



# WRITER'S INK

2023-2024



# **Writer's Ink 2023-2024**

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**Vice President--Randi Whitneck**

**Secretary--Shay Mendez**

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Alfredo Ramos

Moon Patnoad

Fonasia Nelson

Richelle Tang

Denise Peralta Baez

Basil Reels

Jonathan Moser

Dear Reader,

Writing is so complex that it's impossible for a 17-year-old to fully explain it in one paragraph. I like to think that writing is a way for us to make sense of the world around us. With so much going on in our hectic world, writing is an escape. In this magazine, you will find writing that is a testimony to the amazing talent of our community.

At the beginning of this school year, everything was new. Even for those of us who had been in this club in previous years, the change of scenery, the change in the NFA's schedule, the change in our members—all of it was new. Writer's Ink has been one of the only points of consistency for me in my high school years. From constantly changing friendships, classes, and just overall stress, Writer's Ink has been a consistent and friendly environment. Writer's Ink has always been like a second home to me, so becoming president alongside my best friend Randi, our vice president, has been truly amazing. Over this year, I've seen so much development. I've seen relationships grow. I've seen people come out of their shell. I've seen such impressive improvements in people's writing. Listening to all of your personal experiences through your writing means the world to me. I have such great pride in what we've accomplished this year, and I hope next year is as phenomenal as this one.

I would like to thank every single one of you. Thank you, Reader, for taking the time to read our poetry and stories. Thank you to our members for contributing to this magazine and sharing such important and personal parts of their lives. Thank you to our seniors for consistently coming to club meetings, even with your hectic schedules. We'll miss you so much. Thank you, Randi and Shay, our vice president and secretary, for contributing extra time and energy to help us. Thank you, Mrs. Krauss and Ms. Roberts, for always being there for us and making our club possible. You make the club such an encouraging and fun environment. But most importantly, thank you for putting up with our nonsense. This magazine wouldn't be possible without every single one of you, and I am forever grateful for all of your contributions.

Much love,

Mackenzie Suplee

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### **Blastophaga Psenes**

Female fig wasps are born pregnant inside of the fig next to their mother corpse, their male brethren impregnating them before they even hatch. After collecting pollen from the interior of the fig, she and her sisters start the journey of leaving their birthplace, squeezing through the small gap that took her mother's wings, leaving her to die in the fig. Once she has escaped her mother's grave, she comes about another fig tree, not unlike the place she was born. Curious, she inspects it closer, until eventually she is struggling through a hole too small for her body, ripping her wings from her body and tearing her antenna from her head. At long last, she has finally made it through the gap, into another fig, not unlike the one she was born in. With her last breath, she painstakingly births the eggs of her brothers. With her eggs laid, she dies, inside a fig not unlike her mother's grave.

Rowan Curry

a blanket keeps me warm at night,

along with holding me in such comfort.

“it’s almost as if you too are a blanket” the girl thought to herself.

but that wouldn’t be right. because in the end you wear down and tear. and the soft layer becomes rough.

my windows stay open at night. letting cold air brush through the blinds.

i wish i could lay with you once more. but your blood stopped pumping.

you were cold. so too was my blanket.

Kai Johnson

Flowers.

Their petals brown and detach over time.

But before, they should be fed and kept comfortable.

When cut away and separated, they can sit in glass beside you.

Hydrating and basking in the warm light.

When left alone, they can maintain homeostasis.

Hydrating and consuming the sunlight.

The help of a human can benefit but not needed. Homeostasis.

Flowers and man must continue to take. Homeostasis.

Whether it is being involved, socially alive, dissolving the sunlight through the surface or disconnected and dissociated from what is around, isolated, saturating in water.

Wherever we may go, we will continue to thrive even when struggling to drink up water and allow yourself to open up to the sunshine.

Flowers kept where they grew causes more stability, but removing from their location functioning they can still manage.

Kai Johnson

as she swooped up the thin cat, she snuggled her nose to its face. leaving the feline with a kiss.

placing the black and white on the grass, it flees the scene.

the breeze flows her cotton white fabric in the air, like a flag held high.

the two souls rest together in a field. as one passes by.

Kai Johnson

I am the forgotten, the invisible,  
Lost in the depths of time,  
A whisper in the wind,  
A shadow in the night.

I am the one who fades away,  
A ghost in a crowded room,  
A puzzle with missing pieces,  
A story with no ending.

I am the echo of a voice,  
Silenced by indifference,  
A memory slowly fading,  
A name that's been erased.

I am the forgotten, the unknown,  
A face without a name,  
But though you may not find me,  
I will always remain.

Anyra Ramos

### **Botany of Beauty**

I can now see what we lived for,  
for the leaves and pruned flowers,  
those which changed,  
now dormant.  
Flowers dying while you beseech soul,  
taking me, but leaving your anger and  
bearing supple fruit.  
Only to be given an end— petals falling.  
I often think of you, the tender fruit,  
only prospering in the wake of turned flowers,  
uprooting beauty,  
laying waste but bringing  
the tender facade of sweetness in spoiled fruit.

Dylan Phelps

Beneath the stars, where dreams ignite,  
In whispered vows of love's delight,  
Our hearts entwined in passion's gleam,  
We dance within our wildest dreams.

Anya Ramos

### **Man of Crafts**

An individual adhered to his philosophy,  
Or simply a hobby  
Lives his life through to the fullest  
Will seek triumph of high achievement.

Rather than those souls without crafts,  
Will be merged into the despair of laughs,  
Through living his life flowing with the river,  
Shall live a life of shiver and regret.

Fernando Flores

### **Mountaineer of Mine**

The highest trenches and the deepest mountains.  
Paradoxical, and to some, wrong; I know.  
Much like the paradox of you.  
One may see you as a mountain at the highest height,  
But I see you as my trench  
With such height falsified.

You give me what you call heart and in turn,  
I must bear a trench that you see as a mountain  
Walking and wading through deep water that may at some point,  
Turn into sharp cliffs.  
The fog on a mountain and the darkness of a trench,  
Much like your smile and laugh.  
Hiding the danger and reaping in the wake of a landslide.

Dylan Phelps

**(Inspired by the stuff we're learning in my history class 😊)**

Here comes the declaration of war  
Soldiers march with victory cries  
Brave soldiers with strong spirits  
Heads filled with propaganda and lies

Small men make big talk  
Tainting and poisoning the young minds  
Saying that he's fighting for the country  
A son leaves his mother behind

More hatred fills people's hearts  
More discord is sown around  
They say the war is for peace  
Such an irony is nowhere to be found

A wounded soldier watches his hopes  
Shatter with every passing breath  
His memory is lost to the sands of time  
As he is embraced by the arms of death

A human filled with hope and love  
Is wiped off with one shot of a gun  
Wiped off the sacred face of Earth  
Leaving in grief his loved ones

At last, it's the end of the war  
Banners of victory fly in the city  
But survivors are plagued by nightmares  
Forever stripped of their humanity

Great honors are bestowed for bravery  
A badge upon their chest gleams  
But the lost souls continue to wander  
Haunting war grounds with ghastly screams

The people slowly rebuild their lives  
Stitching up their world's torn screams  
While the "big men" enjoy the victory  
Built upon the sacrifice of a family's dreams

Peace prevails, leaders shake hands  
People celebrate with one another  
Far away, alone and waiting  
Is a brave child's tearful mother

Anya Ramos

### **Ammo**

Amo.  
Viz. Ammo.  
Ammunition of admiration, like quiet spark,  
Are you one to seek ignition?  
Or one to seek the light?  
To long is to die like a dragon to its own fire.  
Vexing allotment to receive but a simple moment of light.  
The dance of two hearts like cannon fire, equally ruinous.

The soul lives and breathes exuberance; trying that which one cannot truly see.  
Not like a window anyway.  
You must know a heart to truly see its fire,  
Making eyes more like a barricade,  
the demolition of such barricade lying in one's ignition,  
and heart of arms.

Dylan Phelps

You push my hand, you lick my face  
You jump on me, you cry to me  
You you eat my hair, you sleep in my bed  
Not to mention all the other things I haven't said.

But no matter what  
I will pet you,  
I will feed you,  
I will clean your litter box too

Because I love you  
Even though you can be a pain  
Because you are my cat all the same.

Tanner Steigle

### **The Revolution of The Vision**

I was crafted by God,  
Emerged by two,  
With an open mind that hopes to seek.

An attitude of sneering disbelief,  
Against all the blind.

A country I was raised in,  
With perspectives that clash,  
No place can be at peace,  
If skin is differed with a belief.

The color of skin, a thing of beauty,  
A rainbow of hues,  
heritage coursing through my veins,  
a language within me.

Fernando Flores

## **I love being a black woman**

Oh I love being a black woman

I love what I see when I look in a mirror

I love how my skin looks in the sun how it just shimmers

I love how my hair defies gravity

I love my community and my family

Oh I love being a black woman

Being new to a country, coming from a place where how I looked came with familiarity

Now walking into a class where everyone was different and there was no similarity

Being naive and not knowing what the world had to be, I thought to myself...

Oh I love being a black woman

Moving up the grades and kids became less tame and I was still different but it was

okay because everyone else was also different, but then my different became indifferent

Now kids poked fun because I was to blame for my darker shade

And how I felt weird when slavery was the topic of the lesson of the day

Now when I looked in the mirror I had to give myself reassurance, and ask,

Do I love being a black woman?

Now as I began to grow

And my insecurities began to slow

And black excellence became well known

People are now trying to mimic me

And my community,

Changing their lips so they can be as big as mine

Tanning their skin so it can copy my shine

Now they wanted our bodies the same in all ways

And wanted to share our culture and our antiquity braids

I had all they wanted, pure and original

Now as I looked into the mirror, I liked what I saw

Oh I love being a black woman

Now as I became even more grown

And became trapped within my phone

Consumed with social media and then I began to fear

Because the standard was clearly evident and I couldn't help but compare  
Now I couldn't look in the mirror happily  
And I wondered, why did my hair defy gravity?  
Do I love being a black woman?  
Moving deeper into my teenage age  
And now a disease is making the world concave  
Now riots are breaking out and my people are in rage  
Fighting and chanting for a change  
And as I sat and watched in the confinement of my home  
And my knowledge of what was going on began to grow  
After the cries of the people flowers grew  
And a new age for my people began to bloom  
After seeing them fight for what is right I felt anew  
Now I grew as a person and a black woman  
And this new confidence became my new weapon  
I loved me, but will it be for long?  
But for now  
I thought to myself...  
I love what I see when I look in a mirror  
I love how my skin looks in the sun how it just shimmers  
I love how my hair defies gravity  
I love my community and my family  
Oh I love being a black woman.

Ella Prempeh

## I am

Kinnick Campbell,

M From the town of Franklin,  
I State of Connecticut,  
N United States of America,  
D Continent of North America,  
O Western Hemisphere,  
F Earth,  
G Solar System,  
O Universe,  
D

Today I pondered the impossible...

Individuals In My Life,

"Impossible remains with that title for a reason."

Why? In my mind,

A particle of conception in the Universe, Impossible remains infeasible until it isn't,

**Until it's no more,**

Melting away its state of **vulnerability**,  
Revealing a puddle of opportunity,  
Until the unachievable disintegrates.

The quintessence of the unachievable,

## **Dreams,**

Visions of an extraordinary life,  
Life that is unobtainable in your view,  
Let your previous impossibilities disintegrate,  
Allow one foot to make a...  
Envision that...  
What does it look like?

step,  
step,

H-Hesitation fights you,  
H-H-Hesitation, winning in your brain,  
Conforming TO A CRAVEN

Shrug off the hesitation,  
Lift the sword of fearlessness,

Create a step...

of your life reborn,

## **And guarantee it.**

My name is Kinnick Campbell,  
Melder of swords in our nation,  
Who will you be?

Kinnick Campbell

## Collage

I am one big collage  
Covered in stickers and glitter glue  
The people I used to know  
And those I still talk to  
Stick their photos and drawings all over me  
Pieces of personality, habits,  
Even their speaking mannerisms  
Are all on display for the world to see

Each piece holds much relevance in my life  
From the largest, flashiest photograph to  
The smallest bit of construction paper that peeks out the side  
Every last piece, even contributions from  
The ones who've wronged me  
Or left my life  
Still have a place on my body for all to see  
Despite my feelings, their influence is very much apparent

Have some pieces fallen off or have been  
Simply lost to the wind?  
Most definitely  
Growing into this paper shell I was born in  
Filling in its cracks with my flesh and maturity  
Has caused some glue to falter and release some old habits  
And old ways of thinking  
But it's not a big deal  
As long as the important stuff stays with me  
I'll be OK

...but that begets the question:  
What is important to me?  
By the end of this long grueling journey  
Whose papers and photos will remain?  
What cardstock and stickers will decorate my corpse  
And show the world who I was all this time?

I guess we'll just have to wait to find out  
In the meantime, I'll bust out my markers  
And see who else wants a piece of this collage

Jaz Wiley

## Off-color Snake

The bombs start to crash overhead, whistling tunes of death before slamming into the dirt and sending a fiery ball of shrapnel into the surrounding trees. Captain O'Farrell falls into the foxhole beside me, covered in mud and blood, his eyes shot open and bloodshot. The laser-like bullets fly overhead, shredding anyone in their path. He's screaming something at me, but I'm too afraid to move. Right after he leapt from the foxhole, the rain of hellfire cut him to pieces. His body falls into my lap, his stinking intestines protruding from his gut. His eyes blasted open even further, staring into mine, lifeless. The rest of my brothers in arms continue to run right into their deaths, but I know that if I even raise myself by an inch I'll be killed.

The bloodshed continues, the rocks and dirt fly in the air and into my safe haven. I can barely breathe through the thick mortar smoke. My leg starts to tickle, a slimy sensation tingling its way up my leg. I look down at my muddy boots, and I see it. The orange, glowing eyes of a Guangxi cat snake. Its long, striped body crawling its way up my leg and onto my thigh. I want to run, but I know I can't. The mortar fire continues to fill the air with thick, toxic smoke. "Go! Go!" I whine. With the barrel of my rifle, I throw the snake to the other end of the hole.

I need to get up. I need to get off here. His gaze penetrates mine, his soulless eyes staring through me. I feel like I can still hear him breathe, like I can still feel his heartbeat. Our platoon scurries like rats as they try to escape the onslaught. I can see the ground beneath us through the gaping hole in his face, his body twitching in my lap as it finally dies off. A final, wet breath leaves his corpse. I can hear it rattle in his throat.

The snake continues its march towards me. As the bullets fly overhead and shred my friends like cheese, the sounds of dying men start to fade out. As the noise drowns, it's overwhelmed by the hiss of a snake. I helplessly open fire on the reptile, but my gun jams after

the first few shots. The snake crawls up my thigh and around my torso, its brownish orange skin sticking out on my green fatigues. I kick it off of me, and I kick at it as hard as I can. I can feel the crunch under my boot. My vision starts to go blurry, like a dirty camera lens. I look down at my hand, and see two, tiny bite marks. I drop my head to the dirt, take a long, deep breath, and stare at the rising sun.

De'Mari Muhammad-Thomas

### **Going up Northeastern**

There's a storm on the horizon  
A filthy hurricane  
Run, gentle bison  
Get out of the rain  
There's a storm on the horizon  
A fuse of rain and sand  
Run, gentle bison  
Angry is god's hand  
The wolves are drunk with a terrible hunger  
Down, down to the dirt  
Good god speaks like a flash of thunder  
Down, down to the dirt  
Gotta go on from this prairie  
Thunder rolling in  
Gotta go on from this prairie  
Thunder rolling in  
On this rising Appalachia  
I'm mountain bound

Harold Trafford

## **The Musician**

Oh, the musician  
An artist, truly  
They write of love,  
And of heartbreak, too

Oh, how torn they must be  
They write of love fleeing,  
They write of the pain they've seen

And to see  
Their beloved listeners  
Understand and relate,  
Must be a lovely torture

Jonathan Moser

## **Midnight Thoughts: "A Coat Rack at an Art Show"**

You, a coat rack, stood in the middle of a room surrounded by artists' works. Surrounded by these pieces they've poured their hearts and souls into. Everything from sculptures, to charcoal, to paint. And now I can only wonder: were you a piece in the show?

Art is subjective. I observed the twirling curve of your stature, the single hanger hung to your frame. You could symbolize loneliness, a state of being, the state of our world? I saw no name, no price, no artist. But to be fair, I wasn't looking very hard; you were only a coat rack. But, out of every streak painted and every line drawn, I find myself laying in bed wondering YOUR meaning.

Even if you were *just* a coat rack, what was your purpose without any hangers? Maybe that's how to interpret this piece. The question of purpose. Wondering: a single hanger with no coats, this empty rack in the middle of a room—what is your use? Your potential? Maybe it's a statement on modern art, on how people are so focused on the simplicity of an act that they can't see the real meaning behind it? Who knows, the possibilities are truly endless. Nevertheless, there is the possibility that maybe, just maybe, you were simply used for coats. I guess I'll never know.

A coat rack at an art show.

Randi Whitneck

## **Machine**

Aluminum body with carbon steel limbs  
I'm a machine that works day and night  
A list of duties that are often quite grim  
I must complete with every cycle  
And my blight isn't the best  
But I cannot complain  
I do it everyday  
My joints gets rusty  
My gears sometime stop  
I oil myself up and push through the pain  
This is the life meant for me

But this constant cycle  
This demanding, debilitating cycle  
Eventually breaks me down  
Other machines continue their endless toll  
While I get dragged outside to be scrapped  
I'm no longer useful  
So I cannot live

They slam a hammer into my heart  
And expose my bloody parts  
My guts sprawl across the floor  
Intestines jerk out of my body  
I defecate and vomit  
Fluids and chunks of all kinds come out of me  
I fall onto my knees  
It hurts  
But I feel too weak to scream  
As my blood pools onto the concrete  
I wonder  
Did I live the life meant for me?

Jaz Wiley

## Alexithymia

I open my mouth, but nothing comes out,  
Not a mumble, not a whisper, not a sound.  
The words I feel inside make me want to shout,  
Yet my voice is gone, nowhere to be found.

The emotions I feel are very overwhelming,  
It's like a ball of energy building within,  
And that endless energy is constantly swelling,  
It grows until I feel a breakdown begin.

Even in the midst of all the crying and chaos,  
The words for my emotions remain lost.  
My thoughts and feelings are trapped,  
Behind a wall that remains intact,  
No matter how hard I try to break it.

I feel hopeless, helpless, hapless,  
The suffering I feel is endless,  
When I don't know how to get others to understand me.

Even if I know what I feel,  
My emotions remain concealed,  
Because I cannot express myself in a verbal manner.

Caspian Fitzpatrick

## Why?

Considering the why,  
Permits ourselves to discover the how.

How we walk through life.  
Our senses escort us.  
Breathing in the crisp spring scent ~  
Appreciating the food available to us, we relish its taste.  
Feeling the wind brushing across our fingertips,  
We connect with nature.  
Listening to the raindrops trickle onto the ground,  
We hear what life has to offer. □□□

**Gazing upon life's canvas, we find out why.**

Simplistic thinking, 5 senses.  
Life's not as simple as it presents.  
It's not a walk...

ups  
It's a path, a hike, with and  
downs,  
Twists and turns,  
high's and low's.  
Arises the question,  
Why?  
The very ounce of our existence,  
Requires purpose.  
A reason.  
A why.  
**Why do you do this?**  
Devours the whole of human existence.  
Although alike,  
Unique souls contain divergent sparks...

Kinnick Campbell

## **The Stag**

I thought to venture from my house  
Its windows flickering fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well  
As the fire died and the candles were doused  
The embers glowing fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well  
My coat held up against the snow  
With musket close at hand  
Whose tracks these are, I think I know  
Etched in the coarse and frozen land  
There on the cliff, a grey-blue shape  
Cartridge fetched from linen bag  
With breaking horns, frayed and scaped  
The looming form of a lonely stag  
The click of the hammer was concealed in the squall  
Its eyes of garnet, black against its pale hide  
Barrel leveled to my future haul  
When did appear a fawn at its side  
The stag then watched me for my verdict  
As my breath turned cloud in front of my eyes  
The flintlock glinted, ready and burnished  
As my musket discharged into the sky  
The fawn turned round, and at once fled  
In terror, 'neath the bushes, tangled and low  
The stag, in good manners, dipped its head  
And vanished into the brash and blustery snow.  
I thought to venture to my home  
Its windows flickering goodnight, goodnight  
And let that ancient father stag roam  
Its garnet eyes blinking goodnight, goodnight.

Harold Trafford

## **Tombstone of the Unwritten**

I run as fast as I can. I know that it has awoken but I'm panicking. I don't know what to do, so I do the only thing I can do. I run past the graves and I hear its growls, but I'm not detoured. I know I'm dead if I don't leave, so I run faster than I had ever run before in my life. I finally make it about halfway to the entrance gate of the graveyard before I am quickly reminded of my reality. My lungs feel crushed, and cold, yet still burning. I'm praying to god that I'm able to leave this damn cemetery in one piece. Yet I find my foot caught on a headstone in the shape of a cross. Ironical, isn't it? God is the thing bringing me down. Yet God is the thing I plead to. I shiver at its cold and stern hands, I quickly turn, and to my horror I see it: the writhing worms throughout its chest cavity, and its hanging broken jaw. I scream and struggle as much as I can, but I can't escape its hands. In my struggle, I feel a sharp pain. It ripped through my flesh. In contrast to its cold hands, I feel a rush of warmth goes down my arm. It's my blood, my warm viscous blood. As if to rub salt into my already gushing wound, some of the creature's eye veins fall onto my chest. I lay on the floor bloody and beaten, no one can see or hear me. I lose sight of the whole world as my life flashes before my eyes. I can't get over the fact that I'm being ripped apart in front of the eyes of God. Is this what God wants? There's no point in obsessing over it. I'll be dead soon anyway. Even in death, I'm found boring. I watch as it drops chunks of my flesh in disappointment. It disappears back into the hidden graves in the forest. It got bored of me even after going through the trouble of hunting ME and tearing ME apart, it got BORED of ME?! I lie there filled with rage, sadness, and a sense of numbness. The sunlight shines through the forest hitting the cemetery, and as I bleed out, I feel the warmth of the beautiful daylight one last time.

Imanol Arzuaga Rodriguez

## **My Mother's Daughter**

I scream in my car because no one's there to listen  
And that's exactly how I like it  
They say at least that's how it's always been  
Women are to be seen, not heard  
A girl cries in her car but no one is around to hear it  
She was never in pain at all  
After all perception is reality  
And my reality is swept under the rug by those in power over me  
My power has not been mine since the day my mother's doctor exclaimed  
"Daughter"!  
Though I am my mother's daughter at my core  
I am a walking talking breathing *generational curse*  
But my breathing has become shallow  
My voice become weak  
And all I wish is for someone to carry me  
Like I carry my mother's secrets, and her mother's secrets, and her mother's secrets  
And my own secret that I don't want to carry any of it anymore  
My generation speaks of breaking generational curses  
But what if you don't know what you don't know  
How do I break through a glass ceiling I've never even seen before  
How do I know that my own actions aren't just as harmful  
What if I myself have been the curse all along  
Just ask my mother  
If you asked my mother she'd tell you the problem started with me  
And will end with me  
Yet she has never held blame her entire life  
While my life is to blame for her problems in addition to my own  
But the problem is neither mine nor hers to cast stones  
It is on the "boys who are just being boys"  
The ones who poke bears and blame them for biting  
On the society that tells me I am too much  
Yet somehow never enough  
Sit down, shut up, speak up, stand up, be yourself but not like that

You are perfect just as you are, as long as you are perfect to begin with  
The pursuit of perfection is a brilliant distraction to stifle the brilliance of women and it's  
working  
But I am tired of screaming into my pillow at midnight with fear that no one wants to hear my  
pain  
So I sit with it for a moment  
Ask for her name  
And she tells me they call her womanly rage  
Everyday I become more violent within my own feminine body  
Today I scream louder hoping for once to be free  
But it echoes back to me  
This time sitting so sharply in my chest it could cut me  
I now wear the same sharp edges as my own mother  
I see now where she got her scars  
From how she was forged to make her daughters bleed  
But I will not hold my own daughter with such sharp edges  
Instead I wrap my arms around myself the way I wish my mother would  
I watch my body bleed out in front of me  
I allow myself to see and feel my own pain  
I place a loving hand on my own cheek  
Nurturing the little girl I never got to be  
I begin to echo love  
I bleed grace and compassion  
My sharp edges become soft landings for bleeding daughters and their own broken mothers  
"Perfect daughter" I exclaim  
Just as you are  
But it is not really true  
Because she has come too far

Felicity Jorge

## **My Dad, Not My Father**

We all have that person. That person that's been there for you even though they didn't have to be. They stayed around long enough that you didn't realize they weren't there in the first place. That person that loves you unconditionally and without a doubt. The person that teaches you things that no one else could. That person that spends hours listening to you rant and complain about even the smallest silly things.

This person does everything to support you and make an effort to try to understand you. They will embarrass you at times, but still make you laugh and smile at the stupidest little things.

This person, for me, is my dad. He never had to stay. He didn't need to take the role of my dad. He didn't owe it to me. But he is. He stayed. He listens to my rants, and I listen to him. He stayed by my side my whole life.

And no... We aren't related by blood... But he's the one that raised me. He's the one that has that title. Him. Not the person that is related to me by just blood. Not my Father. My dad.

I couldn't and won't be able to thank him enough for anything he's done for me in my life.

Again, he's my dad, not my Father.

Cedar Leighton

### **Gauze and Tape**

Pull out the med kit again for my wounds,  
Dab them dry with love.  
Tell me you're there  
And that you care  
And that heaven is waiting above.  
Tell me it's not my time yet,  
And you'll protect me at all cost.  
When the world gets dark  
And I feel no spark  
And my heart is covered in frost.  
Wrap my arms like two little presents,  
And kiss them until the pain's gone.  
You told me they lied  
And that's when I cried  
But we stayed like this until dawn.

Jay Griest

I must go into town once more,  
I have affairs to attend to.  
That little town on that ashen shore  
Where all the busy folk come through.  
They chatter on and mutter on  
Through the dust and sandy streets  
They clatter on and shudder on  
As crowded as flaxen wheat  
Each with a life to call their own, and they alone may hope to grasp or seize,  
Each with a name to call their own, and they alone may hold the keys.  
Some may write, some may ponder  
Some, like me, choose to wander  
I must go into town once more,  
That ancient town of immemorial yore.

Harold Trafford

## **Ode to Water**

Water, you are always there for me  
At night waiting in that clear cup  
Staying by my side  
You are so patient  
Waiting for thirst to strangle me  
disturbing my peaceful slumber

Water, my most loyal friend  
never failing to make my day  
Standing upon my red hot stove  
Slowly beginning to bubble  
Opening yourself  
To meet with my bitter coffee grounds  
Your duo forces me to finish  
These long lasting days

Oh water  
You are the hard raindrops  
Cooling the fiery atmosphere  
Readying the soft ground  
For your distant cousin, Snow

Dear Water  
Even when you try  
To become friends with my dry lungs  
Backfiring  
Sending me into an uncontrollable cough  
You are still my dearest companion

Madeline Crosby

## **Romanticize your Life**

Pay attention to the leaves as it slowly falls with the brisk autumn wind

Look at the beauty of humans and their differences and quirks

Count little victories as a win

Appreciate the smile of the barista as he hands you your coffee

Go home and replay that encounter in your head like you're living it again

Think of the wondrous scenarios in your head, with lullabies in your ears as you watch the world pass by

Walk in a class and imagine everyone looking at you with loving eyes, that boy who makes eye contact with you is amazed with your beauty

Let that image of the girl who gave you that comforting smile stay with you

Walk through a crowd and notice the old couple having a date, notice the beauty of Two people in love that gaze into each other's eyes, notice the glow of the pregnant woman, notice the happiness of the family as they play in park, notice the gracefulness of the snow as it lands on your forehead

Play in rain, jump in the leaves, roll in the snow, jump in the pool

Feel the warm embrace of spending time with the ones you love

Feel the comfort of being alone and spending time with yourself

Appreciate the pain, accept the happiness

Look at life through the eyes as a crushing teenage girl

Who kicks her feet to his text message, and smiles to the sound of his voice

Look at life like it's your love story even if you're without a companion

Love the little things, the crunch of the leaf as you step on it, the yellow eyes of hard working parents, holding hands for the first time, swinging on the swings, playing on the playground even as you have overgrown it, laughter, butterflies, beautiful sunsets, starry nights

Look at life like the beauty it is

Ella Prempeh

## **The Mistress**

I feel like a mistress around you  
You only “need” me when you want me  
You only “love” me when I help you

I feel like i’m just there around you  
You ignore me when your “friends” come by  
You hurt me with your “caring” praise

I feel like a secondary character around you  
You copy me to “understand” me  
You only talk to me about people you “like” more

If you loved me,  
Why do you treat me like you do?

Jonathan Moser

## **How?**

*(On baking in my kitchen...)*

My spark comes alive with pastry artifice  
Massaging the dough through a series of scripts  
I grow into an optimist  
The moisture hits my fingertips,

Euphoria drips its way into my brain,  
As the kitchen transforms.  
Wooden floors morph to a grassy plain.  
Oven, a campfire, with flames that perform.

Entirely transitioning into a different terrain,  
Intention develops and innovation comprises  
The delicacy constructs itself into quiet refrain  
And intrinsic purpose lies.

The reason anyone does anything  
Found me with its meaning.

Kinnick Campbell

## **Mind-Body Dualism**

My mind: a war zone  
My heart: full of desire  
My body: split

I fight with myself  
My heart wants to find love  
My mind wants to be alone  
What should I do?

My heart yearns for something more  
My heart yearns for the embrace of another  
My heart yearns for comfort  
But what does my mind say?

My mind says I'll get hurt  
My mind says to stay away  
My mind says I don't deserve love  
So what should I do?

My body is split, my mind and heart at war  
It's like I want to be alone, but in the presence of another  
It's like I want to be held, but not feel the touch of someone else  
It's like I want to be loved, but never be in love

Caspian Fitzpatrick

## Scars

I tapped the scar on my wrist,  
I've had it a year

When I tapped it,  
I felt that familiar jolt of pain  
As if it was fresh

Scars fade,  
Wounds heal

So why does mine still hurt?  
It's been a year  
I should be healed now  
Maybe some things I just won't forget

Jonathan Moser

Ignored by those with narrow vision,  
Sought for separation and sneering ambition  
As if those who differ are not part of the same decision.

Their contributions, their hard work,  
overlooked, ignored.

Individuals from all walks of life,  
Simply filled with drive,  
Shall be seen by their content,  
Not by someone's ideology.

Thus the separation of the vision shall be granted,  
Its remembrance of an old time,  
With its greyed crime,  
Its fruitful lies.

Shall lie in its slumber,  
So that all our brothers,  
Be crafted through God,  
In its modern vision.

Fernando Flores

## **Perception**

My biggest fear is that someday you will see me as I see myself  
My biggest fear is that one day you will see my broken pieces and run  
My biggest fear is that someday you will see the demons that haunt me  
My biggest fear is that one day you will see my scars and turn away

For so long, you have idolized me  
For so long, you have looked up to me  
For so long, you have thought me to be perfect  
For so long, you have only seen what I wanted you to see

I've always hidden my sorrow  
I've always hidden my pain  
I've always hidden my thoughts  
I've always seen my scars, my demons, my broken pieces  
I've always known that I have kept myself from you

When the day comes that I show you the real me  
Do you promise not to run?  
When the day comes that you see me the way I see myself  
Do you promise to stick by my side?

Or will you run?  
Or will you turn away?  
Or will you leave me like everyone has?

Or will you accept me for who I am?  
Or will you love me like you always have?  
Or will you make me see myself the way you see me?

Caspian Fitzpatrick

## **Drowning in the Air**

Land

I am sleeping on the land  
As the water fills my lungs  
But my feet still in the sand  
The deeper I drift away  
The further away I get  
My heads down as I lay  
Just an empty silhouette  
I feel the clear tightening up my chest  
I'm drowning on the grass  
My feeling I oppress

I don't know where I am  
How much longer can I last  
In a world of "I am"?  
We all wear a mask  
People are my mirrors  
I can never see through  
But I don't, and I do, and I don't, and I do  
But how can you swim  
When you are not even you  
People are my mirrors  
And I am drowning on the land  
For people see my swimming and I sink under  
I don't know who I am

Felicity Jorge

## **We're not Alone**

The evening star is shining bright,  
Reminding us we're not alone tonight.  
The stars are many, numbered, and true,  
Until now their beauty I never knew.

There's the sound of the frogs and their croaks,  
They remind us that we're not alone.  
They are hidden and many and loud,  
Together they sing their songs so proud.

The noise of the crickets echoes as it chirps,  
But we're not alone, for better or worse.  
And the sound of the crickets reminds me of home,  
Oh yes, they remind me that we're not alone.

With the sounds of the frogs, and crickets tonight,  
And with all of the stars shining so bright,  
I look up at the stars as they are shown,  
And I know in my heart, I'm not alone.

Caspian Fitzpatrick

I must walk through the woods again,  
Where the leaves fall and burn  
Where woody bark strangle grassy glen  
And moss overtakes a cairn.  
Perhaps I may take the left road  
Otherwise, I would take the right  
Both paths, do good fortune bode,  
And I'll travel on through the night.  
My old staff, of varnished oak,  
I took it from an old wagon's spoke,  
The end is metal, simple, burnished,  
It serves its purpose; it is comfortably unfurnished.  
Perhaps I'll meet a caravan, along the dusty road.  
Perhaps I'll meet a cunning man, who peddles a gathered load.  
I know not who or what I'll meet,  
All I know, is I cannot sleep,  
With the dim, flaxen glow of lantern light  
I must walk through the woods tonight.

Harold Trafford

### **Angel**

"You're such an angel"  
My fellow classmate told me as I handed them the answers to an upcoming test.  
"An angel," I think to myself as they walk away.  
"An angel?" I question myself.  
Am I really an angel for being kind?  
Am I really an angel for helping those who need it?  
Do I really deserve to be called an angel for such a small gesture?  
Or is the world just so evil that such a small act is considered heavenly?  
"An angel," I repeat aloud. Once I'm alone, I smile.  
Maybe that's all an angel is: kindness.

Jonathan Moser

## Atelophobia

It's a crushing feeling, really  
To never meet their expectations  
To never live up to what they think you should be  
To feel like you're so close,  
But you always fall short  
The revelation falls upon you like a tidal wave  
When you notice that you don't quite add up

Once you get the feeling, you can't quite shake it  
It will haunt you like a ghost  
It will loom over you with every decision you make  
It will consume your thoughts at every moment

It's like a voice whispers constantly in your ear  
"You're doing it wrong!"  
"You're just a kid!"  
"You should be doing more!"  
"You'll never be enough!"  
Their critiques, their wants, their words,  
They'll haunt you forever

It hurts to know you'll never add up  
It hurts to know you fall just short  
It hurts to know you're not what they hoped you'd be

It's scary, really, that feeling you get  
"But what is it?" You may ask yourself  
And I say, "It's Atelophobia"

It's the fear of not being enough

Caspian Fitzpatrick

## **Trial Scene**

*Enter scene, 9 representatives reside, from left to right, Velde, Jackson, Kearney, Scherer, Walter, Willis, Moulder, Frazier, and Doyle. Enter Ernst, alongside two federal agents. Two people, Robinson and Miller, follow. Multiple paparazzi are present taking pictures, one of the agents takes Dusseldorf's trenchcoat as he removes his hat, carrying a file of papers. He places his hat on his desk and sits down as the nine judges stare at him with contempt. Walter shakes his head with closed eyes as he puts his glasses on.*

WALTER: We will now reside over the case of Ernst Dusseldorf. The court is now in session.

*Walter slams his fist on the table in place of a gavel.*

WALTER: Now. Mister Dusseldorf, do you have any connections or compliances whatsoever to the communist party?

ERNST: ...Define... connection, please.

WALTER: Connections? Affiliations? A.. a union?

ERNST: *trying to find a loophole, acting confused:* What exactly do you mean?

WALTER: *frustrated, but still confused as he is being as clear as possible in his eyes:* What do you think I mean?

ERNST: I take it as membership or previous membership, in which case... *(The representatives all lean forward slightly, with bated breath)* I have to say no.

WALTER: Well... no membership yourself, but are you friends with members of communist parties that you know of?

ERNST: Yes.

*A titillating murmur spreads amongst the representatives.*

SCHERER: *eagerly:* Their names- What are their names?

ERNST: I will not answer that.

SCHERER: Mister Ernst, you-

ERNST: Sternly, yet calmly. I invoke the fifth.

DOYLE: Do any of them happen to be in this room?

*Ernst looks around, setting his eyes on each representative.*

ERNST: *with neutral expression:* This is a game of chess. None that I know of,

representative.

DOYLE: That you know of?

ERNST: Yes.

DOYLE: *confused*: Can you elaborate?

ERNST: Nobody in this room that I know has been affiliated with the communist party, nor have they disclosed their membership to me.

DOYLE: Thank you.

WALTER: Mister Doyle, may I?

DOYLE: You may.

WALTER: Have you had connections to any left-wing party inside the United States?

ERNST: No.

SCHERER: Outside the United States?

ERNST: Absolutely, and proudly, too.

SCHERER: Russia?

ERNST: Germany.

SCHERER: NSDAP?

ERNST: No, the NSDAP were right-wing.

SCHERER: Wouldn't communists be right-wing then?

*Ernst and Miller glance at each other, both trying to contain their laughter. Ernst calms down.*

ERNST: Well, no, they're left-wing. Even still, I am not a communist nor was I in a communist party. We sided with the communists against the NSDAP but I was never a member.

SCHERER: *dumbfounded*: So you worked with communists?

ERNST: Yes.

SCHERER: And you're not communist?

ERNST: Correct.

*Scherer is at a complete loss for words. Walter glances over and quickly takes the reins.*

WALTER: Can you explain to me your German party and its beliefs?

ERNST: Most certainly. *Ernst pulls out a paper from his file and begins reciting key information.* Proudly so. Our full party name was die Anarchisten fur die Einheit der Linken, shortened to the AEL. The most party seats we ever had was 74 out of 491 from 1928-1930.

DOYLE: *clearly very bored:* Can you translate your party name for those who don't speak German?

ERNST: .The Anarchists for the Unity of the Left.

WALTER: So you believe in Anarchism?

ERNST: Not as a realistic society, no. But I do enjoy smaller governments and greater human rights.

WALTER: What do you mean by, and I quote, "realistic society"?

ERNST: Well, in my eyes it would be optimal to all work together with nobody above us, but a society like that would fall into chaos. So, I do my best to lobby for a society as close to that as possible, while still falling away from total collapse.

WALTER: *genuinely trying to understand:* So you're anarchist in beliefs, not practice. Am I correct?

ERNST: Yes.

*Walter is baffled, desperately trying to understand what Ernst is saying, and he motions to Doyle to take the reins for him.*

DOYLE: How would you describe your practices then?

ERNST: Define practices.

DOYLE: *under his breath:* Jesus. *He looks down trying to find the right words. There is a brief pause. He looks back up and has an "a-ha" moment:* What ideology would align most with what you want to realistically see?

ERNST: Realistically? Libertarian Socialism most likely.

*Everyone gasps. Doyle, Scherer, and Walter stare at Ernst with wide eyes. Walter takes his glasses off slowly, Scherer is agape, and Doyle is taken aback, sitting straight up in his chair, leaning slightly back. Every camera in the entire room goes off, stressing Ernst out. There is a loud silence in the room, as Ernst glances about, confused. Miller is also confused.*

WALTER: *as if he's just received his death sentence:* Libertarian... what?

ERNST: *matter-of-factly:* Libertarian Socialism.

SCHERER: *interrogatively:* I thought you said you weren't communist?!

ERNST: I'm not, I'm an anarchist who vies for a Libertarian Socialist society

SCHERER: A socialist society? Like the United *Socialist* Soviet Republics? *There is a smirk on his face as if this is the biggest "gotcha" moment in history.*

ERNST: *frustrated:* Oh please. The United States is a republic, are we communist?

DOYLE: *somewhat seeing his logic:* No.

ERNST: And were the Nazis for the workers?

DOYLE: I don't know enough about them.

ERNST: *in a quieter voice:* They murdered members of my party in the streets of Berlin during a protest. Is that "for the workers"?

DOYLE: This is making odd sense to me-

WALTER: Representative Doyle-

SCHERER: Are you communist or are you not?!

ERNST: No, I-

VELDE: Give us an answer, Mister Dusseldorf.

ERNST: I told you, I-

WALTER: Mr. Dusseldorf, just for what the hell do you stand for?

*Everything combined, the yelling, the flick of the cameras shuttering, Ernst starts to panic. Flashbacks run through his mind. With all of his might and pent-up anger, he explodes, furiously slamming the table and throwing his hands into the air.*

ERNST: I stand with the heroes! I stand with what is right! I stand with those who have been manipulated and used as tools! The little Irish man I saved in Amiens! The valiant men of yours I- was ordered to kill! The ones that fought for your constitution, and now mine! The ones who broke their shackles of *your* institution! *(His voice warbles and trembles, as if he were made of glass.)* I stand with the hundreds of young men we lose! Every! Day! I stand with those tombs and those fatherless children! I stand against tyranny! Do not impede on

your citizens' rights! Do not walk across the first amendment! Study it! Learn it! And make sure that this whole... Thing! It never happens again! I was against Hitler! I was against Stalin, I am against Krushchev, I am against you, representatives! For you are them! I stand against this court, I rival it! You are tyrants, all of you! You, Doyle, you, Walter, you, Velde, all of you! And I wish nothing but to see you burn in damnation for the suppression of our natural rights! And you will burn! God sees you, and he judges! And God- God will not forgive you!

*The whole courtroom is silent. Ernst is breathing heavily. He grips at his hair with his hands and buries his head onto the table, curling into himself. A moment of shocked silence. He raises up his head, the same neutral expression.*

ERNST: *now calm, still panting heavily:* Apologies, representatives, I had a bit of a... Moment, can you repeat the question?

*Walter is enraged. Doyle is even more taken aback.*

DOYLE: Uhm, well, Representative Walters asked what you stand for.

ERNST: Ah yes, thank you. *(He wipes his forehead clean.)* I stand for a hugely limited, democratic government with a socialist economy that benefits workers, and all people under its flag.

DOYLE: Mister Dusseldorf, that speech *(he spat the word with malice)* you just gave is treasonous at best. What do you have to say for yourself? *There is a long pause. Ernst is very confused. He doesn't remember giving a speech. Walter has not broken his furious gaze on Ernst, his brows furled and his jaw clenched, his hands shaking with his glasses in them. It is a moment of deafening silence before Ernst breaks it.*

ERNST: He is concerned Repres- *he is cut off*

WALTER: *through clenched teeth:* Case dismissed.

DOYLE: Walter?

WALTER: Will Arthur Miller please approach the bench.

ERNST: Representative Wal-

WALTER: *now shouting:* Leave, you- leave! Your case has been dismissed!

Adjourned, acquitted! OUT! *He points to the door.*

*Ernst, nodding, picks up the file he barely used and puts his hat back on. One of the agents gives Ernst his coat and he stops to put it on, giving Miller a few unintelligible words of encouragement and a warm handshake before exiting. The lights fade.*

Cobain Jones



