time with you, Sunflower  
Wistful pain flourishes when I'm with you,  
Sunflower  
I will no longer ask to be with you, Sunflower  
I'm no longer interested in an idle talk, Sunflower  
I'm no longer interested in wasted time, Sunflower  
I'll remain in the dark.  
Perhaps I'll see you tomorrow  
I'll only walk past you when I do.  
Because You'd do the same thing too



# NATURE & EXPLORING

CASEY DEMARISCO



AMELIA KRAUS



ANNA YOUNGSTROM

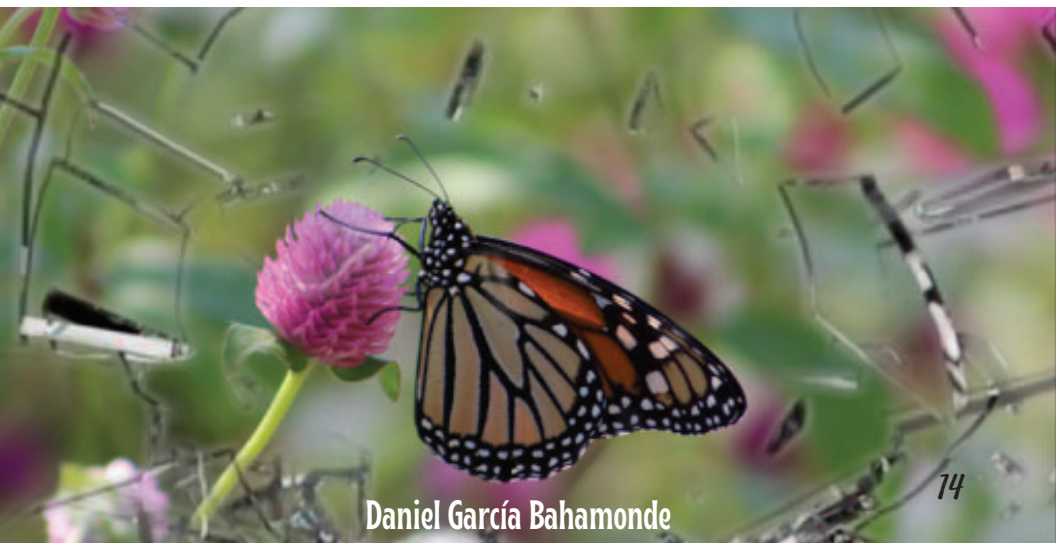
# New Beginning

Whether it may be the sweet aroma of spring,  
Or the thin chill air of winter,  
Or the recovery of our pain for lives lost,  
The birth of the Monarch butterfly  
Signals the day to start fresh and new.

Rolling and moving in a wavelike motion  
Hanging from the branches of an old oak tree,  
The caterpillar becomes a chrysalid.  
And after many days of darkness,  
amidst its wildest slumber,  
It struggles to break free.

Shattering its crystal shell into tiny shards of glass  
The birth of the Monarch butterfly  
turns and looks at thee.  
Only to fly away into the sky, as blue as the deepest seas.

Even though world sickness has been spreading  
Like hatred and bigotry  
The birth of the Monarch butterfly  
Gives its message of hope:  
Forget the past,  
Forget the pain,  
Spread your wings,  
And fly, at long at last, to a new beginning.







SARAH FLORES



ANONYMOUS



**perspective**

**a picture frame  
meant to encapsulate  
worlds beyond  
our mere mortal understanding**

**brightening the earth  
glistening green grass  
and clearing foggy days**

**like a crystal in sunlight  
scattering beauty  
and encompassing life**

**- lilit voskoff**





brandon gibbons



brandon gibbons

Sometimes you look at a sky, so unforgiving; it demands conscience. And you look at the stars, and there's a gravity that you haven't felt before. And you feel the weight of the cosmos pulling up on you as the sky, a beautiful flourish of greens and blues, a brilliant hue of the midnight ocean, burns in your eyes. And it's a symphony, and there's an infinite heaviness in you, pushing you down to the Earth, as the infinite black swallows you. You run to it, or from it, whichever feels right for you. But, it's chasing you like an illness.

And as your eyes burn, and you collapse to the ground, the melody swells around you, consuming you, and it's sad and forgotten. At the point of complete conception and chaos, and it is silent. Just silence.

"I want to live in those moments," You whisper.

"What?"

"I wanna live there!" Lifting your hand to the blue.

"In the stars?"

"No, not in the stars," you sit up and turn to the one next to you. "I want to live in moments we forget; when we have nothing else but this."

"What are you talking about?" They gently press.

"Think of a sunset. Think of those times when you can't stop laughing, and you fall over yourself. Think of the peak of a mountain, and it's calm and timeless." You stand up, waving your hands across the sky. "Everything that we forget about, everything that no one will remember why, or specifically when, but you can feel it."

They sit up too, but they're still puzzled and frowning.

"Don't you feel it?" You sit on your knees in front of them taking their hands in yours, and desperately you offer, "Don't you hear it? That music swelling inside you, a song and a feeling? Or-or don't you feel it pushing down on you?"

They look down, a little embarrassed. You lay back down next to them feeling the same. There's silence, but the wind is warm and harsh.

"Remember me in those moments."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, one day I'll be gone, or you'll be gone from me. So remember me in times like I said: when you can't stop laughing, or staring at the passion of a sunset that hits the clouds just right, or in the grand scheme of the skies and stars. Remember me in those moments out of time, when you can feel everything at once. That's where I want to live."

"That's awfully selfish, don't you think?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if you're gone, why do I need your memory controlling my life?"

"...Yeah. I guess you're right."

So you both lay back down, a little worse than where you started.



*Madison Lucas*



*Bryan Wolfe*

## *A Hopeless World*

The terror of a hopeless world  
Its dark tendrils envelop my mind.

The seas turn to sludge. The sky fills with smog.

The land set ablaze. While all we do is watch. Deny. Ignore. Forget.

The only things we can do in a world without hope. A life without a future.

Futilely pushing against the waves of greed. Like children, attempting to protect our sandcastle from the encroaching waves, in vain. But what else could we do? Everyone works together to save the day just in time? Of course not, the inevitable catastrophe will slowly creep in. We are but frogs in boiling water. Not reacting until it's far too late. Millennia of human history, down the drain in an instant.

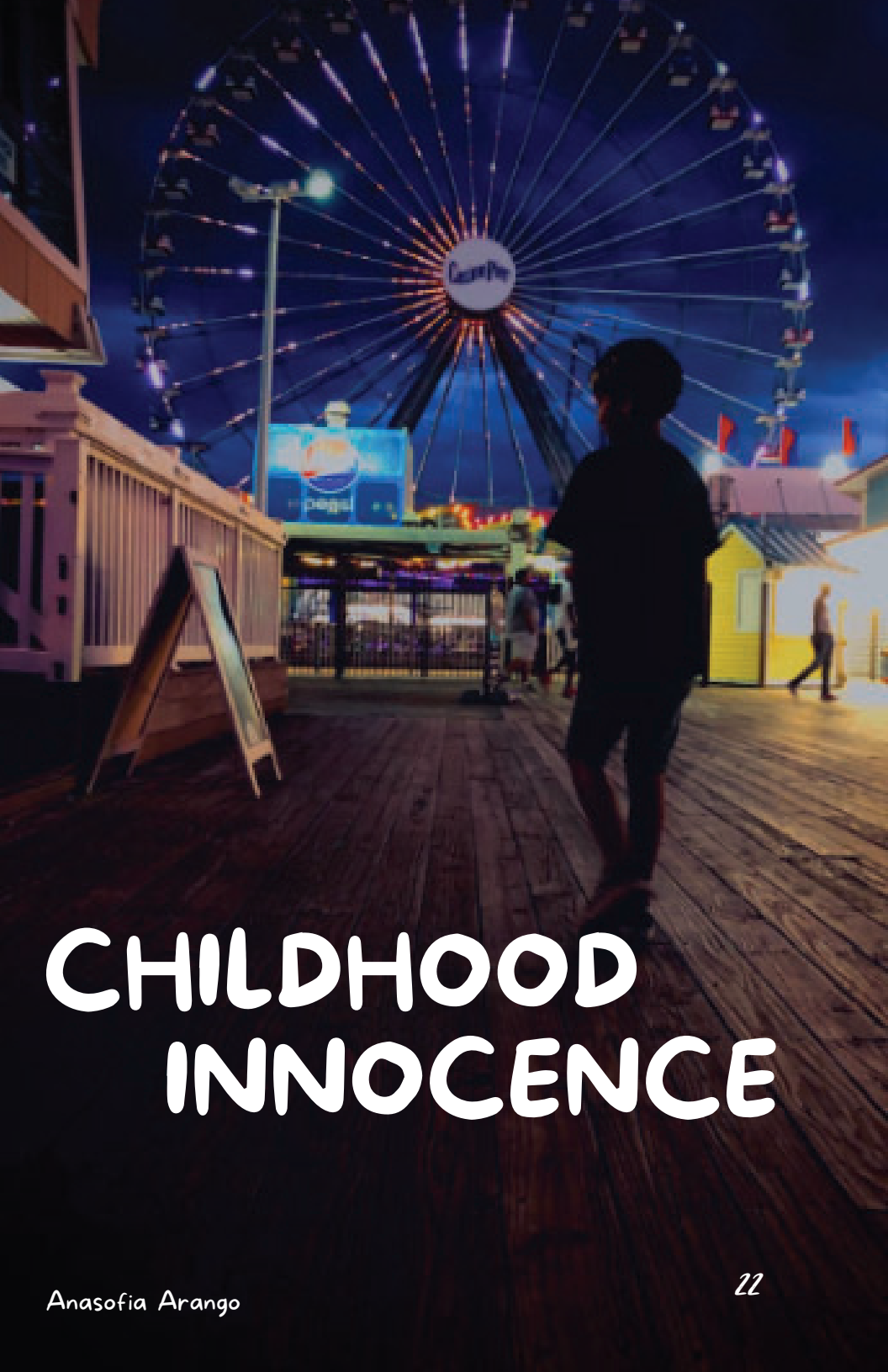
And what ended it? Human greed. Human desire. Like the snake that eats its own tail. Our greed will keep consuming.

Until we've consumed ourselves

Ezra Burghouts

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# CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE





Juan Orozco Lopez



Mia DeMarco



## Oh To Remember

What is it to be young?

To not be fourteen,

To be free,

To feel no weight of the world on your shoulders,

To wish you were older?

I can't remember.

Is it nice?

To hug your mom when there's thunder,

When this big world was all a wonder,

To be afraid when it was the weather you were  
under,

To watch 80's movies with your father?

I can't remember.

Did you enjoy it enough?

Singing lullabies you once heard,

Twisting your hair until it swirled,

When your only care in the world

Was what that ice cream flavor you were  
served?

I can't remember.

What if I try hard enough?

Will it come back?

All the joys of the past?

All the lost laughs?

Did the moments last?

I wish to remember.

Why can't I remember?

Every detail of every day?

When I was younger I would say:

I can't wait until I'm older one day.

And now I am older and wish I could stay,

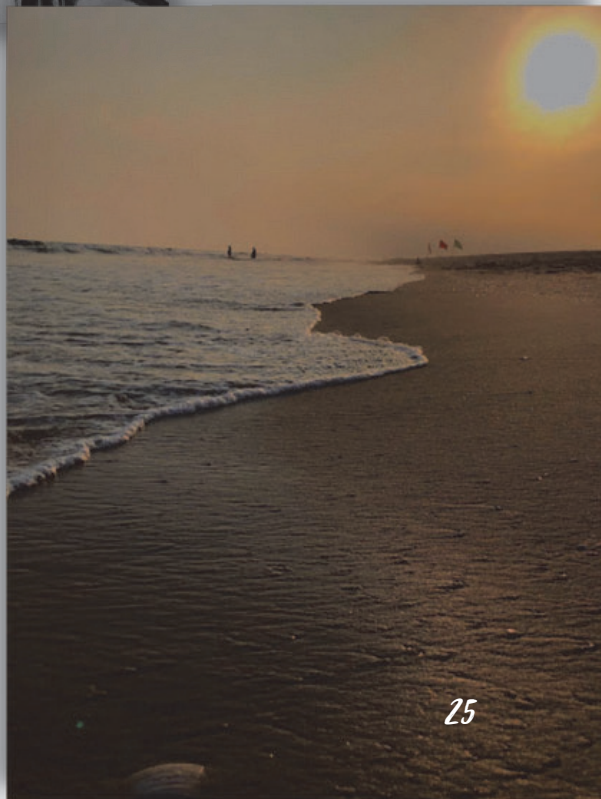
In a world I cannot remember,

In those days I wished I would soon fly away.

- Paula Barbosa



LUKE BORACZEK



ANASOFIA ARANGO

Dear Mother and Father,

I'll go to France.

I've packed a hand mirror  
my nicest shoes, and a powdery wig,  
Just like the one you wear, Mama.  
Though I didn't pack my chess set.

I am a fourteen-year-old girl  
Who wants to play with my farm animals  
And try on Mama's dresses and heels  
Even if they're too big for me.  
I like to play in the grass and  
Soil my clothes,  
Albeit I imagine I should learn to be proper,  
For Louis. But I wish  
Oh, how I wish  
That I could just stay here with you  
And tend to the farm animals.

Did you know that  
Today, I saw one of my rabbits  
Die?  
It was your favorite one, Mama. The one  
that was white as sugar,  
And just as sweet.  
Its own mother ate him,  
Just as rabbits do.  
I asked the gardener why its mom  
Would do such a thing, and he said:  
"Wild rabbits eat their young because  
They are hunted by  
Predators,  
So eating their young is the only way  
For them to hide all traces of themselves and  
Live to give birth to another litter."  
I asked why  
my domesticated rabbits would do that.  
"Because the instinct to eat their young is  
Rooted too deep. So much so that they still do it even if  
there is no predator chasing after them."



Adriana Sliney

The blood was all over my  
white gloves, the  
Ones you had gifted me, Papa.  
Please, forgive me. I tried to  
Get the scarlet out of the gloves,  
Scrubbing and scrubbing with  
soap water.  
But I only ended up staining  
My dress, too.

Your beloved daughter,  
Marie Antoinette

Zoe Coric





*Prabhleen Kaur Boparai*



*Giovanna Albanese*



Emi Kaneko





*community and family*

## A way home

A single tear rolled  
Down  
her  
face

as the coarse dirt blew around and the wind rushed against her face, the  
desolate  
desert ahead of her.

She looked down at her mom who wasn't breathing anymore, her lifeless  
body on the dry ground it seemed like she had been simply sleeping.

She was now alone  
but in the distance she saw something that appeared to be a simple dot  
.  
but it was better than turning back around to the home that isn't home  
anymore.

It was the place where piojos ran rampant. The place where a boy had beat  
her to steal her shoes. The place where they beat her father to death, the  
place where the screams would keep her up as she tried to sleep, the place  
where she would hear gunshots regularly.

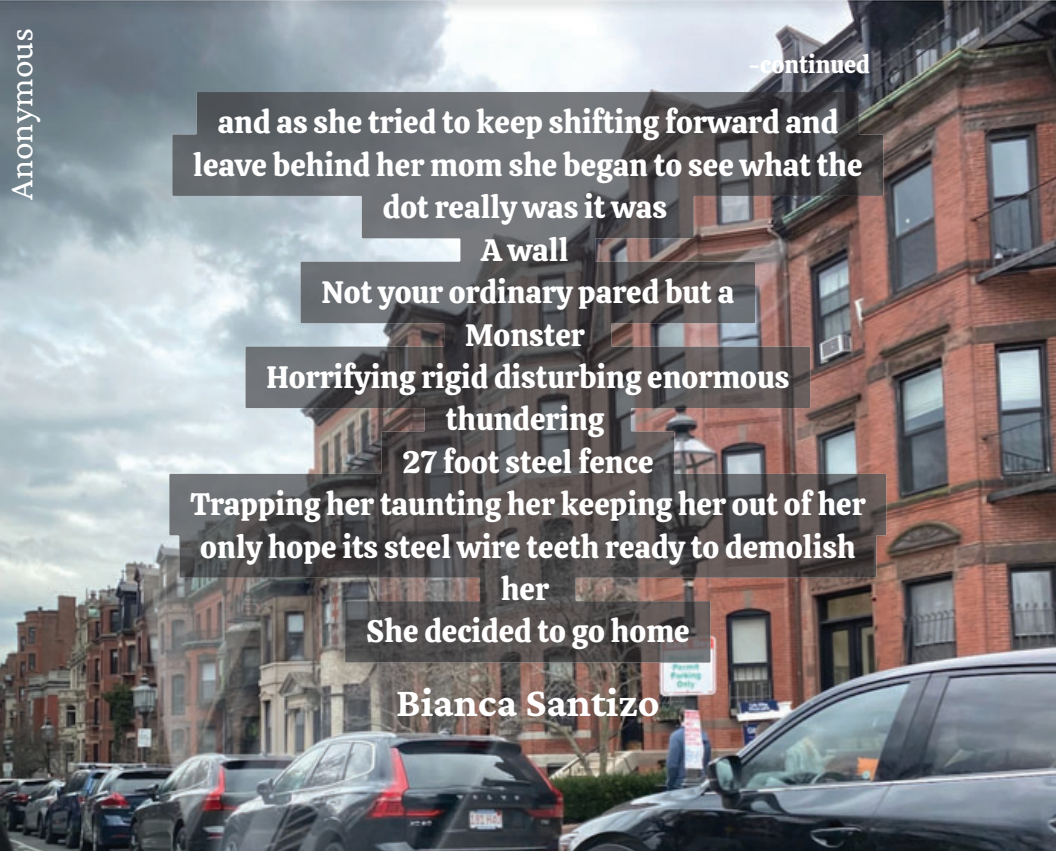
The place where her mom told her she had to move up from to her  
Sueno Americano.

Her mom told her about this place  
She said you need to leave home to make a home.

Where kids could go to school safely  
jobs were just overflowing from the seams of this alluring country.

But that was before  
her mom stopped breathing  
That was when she had someone  
That was when she wasn't alone  
But she wasn't alone anymore  
she had the dot  
.





and as she tried to keep shifting forward and  
leave behind her mom she began to see what the  
dot really was it was

A wall

Not your ordinary pared but a

Monster

Horrifying rigid disturbing enormous

thundering

27 foot steel fence

Trapping her taunting her keeping her out of her  
only hope its steel wire teeth ready to demolish

her

She decided to go home

Bianca Santizo

## The Other Woman

To be the other woman breeds realism  
In the shadows, darkness, nobody seems to see me.

To be different gives us trouble to foresee

As the community is fighting for unity  
and only one group gets the opportunity

It becomes difficult to live

It becomes difficult to go on

It becomes difficult to be a woman in this time

Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Asian

Differences of appearance remain the only contrast, though they're

All left behind by our reality

All acknowledgement, with no action

Abandonment to the highest degree

Putting another sister down for the white man's reaction

Oh to be the other woman.

## *Last Thread of Life*

I am ninety	Nobody stops to think
And my life has betrayed me	about me
	Ever
The family I used to have	No love
no longer comes around	No care
no longer calls me	No warmth
no longer knows if I'm alive	No appreciation
How come they don't care about me anymore?	Just left alone
All my friends are gone	Just me left
were taken away years ago	
One went	Maybe one day
then two	when I'm gone
then three	they'll miss me
and now all	but I doubt it
Just me left	There's only so many days left for me
	day by day
All my medicine bottles	less and less
stand side by side	Fewer days
in my abandoned looking kitchen	hours
My house is falling apart	minutes
cabinets ancient	seconds
couches ripped	of life
chairs that are aged	
and look like they will snap any second now	Breaths are coming to an end
and the rugs lost all their color	But right now
Don't have the energy anymore to fix it	it's just me left
There is nothing I want to do	
and too much	Remember
that has to be done	Just me left like an abandoned home
Just me left	

*Kayla Porto*

# They Colored Us

They colored us pink or blue  
They colored our rooms with pink and blue  
They celebrated what we were born as  
But not what we were on the inside  
They pushed and prodded till we agreed  
But we knew we were different  
She was born pink but she felt blue  
He was born blue but he felt pink  
And yet they never realized what they did hurt us  
We take things to try and feel the way they say  
But we have to take more and more each day  
They say we are sick and need to be fixed  
They give us books and say that we are freaks

They say we are just kids and don't know  
We know more than they think  
She jumped and he stopped breathing  
That night families changed  
And lives were lost  
But they still color us  
They colored me pink even though I felt blue  
They tell me God will fix me  
We are just kids  
  
We aren't dolls

I was 7 when I realized

They tell me daughter she her  
I say son child he they  
They say silly little girl  
I say boy

They say God doesn't make mistakes  
I say God does  
God made so many of us wrong  
So we pay to fix it  
Fixing it breaks us and families  
Fixing it makes wars  
We just want to be in the right body  
We don't want to die  
We just want to close our eyes and feel all right  
We can't think of anything else to make them understand

Kids don't have to be scared to come out  
We deserve to be happy with who we are  
I came out and it wasn't easy but sometimes that's life  
I was 9 when I said I am a boy  
My family said no you are a silly girl  
I started changing who I was to be who I am now  
They still don't know why I am this way  
I told them I was always like this but they told me I was wrong

Boys make the best Girls  
Girls make the best Boys

Blues make the best pinks  
Pinks make the best blues  
Pinks or blues make the best greens  
Greens make the best of everything  
We were just kids trying to live  
They took our childhood  
We are supposed to know we are the way we are born  
We are learning to cheat death when we should be living our life

*Anonymous*





MADISON DELGADO

GIOVANNA ALBANESE



# Kevin's World

"AUTISM IS ABOUT HAVING A PURE HEART AND BEING VERY SENSITIVE... IT IS ABOUT FINDING A WAY TO SURVIVE IN AN OVERWHELMING, CONFUSING WORLD... IT IS ABOUT DEVELOPING DIFFERENTLY, IN A DIFFERENT PACE AND WITH DIFFERENT LEAPS." – UNKNOWN.

January remains my least favorite month of the year. I stepped foot into the woods and my fingers felt like they were on the verge of falling off my hands within a minute of being outside of the car. My hiking shoes crunched the dead leaves as I puffed out tiny white clouds. The short two-mile walk was accompanied by rattling wind, a few birds chirping here and there, but other than that, you could have heard a pin drop.

I did not dress for the occasion. I wore a skimpy coat that did not provide nearly enough insulation for my skin. Cold air brushed my face and every part of my body just like the wind passed through the dead trees. My skin, bumpy, and my cheeks, a rosy color.

"Keep walking and you will warm up soon." My mother noticed me shivering -- she loved the winter because the snow was pretty and the weather wasn't hot anymore, and she enjoyed peace and quiet in the woods.

"We have been walking for like five whole minutes and I feel like my arms and legs are about to freeze."

I over-exaggerated. I peered at my family and I saw my brother running in circles, picking up rocks, and throwing them into the frozen lake. I wondered to myself, *why does he have such weird behaviors?*

My mother ignored me because I irritated her. Kevin was now inspecting sticks and collecting the right ones. He threw away the sticks that were too long, odd-shaped, and the ones that he deemed unfit for his collection. I questioned why he was collecting sticks because he has nothing to do with them. He would take two steps, stop, examine a stick, and either put it in his pile with the other sticks, or he would put it back in the same spot he found it in. He did this for what seemed like forever and I got annoyed because I did not understand why he was doing this.

"Why is he inspecting sticks?" I shuffled over to my father and I pointed to my six-year-old brother.

"I do not know, but he is having fun and it is not affecting us," my father stopped again to wait for my brother to take another stick. "He is not like us, Fiona. What we might think is weird, he might see as normal or necessary."

I grew more displeased not because I did not want to stop every two seconds in the middle of January to wait for my brother, but because it did not seem justified to me to stop just to look at sticks. Once my brother's hands were full, he decided he had enough sticks so we kept hiking. At the end of the path, we noticed a small stream and a bench. My brother sat in the middle and on each side was my mom and me. My dad stood up behind my brother. Kevin arranged the sticks in a line on his right side, next to me, and then one by one took each stick and threw them in the water.

Kevin's smile was as wide as the horizon once the first stick connected with the water. After each stick hit the water and made a little 'splash' sound, he clapped and cheered. He started flapping his hands like a bird and made weird noises. My dad tried to calm him down because he didn't want to draw attention to us. There were people walking by us, and my dad did not want the people to think that my brother is 'abnormal'. Once my brother calmed down and maintained his excitement for the sticks, we decided to get up and keep walking the trail. My brother chose not to pick up any more sticks and now he just wanted to run back and forth.

We kept walking for fifteen minutes until we reached a small deck that overlooked the frozen lake. My brother ran towards it because he was so excited to find stones to throw on the ice. He picked a handful of small pebbles that were laying around the deck and then carefully walked up the deck. When he climbed up the steps of the deck, he made sure that both of his feet were on the same step before moving on to the next.

"Kevin, do you like the deck?" My mother asked as she put her hand on the railing and started escalating up the steps of the tattered deck.

"EEYES!" My brother screamed. He grinned brightly and started throwing the rocks toward the ice. He couldn't crack the ice though because he wasn't that strong, and the ice was rough. "Daddy, throw it!" Kevin handed my dad one of the rocks and waited for him to throw it into the lake.

My dad threw it at the ice, and it left a little scratch. The rock made a small 'clank' noise and it slid through the ice. My brother handed him the next rock, and my dad tossed it so far that we couldn't see or hear the rock plummet. The old deck started shaking when Kevin jumped with excitement as he squinted his eyes to try and see the rock.

"I want to go home," my little brother declared abruptly. His humor completely left his body. He was so excited two seconds prior, and now he wanted to leave?

My parents, of course, listened to Kevin and we decided it was a good idea to head back home. We were not too far from the deck when Kevin suddenly stopped walking and started biting the back of his hand like he was taking a bite of an apple. It was the kind of bite that leaves a clock-looking circle from teeth markings, the kind of bite that burns. He did this a lot when he was mad or anxious. But it was so sudden and he was happy like a minute before.

"Kevin, no. Use your words and tell us what is wrong," my dad quickly removed Kevin's hand from his face. But Kevin did not calm down. He began to squeeze my dad's hand and began hyperventilating. He looked at us with wide eyes and pink cheeks. "Kevin, look at me, it's okay," my dad tried again, pulling Kevin into an embrace.

Kevin screamed like he was possessed and there was no way he could have gotten any words out. My mother joined in the hug and gave my brother a big kiss on the cheek and did everything she could do to make him stop. My brother looked like he was in pain, snot dripping from his nose, tears pouring down his face, his body was shaking, and deafening screams. My mother broke from the embrace to get water from her bag to give to Kevin. She shuddered and I heard the tiniest whimper come from her.

"Kevin, please tell us what is wrong," I tried to communicate calmly and effectively, choking back tears. Seeing my brother like that felt like being punched in the stomach. I couldn't bear seeing him in that state. The water did not help him calm down, if anything, it made the situation worse. People gave us death stares.



I glanced over to my parents and I observed two tears roll down my dad's face. No. Way. I thought to myself.

I was confused because I did not understand why my brother was having an anxiety attack, was overwhelmed by my whole family showing vulnerability in the middle of the woods, and was embarrassed because people passing us were giving us dirty looks. My whole body was on fire and my breathing became shallow. I did not understand anything, and I hated it.

This was the moment where I saw my dad let his guard down for the first time. I was 11 years old when I saw him cry for the first time. It was a chain reaction. My brother cried, then my mother, then my father, and then me. Erion Vela, the strongest man I knew, the one that didn't like to show emotion, the one who always told me "Velas don't cry" whenever I cried, suddenly became vulnerable. This broke me because my dad felt powerless that he could not help my brother to express his emotions and what was going through his head. Confusion surrounded me because I didn't comprehend what was happening at this moment. My head started throbbing and my vision went blurry from the tears that soon fell down my face.

There are unexplainable things in life that you have to accept. As I grew older, I had to accept the fact that my brother will be in pain sometimes and all I can do is try to comfort him. Even if I do try and comfort him, it is not guaranteed that he will calm down, and I will not know for sure what will happen when he breaks down. There will be times where I will not understand Kevin, and that is okay. It is hard to not be in control, and it is hard seeing my own family struggling to communicate with my little brother, and it is very difficult for me to be a good big sister when I can't understand him. It is uncomfortable to see people show vulnerability, but everyone is going to be weak at times. I have to support them, and I have to accept that even the strongest people show weakness sometimes, and my brother is my father's weakness. My brother is all of our weaknesses. Kevin is the person who brings happiness to the family, he is the one who we all want to protect and who we all cherish the most. He is the one we want to understand the most, but he is the one we will always understand the least.

# I Wonder

What his favorite color was  
or favorite song

The moment where he felt he was at his lowest  
Highest

The moment where he was the most proud  
Most afraid

If he ever felt like giving up  
If he ever gave up

If he realized he was losing his memory  
If he pretended he wasn't

What he forgot  
What he remembered  
What he longed to forget  
Or what he dreamed to remember

How he felt as he spent his last days here with us  
What he wished to tell us  
Any advice that he had  
What he thought of me  
If he was proud of me

I wonder if he was still fighting  
Or if he gave up

I wonder if he was happy to go  
Or trying to hold on

I wonder if he's here right now  
With me

I wonder if heaven's real  
What he imagined it would be

Me pregunto si recordó inglés  
Me pregunto si sé sintió solo

Desearía haber tenido la oportunidad de hablar  
con él  
De practicar  
Y de perfeccionar mis habilidades  
Así podría ser la mejora oradora de mi clase

Te extraño mucho abuelito  
ahora puedes descansar  
Te amo <3

Danielle Vella

# 17 KILLED, AND 17 INJURED

Dear Mom,

12:34 pm: I love you, and I want you to know that.  
You have been, and will always be my everything,  
no matter what happens today.  
I am writing to you saying that if I do not come out of this alive,  
I love you, and this is in no way your fault.  
I am trying to keep myself safe, hoping to see you snuggled up on the couch,  
knowing that your daughter is well.  
But I cannot make that promise.

12:36 pm: I am squeezing in the corner of my classroom right now,  
avoiding the thunder of screams on the outside,  
and the shots coming from the halls.  
But where I am inside my own head, admiring what I have been lucky enough to experience,  
there is silence.  
silence all around.  
Silence,  
silence,  
silence.

12:37 pm: I couldn't piece together what I saw today,  
I don't know if it was the immediate urge to run or the fear that splurged through my spine.  
But from what I could recall, before the shots started to fire, I had reached the bottom of the stairs.  
I saw a swarm of kids with flushed faces and commotion.  
An ocean, just beneath me on the floorboards caused me to slip.  
I had turned around rummaging into the closest room, which is where I am now.  
My head was filled with cement, and my veins were full of fear.  
It wasn't a normal day.  
But I had to write to you.  
I had to say something because I needed you to know that I was trying.  
Trying to stay alive, trying to keep hidden.

12:40 pm: Mom, the thunder of screams died down,  
and the blazing shots have stopped.  
But now the silence in my head snapped away.  
The door just across the room had started to creak open, but I am sure it's the police.  
The clocking of the gat rang in my head through the near distance,  
and the silence inside the room, where I was crouched, was now gone.

12:41 pm: I tried I really did Mom,  
but I guess it just wasn't good enough.  
Mom, I love you.

12:42 pm: Hey sweetie are you still there?

12:42 pm: Sweetie?

12:42 pm: Sweetie, you're worrying me.

12:42 pm: Sweetie, please answer me.

## the pieces that can't be repaired (excerpt)

October 31st, 2015. The day my life split into thousands of pieces, did a backflip, and shattered like glass onto the floor. The sun drowned into the dark abyss as my father crept into the room, gripping his stomach as if it would burst. His eyes groaned in pain, desperate for medical attention. The floor was shaken by the collapse of a 42-year-old man, weeping. The fake blood dripped onto my costume as I transformed into a blood-eating demon.

I was too busy to hear the sound. My mother, however, sprinted down into the kitchen, as her face turned to a deep blue. What is happening? Her hands trembled as she screeched, she saw her uttermost fear happening right before her eyes. The screech alarmed me, and I dashed from the windy, cold basement into the moldy kitchen with bright sunflowers. The wind curled into an ominous wind surrounding me, watching my every move as my eyes froze onto my father's body. Darkness wrapped around my shoulders in despair, haunting me as if Halloween came to life. In my 8 years of lifetime, my father was never weak, crying for pain. Was my father going to live through this, is this "sickness" really that horrible? The car engines turned on in a loud roar as my father crept into the car with my mother. The car zoomed out of the windy driveway and followed into the dawned night. My hands soaked with dry tears held firm on the windowsill. It was the last time I saw my father for months.

**massimo reali**



Eileen Dockery



# The Call Changes Everything

As people, we think we are the focus of the universe. When something bad happens to us, we jump to all sorts of conclusions as to why that horrible thing has just happened. We blame it on all sorts of things like bad karma, or manifestations. But all those reasons make us regret. Regret what we did, why we did it, when we did it. But what's worse than all that is the regret itself. Regret acts like an anchor in people's life, not only keeping us sucked up in the past but holding us back from the future. From growth and better things. The death of my great grandma made me realize all this. Her death made me realize that life is too short for regret. I need to go out in the world, making my mark and owning it. And that's my motto, my guide through life, and who I am.

The morning of the call. The breeze was light but still I laid cold as the morning wind eased its way through the small crack in the window. I tugged for more blanket coverage from my mom, who wouldn't budge. I was seven and fell asleep in her bed after our traditional Friday night movie. My mom's phone began to ring, and she let it, too tired to pick up what she thought was another telemarketer call. After a minute, it stopped. Ah, peace and quiet, I thought. My eyelids weighed heavily and forced themselves to shut, which was interrupted by another obnoxious ring. This time, obligated to quiet the torturous sound, she picked up. Her voice faltered and drained. I rolled over taking the pillow with me, and covered my ear to block out the sound so early in the morning. When the room fell quiet again, I turned over to see that my mom had begun to cry. Little trickles of tears that in a matter of seconds turned into an avalanche. I had never seen my mother cry. My mom had been by my side at every tear I had shed up to that point. From a pinky broken in ping pong, when I shed more tears than I'd like to admit, to when I balled my eyes out after my fifth grade cell project dropped from the hands of my sister.

But still even after all my altercations, I had never seen her cry. I wanted to comfort her, the way she had with me. The moment the call ended, I just wanted to hug her and vacuum up her tears, so she had no more to shed. So we could turn back time to seconds before she received the call about her grandma's death. When our only concern was the cold morning breeze. But now everything felt out of place, and wrong. I couldn't do anything to change it, I didn't have the power to. Little seven year old me looked up at my mom, and wondered which one of us would dare to move first. We were frozen, trapped in silence.

At the time of her passing, seven year old me didn't really understand what death meant. The permanent absence from one's life. When you feel them there but question if they really are. Only bits and pieces of memories that you wish you could clasp onto and never let go. Travel back in time, drop an anchor and stay there. My anchor was dropped in the memory of my great grandma dancing at my communion party, the summer of 2014. Needless to say she was the life of the party. When she walked onto the floor, her radiant complexion and rhythmic sway magnetized the eyes of the onlookers from their seats. Her body was so fragile, yet so pristine in every movement she composed. Seven year old me was seated with the onlookers, all of us watching her in awe and admiration, telling myself I would never be amongst them again. I wanted to be on the floor, dancing, like her.

Today, I know my great grandma wouldn't want me or any of the people keeping her memory alive to stay stuck in place, grieving. As I visit her memory from time to time, I remind myself that she would want me to live my life, the way she had before her time ran out. Loving and cherishing youth, that would later on develop into a family. Our family. Loving the people life throws onto my path, and learning when to let them go. Going through life the way I wanted to, just as she had. All are promises to myself and her, and I refuse to break. Leaving her mark without even knowing it, not only me but all those lucky enough to know her, and to be loved by her. And I will do the same.

Annelise Serpa

# Identity



# Two Sides Of Me

June 1998. It was a hot summer day

I walk past through the smell of smoking wood

Remembering how my family would gather and tell stories back home

I come back to reality remembering that I am all alone in a country with no support .

Who am I ?

Who am I supposed to be when I have two different roots growing out of me ,

Screaming Mexican pride.

America is a country full of different cultures and identities.

I've decided who I want to be.

I've decided I will share the two sides of me.

I've decided who I will be.

I am lucky to have two languages that I am able to speak

El español, el lenguaje en el que mi madre me enseñó y que uso para no olvidar de dónde soy.

English , the language I was taught to speak at school with a mix of my accent.

Growing up I was always taught to remember who I am

I play close to my roots as they still continue to grow in America ,

Remembering my ancestors and the Aztec blood that runs inside of me.

I walk back home remembering the smell .

I walk back home and know who I am.

I walk back home knowing that I have two roots growing out of me.





Gianna Allegretti



*Prabhleen Kaur Boparai*

It's often hard to admit  
But to differentiate left from right  
I still have to hold my hands up in  
an L-shape  
Just to tell which way to go

I find it to be frequently helpful  
Though a little embarrassing  
And yet I find that I still struggle  
with direction  
And it's hard to admit I have  
trouble with that, too

On one hand, bent into an L  
There's the past  
A face I do not recognize and hope  
to forget  
She sits in front of a joyful and  
accepting crowd,  
Laughing  
Laughing and drowning  
She is lost in the lies she tells  
And she's not happy

On the other hand, the L is backward  
Looking right, right into the future  
A boy, a contented one  
His crowd is a little more divided  
Because maybe they miss that girl  
But his smile is brighter  
Even though it didn't change

And I hold my hands up  
In front of my face  
And I look, side to side  
Before traversing a road of resolution

Is it he or she  
A cage or a key  
A step forward or back  
A left or a right

Without my hands in front of my face  
In two mirroring L's  
I'll march forward into that street  
Because no matter what they tell me  
I've decided which way I want to go

Forward.

Joey Lipple-Smetana

## *Heart*

Knowing not  
The shape  
We've  
learned To half along a  
fold then open, Where do we open? Where do  
we open?

Suspended on a chain. Will we find them? Will  
we find ourselves? What shape is made

Whole by the  
Opening? Besides the heart?

We cut at paper, To find  
the shape. That we once knew.

Healing sentiments  
From memories. Who knew.

We have. No one  
Not even.

Our own.

Heart.

Elizabeth Nicaj

## Impostor Syndrome

I have very bad impostor syndrome

I already do not like this song

And I'm not one for words of wisdom

Sometimes I think my middle name is  
wrong

'cause my grandma did everything right

She didn't sit and pout

Four kids aren't going to raise themselves

And a widow can't afford to doubt

I have terrible impostor syndrome

I tend to fall before I jump

I'm probably gonna cry once I get home

And convince myself I didn't mess it up

I aspire to be Pope

When I'm not even a priest

If disappointment is beauty

Does that make me the beast?

And I've tried to call back hope

That odd thing with feathers

To come perch in my soul

But it seems that there's bad weather

I have horrible impostor syndrome

The world's barbaric; I'm the fall of Rome

"Desperately trying to prosper" syndrome

God how I wish I were more like my mom

'cause my mother is sharp as a blade

Broken English, but she's not afraid

Talks to strangers as if they were her friends

When you're far from home you can't afford  
to break

I aspire to be great

When I'm not even good

My strength of "will" is always

Weaker than the "would"

And I've tried to call back hope

I wish she wasn't busy

To please perch in my soul

And make it all so easy

I have very bad impostor syndrome

And I'm gonna have to like this song

I don't think I'm very smart or very strong

But for the first time, I hope I'm wrong

**Bárbara Sara Borrell Porras**

Gianna Allegretti





# Make It Yours

What's worse than giving up before the treasure  
When it's one more meter, not another lecturer  
And you taking it easy, looking for the future  
Which car you buy next would be your only pressure  
But you thought wrong, giving up your whole life  
Working a 9-5, you always tight  
Now you mad at the world because of your mistakes  
That's gonna affect your feels of what you threw away

Been given life into a hand or two  
But you don't give a damn and breaking all the rules  
That's only half the time, you ever tried to mix  
I could make a whole book out of what you did  
Nah still that won't matter, cause you never share  
You can't affect opinions if they never cared

I could give another try but it don't feel right  
We used to be tight, we had the spot light  
Take another hit, but you said you quit  
No I'm not surprised, I saw it in your eyes  
You looking for escape from the mess you made  
But it's too late now, you regret your fate

Looking for a rebound but I stole it  
On and off the court now but i'm going  
Make another song just get it rolling  
Make another album, get it rolling

The strength to give, the strength to take  
The heart to love, to appreciate  
All the time it took, all the blood and tears  
The change in systems, change in gears  
You love to hate and you hate to love  
But to make it work, you're needing some  
The only chance you're gonna get  
The one that gives you some respect

You wanna have it all, but you only getting some  
You wanna share your love, but it turns into a gun

Remember one thing, don't let those dreams fade  
Make that dream real, turn it into fate  
Keep your head up high, never close that door  
Remember one thing, make that dream yours



*Georgia Robb*

Sonder is the realization that everybody around you, even strangers, are living a life just as complex as yours. Sometimes you're hurting so badly and you feel you're the only one. But after all your hardships you start to realize that everybody is unique and you aren't the only one. Everybody's lives are so indescribably different and there is no way you will ever understand their lives. To sum it up, you are realizing that you're not the only one living with such chaos and complexity. All people's lives are unique, strange, chaotic, and complex, just like yours. You're not alone.

Late at night I will have restless nights thinking about that word. The word sonder just captivates me into such a paralyzed state that all I think about is that word. I'm in Harrison High School and we have a student class of 1,075 and you see almost all of them everyday, 5 days a week, 7 hours a day. That's 35 hours weekly. That doesn't include our teachers, who all have their own separate lives. Sometimes I will lay in bed by myself around 2 am and with the darkness that surrounds my room and slowly the wave of sonder hits my mind like a truck. I then begin to realize that not only me but the 7.753 billion people in the world that we are constantly alive and having their own day to day routine, history, and so much more and it's such a crazy thought to just think about.

One day I was out at a restaurant for my mom's birthday and as I sat there around a good fifty people. I felt sonder about the people who were sitting around me. I saw an elderly woman with what seemed to be her grandson talking like they hadn't seen each other in years. The history between them is a mystery to me but they know it so well.



As individuals we feel like we are the main characters of the world that we are living in. We are living in our own story and the people around us are our supporting actors or background characters who have no insight into our lives but what's such a crazy thought is that they aren't just background characters, they are their own main characters in their own story. We are living in other people's own story while ours is only beginning. We need to appreciate the life we live because we never know the complexity of others. Sitting down and looking at the people walking is a weird pastime of mine but it shows how much I'm into the word. Thinking about the complexity of others for me is so fascinating. No matter what happens or how people act you never know what's really going on behind the scenes, it's such a crazy thing to realize that we aren't the only ones living life, tons of others are living life the same time as us but with different past, desires, fears, and everything. Everything that happened makes us different and that's why I sonder for everyone.

Staying up at night and thinking about this word puts me into such restless nights. As I think about going into college, I feel sonder about all these new people that I'll meet. I can't wait to have roommates as well to talk about this subject and to think more and more about this subject that makes me stay up late at night wondering about people around the world. Sonder is such a captivating word and so fascinating and goes to show how we are never alone. We are living our own story while others live different ones at the same time. It's amazing.

Sergio Sadl

I want hope to be like an egg--  
you need it. It's healthy for you, hope

it can bring you back to life. I want  
hope to crack easily. I want hope to be able

to rot. I know it too often is a false promise.  
If I need sugar for this new beginning,

let it be words. Musical words, sweet words  
that set the earth aflame. Words that fill

up anything. I want words to drill holes  
in your teeth sometimes. I want them

to be damaging. I want life to be like water.  
I want it to flow, I want it to flood with feeling

so overwhelming you cannot contain it.  
I want life to form new rivers out of barren earth.

I want beginnings to be  
as messy as batter smeared on tables

and behind ears where you forgot  
you touched your face. I want them

to shiver and shine. I want them to be  
beautiful and broken and needed.