

## **Love and Loss**

**By Hannah Maki**

Did you ever wish you could travel back in the past to a particular time in your life? A period that you distinctly remember as being one of the greatest? I certainly do. There was a time, not too long ago, when everything seemed to be unparalleled; when people were truly happy and lighthearted. From this childhood memory, I learned that you can never take anything for granted; not time, not people. You never know when they are going to leave you.

I remember, every Friday morning, my Papa Toivo would drive from Middleboro to pick me up and bring me back to his house for the day. This was before kindergarten, so I was around four or five years old. Each and every Friday morning before he arrived, my house was filled with excitement. The air was different than that of other mornings, because I knew I was going over Papa Toivo's. My joyfulness would dance through the air like butterflies. We would drive to Honey Dew and buy glazed blueberry donut holes, which were my favorite at the time. Once we finally arrived at his house, I went wild. It was my playground, my escape. Going there each week was the highlight of my childhood. Each Friday afternoon, Papa Toivo made me Annie's macaroni and cheese for lunch. The aroma of melted cheese would float through the air like leaves cascading from a tree during the fall.

The possibilities of what I could do at that house were endless. I could ride my bike around the neighborhood, play with the dollhouse, watch TV, play hide and seek, and so on. I could do these activities anywhere, but there was just something about doing them at Papa Toivo's house that made it special.

My younger brother later carried on the tradition

of going to Papa Toivo's house on Fridays while I went to elementary school. The only time I would get to see Papa Toivo was when my family got together on holidays, such as Christmas, Easter or Thanksgiving. Even then, I could start to feel that the unbreakable bond we once had was growing weaker. This was only because we were unable to see each other as often as we once could. We spent a lot of time together when I was younger, and I wish I still had that friendship with him. Unfortunately, not all things stay green forever.

It was late fall, 2012. The crisp bitterness of the season hung in the air like a canopy. Dad came home from work with a solemn look; something was quite different from the cheerfulness he often displayed.

"What's wrong?" I asked him, knowing the answer would be disheartening.

He turned his head toward me and placed a hand on the spindle-wood banister around our steps for support. "It's Papa Toivo," he stated gravely. "He's sick."

"What?" I managed to make a sound, my voice muffled.

"They're not entirely sure what it is. But he's in the hospital right now, and they're taking good care of him." My dad trudged to the kitchen table, sat, and tears began to flow from his eyes. The drops of salty water made small puddles on the wood table. His shoulders were hunched and his head was in his hands. As for myself, I wasn't entirely sure how to feel. To describe it in one word, I felt numb. I was emotionless to all feelings. It was as if someone had pushed the pause button on my life. My ability to feel empathy, sympathy, compassion or anything else was gone. I hated myself for it. A gloomy and heartbroken atmosphere seemed to fill the room.

A few months passed, and still no improvements on Papa Toivo's health had been made. The doctors and nurses had been trying their hardest to cure him, but unfortunately there was nothing they could do. I had to take into account that he was rather old, but losing someone is never easy. The day my dad told me that Papa Toivo didn't have much longer was the day my brother and I went to visit him in the hospital for the first time. The first time we went to visit him was the last time we said goodbye. The thought weighed on my shoulders.

The reality of it all has yet to sink in. To this day, I still shed a tear remembering the times we shared and the memories we made. There's an emptiness inside of me that will always long for Papa Toivo and the wish to have him here today. Nevertheless, I know that he is watching down on me and it is my role to make him proud. Hopefully, someday we will see each other again and reconnect the bond I know is still there, and will be forever.



### Breath and Scar By Mariah Jacobsen

How is it that it all just fades away,  
Like breath on a mirror?  
The candlelight that dies,  
With smoke as its last moment's remembrance

How is it we see ourselves so mighty?  
So great?  
But are so small  
Gone in an instant

There are those who remain  
Those who are remembered  
And live through those who reminisce  
Those of the unforgotten

What cost must be paid to become unforgotten?  
What civil blood must be spilled for so vain a mission?  
For in great deeds, something abides  
A dark mark remains

Time heals all wounds  
Why are the wounds recalled and not the extraordinary  
happenings?  
Time can heal a wound  
But the scar will prevail

Perhaps it is better to be forgotten  
Our songs ending in silence,  
Nothing left but the stillness of the aircraft  
Perhaps it is better to be a breath than a scar

### Summer Sun By Taryn Cahill

A story of love,  
love that conquers  
time,  
heartbreak,  
predetermined destiny,  
war,  
illness,  
and expectations,  
to bring two souls  
bound by sweet fate  
one summer of teenage bliss  
under the summer sun,  
leaving both alone  
but with love in their hearts.  
Love that continues to grow  
like a rose,  
budding,  
surviving rainstorms,  
droughts, and winds.  
A rose growing in preparation,  
waiting for the sweet spring  
when it can bloom and flourish,  
waiting for the next summer sun.

**Tomorrow before Today?**  
**By Kristen Martin**

From the moment you are born and enter this hectic world,  
It is almost as if your entire life is planned for you.

What you eat,  
What you wear,  
With whom you become friends,  
Where you live,  
Where you go to school,  
What you should believe.

Our parents make most of the decisions  
in our early years of life.  
And as we mature we begin planning our own lives,  
But is this true?

Society corrupts our minds into believing that an ideal life is  
achieving fame and fortune,  
Handing us a neatly drawn up map  
to follow on the road of life,  
With precise checkpoints needed to be met in order to reach  
our final destination,  
Wealth and success... but not happiness.

Simple numbers define us...discourage us...humiliate us.  
The number in our pay checks...the percentage on our re-  
port cards...the amount of likes on our pictures and the fol-  
lowers on our screens.

Our eyes are glued onto glass screens that crack our spirit,  
Our lives broken into millions of shards.  
Our souls should be measured by the lives we touch,  
By kindness...determination...creativity,

**The New England Seasons**  
**By Alexis Swift**

The year begins with a rush of cool air  
Such cool air that everything is frozen  
Ponds, puddles, the ground  
As soon as the temperature drops, it snows  
The first snowfall of the year  
The air is crisp and the ground is white  
White with tiny shimmering crystals  
As soon as the snow stops, a new season begins

Spring, the season of rain and flowers  
Almost the whole month of April rains  
The temperature rises and the rain dies down  
Then, the world starts to grow again  
Trees, flowers, gardens  
Shortly after, the temperature again begins to rise

Summer, the season of hot weather and beaches  
The season of swimming and the sun  
Tans and sandals  
Vacations and bathing suits  
Joy and laughter

Fall rolls around  
As the temperature dies down  
Leaves start to fall  
The green life around us starts to wither away  
The wind speeds up and you start to see your breath  
And then, suddenly, it's December  
The year is ending

Winter has started again  
The snow starts to fall



The rare ability to see a glowing light in a sea of darkness.

We spend so much of our lives in a constant cycle,  
Rotating...spinning...turning,  
Oblivious to our nauseating lifecycle.  
And although the cycle may appear never ending,  
Impossible to escape,  
We have the ability to make it come to a screeching halt.  
Stop planning...worrying...stressing...wanting...living in fear  
of the future.

We are so concerned about what tomorrow brings that we  
forget about today,  
We forget how to live.

Today could very well be your last one ever.  
Last time you watch the bright sky turn from baby blue to  
flaming orange,  
Blending with pink,  
Until it meets the edge of the horizon, and is engulfed by a  
calming darkness.

We need to appreciate and embrace the simplicity of life,  
The rhythm of rain dancing on our roofs,  
The delicious smell of a meal being prepared in our kitchens,  
News of good health from a doctor,  
An unexpected phone call from our family,  
The contagious laughter of our friends,  
The kindness of a complete stranger.

So when the sun plummets into the night,  
Don't ask yourself how you should plan for tomorrow,  
Ask yourself if you are content with today.  
After all, today comes before tomorrow.

**Struggle for Air**  
**By Jessie Sullivan**

Sinking.  
Slowly sinking.  
Light that once guided me fading away.  
Struggling against the weight  
I must carry.

Sinking.  
Slowly sinking.  
Wading in expectations that swallow me whole.  
Carrying the load that grows with every second.

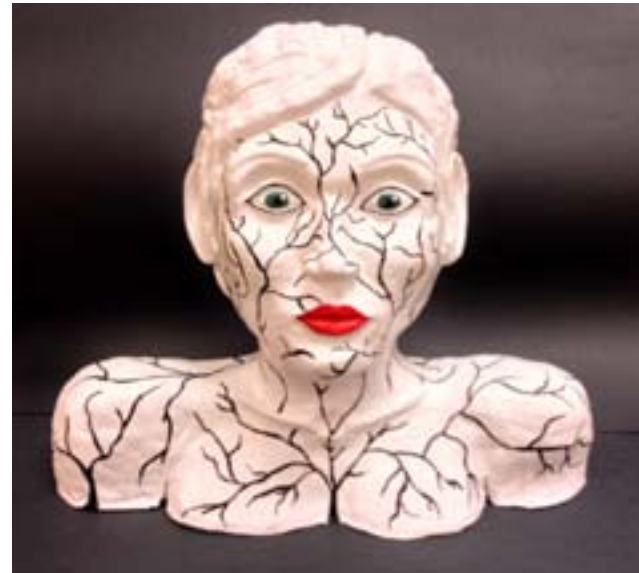
I am drowning—  
pressure builds around me.  
My heart races,  
as the weight pulls me under.

Suddenly,  
I let go of the anchor,  
struggle to reach the surface  
and find a source of air,  
gasping.  
Relief.

Looking at the anchor,  
I feel regret,  
and taking a breath,  
plunge back into the sea.

Sinking.  
Slowly sinking.

I am 16 but I wish to be 18 so that I may  
travel alone like a fool.  
I am 18 but I wish to be 21 so that I may drink at the bar.  
I am 21 but I wish to be 30 so that I may have no school  
loans, and catch my breath.  
I am 30 and I wish to be 62 so that I may retire.  
I am 62 and I wish to be young,  
For wishing to be older  
Is wishing to be closer and closer to death.  
There is no escaping the trap that is time.  
What we can do, is warp our view on now.  
To appreciate those around you is for sure not a crime.  
Live life in happiness, for the time you allow.  
The moral I tell you is not to disregard success;  
It's that we are born for each other.  
That to love your people is all for the best.  
When the children that are younger  
Have your name imprinted on their breath-  
You'll live forever  
And truly cheat death.



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**Born to Work**  
**By Laura McCue**

We are born into a society built upon money.  
The slips of paper in our pockets  
Define whether we're viewed as rich, or just cruddy.  
We are born in a hospital,  
Based on a healthcare system,  
Based around cash.  
"How can we help your well-being?"  
Is now, "How are you paying?"  
We are born to pass classes,  
To try harder, to try more.  
We will sacrifice sleep for an A,  
And much, much more.  
This more that I speak of is not objects, cash, nor a dime.  
What we let slip past us  
Is irreplaceable time.  
Time with our loved ones,  
Our close family.  
When you find yourself dying..  
Will you hug your degree?  
We are born to work hours,  
Do math, and pay bills.  
We shut out the flowers,  
Ignoring rolling hills.  
I am 3 but I wish to be 5 so that I may go to school.  
I am 5 but I wish to be 10 so that I may be strong enough to  
open a jar.  
I am 10 but I wish to be 14 so that I may work and earn my  
own jewel.  
I am 14 but I wish to be 16 so that I may drive a car.

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**Intense Nights**  
**By Mikaylin Nogler**

As the sky darkens,  
the dark, frigid  
glass-like water  
starts to scream,  
shattering upon the cave.  
Clouds of mist form  
around the perfectly shaped rocks.  
The water is now broken  
like the fragile glass,  
shattered  
into a million pieces  
upon the rigid rocks  
and lively waters,  
until the burning sun rises,  
calming the sea,  
causing it to lay still  
under the blazing sun  
until night falls again  
and the sea comes alive  
once again.

“Age doesn’t matter, son. All that matters is that we have to take this baby back home.”

“Oh no, daddy-o, you can’t do that. There is an evil bear in the elf woods that has it in for that baby.”

“Ooh that’s bad. Then, I guess we’re just gonna have to raise it ourselves until it- I mean she- gets old enough to go back to where she came from and get mauled by that bear,” spoke Froin reluctantly.

Two months passed and Bella (that’s what they decided to call her) was like a part of the family. Hank and Wanda both loved her very much. However, Froin still had a very bad feeling about her. One cold December night, Hank and Wanda went to see the play, “A Very Dwarf Holiday,” leaving Froin with Bella.

Froin was especially grumpy that day because he had gotten fired from the gears factory for sleeping on the job, letting four good dwarves get dragged to their unfortunate demise. He stared into the depths of Bella’s soul, feeling nothing, and despised her very much. Bella would grab his finger, he would pull away. Bella would giggle at him, he would frown at her. He fed her when necessary, but other than that did nothing to help her. He was so stubborn in his old ways. Unfortunately, nothing ever changed between Froin and Bella. Or did it?

No.

What a grand story. Too bad it wasn’t longer.

Or is it?

No.

The end.

bear. It was a beautiful pink-haired baby girl. Hank rushed in, tickled the bear into submission (as he was trained to do), grabbed the baby and fled towards Franor. As he was fleeing, he distinctly heard the bear growl, “Me and my bear fellows will kill that darn baby if it ever sets foot in these woods again.” Not knowing what to say, Hank nervously replied, “Is that a threat or a promise?” ‘Zing’, he thought to himself.

Hank flew into his house, past his mother in mid conversation with a kitchen chair, and snuck away to his room. He wrapped the precious thing in a tablecloth and shook it nice and softly to keep it from crying.

“Hank, what was that racket? I’m coming up right now and you best not have a pink haired baby she-elf up there.”

Hank chucked the baby under his dusty bed just before his mother burst upon the scene. “Oh, thank goodness!” she exclaimed as she peeked around Hank’s room.

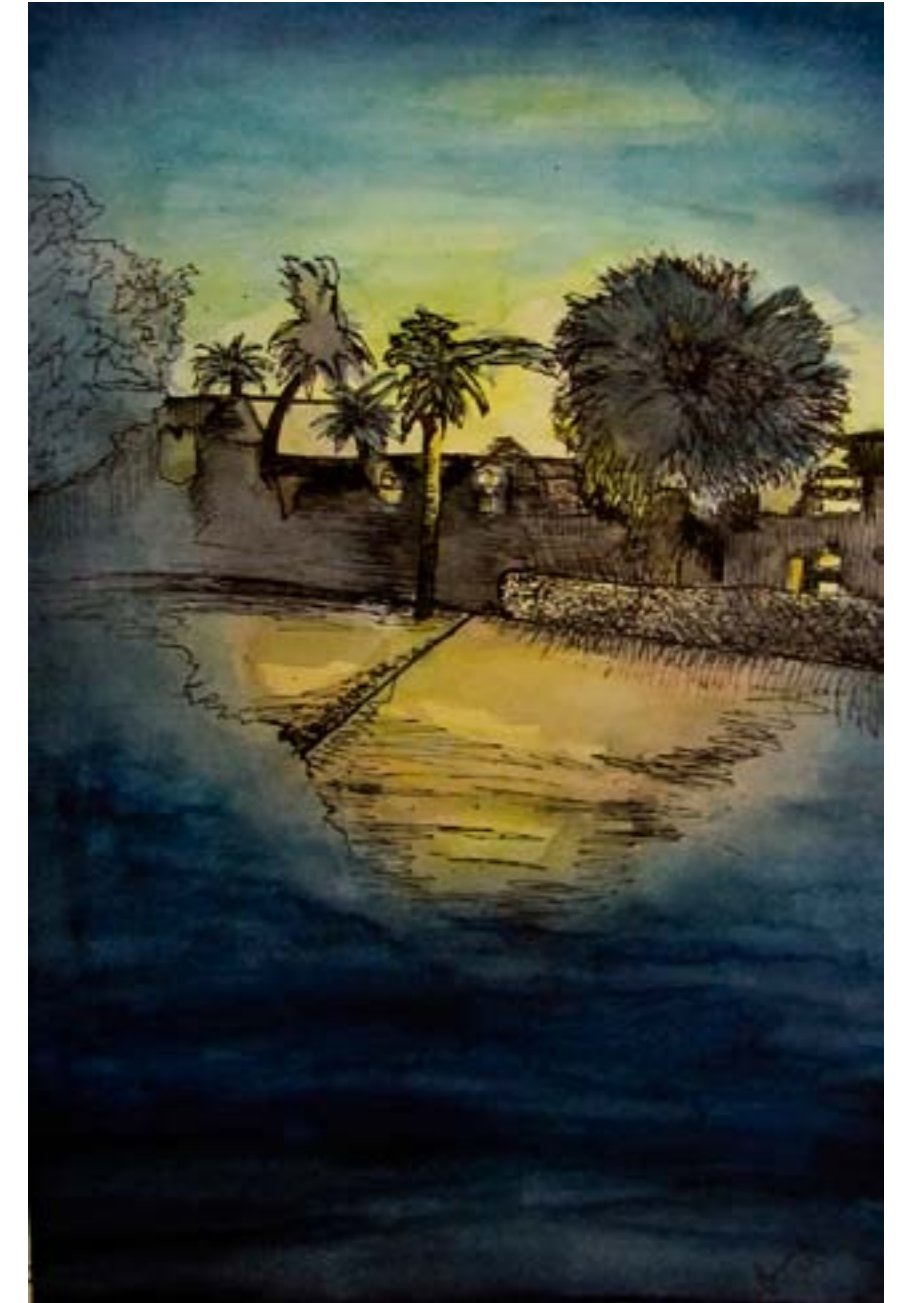
However, just as she was about to leave, the baby sneezed the loudest sneeze ever sneezed and Hank’s mother jumped under the bed and, without even saying “God bless you”, yanked the baby up and spanked Hank’s booty.

“Ouch, my booty,” cried Hank.

“I’m telling your father,” Hank’s mother said, and stormed out of the room with the baby.

“Hank, I’ve loved you like a son for ten years now, but I just don’t know what to say to you right now,” said Froin.

“I’m fourteen.”



**Rain**  
**By Chloe Hanson**

Splat.  
Splat.

Drops of water smash against your windshield  
Violently,  
As if they were angry for something of your doing.

Pitter-patter.  
Raindrops slide down your bedroom window,  
Slowly,  
Quietly.

Pish-posh.  
Water drips from the clouds,  
And lands softly in a puddle,  
Echoing in ripples.

Rain represents roaring rage,  
Taking place above the clouds,  
Resulting in horror  
And tears falling from the sky.

These tears invade our life down below,  
What is going on up there?  
We may never know.

thing that we don't: height, slenderness, good looks. Why wouldn't you hate them? Man, are you ignorant. I'm getting out of here, you two sicken me. And don't expect me to come back until at least 10:00."

And with that, Froin left, leaving his breakfast (and family) behind. Froin went to the giant gears factory which he had worked at for as long as he could remember. It didn't help though that he was suffering from senility and could not remember anything. There were only ten dwarves still working in the gears factory because most of the workers ended up being pulled into the gears by their beards. It was very dangerous for a job with absolutely no point.

"Don't worry about him, dear," said Froin's wife Wanda, finally. "He's just upset that I beat him in the Best Beard contest on Sunday." It didn't bother Wanda that her son had left twenty minutes ago, and she was talking to a chair.

Meanwhile, Hank, Wanda and Froin's son (named after their god of love and beauty), was out prancing around (the fad at the time), and heard a soft but distinct wail. He knew what it was right away. It was a baby screaming for its mother. Hank rushed around trying to find out where it came from, when he finally realized it came from the elf forest.

Hank jumped and leaped and jumped until at last, breaking all parkour records, he made it over the fence and gorge that divided the two empires to the elf woods. He ran as fast as his six year old legs could carry him (which is weird because he was fourteen) and he finally found the baby. It was being attacked by an evil, whimsical

**A Dwarf's Tale**  
**By Peter Coner**

Froin woke up. He sagged downstairs and put on his cloak and belt. Then he sat in the kitchen where his wife and son were getting ready to eat breakfast. Froin feasted on miscellaneous meat while making idle talk to keep his boring family occupied. He was staring out the window when his son said to him, "Father, whatever are you thinking about?"

"That's none of your business, you little creep," he replied, quite grumpily. "But I guess I'll tell you anyway. I'm thinking about elves, and how I hate them." For you see, Froin and most other dwarves from the town of Franor despised elves. In part because of their good looks and tall stature, but I think it was really just because they were different from them. Unfortunately for both elves and dwarves, they lived right next to each other. The town of Franor, part of the massive dwarven empire, was bordered to the east by the elf woods of Wold.

"I don't see why you hate elves. They don't seem all bad," spoke Froin's son. Froin's son had something different than most dwarves in Franor. He had what is called ignorance.

As described in the Dwarf's Dictionary: Thirty-Eighth Edition, ignorance is called "the quality of not judging someone on first impressions or what is told to you by your racist dad." I see that ignorance has a completely different meaning in other worlds, so pardon my Franch (the dwarf language at the time).

"Are you crazy?! Just look at them. They have every-





**Who am I?  
By Cameron Moe**

Who am I?  
A speck of dust?  
No.  
I am me.



**Stars  
By Julia Blomberg**

People are stars.  
When a star is gripped by death's icy hands,  
A neutron star is born,  
Unintentionally destroying the matter closest to it,  
A black hole of despair tearing through everything in the vicinity.  
When a person passes,  
They create a monstrous black hole,  
Unintentionally destroying the ones closest to them,  
Loved ones' hearts hastily ripped away.  
Stars are bright,  
Strong,  
Glow illumination for miles;  
Minds are intelligent,  
Independent,  
Allowing ideas to shine great distance;  
Stars fade during times,  
We may deny it, but  
People do as well.  
However,  
Stars make a brilliant comeback,  
Extravagant against the night sky,  
Burning,  
Swirling,  
Thrashing their glorious flame.  
It may not seem it, but  
People are able to as well.  
Always remember,  
Hold in your heart,  
People are stars.

**Spires  
By Max Fagnant**

Bent iron, broken glass.  
Skeletons of industrial past.  
Fear stacks up over us,  
Like towers that once were.  
  
Victim's soul now in the grasp  
Of shadows that are no longer cast.  
Your god says this,  
But his god says that.  
Where spires once stood is now flat.  
  
My generation is forever more,  
Burdened with a terrorist war.  
An enemy you cannot see  
For future twins that will never be.

**Old Friend**  
**By Brendan Duane**

Hello old friend, I see you now clearer than I ever have. I see your black eyes down the barrel of a gun. I see your shadow on the front of a car. I see you flit across water or street as I look down from a bridge or window. I see your eerie smile in the blade of a knife. I look in the mirror and sense you but never see you. Reflected back I see a man, young and reckless yet tired and worn. His face seems gaunt, grey in his hair and wrinkled too soon, a man too old for his age. I see each sleepless night and early dawn, every girl I've loved and lost. The friends I've gained and known and loved, never to leave my heart. I close my eyes and think to myself "what a journey it's been". You draw close old friend and I hear you near, ready for me to join you. To take your hand and draw you close, the time I think is here.

I open my eyes, one final time, to take in the world and its beauty. Almost ready to leave, I look again, upon the mirror before me. He's different now, the man I see, not like the one before. He seems different now, his appearance had changed. His hair is blonde with a small bit of grey, and his skin has regained its color. The wrinkles I see are from laughter and smiles, and hold a thousand memories. His cheeks pull back and his lips apart, revealing as rare flash of smile.

Why is it that the ones we love the most  
Either leave...  
Or end up ghosts?  
Well, I'm sitting here on the opposite coast  
Only left with myself, and these words that I wrote.  
Why is it that the ones that always show  
Fill the space,  
But leave behind woe?  
You're on the other side, and I cannot go.  
Knock one down, and the rest just domino.



**The Domino Effect**  
**By Max Fagnant**

How do you act so high, when you feel so low?  
How do you rebuild yourself, when the sun won't show?  
Well it's so sad, that you had to go,  
And I never knew it would be this hard to let go.

We used to roam the streets  
In that summer heat.  
But you're gone now, moved from state and town.  
What's there left to say,  
When all my words drown  
They'll fall to the ground, it won't make a single sound.

Why is it that the ones we love the most  
Either leave...  
Or end up ghosts?  
Well I'm sitting here on the opposite coast  
Only left with myself, and these words that I wrote.

So what happens now?  
Well it doesn't matter anyhow,  
When my thoughts are fed,  
I don't see a purpose in getting out of bed.  
I'm so tired of burnt eyes and sad goodbyes.  
That house is found empty  
Now so am I.

I'm sorry old friend but you can't have me today.  
My time is not up I've only begun. There are mountains to climb, women to kiss. There are friends I must see and places to go. No dear friend today's not the day. I've beaten you once and I won't see you again.





**Words That Burn**  
By Katherine Canniff

Whispers in the hallway,  
Darting eyes carrying messages,  
Seem to have begun when plastic tiaras and foam  
swords had been tossed aside.  
A new pastime.  
What a cruel game.

Every sentence,  
Every outfit,  
Every grade,  
Criticized and belittled.  
Something a person or group cannot comprehend is  
laughed at,  
Declared a crime against the social rules.

Words slither out of mouths with smirks of evil,  
Creeping along hallways,  
Or onto a screen.  
The pleasure of the snake as it bites its victims,  
Cracking a hole in friendships,  
Breaking the fragile confidence of a child,  
Is the true violation,  
Not a misplaced hair,  
Or an excellent grade.

A rock rests in the stomach of the victim,  
Wondering what they must change,  
Fading into the gray surroundings,

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## Solstice Staff

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Cover Art: Up, Up and Away by Rachel Archibald

Many thanks to Dr. Hackett, Mrs. Szostak, Mr. Rix,  
Mr. Pierce, our advisor Mrs. Mrowka, and everyone  
who contributed to this year's edition of *Solstice*.

*Solstice* is published once a year by the Literary  
Magazine Club at Pembroke High School.

Visit us online at [http://phs.pembrokek12.org/  
pages/PembrokeHS](http://phs.pembrokek12.org/pages/PembrokeHS)

Camouflaging to avoid the pain of being different.

The whispers of two who cannot resist the temptation  
of confiding,  
Travel along to many,  
Its flames growing higher as more are touched,  
Until there are those with the burns,  
Those who wish to extinguish it,  
And those who light the matches.

Gossip does not remain in schools or towns,  
But displayed on the covers of magazines at the  
grocery store,  
On the bedside tables of teenage girls,  
Inside the universe that lies within a computer.  
The taunting of others seemingly encouraged

The bitter judgment of humans,  
A source of entertainment,  
An everyday occurrence,  
Across the world within a classroom.

I wonder why we cannot keep judgments to ourselves,  
Why we linger on irrelevant details.  
A smile as a greeting,  
Not calculating eyes,  
Searching for any mistake,  
Fill a heart with pleasure,  
Numbing the burns,  
Temporarily.

# SOLSTICE

Pembroke High School Literary Magazine

2015

