

Stepping Stones



2020

JUNIOR LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE

Stepping Stones 2020 volume 36

Stepping Stones Literary Magazine is an extracurricular student publication that showcases the creative writing and artistic talents of a variety of Park Ridge middle school students. The magazine is developed throughout the school year by students who joined the staff and are interested in promoting creative expression. All students in grades 7 and 8 are encouraged to join and to submit their original work for consideration. Submissions may be generated from classroom assignments, or self motivated pieces written specifically for the magazine. The staff meets regularly to promote interest, brainstorm ideas for themes, review submissions, and consider layout.

The 2020 staff have chosen to focus on four themes that reflect the lives of most middle schoolers--*respecting nature, the impact of technology, understanding our world and dreams*. It is their hope that readers enjoy the varied pieces that are included in this year's issue.

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Table of Contents

Six Word Memoirs	3	Leap of Faith by Krish Ramkumar	25
Respecting Nature	4	Grey Matters by Anonymous	26
Untitled by Taylor Roth	5	Racial Equality	
Untitled by Alexandra Shenloogian	6	By Rohit Chakalal	27
What Can You Do? by Julia Krieger	6	Stand Against Racism	
Respecting Nature: The Importance of		by Thomas Ippolito	27
Recycling by Harrison S. Carolan	7	Carelessness by Samuel Halsband	28
Our Lives with Technology	8	Conditions Change by Erika Glynn	28
Perfection by Kavya Gounder	9	Equality by Joshua Pena	28
Click by Christian Caviello	10	Let's Be Lonely Together	
Artwork by Harrison S. Carolan	10	by Victoria Gazda	29
Tweet Snap Post by Ishwar Idnani	10	Artwork by Julia Krieger	29
Social Media Madness		Alone Together by Kayla Hunt	30
by Makayla Hamilton	11	Trapped by Abigail McManus	30
Every by Brendan Burns	11	The Bridge to Another World	
The Tweets Aren't Sweet		by Amanda Gorrin	31
by Justin Larghi.....	12	Artwork by Katia Rodionova	32
Photo by Amanda Gorrin	12	The Colony of Flightless Bees	
Raindrops by Jameson DeTitta	12	by Katia Rodionova	32
The Picture Hides It All		The New Normal by Erika Stewart	33
by Anna Francica	13	You and Me by Maggie Zhou	33
The Mask by Amanda Cicero	13	Critical Roles, Important Community	
Social Media by Jacob Shannon	14	by Brandon Bliss	34
Think It Through by Erika Stewart	14	Untitled by Anna Francica	35
The Count by Sydney Majdosz	15	Imagi-nation by Krish Ramkumar	36
The Perfect Poll by Amanda Gorrin	15	The Runaway by Elizabeth Ruvo	37
Untitled by Rohit Chakalal	16	Unique; Not Different by Kavya Gounder..	38
Our Efficacious Electronics that Pave Our		Dreams	39
Future by Krish Ramkumar	17	Disproportionate Universe	
Forever by Madelyn Bello	18	by Grace Larson	40
The World Outside by Kayla Hunt	19	Dream Box by Michelina L. Stefano	42
Candy Crushing Chimera		The One Man Who Made Me Scream	
by Brianna Fazio	20	by Brandon Bliss	43
Cyber City by Michelina L. Stefano	21	Travelers Who Seek by John Belasic	44
A Never-ending Cycle		Deep in Muir Woods by M. Papadopoulos	44
by Katia Rodionova.....	21	The Music Box by Rohit Chakalal	45
Understanding Our World	22	Paris Imperfections by Amanda Gorrin	47
Girl Power by Julia Krieger	23	Photo by Amanda Gorrin	48
Civic Engagement by Melanie Constante ..	23	The Cursed Carnival by Tyler Ludwig	49
Independence by Michaela McVerry	24	Winter's Storms by Brandon Bliss	51
Photo by P. McClair	24	Appalachian Trail by P. McClair	52
The Bottle Popped by Brianna Fazio	25	Staff Bios	53

Six Word Memoirs

Countdown—

Heart Sinks... Jump... Fly... **Bungee!**
~Krish Ramkumar

Wind filling my sail, tacking around.

~Amanda Cicero

***Using culture to find
my way.***

~Maggie Zhou

Overreacting about getting lost in cave.

~Rohit Chakalalal

**Faults are sometimes
the best memories.**

~Melanie Constante

Mind Reads Music to My Heart.

~Mary Craffey

Family shows the good we have.

~Kayla Hunt

***Experiencing
unique life around
the world.***

~Juliana Barros

The Ocean

Crashing waves and the fun times.

~Anna Francica

**Traveling
enhances
perspective on
the world.**

~Hailey Moran

They remark, “You are completely
identical.”

~Katia Rodionova

**Using Aged Devices,
Flashback Remote Memories.**

~Brandon Bliss

Respecting Nature



Untitled

~Taylor Roth

A rose
is a flower that is
found in multiple colors.
The most common color rose is
the red rose, used to portray the heart.
This is the reason that many people love the red
rose. But why don't people love other nature
that much? Roses are only a part of nature
that should be treasured and kept safe.

People are cutting down trees
and taking away homes
for animals in the
process.

The world
..... would be
..... a better
..... place
... if all
.. nature
was
treated
like a
rose.

Untitled

~Alexandra Shenloogian

Respecting others and the environment.

Everyone is the same; take everyone into consideration not just yourself.

Selfish. Don't be selfish. Not everything is what you want and the way you want it.

Protect the environment. Don't litter!

Encourage others to do their part.

Care for plants and animals.

Tons of beautiful trees.

Nature is the world.

Animals are being helped by rescuers.

Trees make paper for our school work.

Use less.

Recycle because the world doesn't need any more pollution.

Everyone should be involved.

What Can You Do?

~Julia Krieger

When you see litter in the street

And the air smells like pollution

When you feel it all adding up

Remember there is a solution

There is something all of us can do

To keep the earth clean

To keep the fresh air we breathe

And keep all our forests green

Help and clean a beach

Or help recycle bottles and cans

Learn about the problems we all face

And help other people understand

It doesn't have to be a whole lot

If all of us just do our share

So, just take some time on Earth Day

To show the Earth that you really care

Respecting Nature: The Importance of Recycling

~Harrison S. Carolan

Every time I am in the lunchroom, I visit two garbage cans. One can is for trash and the other is for recycling. I make sure to properly discard my items. Plastic belongs in the recycle bin, and food and paper belong in the trash. I have been using this routine for as long as I can remember. Respecting Nature is a key element in our life. If we don't, we can upset the natural balance. This small act of properly discarding waste can make our school and world a better place.

For the approximately 200 kids that sit in the lunchroom, it seems like an easy task. But, it seems like people have forgotten the importance of recycling. There are many benefits to recycling, including the conservation of natural resources, the prevention of pollution by reducing the amount of energy to gather raw materials, and recycling reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators.

Even though I have only been here for a very little time, I have seen many people using incorrect recycling procedures. Here are some tips to help:

- Make sure to sort your items that you are disposing into piles and then discard them accordingly
- Bring less plastic to school and more reusable items so you don't have to worry about recycling as much
- Always check your hands before disposing of your items

Just taking the five seconds to sort your items and dispose of them can make a big difference. We have to change our ways now or the earth will not be habitable. Just think about this next time you enter the lunchroom.



Our Lives with Technology



Perfection

~Kavya Gounder¹



The Viewer,
All you see is perfection.
Wanting, needing that you pretend.
Not knowing that everyone else is doing the same,
Setting up a perfect life as a facade to hide the truth.
You don't know that the beauty you see is fake,
A photoshopped image of perfection.
You don't see through the curtain to the truth,
All everyone sees is the mask, not the face underneath.

The Model,
Pretty, perfect, poised, pretend.
Changing yourself as you see fit.
Hating yourself and your life,
Snap Snap Snap, "Look pretty for the camera."
Hide all your flaws and never let them see the truth.
Make yourself perfect by changing yourself,
The blemishes that make you who you are.

Standards,
The world keeps them out of your reach,
So, fake it and wear a smile that the world sees.
Don't let them in to see the real you,
Keep that private so no one sees your scars.
Reaching for those impossible standards,
Change to be impossibly perfect.
That is all that others see,
Perfection they could never reach.

¹ 2019-20 Winner of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs Youth Creative Writing Contest for Poetry

Click

~Christian Caviello

Every time someone posts,
All I can think is *what a boast*
But once I step inside my home,
I feel as if I'm in a dome.
Whenever I turn on my phone
The jealousy builds up
Like a cyclone
Snap, Tweet, Post



Artwork

~Harrison S. Carolan

Tweet Snap Post

~Ishwar Idnani

Tweet, snap, post
All you do is boast
Until you become roast
And are unable to boast
About you're horrible post
How could you be unable to unpost
The horrible amount that you always post
Which forces you to pay the most
People pay for their post
Although you pay the most
You realize not to post
Anything that will ever let you boast.

Social Media Madness

~Makayla Hamilton

**You post a picture,
you snap at your daily streak,
And you tweet your latest drama
people are seeing your picture, your streaks, and your drama
from all over the world
And you're the one regretting the most,
People post things without thinking about the consequences, by
not clicking private now thousands and thousands of people are
seeing your latest post, tweet, and snap.
By this, "wrong click of a button" you just hurt your next interview,
your future career, or your options of future challenges,
that's why we need to avoid post, snap, or tweet problems or
mishaps.**

Every

~Brendan Burns

**Every snap you post.
Every tweet you tweet.
Every streak you send.
Every text you send.**



CAN HURT SOMEONE INTENTIONALLY OR NOT

**Think of others.
Think of yourself.
Think of your health.**

The Tweets Aren't Sweet

~Justin Larghi

You tweet a sweet tweet while the birds fall asleep
In the midst of night someone can retweet that tweet
If you regret that tweet and someone takes a snap
The people you love can't help you retrieve it back
Anything you post is free for taking
So don't make a meme that can't be retaken.
Although the thought of that is scary
All I can say is that it's beyond the contrary
Take some time to rethink your choices
And maybe next time you won't hear those voices.



Photo ~Amanda Gorrin

Raindrops

~Jameson DeTitta

**Raindrops on the windowsill
Sheep ran from the grassy hill
Now my days just ain't no fun
Thought the sheep were number one
My phone rings but I decline
I think I will be fine
Turn my ringer off
All I can do is scoff
I turn my phone off
Jump on my bed and think
"Soft"**

The Picture Hides It All

~Anna Francica

Stuck in your phone,
scrolling through Instagram,
snapping your friends,
hearing the silence of just sitting there, alone.
Social media is like a fake friend
It can make you feel lonely
or like you have all the friends in the world.
It can make you happy some days
and sad the next.
It's tricky finding the perfect picture to post.
Wondering how many likes you will get
and who will comment.
The stress of it all.
Going outside, doing your homework,
or spending time with you friends or family
is what social media takes away from us.
They lock us up in the screen.
They keep us away from the outside world.
Constantly being on this little device and
looking at all the "perfect people"
on the social media platforms
can make us self-conscious and question
and make us change inside and out.
But really,
some of those people are just hiding behind a
mask
and showing us what life should look like but,
it isn't perfect.
The picture hides it all.
And it's as if people are forgetting how to talk
to each other.
In the future, we need a new way of
communicating.
And that is talking,
face to face.

The Mask

~Amanda Cicero

"Ding"
sometimes a devil sometimes an angel
not always good,
sometimes bad
always wanting to be perfect
number of likes,
number of photos tagged in,
impacting someone in a negative way
caring more about likes than anything else
wanting to be the one tagged in every photo
posting day in and day out about your
amazing life
but not always feeling happy about your
actions
never being yourself, always trying to keep up
your perfect image
never letting it slip
putting on a mask hiding the sorrow
becoming lonely or upset
use it in a positive, powerful way.
not a negative way
connect with others
post the ups
but also the downs
show who you really are
take off the mask
unveil the real you
people will start to care more and more
maybe you won't get the number of likes you
want,
but at least you'll be posting about the real
you



Social Media

~Jacob Shannon

Playing football, hanging with friends,
traveling to places that I've never been.
All of these things that I like to do,
Now there's a way I can share them with you.
After I'm home and resting in bed,
I take out my phone and jump on the thread.
It could be snapchat or insta, a group text or a streak,
Liking my photos, shows how well you know me.
After I'm done editing, tagging and posting,
It's time to scroll through what everyone's boasting.
Whether it's a party with family or a sport victory,
Snapchats the way you can share it with me.
I will always like the recent and sometimes even share.
Anything to do, to show that I care.
When people like my photos, it feels so good.
It feels like I live in Hollywood.



Think It Through

~Erika Stewart

FaceTime, Instagram, and Snapchat seem great,
as long as they are used positively and do not support hate

You can stay in touch with friends and family too,
and get reconnected with people you once knew



These features are helpful but remember what you write
will be on the internet FOREVER in plain sight

Cyber bullying, being prejudice and writing things that are wrong
Can cause people to not like you and you'll lose friends after long

Remember to be kind as you were taught to be,
You will feel better about yourself when you are the best person you can be

The Count

~Sydney Majdosz



Social media is wrapped around one thing
It determines fame and popularity
It is like someone is going to win in the end
Who can get the most likes and followers
You find the best pictures to post
Then tell everyone by saying things on other social media pages by tagging ourselves and saying to like it
All you want to do is rack up the numbers to get it higher and higher
No matter who you are
You want to post the best thing
So people will like it
We get wrapped up with this idea that followers and likes are the most important thing
When they really aren't
They have become so important to where they can define you
As, "oh that popular person"
To where you are no longer described as you, or your name
You won
You get accepted in social media
We can get so fixated on something to where that is all we think about
It is just a number that can determine someone's popularity
A count

The Perfect Poll

~Amanda Gorrin



Opening Instagram excitedly
Posting a poll of what I choose
I make the decision what people should choose from
Left or right twix, Disney or Universal, anything is possible
I am the one who sets the rules
Notifications dance across my smooth screen
I feel the phone glide underneath my fingertips
Percentages pop up quickly showing the opinions of many
The results are a questionnaire; digitally answering life's sense of ponders
The results come in as quick as a racecar with wonderful results
I eagerly await to see what my closest of friends say
Polls give me a fun form of control
It's all up to me to choose pop culture figures that people prefer
People can learn new things
Instagram polls on social media may seem very addicting
But polls can help the human have something to look forward to
It can make me have a reason to want to wake up happy
It can help a person like me wake up early in the morning
It makes me happier

Untitled

~Rohit Chakalakal

Mainstream media, all around us,
Mainstream media can cause a big fuss.

Mainstream media can affect many people,
Sometimes it makes us feel unequal.

Mainstream media is fully digital,
Which nowadays is quite typical.

Some companies include Fox News and CNN,
They have a lot of problems waiting to happen.

Some companies based in facts and some not,
And some not as trustworthy as we thought.

Some of the news can be fake,
Some of these companies really take the cake.

Fake news is the worst type of news,
Most people believe these confounding companies' ruse.

Why do these companies do this?
They know most people will realize something is amiss.

Although mainstream media is a zoo,
It can be very serious too.

Mainstream media can be controversial, important and even sad,
Sometimes it can cause an uproar, making people mad.

In all seriousness, mainstream media is a problem,
All viewers beware of the news column.

Be aware that not everything you read or hear is true,
These companies only want to take advantage of you.



Our Efficacious Electronics that Pave Our Futures

~Krish Ramkumar

Long ago, in a land without screens and social media, lay thriving civilizations separated by mountains and seas.

Discoveries were made individually and kept secret for the benefit of their own civilization, not for humankind.

Ding!

A notification pops up on a computer.

Brr Brr!

A phone vibrates with the latest tweet.

As the bright illumination of the screen shines on your face, you begin to wonder...

“What was life before the like button?”

Some argue people are now more disconnected,
while in reality,

social media has us connected at all times.

At any distance, at any time, one can text or call one another.

One is able to communicate with their family members downstairs, or even make buddies on the other side of the globe.

Scientists can send their discoveries instantly to the world and do not need to be featured in a newspaper to be recognized.

With phones like wands doing magical things,
unimaginable wonders our smartphone brings.

Phones tend to always stay by our sides like they are a part of the body.

Yet even still, many advise against the use of electronics in their household.

As society advances, our devices will only advance with it.

They will not dwindle but become more relevant and necessary.

Why does society advise against a product of the future, which will become what all our lives will revolve around?

A closed mindset and resistance to change will only make it harder for you to live as time passes.

And someday, far in the future, lay lands of thriving civilizations of advanced screens and brand-new revolutionary social media ...



Forever

~Madelyn Bello

Why do people decide to post?
Is it because they want acceptance?
Or because they want to boast?

We think that deleting posts means that they are gone
But in reality, that is not the case,
As social media is the game and you had just become the pawn

You might think that there is privacy between you and your friend
But it only takes a second
For what you said to get spread

People say snaps go away in 24 hours but do they really disappear?
Someone could take a screenshot
And share with your other peers

Everyone conforms to society, whether it is constant or not
But social media makes it more difficult
As more ideas of wanting to fit in have been brought

Hearing those messages 'ping' sends a rush through you,
As you glide your fingers across the shiny screen,
You feel this pleasure when you swipe through

Why do you feel positivity while pulling up people's posts?
Social media has created a popularity contest
Where you decide which posts you like the most

Even if at this moment you do not think that what you are saying is wrong
You may find yourself in the future wondering,
And not understanding what you were thinking all along

Even if the comments might not seem to matter now
Those same comments can come back to haunt you
Sometime later in life somehow

Even if you think that tweets, posts, and snaps are the greatest things ever
There is one thing you have to remember,
And that is that what you say and do will stay there forever

The World Outside

~Kayla Hunt

The world outside, the one I used to live in
Now locked up, in my own new life
Why do I sit inside and not see the world?
Because technology takes me away
Day and day, I sit on my phone
Communicating through a screen, not saying what I really mean
Why don't I go outside, and speak face to face?
Because my phone has taken me away
It's disconnected me from the real world
Instead of seeing nature, I see the world through a screen
I used to go on the swings in my free time, enjoying life as it was
Now I just have a small device, occupying most of my life
A rectangle of light, projecting what my world once used to be
My world of people, talking and laughing
Now I do all of this through a little screen
Taking me away from opportunities
When I was younger, I would go outside to play
Meet friends on my block, new kids every day
Now I meet people through snapchats
Or I facetime them when I can
A simple post, resembling society's idea of perfection
Introducing me to what the world wants to see
The ideal perfect body, face, skin and hair
Telling me what I should look like and be
Social media has introduced me to something bigger than I can understand
A world of people behind their screens, typing whatever they can
Unable to say it to their face, we type away all kinds of hate
I've said things that I haven't meant, unable to take it back
Anyone can say anything, anything at all
Once my words are out there, they're never coming back
We don't understand what the world of social media can track
The world outside, the one I want back



Candy Crushing Chimera

~Brianna Fazio

Pop! Swipe! Bing! Welcome to Candy Crush.
Where am I? And please don't lie.
In order to leave, you must not cry.
Get to the bottom and you'll go home.

Only one life, you have to make it.
Twenty moves, you shouldn't quit it.
Best of luck to you, my dear.
You are just fine; no need to fear.

Green, purple, blue and red.
Complete the level and go back to bed.
There is yellow and orange, too!
I can help you make it through.

If you match the striped candy,
Finishing the level should be dandy.
Make the cherries disappear,
If you don't you'll still be here.

Moves can take you anywhere.
Rainbow candy is very rare.
Cherries are red, candies are blue.
The tension in this game increasingly grew.

Wrapped candies explode when hit.
If I don't make it, I'll have a fit.
Come on now, you are almost there.
Ten more moves would be quite fair.

One cherry is gone; now it's just you.
Match three blue, and you'll be through.
You don't control the game, it controls you.
Only five more moves to match the blue.

It's getting close, down to the wire.
Use some powerups, it will be fire.
There you go, you're falling down.
All of the sudden up pops a clown,

The clown greets you with a great ole smile.
And he wants you to stay, just for a while.
You really need to go and the clown says
goodbye.
Your eyes open up and you think to yourself
"Why?"



Cyber City

~Michelina L. Stefano

The world is a big place
Many things you never see
But it's made accessible on your phone
Reaching out like city skylines
Networks and pictures connected like cities
A web of information spread across the world
WIFI connecting people like love

There is nothing scarier,
No fear more perilous,
Than navigating the web,
A dark place of evil and
injustice.
Imagine what possibilities
they could hold
Controlling your phone and through that,
Controlling your only safe place.



Buried in a place with deep thoughts
Cover your face with filters and masks
“Make sure you don't let them see the real you”
In a network with hackers and ‘windows’ we call apps
Feeling small in a great big place we have to compete
Big red heart balloons getting us up to the top
And zero views making us shrink slowly down.

Zooming out
You see the city in a different perspective
Cries of help
Eyes blind and mouths shut
A shockwave of eerie noises hitting your ears
A computer atmosphere hiding all the torn people
The world is a big place but it's made accessible on
your phone
But it also leaves you so very vulnerable.

A Never-ending Cycle

~Katia Rodionova

**A city of pixels dance behind
several glass screens
Millions of words, rooted in
blue denim jeans**

**Like an ice cube in your palm
A burn that won't leave
No matter how calm**

**Heavy eyelids and lashes like
stones
Bound to collapse
Yet stopped by our phones**

**A longing for more
For finishing the chore
A fight for an end,
An end to this war**

**A brick of power, of plight and
of speech
Old man, tell me why
It sucks youth away like a
leach**

**No need for daylight
The sun or the rays
With this brick of power
You'll stay inside for days**

**An age where you see
More life in a tree
When walking past
A highschooler or three**

**What a shame, might one think
How eyes are glued to a light
Well that was you, old man,
With your book and flashlight**

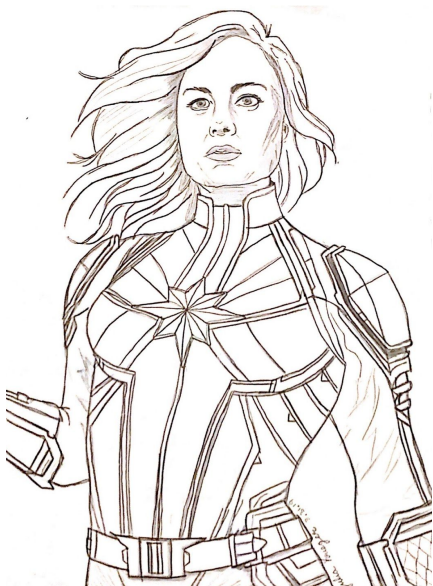
Girl Power

~Julia Krieger



Note from the artist:

I decided to draw these girls after seeing the *Captain Marvel* movie. I didn't just want to draw superheroes who were male; I wanted to draw some female superheroes too. It is important to realize that girls have power too.



Civic Engagement

~Melanie Constante

You say you understand them
But you're accepting of the ugly words that people say
You say you want to help them
But your actions are nonexistent
You say that racism is the worst thing in the world
Yet you ignore the screams for help that people whisper in your ear
You say you are going to make our society a better place
But you're biased against them without knowing it
When will you truly believe that racism needs to stop?
How long will it take for you to truly believe?

Independence

~Michaela McVerry

You walk into Park Ridge High School on the first day. You're nervous because you don't know your schedule or where any of your classes are! You have to ask a teacher where this classroom is and try to find your way there.

But get lost.

Alone.

You take initiative, decide to not give up! Peering at your schedule, you find each and every one of your classes. You feel **responsible** and **independent**! You feel so proud of yourself that you finished the day. You go home, relax and as the night passes, you go to sleep and start the day over again. This happens for the whole year. You get used to the school by the second day. You start to know where things are. You are doing great on handing things in when they are due! When the year ends, you are sad to see everyone go, but you know you're going to have a great time in the Dominican Republic this summer so it doesn't bother you that much. You say goodbye to all your friends and hope to see them soon! You say to yourself, "Next year is going to be even better!"

A photograph of a paved walkway. The top half of the image shows light-colored, rectangular stone tiles. The bottom half shows darker, square tiles. A quote is inscribed on the light-colored tiles in the middle of the image.

*"In a composite nation like ours, as before the law,
there should be no rich, no poor, no high, no low,
no white, no black, but common country, common
citizenship, equal rights and a common destiny."*

Photo ~P. McClair

The Bottle Popped

~Brianna Fazio

You see the smiles, the laughs, and the fun.
But, where are the tears and the sadness?

Never shown to anyone else.

All of that sadness is bottled up inside you.

Just waiting for the bottle to pop open.

One day, without any warning.

It does.

You can't control your bottle any more.

There are just too many confusing things spilling out.

It happens to everyone eventually.

Your body feels heavy like the world is on your
shoulders.

And you don't know how to close it.

Finally, it's all done.

You feel the world lift off your shoulders.

Everything is gone.

You feel

Happy.

Leap of Faith

~Krish Ramkumar

**Harness tightly wrapped
Butterflies in your stomach
You're ready to go**

**Walk up to the line
See the drop and now you know
'Oh God this is high'**

**Now they start to count
You start to have second thoughts
5 4 3 2 1**

**You stop in the air
Now you start to plummet down
Flying very fast**

**Cannot comprehend
What is even happening
The wind flows through you**

**The cord bounces you
Like a rubber band you will
Fling back to your height**

**You stop once again
Everything stands perfectly
Falling once again**

**Hanging upside down
Blood floods to your cranium
Starting to feel heavy**

**Now you realize that
You just completed the task
You just bungee jumped**

Grey Matters

~Anonymous

Black and white separated only by grey.
Grey, the unknown factor.

Why is there conflict?
Why is there hatred?

We are one people.
Together as one.

Humankind is getting killed. Heart wrenching.
Humankind is losing everything. Senseless.

The unknown factor of grey.
Grey matter is essential for brain activity.

Emotion. Decision making. Self-control.
Grey matters.

Rallies and protests happen.
People yell. They realize silence didn't work.

Is this the way it should be?
Unity is clearly the answer.

Voices that were not heard before yearn attention
now.
Destruction does not cause positive change.

The young man wears a shirt proclaiming,
"Free Hugs".
He is not a protestor, nor a police officer.

He is simply a young black man.
A man searching for grey in the matter.

A man's selfless act of handing out "Free Hugs"
creates unity.
People are realized as equal.

His shirt screaming without his lips uttering a
word.

He protests hatred. He advocates for communal
understanding.

Simple gentle hugs to the protesters.
Simple gentle hugs to the police officers.

Angry people arrive to protest.
His "Free Hugs" change the protest volume for a
moment.

People are forced to take pause.
People look around and take notice.

He teaches to understand outward differences.
He teaches that all have inward similarities.

Everyone has grey matter that can be gained.
Everyone has grey matter that needs to be
shared.

For several moments he gives out coveted "Free
Hugs".
For just a moment, those "Free Hugs" create
unity.

He knows black and white blend to the perfect
shade of grey.
He knows grey matters.

Those "Free Hugs" create change.
Brain activities change. Emotions change.

Decision making changes. Self-control changes.
One's grey matter changes.

Suddenly, if only for a moment,
Grey is no longer an unknown factor.

Racial Equality

~Rohit Chakalal

**We are all people,
We are all equal.**

**But that is not how many feel
When many express bigotry with such zeal**

**Unfortunately, there are some people
That don't believe all humans are equal**

**Some think that humankind should be divided
And that freedom should be more one-sided**

**There are those who believe that their race is supreme
And those who think this mentality is extreme**

**These opinions are based off bias and prejudice
These opinions disseminate like disease**

**But that doesn't change the fact that we are all the
same
And therefore, we shouldn't put a single group to
shame**

**Although we are different, we should stand united
And acts of hate should be disintegrated**

**Just remember that, we are all people,
and that all people are equal.**



Stand Against Racism

~Thomas Ippolito

Why do we discriminate?

What do we gain?

All it does is provide others

With so much pain.

Why does the color of others matter?

We should appreciate people for who

they are

And enjoy each other's laughter.

We are all so different one way or

another,

We are also really similar,

Just like we are blood brothers.

We shouldn't hate others because of their

skin,

We should love everybody,

And together we will win.

Carelessness

~Samuel Halsband

We're all citizens,
But if we're racist and rude,
There will never be any peace.
There are so many problems,
That'll never come undone.
But if we start right now,
Maybe we can fix more than one.
Why be sexist and negative when you can be kind?
And why be insecure rather than have peace of mind?
People need to keep their spirits up,
And be an inspiration.
Because bringing others down,
Doesn't make us a nation.

Equality

~Joshua Pena

Leaders must know what's good and right
Leaders must know how to solve a problem
Leaders must be kind to the people
No man or women shall be left behind
Everybody has a place which is equal to others
Everybody has a voice
A voice that must be listened to
Leaders should give these people a voice,
No matter their race, or gender
They are equals
And the leaders are the only ones who can do that
It's the way to make a perfect society
But there are other leaders who act differently than others
They do what they desire,
Exclude people that are not similar to them
Saying mean things,
Hurting feelings
Ignoring people who are different in race or gender
Not giving them a voice
Assuming they will do the wrong
The sight of selfishness makes people shiver
They have no heart
But those who know what's good and right
Can change them
And can truly make a better society for citizens and every one.

Conditions Change

~Erika Glynn

Make new friends,
Be social,
Sit with new people at lunch,
Were encouraged before.

Stay inside,
Avoid social interaction,
Wear gloves and masks,
Are enforced now.

Hidden away,
While the world is repaired,
Birds in a cage,
Waiting for their freedom.



Let's Be Lonely Together

~Victoria Gazda

I once saw you there.
Standing a mere three feet away.
I have yet to know your name.

Though our hearts say run,
Our minds say stay.
The world needs to heal.

But here we are,
Connected by a single need.
Peace.

I don't know you.
You don't know me.
Let's be lonely together.

Stuck in a stale prison called home,
Like Rapunzel in her tower,
We wait for a better time.



Artwork ~Julia Krieger

Alone Together

~Kayla Hunt

Here and now we're stuck,
stay at home and don't go out,
because the world is out of luck.
A global pandemic, which many have not
experienced before.
We're scared but we stay fighting,
fighting for a better tomorrow.
Yet some of us still sit here,
and point a finger to blame.
The Chinese started this virus!
But why do we look at it that way?
We shouldn't feel the need to put this under one culture's name,
together as a nation, we can fight this away.
If everyone stays helpful, and with an open heart,
We can go back to normal, if we don't let this drive us apart.
Day by day I sit outside in my own backyard
looking around at everyone in masks, all I want is this to stop.
So, I stay praying that one day we can go back to school,
that everyone is healthy, and the virus leaves our world.
But right now, in this moment, there is no one we should blame.
Everyone is struggling, so no one deserves to be shamed.



Trapped

~Abigail McManus

I am trapped in a world
Where I can't see my friends.
It feels like the world is going to end
Always trying to look at the bright side
Even though it's like I am stuck
In a dark shadow.
I'm stuck in the same routine
Which makes it feel like
I am repeating the same day.
I am only able to see my loved ones
through a phone screen.
Scared that someone
Is going to get it
Why now
Why us

The Bridge to Another World

~Amanda Gorrin

I sit inside my house
Pondering what the world has become
Should I take a stand?
Or wait for others to force it to overcome.

The people all were happy
Hand enlaced in hand
The world was oh so perfect
I wondered, "Was this planned?"

I look outside my door
The fog escaped inside
I heard a whisper in my ear
I pushed the exit aside

The people greeted me
Beauty in the air
Everyone was different
No same skin or hair.

I ran to follow the whisper
That led me to a wood
A gate towered over me
I opened it doing no good.

Everybody got along
No one leader or one mind
They all led this world together
All of mankind.

"Hello?" I shouted all alone
The visuals I could not bare
A bridge lay out in front of me
I crossed it in despair.

There was joy at every turn
Grins from ear to ear
They surrounded me and told me,
"This is what you need to hear."

Surprised I looked at what came next
Nothing I should be scared of
A perfect utopia smiled at me
I hadn't crossed the bridge enough.

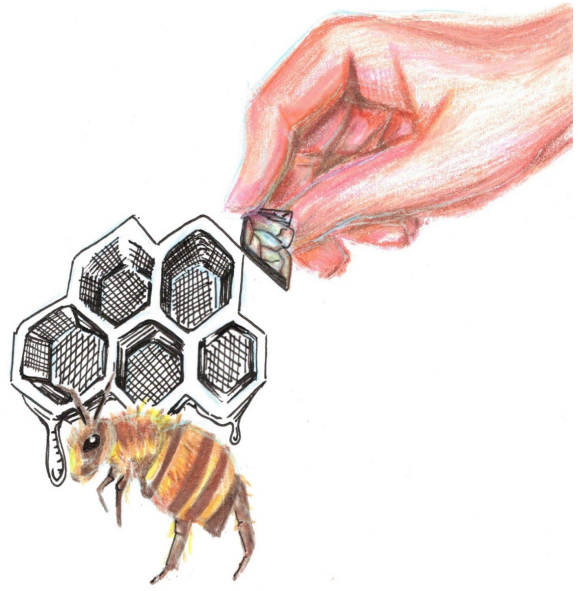
"This is our perfect world!"
"You can visit anytime!"
"Although this world is ours..."
It can also be mine!

I took their wisest words with me
And ran back across that bridge
I closed the gate and ran to home
On my house on the ridge.

As I lay down on my bed
I knew I had to help
I got to my computer
And wrote all that I felt.

“Stop the hate! Stop the bullying!”
“Stop this twisted world!”
“Get rid of all pessimists.”
“Our new world is deserved!”

The people all were happy
Hand enlaced in hand
I knew that I had done it!
I’m glad I took a stand.



The Colony of Flightless Bees ~Katia Rodionova

We all have our responsibility,
As people of this earth
Whether asset or liability,
Assigned to us by birth

A bee must create it's honey
To supply the beloved queen
We, although it's sunny,
Must abide this quarantine

It seems as though human decency
Has surfaced, only recently
For the ones who have respect,
An end to this, we may expect

We, the bees,
Cannot do as we please,
For a colony of young and old,
The future is wrapped in a blindfold

The New Normal

~Erika Stewart

No one can come to our house,
We can't go anywhere.
Scary times,
In our crazy world.

People like to tell me,
It will all be better soon.
But tell me if that's true,
Why are there no sports, school, or anything
open to do?

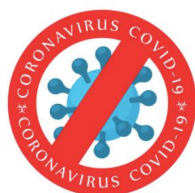
It ended all the practices I never wanted to end,
Ended all the school days with friends,
Ended eating out at restaurants,
Everything feels like its ending while we're in
isolation.

It feels like forever,
Stuck in quarantine.
So over and over I wonder,
What else is there to do?

My world became so different,
All in just one night.
Hearing that schools were closed tomorrow,
Did not seem right.

Healthcare workers doing all they can,
And putting themselves at risk.
Yet still people disregard the government and
state,
Just to see some friends they missed.

They don't understand that they're the reason,
This all continues longer.
But if they just stay home and follow the orders,
We can see friends daily without our invisible
borders.



You and Me

~Maggie Zhou

Before we were born
We were all the same
Waiting for a name and a face

But as we open our eyes
And step into age
Our hearts begin to stray from our brains

Until it becomes man against man
Color against color
Forgetting that you were once my brother

This thing we speak against
But know deep inside
Where the walls of hate sleep and hide

But all it takes
Is the look of a child
Wanting another way to be defined

To free our minds
From this ignorant cycle
Create hands in hands from rival against rival

So if we look far enough
We'll realize that the same air we breathe
Connects together both you and me

Critical Roles, Important Community

~Brandon Bliss

7 billion people living on the earth,
Each striving for a different, individual purpose,
Working every day to provide to their families,
Likewise changing the community not just for their families.

Good times, hard times, whichever it is,
Each individual makes sure they contribute,
Taking leadership and affection to what they are told.

Doctors, police, the list goes on and on,
Volunteers, people simply working just for a job,
In one individual town or state or country,
They all add up to make one strong community.

Children, growing up to learn their role,
Staying calm and under control,
Growing up and finding their purpose in life,
To join and come together and do what's right.
The community has been expanding and growing,
More jobs, responsibilities as the time flies by.

Hard times come often just like we are in,
And the community is coming together to show what is within,
Doctors, nurses working together to play their roles,
As children like me stay at home.

My role might seem quite simple,
And that's okay; I'm doing what is right,
Staying home and helping my peers,
So, when night comes, everything is alright.

During this time,
What I do is stay home,
And help the community by doing what is told.

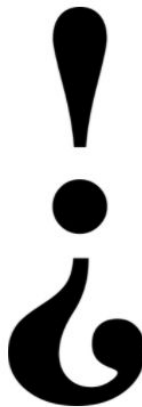
Doctors do their jobs,
As they rely on the community to do what is told,

Stay home and practice social distancing,
While the rest of the world is in self quarantine.

Overall, everyone has their own responsibility,
Which makes our world one large society,
With all the roles being played for different purposes,
At the end of the day,
Everyone makes this a better community.

Untitled

~Anna Francica



**We need a leader
Someone to show us right from wrong
And to guide us in tough times
Someone to stand up to others
To agree and to disagree
To make a change
Who will it be?
Will it be you or me?
Someone strong and smart
With much courage
What would a leader do?
This crazy situation that 2020 has sprung upon the people
All the lives taken
And spirits broke
Being constricted to the walls of your home
For countless days not knowing
When the end will come
Making the best of it
When it really is the worst
We need a leader
And maybe we already have one
Someone known who will rise to the challenge
But until then
Who will it be?**

Imagi-nation
~Krish Ramkumar

Imagine our Nation:
Ruled by one,
With the power to sentence anyone of any
crime.

Imagine our Press:
With no real news,
And only propaganda filling the papers.

Imagine our justice system:
Where activists,
are executed for speaking out for change.

Imagine our society:
Where individuals,
Are persecuted for their identity and beliefs
And through the struggles,
And countless lives lost,
The founding fathers waged war,
And MLK strived for his dream.

But still much work remains;
Racism lives, Fascism grows.
Slurs are thrown, and rights denied.
Despite this all, we waste our votes.
We suppress our voices and let evil be.
But even still, we cannot forget...

How great,
That we live in a nation of democracy.
How great,
That we have credible resources in our
news.

How great,
That we have the freedom of speech and
press.

How great,
that we only have to imagine.



The Runaway

~Elizabeth Ruvo

I run and run down the street.
My legs feel numb with every step.
I hear their voices. Their loud, loud voices.
Taunting me, haunting me.

I turn until I reach the sidewalk.
My foot gets caught, and I collapse.
My face crashes into the rough pavement,
Pain starts spreading from within.

They grab my back, and pull me up.
Their eyes are cold with no empathy.
They grab my backpack, and throw me down.
My items start spilling out.

Pencils, books, erasers leak out like a
waterfall.
They aren't pleased, they want more.
They throw my backpack back at me.
My supplies come flying.

Next, they come charging.
Their force sends me to the ground.
My face becomes one with the pavement.
The same pain starts to form again.

I get punched.
I get kicked.
I get thrown.
I get torn.
Agony.
Aching.
Throbbing.
Stinging.

It seems like the pain will be here forever.
They don't stop. They won't stop.
Embarrassment fills me.
Knowing I will never ever fit in.

All at once, they stop.
Their faces white, eyes wide.
They slowly start to back away.
They turn, and run and run down the street.

I'm lying on the ground.
Blood is splattered on the pavement.
My face is swollen. Is bruised. Is bleeding.
I just lay there and start crying.

The tears flow, and don't stop.
I don't even move. I don't ever stop.
The blood flows down from my nose.
My happiness...is gone.

What feels like hours is only seconds.
Someone taps me on the shoulder.
I look up and see a girl.
I know the girl.

She goes to my school. She is in my grade.
I never thought she cared about me.
She grabs my hand and pulls me up.
She wipes away the dried blood.

She asks where I live. We start to walk.
We talk and talk. We share so much in common.
We arrive at my house, and we smile goodbye.
I slowly wobble into my house, and sit down,
thinking.

I made a friend, when I was told I wouldn't.
I persevered, when no one thought I couldn't.
I go into the bathroom, and clean myself off.
I stare at my reflection, and just smile.

Maybe there are people who care.
Maybe there are people who...always have cared...

Unique; Not Different

~Kavya Gounder

“Different, weird, odd.”
The demons lurking taunt.
Break you down with words.
Even dreams those shadows haunt.
Plant seeds of doubt that grow
To bushes of thorns and evil.
Don't let them take root
Or they just might be lethal.

“Stupid, ugly, freak.”
The people point and jeer.
They hate that you are special.
Try to make you hide from fear.
Their words are daggers sharp
To cut you and tarnish your beauty.
Don't let them put out your spark
With their horrid acts of cruelty.

“Beautiful, special, strong.”
The angels around you say
You are perfect as you are;
Never change your way.
Don't listen to those demons
Who laugh and call you a freak.
Don't listen to the people
Who fear those that are unique.

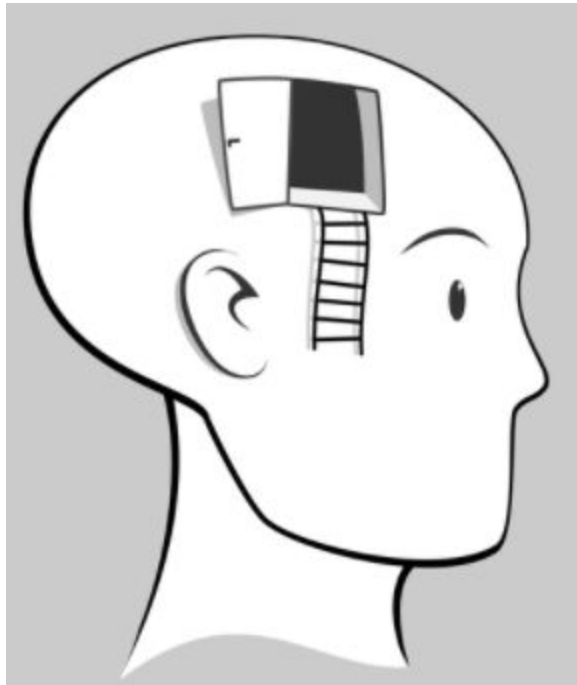
Why should this happen to many?
Don't we always fuss.
“Beauty is skin deep.”
Why does its color matter to us?
An angel shouldn't be needed
To help the brightest stars shine.
We must all do our part and work,
That is the only way that racism can decline.

Don't let words put out your spark;
Let it burn, fierce and bright.
They say you are different;
Embrace it, don't waste it.
A word just shows feelings;
And feelings are bigger than you ever knew.
So take the true meaning of their words;
Be different, be unique, and always be you.



Mandalas are geometric patterns that in Hindu and Buddhist tradition hold a great deal of symbolism as microcosms of the universe. Each pattern is unique, just as each person is unique.

Dreams



Disproportionate Universe

~Grace Larson

Blackout, whiteout,
Dead as night
As I wake up
To a glorious sight

A world of strange colors
Places and faces.
A town of new shapes,
Proportions, and spaces.

I took a peaceful stroll
As the world turned grey.
And I awoke once again,
Yet to my dismay.

I was on a small doorstep.
Now what was this sight?
And I saw a soft glow
Like a sunset at night.

No warmth,
It felt cozy and welcoming so,
But a scream gave me chills,
To just let me know.

There was nothing so sweet
About the strange source of heat
That set the house before me
Ablaze with a glow.

A woman in distress
Caught in a large mess;
Thinking and blinking,
I felt myself shrinking.

I was too afraid
To step into the flames.
No one else was around,
So I'd be to blame.

If whoever's inside
Never got out,
While I stood there and quivered...
So, I quickly shout:

"Stay right here,
I'll be back very soon."
I stepped right inside
No more light from the moon.

Just from the flames
Like fabric, aglow
Orange and yellow,
I was set to go.

With careful strides
I focused on my goal,
Still with blurry vision,
I spotted a hole.

I climbed through and grabbed
The child inside,
Then we started to cough
As we stepped outside.

Suddenly the strangers
Became people I knew,
And the world was once peaceful
And not all askew.

Reality, reality
That rang a bell;
I started to think,
“Is this real? Can I tell?”

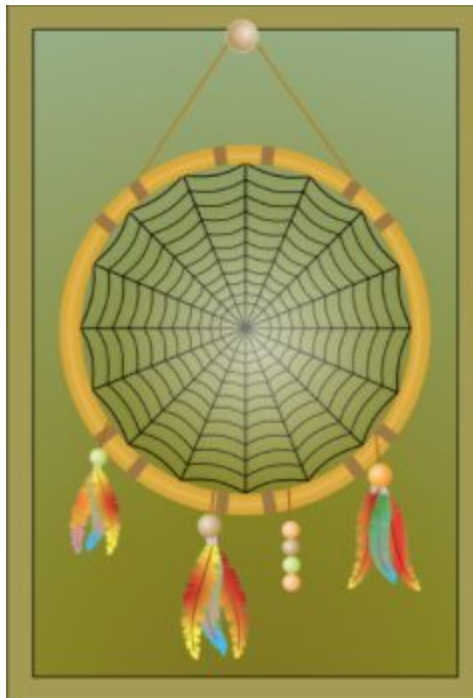
It was all a dream,
My brain seemed to say.
I said, “If I blinked,
this would all go away.”

I stood, as you would
And waved farewell
To all that I knew,
But from what I could tell

Even after one blink,
I was still there
In this forsaken world.
But I didn’t care;

I tried one more time.
I awoke in bed.
It was crazy indeed.
Still fresh in my head.

And I twisted and turned;
I remembered what burned,
But I had faced my fears,
And that’s what I learned.



Dream Box

~Michelina L. Stefano

Living in a world with no color,
The houses were painted in blues and grays.
The sight of the bright three quarter moon looks duller,
For my eyes had slowly shut and my body had drifted away.

Envisioning things I haven't seen,
The world was filled with color.
I felt myself in between,
An afterlife and another.

My legs had slowly lifted,
And my body had started to rise.
I felt my weight had shifted,
Then, I suddenly fell to my demise.

Bam! Went the back of my head,
I was lying on my bedroom floor.
I asked this question, "Was I dead?"
I really wasn't sure.

I turned to see a box so bright,
It started to levitate out of my sight.
I reached it with all my might,
And then I noticed I was taking flight.

The box was in my arms,
I felt it move and shake.
The light had caused me harm,
I accidentally dropped it, "Did it break?"

It was now on the floor;
I saw it, then it opened.
An eerie creature had popped out,
It wasn't human for sure.



Her face was so pale,
And her eyes were so bright.
She looked like she wailed;
Her hair was as dark as midnight.

"Why did you take my house?" she says.
"For you had died and passed away."
She then opened a portal which made me realize,
That this was no game, this was real life.

Hearing out people who cried,
And looking at the souls of innocents who died.
A person walked up to me with their red eyes,
"This place is crazy and a madness has arrived!"

I woke up,
Without remembering much.
I was scratching my head,
Oh yeah, now I remember, I thought I was dead.

The dreambox was gone,
But my visions I hold on.
For I was getting startled,
"Will she haunt me at dawn?"

The One Man Who Made Me Scream

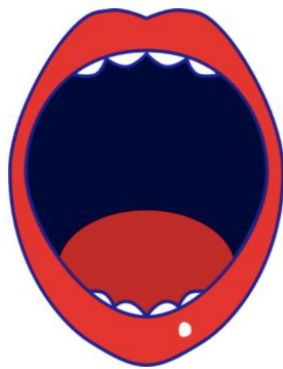
~Brandon Bliss

Home alone and by myself,
My dream began with no one else,
10-year-old me just sitting there,
Not even thinking of going anywhere.

My parents left to the grocery store,
And slammed the glass sliding door,
Leaving me right then and there,
Which made me very unaware.

I stayed there on my couch,
As I acknowledged I was the only one in the
house,
The T.V. speakers making a racket,
As I was laying in my jacket.

Out of nowhere,
A big red alert that said beware,
Took up half of the T.V. screen,
Which almost made me scream.



The T.V. lights were flashing,
And they left me dashing,
As one man was kidnapping everyone,
I started to believe I was the next one.

As I didn't know I was in a dream,
It made me let out a very loud scream,
Bashing on the door came again,
As I didn't know who would come right then.

The sound got louder as a random man hit the
door,
And the glass screamed as it hit the floor,
My glass door just had been broken,
He walked in as no one had spoken.

I left my house with the man right behind me
following,
I was so scared I couldn't stop swallowing,
The man tall and large finally reached me ...
My eyes slowly opened from the scary dream!

Travelers Who Seek

~John Belasic

Deep down in the forest green,
Something sat, never been seen,
Far in the desert, without any handler,
The thing sat, big and a rattler...

In the vast forest, homes of castle,
These homes for the ones who eat apples,
These people are travelers,
But anything from scavengers.

Seek for something more, they did,
For they sought adventure, which the law
forbid.
They sought the desert,
Where they would always need to be alert.

They left their homes with unease,
They left the village like a breeze.
They sought wisdom in the bog,
So, they go there and find the talking frog.

The frog, who lived in the bog, was wise.
He pointed in the direction, but all around there were eyes.
Their journey has started,
Their destination, uncharted.

Along they went; all were spent,
They traveled long and rested by a tent.
They went a long way, until they began to think,
They made it to the desert, and they began to sink.

They sank and they stank, in the sand that was quick,
They could not yank themselves out, for the sand was too thick.
They were swallowed by the sandy ground,
And just like that, they all had drowned.

The travelers felt stuck after they drowned,
Just to find out, there was a tunnel underground.
Extensively they searched, and they found some old bones,
It was so very clear, for they had fear, this place was for gravestones.



Deep in Muir Woods ~M. Papadopoulos

Next to the bones, the travelers sat with their moans,
They all heard a sound, nothing like their groans,
The way they had come, was scaled and jailed,
For it was revealed, the rattler unveiled.

The face-off started with a scream and a yelp,
The travelers realized they had no help.
The snake now lunged, with super-fast speed,
The travelers failed; the mission did not succeed.

Deep down in a forest green,
Something sat, never been seen,
Far in the desert, without any handler,
The thing sat, big and a rattler...



The Music Box
~Rohit Chakalakal

I was just a young boy, shouting with joy, running through the alleyway.
I was back from school, going to the pool, on such a wonderful day.
And that's when I heard, something so absurd, the sound of a music box coming through some rocks.
The sound was distorted; despite this, I courted the idea of taking it home in a box.

As I looked around, it was on the ground, snuggled between some blocks.
I stopped myself, saying, "Why trouble oneself?", who knows what's in the box.
So near the docks, I lifted the blocks, on that fateful day.
I closed my eyes and heard the twinkle; then opened them hearing a crinkle, I looked around,
but everything was gray.

I blinked twice as I heard the mice running in the grass.
I was in a camp, then I took a lamp and it looked like it was brass.
When I regained my awareness, I looked to see the bareness of what was once a lively field.
I walked toward a cave, knowing that this just might be my grave; I snuck around concealed.

As I walked through the eerie cavern, I tripped on an overgrown fern, then I realized where I was.
I walked into a dangerous den, full of bat-men, hanging from vines with one claw.
I started to explore and lit the lamp, that's when the air got damp, and soon I was unconscious.
When I woke up again, I realized that I trespassed in the wrong domain, the batmen were so obnoxious.

The creatures flew me up, and with a windup, threw me out of the cave.
As I landed outside the hole, it felt like I was in the North Pole as the cavern began to concave.
Once again, I blacked out, only to wake up to a snout being shoved in my face.
I seemed to be up North as a dog came forth, emerging out of the unlit fireplace.

The dog and I were in a log cabin that had a carpet of bearskin, in the middle of nowhere.
As we stepped outside, the world began to divide into a huge metal square.
Trapped in the square, we felt a wave of cold air washing over our backs.
We were enveloped in a storm as the winds slowly began to develop, while snow covered our tracks.

We pushed through the snow into a small little plow, so we could get ourselves out of peril.
I plowed my way out, up to a little water spout, but drinking from it just made me ill.
So the dog and I, we built a shelter, and we built it helter-skelter so we could light a fire.
No matter how much we tried, we nearly ended up fried, we couldn't escape this frozen empire.

I began planning my escape, but then I heard a screeching scrape, and music echoed through a crack.
We rushed toward it nearing the end, glad I had made a new friend, we hacked through the ice with a smack.
That's when I woke up, seeing a doctor sipping from a cup, next to my hospital bed.
He lifted a music box from inside the container with many locks and at that moment, I was filled with dread...

Paris Imperfections

~Amanda Gorrin

The day finally came as I was no longer tame, while packing for my trip to France.
The ride to the airport was definitely the sort that is boring as can be.
I looked at the sights through the bright sunlight from the window; I thought I
would prance.
When I got off the plane, I felt unchained as the trees smiled back at me.



I got to the tower which was filled with power and as beautiful as a daisy.
I went to the front and came to a stop when I realized- *I need to go to the top.*
A group went with me as nice as can be, and their white dog the opposite-lazy!
I stayed for a while and started to smile before I realized, this is where the trip would flop.

The elevator down made the leaves turn brown as we started to come to a halt.
I turned around and started to frown as I figured out that we were stuck!
We looked at each other and started to wonder if this mess was all of our faults.
Confused and scared, we all now cared if this happened from when lightning struck.

We waited for a while without a smile as the rest of us started to sweat.
The whirs and beeps that were on the street meant a fire truck was right up ahead.
The white wool wept from my neighbor's sweater vest as this problem was far from the best.
I started to cry as the ladder let out a sigh, but I just wanted to go to bed!

As I exited the lift, I started to shift towards the truck where I would be safe.
The ladder got lower whilst my breathing got slower; I finally began to relax.
We all got out and began to no longer pout for we no longer felt chafed.
I stared at the tower, when I felt sort of sour when I noticed a couple of cracks.

We thought it was nature and not us human creatures that destroyed that piece of fine art.
Our sulks turned down deeper than before as the sculpture started to drown.
The tower began to fall with no plan, to a lean with Italian heart.
Because of this madness that caused us great sadness, we knew we deserved no crown.

The tour guide replied without a single sigh- “Don’t worry, this tower is old.”
We all had to giggle as the art turned to a squiggle right before our eyes.
I laid on the ground when a single sound made my body run cold.
I got up and ran as I wasn’t a fan of this situation; I cannot lie.

Through the streets I went, my time was not well spent when black clouds filled the sky.
I hopped into a car and hoped to go far, but this was my very last chance.
People all ran away from the tower to pray that today, they wouldn’t die.
The tower started to fall and when I began to bawl, I finally woke up from my trance.



Photo ~Amanda Gorrin

The Cursed Carnival

~Tyler Ludwig

One night, I was in my room.
I had just done my work and wanted a treat.
“Into the kitchen I will go, and find something to eat.”
I walk out of the room, and head towards the kitchen.

I walk in, and look around.
But nothing to eat had been found.
I search every drawer and open every door.
But nothing to eat had been found, so I dropped to the ground.

I see an orange box behind some unwanted foodstuffs.
“Lo and behold the *Reeses Puffs!*”
I crack a smile, and stare at the box for a while.
Then, I take a bowl, and spoon. For I will be eating Reese’s Puffs soon.

When I sit at the table, I grab the box by the label and begin to pour.
But mid-pour I glance at the door.
A balloon was there, so I got out of my chair.
I walk to the balloon. But I stop for a second and stare.

I begin to question why the balloon was there.
After waiting becomes a bore, I slowly open the door.
The balloon is gone and I let out a yawn.
I begin back towards the door, but I spot balloons galore.

I rush back to go inside but the closed door forces me to explore.
The balloons rush past and pop all at once.
The scene was clear, and I closed my eyes with fear.
But when I opened them again, My house was nowhere near.

I’m in the fairgrounds and it looks so much fun.
I don’t see anyone. And I smell the food that makes me want to eat a ton.
The fair is fun, but I forgot how I got there.
I walk along and play some more.

I throw a dart into a balloon “POP!”
I pick out my plush Bart.
And as nightfall approaches I hear a noise like nails on cement.
A quiet scampering from inside the tent.

Curious and confused, I head towards the noise.
I headed towards the sound, and I couldn't believe what I had found.
A group of huge eight foot tall creatures.
They all had clown like features.

After being spotted I left with a flash and began to dash.
While running, I hurled trash and signs of all kinds.
Looking back I saw the area was clear.
I became too tired, and a rest was required.

Hiding behind a game stall I sat against the wall.
Hearing the thumping of footsteps coming my way.
I threw a ball at the creature too tall.
The creature didn't flinch, it didn't even budge an inch.

The monster got closer and swung back it's arms.
I felt only dread as the claws barely reached my chin.
I flung up on my bed, goosebumps all over my skin.
With a sigh of relief and a hand on my head, I lay back in bed and sleep again.

Winter's Storms

~Brandon Bliss

A snow shower inside,
Just open your eyes,
White ice water flying right in front of your eyes,
Piling up onto the warm, hot ground,
Until you could barely move your feet,
And the temperature drops lower than your voice can speak,
Animals panicking and quivering inside,
And surely you cannot believe your eyes!

The snow storm inside your house has just hit its peak,
And the snow is whistling and rushing faster than you can speak,
The snow slowly stocking up and filling your house,
Until you barely have enough room to shout,
You cannot move nor shout for help,
But you will for sure yelp for help!

The day is over and you barely get sleep,
To wake up with something strange cooling your feet,
the snow is clearly melted and not there,
until you unleash that there is now water there!

The panic and the terror in the house is back,
Until you realize you are under attack,
By the winds and the flooding impact,
Just like déjà vu,
It all happens all over again,
Another disaster in front of your eyes,
Just like the snow,
And you can barely understand the fact,
That this time it is happening all over again,
This time with a flooding attack!



Appalachian Trail ~P. McClair

Staff Bios

Madelyn Bello is 13 years old and is an 8th grader at PRHS. Outside of school she is a goalkeeper for her soccer team, and enjoys doing art and other clubs. She joined *Stepping Stones* because she has always been interested in reading and writing. She enjoys the freedom that you can have while writing, and hopes that readers enjoy all of the different stories and poems in this issue.

Amanda Gorrin is an 8th grader at PRHS. In her free time, she Irish dances, does theatre, women's choir, color guard, and many other clubs. She joined *Stepping Stones* because she had a blast last year. She hopes readers will like the themes of this issue.

Julia Krieger is a 13 year old in 7th grade at PRHS. She likes to do art, spend time with family and friends, read, write and many other things. She joined *Stepping Stones* because she enjoys how a writer can express their feelings and have freedom to write what they want to. She loves reading poetry because it conveys a message to the reader but in a fun way. Despite the closing of school, the *Stepping Stones* staff has spent countless conferences reviewing many submissions, and Julia hopes that the readers will appreciate that.

Krish Ramkumar is in the 8th grade and is 14 years old. He loves to play instruments, play video games, and do competition math. He joined *Stepping Stones* in order to extend his knowledge of poetry and what makes a good poem. He really enjoys provocative statements in poetry which really strike a chord in readers. He hopes readers really see the poetic intent in each poem and that they can see the work that has been put into the magazine.

Katia Rodionova is a 13 year old girl in 8th grade. She likes to draw, play volleyball and hang out with friends. She joined *Stepping Stones* in hopes of continuing her interest in poetry and writing. She enjoys poems about nature and art. She hopes that those who read this issue will understand the potential the middle school has for creating powerful poetry.

Disclaimer: The *Stepping Stones* staff are pleased to present this publication to their fellow students. The publication was created by students for students and is not meant to be a professional publication. All efforts were made to improve the product and catch all mistakes. The staff apologizes for any inaccuracies. As this is the only edition printed, any omissions or errors are purely accidental and are in no way intentional on the part of the staff, the advisor, or the printer.

