



The Phoenix Egg 2016

No Outside Help

By Brian Armijo

A wall of what now? I'm not blocking you out.
I think it's gonna drown me outta this world!
I haven't a clue what to do, it's been so long.
I know what I say now could be wrong.
I don't know what to do now, when you're away.
The hours start to feel longer e-ver-y day.
Think I'm ready now with something to say.
Please don't fog my vision, and please clear the way.

What am I doing now? How do I fight?
I cannot find it anymore, what isn't right?
I need your help now, will you please be my guide?
And can you stay with me through the night?
I even see now that I have gone blind.
Please don't let this demon destroy my mind.

I look into that shell and the core's not inside.
It's gone and run off, it's found somewhere to hide.
I can see a dying light within those eyes.
We'll save it with the truth, please spare all the lies.

You'll see in this trench, there's more than one soul.
But it's not the end yet, no, it's not a hole.
It seems long and dark without an end in sight.
But trust us, we know it, at the end lives a light.
So let us travel to the other side.
Time to face life's fears, no, don't run and hide.

So what am I doing still? Now do I fight?
I think I found a clue, but it's not yet right.
I need your help now. Will you please be my guide?
You said you'll stay with me through this long night.
Let's go, it's time for us to go and take flight.
Please don't give up on my, no, not without a fight.

One look into that shell to see the core's not inside.
I guess it's run off, and found somewhere to hide.
I can see a yearning light within those eyes.
We can save it with the truth. Please spare all the lies.

I know so far it's not been fair.
You want to give in, but don't you dare.
There is still something living there,
Just reach that land up there and,
Breathe in that mountain air and,
Feel home almost anywhere.
Just hold onto hope my friend.
And I'll hold you until the end.

I feel ready now. This time I'll fight.
Now I'll stand with you, I'll be your Dark Knight.
I need your help now, will you please be my guide?
And we'll travel through this long night.
Almost home now, I know how you're strong.
If hope is alive, this time we won't be wrong.

I look into that shell and the core's not inside.
It has run off and it's found a place to hide.
I can see that burning light within your eyes.
Let's save it with the truth, please spare all these lies.
My love, we'll be fine, this is not our demise.
Don't let it stop you now. You know that's unwise.
As long as I'm with you we're still in this fight.
Just stop blinding yourself and you'll thrive in this light.
I'm certain that I know how you're feeling inside.
To the end of the line, I think we should ride.
I know there we'll find our promising land.
So time to jump now, close your eyes, and take-hold-of-my-hand.
So come on, let's jump, and don't take it slow.
And I just want you to know, I won't let you go.

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It's Not That I Don't Love You

By Faith Penn

"It's not that I don't love you";
it's seeing the pain in
my mother's eyes
when my father impregnated her
six times and
decided to up and leave
one day.

It's hearing her soul shake
when I would bring up his name or
Ask where he had gone.

"It's not that I don't love you";
it's seeing the disgust in my sister's eyes
when he would touch her
because of
what he has done to her in the past.
I could see her broken heart
right through her chest.
The eagerness to keep trying
even though she knew it would
fail
each
time.

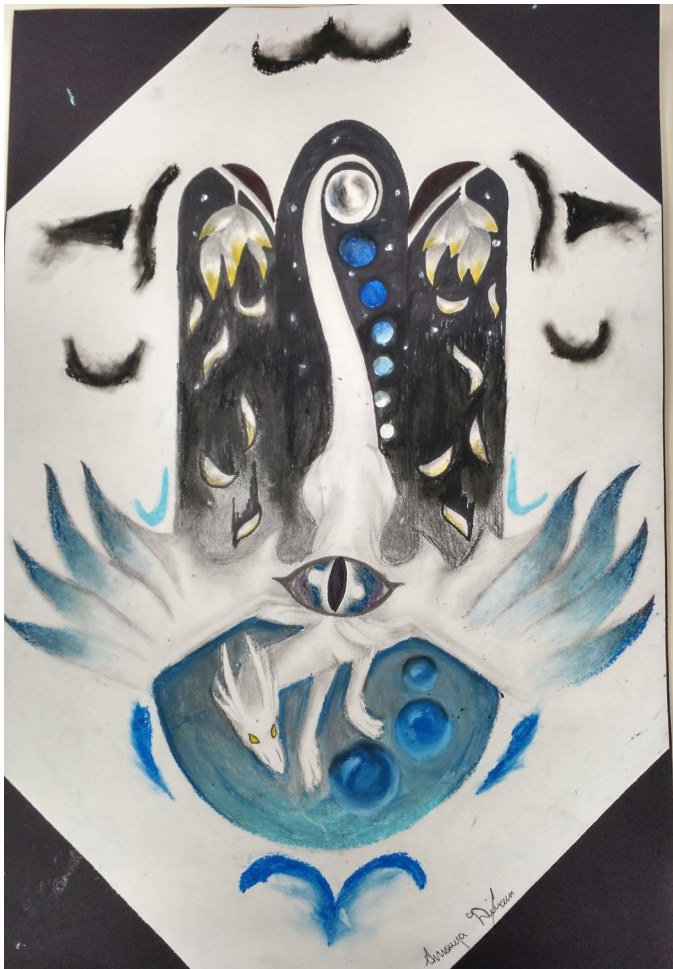
It's not that I don't love you;
it's watching my brothers
bring home a different girl every night
and wondering
if the girl the night before had fallen in love.
I watch them run game
on every single one of them
and they had no clue.

"It's not that I don't love you";
it's that I do.



"Audrey Hepburn"

by Mina Davidson



"Celestial"

by Amaya Dixson

"Walking After Midnight"

by Yireh Gonzalez





"Serenity" by Amaya Dixon



"Landscape" by Erika Jaime-Jimenez

They Like To Dance

By Brian Armijo

The dance floor is a black and white checkers board on which the spotlights spontaneously flash.

Looks like there's a ball taking place here. Am I in charge? Looks that way. *Great.*

I set up the décor, the lights, drapes, music, and refreshments. I hope this goes well. Knowing me, it won't. I can't host a party.

There are guests coming soon. How do you throw a party for guests you don't know?

Also, where am I? I hear steps approaching the only door, which is black. Time to meet and greet new people!

The first guest steps in. He is clad in a black suit, red tie immaculately fastened around his neck. Something about this guest catches me by surprise though.

He's wearing a mask. But not just any ordinary mask one would see in a costume store or anything. My face isn't attractive or famous enough to be featured among the selection of masks one could typically find in a Part City.

It is identical to my face. It perfectly mirrored every blemish and scar, every unique feature. Why? Where did he even get the mask?

His appearance is gray; he lacks any sort of color. Even the mask of me is plain gray.

Approaching me, he asks me if he may have this dance. I don't suppose why not, no one else is here. I'm chilled to hear the music start without any command.

The speakers gently seep the sounds of a dark piano tune. I'm unsettled to hear the hum one would typically associate with the soundtrack of a horror movie playing gently behind the piano.

The lights turn an ocean blue. I am now convinced that we two are not the only ones here. It's almost as if I'm seeing the composure of this room change slowly. Perhaps my vision is just playing tricks on me. Quite sporadically.

I manage to catch up fairly quickly when I stumble. Good. I didn't upset the dance. We must not fall out of synch with the music. He spins me once, then again, disrupting my equilibrium. I immediately stumble afterwards. We have fallen out of synch. Dammit.

His mask of me contorts as if supernaturally. It is more than difficult to fight against the urge to cower at the scowling face the mask has morphed into.

Into my stomach sinks my heart, and in my lungs forms what I only envision as a black hole slowly eating me.

Chastisement and ridicule I've received outside these walls countless times; however, the numbness in which I had grown to those words is faded with the continuous movement of his mouth, taking me by surprise. He palms my forehead, and I remember that this guest has followed me around all my life. That's why his words hurt. I don't know what this means.

He tells to acknowledge the darkness that I run from. The darkness that is now a black hole in my chest, or so it feels. He throws me onto the floor, hurting me once more, and delivers a swift kick to my ribs. No injury. Even so, crimson thicker than life pools around me. If not blood, what could it be?

He tells me not to find anyone who can save me from him. His reason; because I know as well as he does what I'll do to them.

He tells me farewell, and promises that we will meet again and again.

The next guest walks in. He quietly steps over to me with pale skin and long, stringy black hair.

The tone changes, lights dim and turn a darker blue as violins narrate his cold and longing stare into my eyes.

His eyes show no light, and so steal mine without a fight. Suddenly I see there is little to live for. I don't know if this is true, but it's just the overwhelming feeling enveloped me with the connection of his dark pupils to mine. A gentle flute begins playing a sorrowful melody while we continue to dance slowly.

He spins me around as the piano begins to play and speed up this woeful lament. He is surprisingly strong for someone whose arms look like leathery sticks. His face is oddly plain, bony, and his long hair almost blends in with the robe he wears if not for the grease.

Catching me in his arms, he brings his hand up to my mouth. My heart pounds when he shoves his whole arm inside, and withdraws a transparent orange light. I fight the tears that come with the removal of this light. Suddenly, he's gone.

I don't like this party. Ha, ha, he-he.

The lights close in, only me in the spotlight. Piano is the only instrument that plays now. The spotlights return to white with a few gentle strums of an acoustic guitar. One light remains.

Somehow I feel empty, something doesn't feel right. Pulsing through my chest, I am torn apart by electricity; an overwhelming feeling of anxiety.

Without making a single sound, another guest steps into the light. I look up at him and freeze. I can't help but feel he's responsible for all of this.

He lacks a warm presence but takes the form of a familiar, tall, blonde boy with blue eyes. I feel my strings tighten with the recollection of my long, powerful infatuation with someone he resembles.

He offers a hand. As our palms grasp one-another's, he pulls me up to my feet. He wears a look of doubt. I feel like he's looking at me like I'm a bug. He makes me feel small. Unable to hold my gaze into his eyes, I look away. I return my gaze and he leans in to kiss me. Powerful burning inside me compels me.

I go forth and he immediately pulls back. He has stolen the light from my long-haired friend as it strikes me that I've known him for the same length of time I've known the masked man in gray. The one in front of me laughs and spits on my face. He calls me a fool and continues his laughter. I remember the agonizing torture I still feel when seeing this person in every face, every crack in the sidewalk, the floor, around every corner, in the spaces between every word and letter as if he was the one reading, speaking through every voice, never leaving my mind. I know it's the contrary for who he resembles. He slaps me, leaning in to whisper "I'm never leaving your side." He spins me away as furious pains rip through my arms, the left arm in agonizing pain completely outmatching that of the right.

I spin around until I land in the arm of the first guest. He is no longer in a suite, but shorts and a tank top. The scars on his arms glow a vibrant red, reflecting the faded scars on mine. His left arm shines an agonizingly bright red, reminding me that he was responsible for every one of the countless scars that map my left arm, reminding me of the sadist who left the long ones that run up the outside of my fore-arm, and the boy of interest who left the scars on my right.

He enlightens me. He's the puppet master who pulled my strings as I built this room and designed it from top to bottom. I guess I built it too? He invited all of the guests today. He also followed in every step and fell into every deliberate machination of the blonde boy. He drops me onto the floor without warning, telling me he had this all planned out for me. My head hits the floor with quite the impact and my vision blurs.

The pillars and beams that sustain the room crumble around me as three sets of footsteps pitter-patter towards the door that never opens.

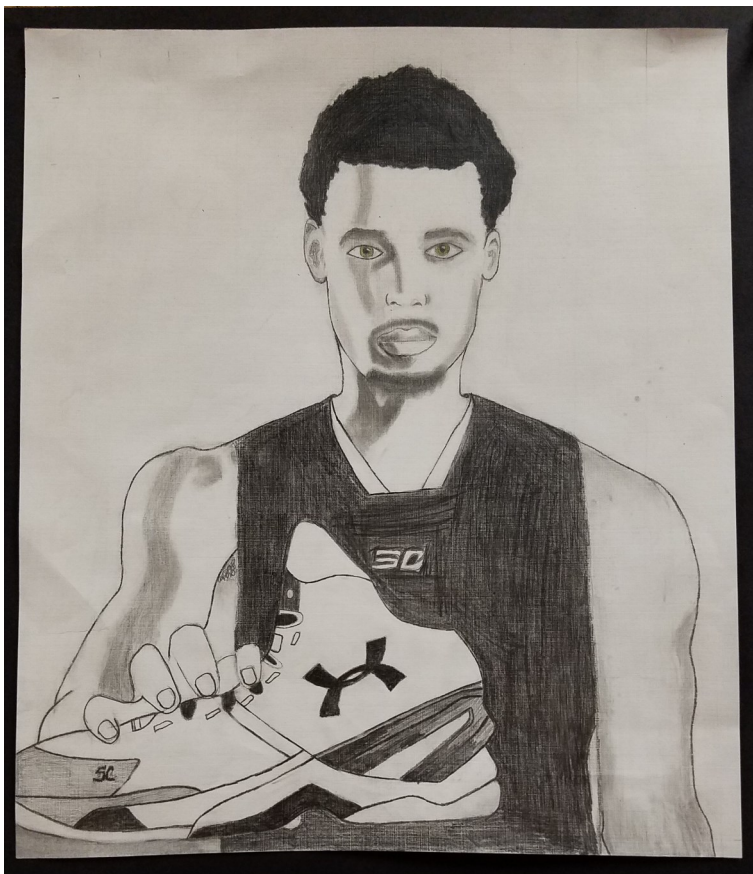
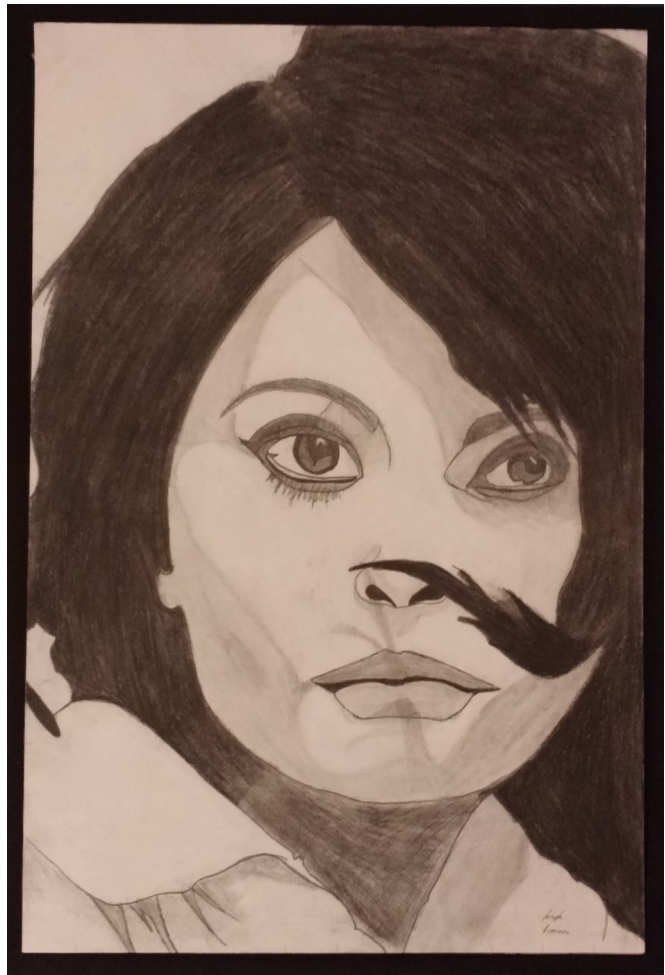
I rise from the rubble into an endless desert with tears and blood running down my face. I laugh uncontrollably while I remember everything. It looks like this room is my psyche. My private place. This was terrible. But somehow, it feels right. I swallow my emotions and just stare out at the desert surrounding this odd, destroyed cube. While the wind blows through my hair, I choose to close my eyes. When they open a minute later, I just stare at my hands, and then into the distance.

Then I remember who everyone that came today was.

These are my demons.

And they like to dance.

“Sophia Loren”
by Joseph Romero



“Stephen Curry”
by Michael Fallert

Perspective Drawings

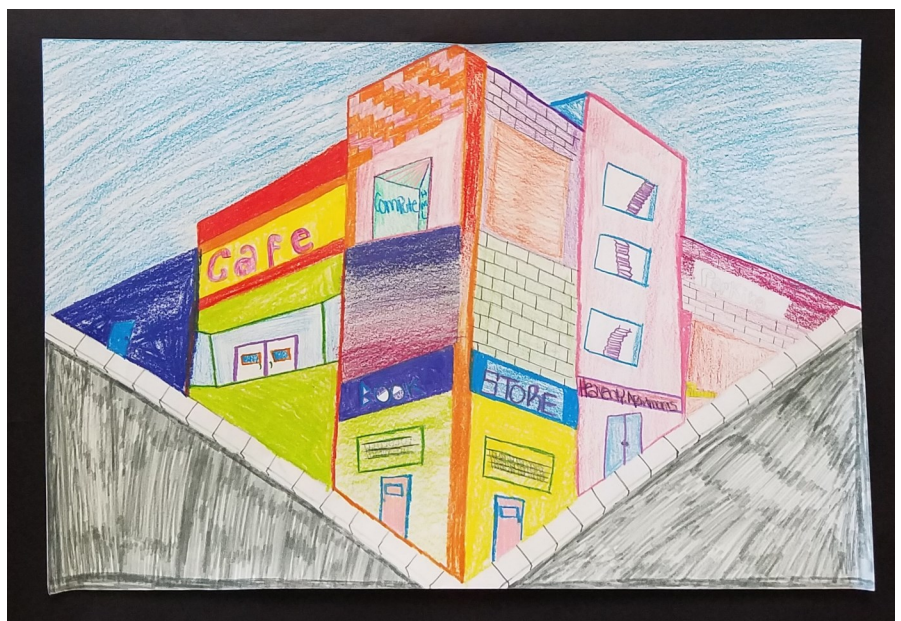


Sadany Velasquez



Erika Jaime-Jiminez

Tatian Benton



Cries from the Forgotten

By Anni Kyra Mezzofante

"I've had my heart broken too many times.
I distrust people.
I distance myself from crowds,
Fall silent and slink away
When others begin to talk.
I can only be comfortable with my close family.
I get strange looks the few times I've tried to be myself."

We punish others,
What have they done?
We taint them with wounds,
They will never fully heal.
Who are we to torture,
To brainwash,
To blame?
We are who we are,
So get away.
"With people, I feel my freedom is restricted
And that I can't be myself around them because
they don't like it when I try to be myself."

I hide away,
Gone for a day,
Wear a mask,
Hide from the past.
Who am I to fight?

"The world is a cruel and unforgiving place. I
stay out of it myself as much as I can..."

We push people out, yet we are all the same,
Can you tell me,
What's the pride in being that way?

They run away
Into the night of isolation,
And waste away
In the cruel cold of this world.

"...It's hard to find that one thing that
could potentially bring you back."

Should I run?
Should I hide?
Should I stand up and fight?
Do I defend myself or protect everyone else?

"Despite what they say, I'm alone and
they're all off in separate groups without me."

Sorrow,
Anger,
Darkness,
Danger,
Just a ghost,
Need a home,
For home is where the heart is.

Darling,
Darling,
You can cry,
Rest your head,
I'll hold you tight.
Good night,
Good night,
The sun shall rise,
I'll see you in the morning.

Timmy

by Juliessa Manchego

Run away Timmy
The pizza said
Foot after foot
The pizza chased me
It's cheesy mouth calling my name
Chasing me around
The New York City blocks
Tall buildings touching the sky
Yellow cars filling the streets
Jumping over the cars
Yelling my name
Come here Timmy
Just one bite
It won't hurt
Running as fast as I can
Screaming for my life
Gasping for air
I trip
All of a sudden
BAM!
I thought I was dead
When I woke up from this slumber
No it wasn't a peaceful night
It was a horror night full of fright!



“Hamsa Hand” by Victoria Burtis

What is Society?

By Katrena Hall

What is SOCIETY?

A girl ponders in life,
what is it like to be thin?
To be thin is
to eat without feeling
like a cow.

What is it like to be PERFECT?

To be PERFECT is not
feeling like you got
hit by a bus.

What is it like to be FIT?

It's being able to be like everyone else.

All society does

is judge.

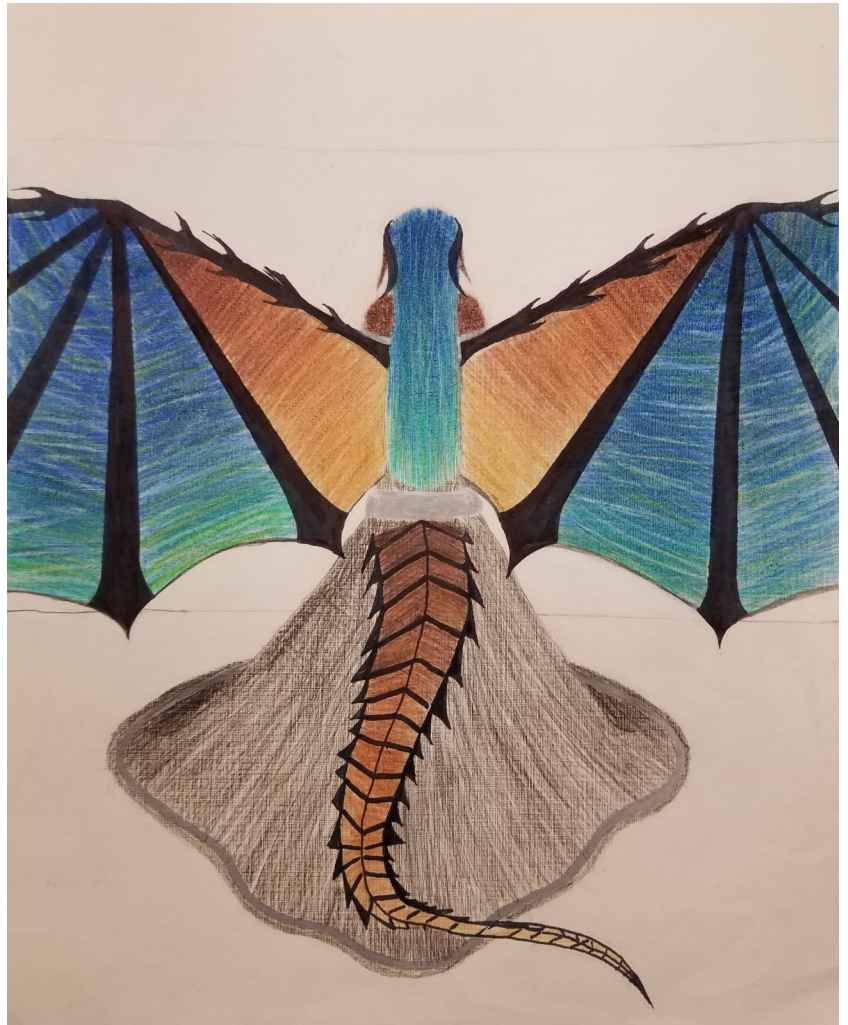
Every night

she's home

she locks herself in her
room full of broken mirrors
with every piece of her being.

Broken, she grows to think
she is nothing to anyone
in this dark world.

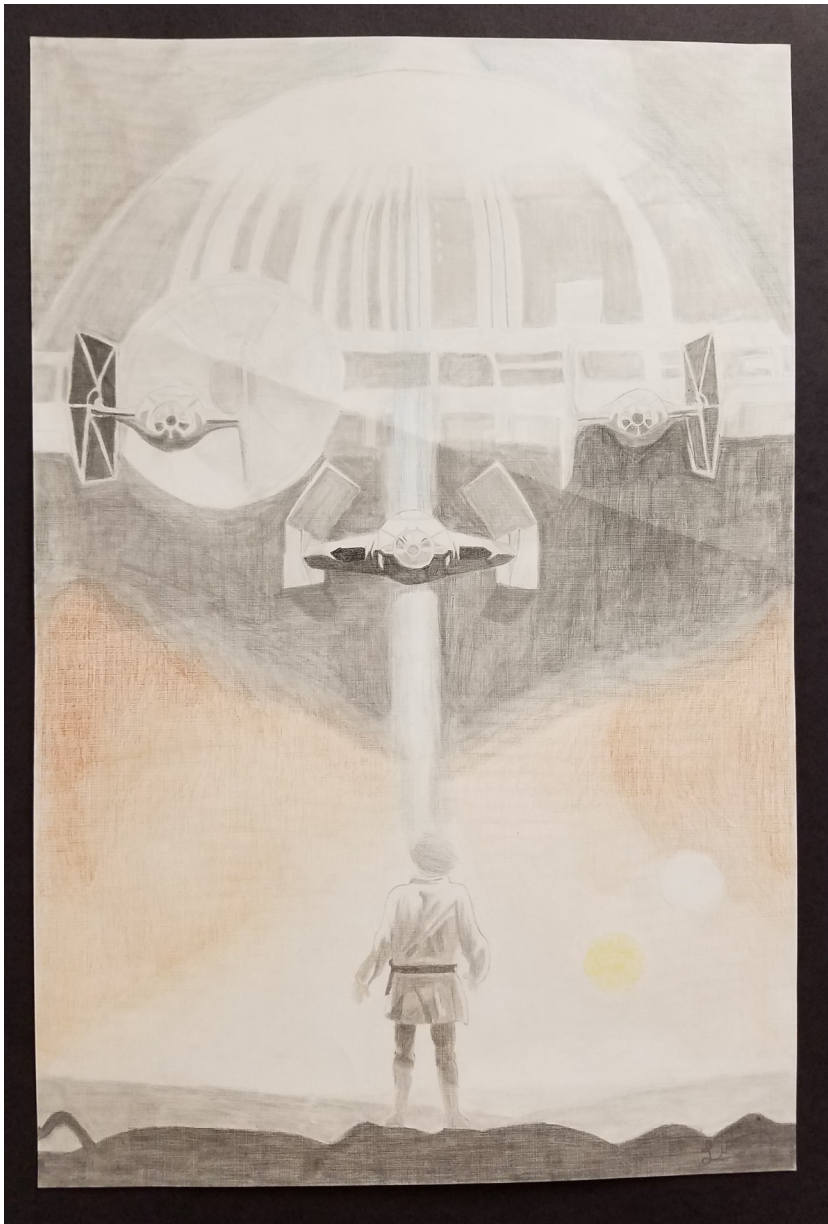
She wants to believe
she is fine.



“The Hybrid” by Anni Kyra Mezzofante

She grows to believe
everyone is better off without her
so she slips into
a deep sleep,
knowing she will never wake up again.

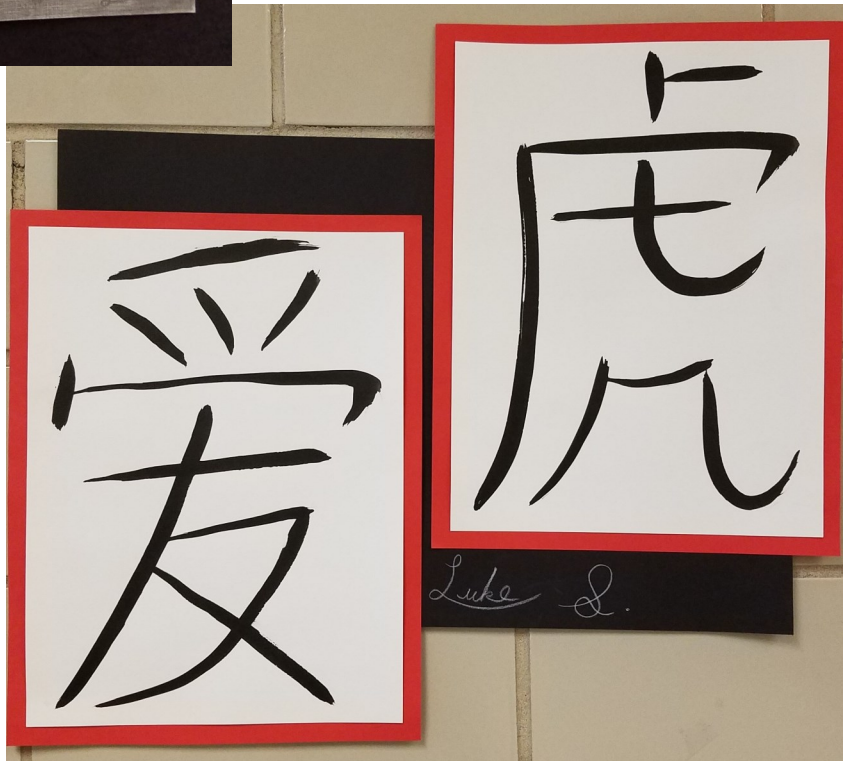
What is it to be “perfect?”



Luke Erickson

"A New Hope"

"Tiger and 'Love'"



A Mixed Drink

By MacKenzie Howard

All my life, I grew up with the thought that everyone will love me.
I would have a ton of friends to spend time with.
I can be anything I want.
When I hit grade 9, I realized I was wrong.
I'm just someone everyone replaces.
I am a walking travesty.

A mixed drink with one part disappointment
and two part depressed.
-----A girl, 13 years old, Grade 7
Everything in her life was full of regret and heartache.
She tried to save herself before the darkness inside of her caught up.
But, it was too late.
she was eaten alive by the monsters in her head.
They crawled out of the walls of the mind.
They came through the cracks.
She was overtaken before she could do anything.

She wasn't the only who grew up this way.
Grade 7.
A boy came out to his parents about loving another man.
He was disowned and thrown out.
His boyfriend took him in because he was concerned.
The fact of knowing his parents didn't love him, ate the boy alive.
Day after wretched day, he lost part of himself.
Until one day, he snapped.

We weren't the only ones who grew up this way.
People don't realize how depression is.
One minute you can be completely happy.
The next, you could be wanting to disappear.
Nothing is ever the same when you realize you have this horrible curse.

A mixed drink of one part depression, one part suicidal, one part self-doubt.
Three things that control the mind over and over
Until it eats you alive.
She earned the title of popper because of
the anti-depressants she was given.
The pain pills to ease the emotional stress that was always in the back of her mind.
Nothing was ever the same.

One part hurtful thoughts, two parts night terrors.
She tried to avoid sleeping because she was terrified to sleep at night.
She stayed up, overthinking.
Was staying awake better than sleeping?
Nothing seemed real.
She couldn't figure out what the fine line was.
The night terrors overtook her life.
The hurtful thoughts were in her mind when the night terrors weren't.
No one will ever love her with this condition.

We weren't the only kids who grew up this way.
Night after night, everyone is scared.
Scared of oblivion.
Scared of the thoughts.
Scared of what could happen next.

When will this torture end?
We pray and hope
Night after wretched night
That someone will save us.
No one comes to our rescue.
No one tries to understand what is going on.

To this day,
She still has those thoughts.
She tries to outrun them or push them to the side.
No one hears her cry herself to sleep, night after night.
She prays to be taken away from her.
No one hears her begs.

To this day,
She knows that no one cares.
To this day,
She fights her demons
in hopes that something good will come out of it.
To this day,
She finds only flaws in herself.
When everyone can only see the beauty.
To this day,
She can't see the beauty in herself,
Even Though her boyfriend and family have the definition
That begins and ends with her name.
To this day,
She is afraid to sleep or do anything she once loved
For the guilt and the pain is eating her alive.
We're not the only ones who grew up this way.

One part disillusion. Two parts hopeless.
No one hears her scream for help.
They turn their heads and think if they ignore her,
She'll go away.
When in reality, She wants to.
Heartache.
That's all she causes.
She begs and pleads for someone to take her away.

She's not the only one who grew up this way.

Stand Up

by Tiffany Moors

There's a saying that I adore,

It's about doing nothing.

It has a word of four.

Doing nothing is something.

Sometimes, there's a path.

This path can lead left or right.

You don't need mental math,

The right path will have a light.

Negativity kills the soul,

Makes you feel worthless all the while

It will eat your body whole,

The 911 buttons on speed dial.

Suicide is so common in the thoughts of teens, It's starting to affect new borns.

Miscarriage, abortion, the mother can't redeem,

What she has lost and is her mourn.

In life, there are so many fiends,

That this new trend is the norm.

Teens wanting to end their lives because they don't know what it means.

There will not be a single mourn,

For those who did not know how to grieve,

For there are many who will try to end their lives

The next morn.

We're so insecure in this generation,
That when we say those three words to the one and only of whom we love,
They say it back because they think it's all fun and games,
But when they find out that they hurt the other person by lying,
They're filled with feelings of shame.
There are so many beautiful people in this world,
One cannot say they are beautiful without another saying they are horrible,
For being confident with their hair curled.
Young ladies are becoming insecure and pitiful.
Stand out, for you are unique,
Stand up, for what you believe in.
There are people who love you, so don't freak.
Everyone deserves to live.
Don't let anyone put you down, for all of you are so sweet.
No one can tell you you don't deserve to live,
No one can tell you you're too petite,
Skinny, fat, curvy, you are all perfect, so stand up for what you believe in.

“Lotus Flower”
by Vanessa Gadson





All pieces by Tomas Jaramillo