

CANUCKLING

2020



EVER
GROWING

VOLUME
65

CANUCKLING 2020

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VOLUME 65

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EVER GROWING

VOLUME 65

THE LITERARY-ART MAGAZINE

OF

NORTH PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

34 WILSON AVENUE

NORTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060

CANUCKLING

2020

AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION
FIRST PLACE WITH SPECIAL MERIT 2019

COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION
SILVER MEDALIST AWARD 2019



North Plainfield High School was founded in 1896. Its first graduating class boasted three students. Many residents of North Plainfield and the neighboring town of Plainfield had favored the merger of the two communities, an annexation idea paralleling United States-Canada theories in vogue at the time. With North Plainfield located just north of the brook, it was popular to refer to the community as “Little Canada.” Thus, high school students became known as the Canucks, and the school adopted a bearded lumberjack as its mascot.

The *Canuckling* magazine, though not quite as ancient as the school, was first published in 1955 in hardcover with Ms. Marie O’Brien as the General Adviser and Ms. Frieda T. Bockius as the Art Director. We are proud to be a part of this tradition, now celebrating our sixty-fifth anniversary year, as we graduate a class of approximately 200 bright, talented students.

(Photo by Kristyn Rosen.)

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Editors' Note: Due to the challenges this year with the global pandemic necessitating remote instruction, this issue was more of a challenge to complete. Thus, there are more pieces done by fewer writers, but we are proud to still present to you an issue that we feel represents our theme. We are ever growing as students, as citizens, and as people who recognize that life is also filled with the unexpected. So we must carry on striving to mature and make a difference in our world.

POLICY

Canuckling invites all students of North Plainfield High School students to submit original works of literature and art. Students may submit work to the English teachers or directly to the advisers throughout the school year. All submissions are catalogued and subsequently judged for content and form on an anonymous basis by the editorial staff. The staff meets on Thursdays to read and select submissions. Every effort has been made to ensure originality. Each student may submit as many pieces as he or she wishes. We ask that students place their name and grade on the back. Submissions may not be returned. It is the hope of the staff that the magazine is representative of the creative talent of North Plainfield High School.

COLOPHON

Canuckling 2020, the literary-art magazine of North Plainfield High School, was printed with a press run of 125 copies on 28# laser stock and bound by GMPC Printing of Clifton, NJ. The software used for the layout of the *Canuckling* is Microsoft Publisher. The font types used in this issue are Castellar and Times New Roman.

COVER

Kristine Olivares-Gonzalez, a senior, drew the illustration on the cover with pencil. The piece is titled, "Growing."

BLAST FROM THE PAST

From Canuckling 2010: *Collage of Dreams*

Everyone's a Critic

Katherine Barna

No one wants me to be myself,
Everyone tries to mold me into new.
I'm just like midnight,
Split between two different personalities.
I am night, sneaky and lying,
hiding what is real in my darkness.
Then I am day, cheerful and perfect
Oblivious to the true reality around me.
Fighting with each personality,
Everyone acts like I am so great,
'til I turn around and they admit what they think.
There is no middle for me.
Some think I am easy, like a first grade math question
or that I smoke, just as a chimney on a house.
They judge by what they want to see,
Never looking beyond my makeup and clothes.
No...I am a simple girl learning,
learning that not everyone is nice,
that everyone judges on appearance.
Everyone lies so they don't hurt someone
or so they do.
And these lies build who I am,
The self-critical little girl.

A TRIBUTE



Deanne M. D'Armiento
April 27, 1969—February 2, 2020

This year we lost a beloved teacher and coach. Deanne D'Armento was raised in North Plainfield, New Jersey. After receiving her bachelor's degree and master's degree in Education, she returned to North Plainfield in 1994 to teach in the middle school. She also coached high school track and field over 25 years, and coached girls' basketball and girls' tennis, as well as being a staff member of the varsity football team. She was much admired by students and staff. Included here are tributes to this resilient soul by colleagues and family members. Rest in peace.

Memories from colleagues:

Deanne D'Armiento represented a hard work ethic and kindness. She selflessly had perfect attendance each year to ensure she was dedicated to helping others, whether it was with her role of being a teacher, coach, or a supportive co-worker. Deanne would help out with our football team and tutor athletes to assist team members with the NCAA requirements. She would spend countless hours helping our district with the master schedule and she supported staff members by being an active member of our union. Deanne would bring in snacks to the counseling office and if she saw there was a need for something she would do for others. She knew our department needed a container for utensils so she went out and got a container for the counseling office. It was the simple small acts of kindness that went unnoticed. She would bring in pencils and notebooks for her students and she would always leave the extras for our office. Working hard no matter at school or outside of school at a job and showing random acts of kindness is how we can all keep Ms. D'Armiento legacy alive. - Joelle Bruno, Guidance Counselor

Sometimes you meet someone at school who becomes a friend for life. I was blessed to be Ms. D'Armiento's friend for 25 years. The Ms. D'Armiento I knew played softball, ran marathons, and LOVED chocolate (especially M&M's). She collected Snowbabies, and anything from Peanuts or Winnie-the-Pooh made her smile. She liked to go to New York Mets games and the U.S. Open. She enjoyed crocheting (she was usually making a gift for someone) and solving Sudoku puzzles. She also ran the clock at basketball games (and would crochet and solve Sudoku puzzles during timeouts and/or halftime). Her favorite things in life were teaching and coaching, and she treasured her students, her friends, and especially her family. She had a wonderful laugh, an adorable happy clap, and would often say more with her incredibly expressive eyes than with her words. Our friendship here on Earth ended much too soon, but I will treasure the memories we made together, forever. -Patricia Lukacs, Mathematics teacher



With Patricia Lukacs and student



In 2019 with (L-R): Kristen Ebbrecht, Jennifer Riolo, Carrie Johnson, Sabina Astafovic, and Matthew Iannucci

A TRIBUTE—CONTINUED

Poems from family (from Memorial Service held at The Church of St. Luke, North Plainfield, NJ)

Aunt Deanne's Poem

The last time we read one of these was in 2010,
And it's safe to say a lot has happened since then
Graduations, jobs, engagements and more;
Our family is never a bore.

While we were unsure where to start,
We figured we could speak from the heart.
If she knew all of you were here for her, she'd be in disbelief,
But we promise you, Aunt Deanne, this poem will be brief.

Aunt Deanne was a daughter, sister, aunt, godmother, and friend,
A teacher and coach—her impact will never end.
Here are some tidbits to share—
Proving the memories we have will always be there.

Some of us caused a lot of trouble—
Without her help, the punishment would've been double.
Spending time with Aunt Deanne was always a must;
She cared for each person she knew and was the person you could forever trust.

She would be our support in the stands—
Proving to us she was one of our biggest fans.
The sunrises in OBX brought a smile to her face,
But the company we had is what cannot be replaced.

Her goddaughter's wedding day was held close to her heart, she would always make a point to say,
We know that her spirit will not be far away.
A teacher not only in the classroom, but in life too, you see,
Some of her nieces and nephews had the pleasure of seeing her each day, filling her with glee.

She showed us unconditional love there was no doubt—
Being together, making memories was what it's about.
Her heart was loving, strong and pure—
Always fighting in hope for a cure.

Her motivation came from her loved ones and she always sought improvement;
Hoping she could be in the classroom once again with all her students.
A coach at heart, she gave it her all;
The most coachable patient, the doctors were in awe.

We will miss your smile and presence, although it goes without saying.
The difference you have made is displaying.
Our world will never be the same as a part of our hearts will be missing.
We will always spend time together, sharing and reminiscing.

As a wise bear once said: "If there ever comes a time we can't be together,
Keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever."

Love Your Babydoll, Munchkie, Bestie, and the boys

Eulogy to the Scaffold

When we conceive of the family—
Picture its form and its essence—
We immediately draw the scaffold

A scaffold built, as traditions are sown
Steady they rise
But over them tower the skyscrapers, raw material,
plants of roots

The scaffold is where we stand to build our lives
It is the foundation
The “solid rock” of our houses

But never is it built on a whim,
Though it may seem as you rush below, shaded sidewalks,
It is carefully constructed, with purpose and with care

My aunt was the architect

Not of projects we built
But of the support, the insurance,
The base from which we gathered the earth

In fact we were free to build as we pleased

When the structure of the scaffold falls
And slowly its inspiration fades
The support is left, though unguided

She was the quiet planner

It will take years, perhaps decades, before the scaffold unalterably shifts
Though even then you will see
Its solid heart still speak to you, in pressing times

I tell you, her loss will not be felt soon

When you realize the steady change
That morphs the scaffold
Only then you will truly comprehend the architect

She was the scaffold, the structure, for the lives of so many children

Children who build take the scaffold for granted
But they may only build in the image of its conception
For it is all they know of

She made everything I know to be family

Now we build alone, and mindlessly
Striving to have her vision back
Till our failure finally shows us how much we have really lost

So sacred was she, who was reserved for time to tell her loss

Kavin Chada



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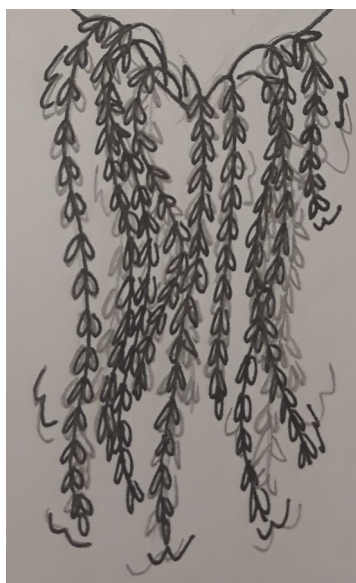




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ICARUS IN THE SUN



“Everything She Touches”

by Kristine Olivares-Gonzalez

(Digital Photography)

chrysalism

a.a.

quiet protection
wrapped up in bliss

warmth indoors
mother nature is sobbing outside
i melt away
fading in and out of rest

liabilities pushed aside
liabilities in my mind

the fire burning
the magpies call for you
get home safe

Wonderland Away from Inhumane

Amaya Nicole Shallo

Hey You! wake up to the sound of airplanes
falling asleep to the tune of train tracks
hearing the dog barking stuck to her chain

chewing enjoying a big loaf of grain
visiting the memories from knickknacks
Hey You! wake up to the sound of airplanes

tons of thoughts making music in the brain
the gorgeous smell of melting candle wax
hearing the dog barking stuck to her chain

seeing all the adults drinking champagne
the sky the lovely color of pitch black
Hey You! wake up to the sound of airplanes

now let's have fun tearing books into scraps
the sound of chewing on a favorite snack
hearing the dog barking stuck to her chain

or toss some paper airplanes in the rain
come to my wonderland where it be wack
Hey You! wake up to the sound of airplanes
let's escape this world of inhumane



“Gazing at Wonderland”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo
(Digital Art)

Full Moon

Jonnathan Josias

Sitting on a bench
I was all alone
After that fateful day
When we went our separate ways

I miss you more and more
As time moves on
Things won't ever be the same if you don't ever come back

With all these days that passed
I thought that the pain would lessen
But I still miss you like I did yesterday

How are you doing
I don't know
We have not spoken in ages
All I want to do
Is speak to you again

One day I wish
One day I wish
That we will be able to speak
Like we used to
When you were here

One day maybe
One day maybe
We will be able to speak again
Like we used to
A long time ago

Whenever I spent time with you
Time would always move faster
But now that you are gone
Time seems to move slower

Even though we argued sometimes
We were always able to make up
Because we truly cared for one another

Hopefully we
Hopefully we
Will be able to discover
The full moon that
Shines so bright

So that we can
So that we can
Lie side by side under the full moon
Like we used to
Many years ago

Many days and nights have passed by
Since you moved away

The only thing I want is
Simply to speak to you

Sure I have many other friends but
There is no doubt
That I want to
See you more than anything else

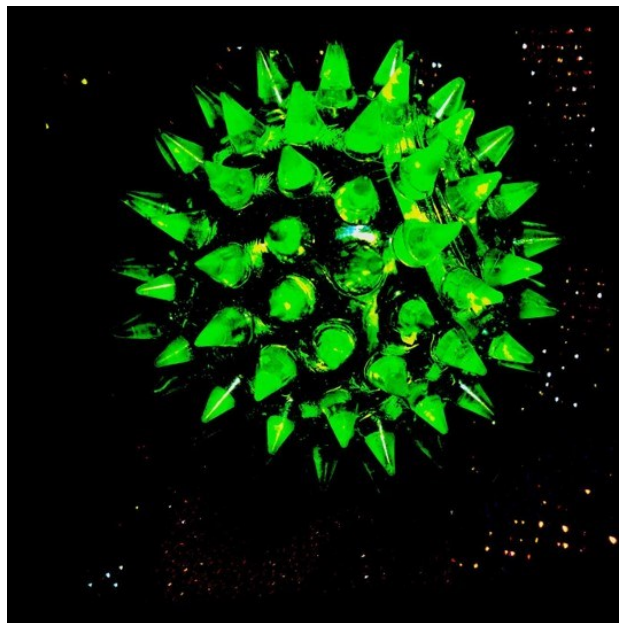
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One day I wish
One day I wish
That we will speak to each other
Like we used to when you were here

One day maybe
One day maybe
We will be able to speak
Like we used to

Hopefully we
Hopefully we
Will be able to discover
The full moon that
Shines so bright

So that we can
So that we can
Lie side by side under the full moon
Like we used to
Many years ago



“Dreaming of Light”
by Amaya Nicole Shallo
(Digital Photo)

Light

Ashley Dawsey

The angry sky swallowed the sun
Heavy winds are blowing
All the shining stars have weakened
Slowly fright is growing

Below no streetlights are showing
No kids are out running
There is no one barbecuing
Silence is deafening

The dark mammoth clouds full of fright
No one willing to fight
Evil is overpowering
The Earth will go down light

With glee a hero will emerge
Full hearted he will light
And defeat the ghosts in the night
A town that was once bright

This hero was not strong and wild
He was feeble and old
And he couldn't run a mile
But he was very bold

And kind to those he did not know
To help our big world go
And he was never defeated
Because his heart was gold

I Love You

Juliana Damonvil

Anna walked into the furniture store promising herself that she would exit with only one item. As a female she knew she would not be able to promise herself that. She walked in, looked around for a few and already had two items she wanted, a lamp and a furry white ottoman. She sat down a little and was checking her bank account before even thinking about cashing out. As she was checking her account, she noticed a handsome black man. He looked about 6'2 and had muscle. Anna was now starstruck and she didn't even care about her bank account status. She walked over to where he was, which was by the beds. She casually, but not so casually, dropped her lip gloss, keys and phone near him. She expected in her mind for him to pick those things up for her and maybe just like the movies, they'd look each other in the eyes and fall for each other.

"Hmm," Anna said under her breath while picking up her things.

"I'm sorry, did I miss something?" said the black man.

"Oh not at all, carry on."

"Do I happen to know you from somewhere?"

"No, I don't think so," Anna replied with a face of confusion.

"Oh sorry about that, you just reminded me of someone."

Anna thought to herself what the heck, there's none like me.

"I'm being rude, my name is Trenton, and what is yours, may I ask?"

"Anna is my name," she shook Trenton's hand while smiling.

"You have a beautiful smile, has anyone ever told you that?"

"Yes, I get that a lot actually."

"I'm not surprised."

"Yeah, well it was nice meeting you, Trenton."

"Uhn Uhn, excuse me miss, I saw you from across the room and I got to admit that you got my attention."

Anna knew exactly where that line came from because it was by her favorite artist, Chris Brown.

"Oh is that so, Mr. Trenton?" Anna laughed.

"Yes, now would you mind if I got your number?"

"No not at all."

Anna and Trenton exchanged numbers and went their separate ways. As soon as Anna got home, Trenton told her to text him to make sure she was safe. They talked all night and since neither of them had work the next day, it didn't matter so they decided to schedule a meet up at a nearby cafe. They talked about themselves and their professions, passions and hobbies.

Their conversation just flowed like honey.

It has been nine months since Anna and Trenton have made it official that they were a couple. They were madly in love with each other and they did everything together. By then they already discussed marriage, all Anna was doing was waiting eagerly for a proposal.

By December 31, Trenton had made multiple arrangements to propose to Anna. He rented a fancy restaurant in California and flew all her family members out. He had someone playing the violin for her and multiple drawings of her as well. It was all just so perfectly planned out for a perfect girl.

Just as he thought that everything would go as planned for the night Trenton received a call around 1 p.m. that he thought would change his life forever. He received a call from Anna's best friend, Beatrice saying that Anna was involved in a horrible car accident and she was being rushed to a nearby hospital. Trenton's heart skipped a beat, and he just froze right where he was and forgot everything. After a couple minutes he stood up, grabbed his keys and ran out of the house and to the hospital. While driving he was praying that Anna would be okay and not in critical condition.

"Hi, I'm looking for Anna Grant."

"Hello sir, if you would wait in the visiting lobby, she has been rushed to surgery and will hopefully be out soon."

"Surgery, my lord," he said while in a squatting position.

Trenton went to sit down and was deeply thinking almost as if he was in a trance. A light bulb went off in his head and he forgot to call the restaurant, violinist and everyone that he won't be able to make it. He thought twice and realized why not bring them to the hospital? That's exactly what he did.

Anna came out of surgery around 5 p.m. and that was a perfect time. She woke up around 7 and was in so much shock as to what happened. Trenton was allowed in to see her along with Anna's parents. Trenton told her that he had a surprise set up for her later, but since the accident happened he had to bring it to her.

He cued the violinist to come in playing "Love" by Keyshia Cole, one of her favorite songs. Then came along her best friend with the flowers. Next her mother and father brought in the drawings of her and lastly Trenton came in with a huge teddy bear holding a sign saying "will you marry me?"

"Anna, baby ever since I saw you in the furniture store trying to be slick and pretending to drop something, I knew you were the one," Trenton said.

"Oh, so you did see me drop my things," Anna shook her head.

"Yes, and that's why I couldn't let you go. You are the sunshine to my rain, my best friend, my lover, my everything, and I don't know what I would do without you."

continued next page

Trenton bent down on one knee and pulled out a medium sized diamond ring.

“Will you marry me, Anna Grace Grant?”

“Come here, yes, yes, yes a thousand times yes, I love you so much.”

They stayed hugging for the longest time and wouldn’t let go.

“I can’t wait to say ‘I do’ on our wedding day,” Anna said.

“Try to stay in one piece,” Trenton said.

“Hey!” Anna said, punching him.

“Too soon, too soon. I love you, baby.”

“I love you more,” Anna said while pulling him close on the hospital bed.

boy of the dunes

a.a.

half buried in the morning light
bits and pieces poke out
like an intricate landscape of flesh

you’ve gone for a walk
and i wonder when you’ll be back
but when you do
when you find me drained and confused
will you heal me?



“On the Path”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

MEMORIES



“Timeless”

by Johan Restrepo
(Digital Photo)

Lose You to Love Me

Glinka Jimenez-Reyes

Sometimes I can't help but wonder, if I hadn't taken the first step, would you have made the first step? That's a question that I have the answer to, but probably not. Tears didn't bring you back. My love for you wasn't enough to make you stay, and me fighting for you and being on your side when things started to get bumpy, wasn't enough for you to love me back. You said you loved me. I wonder where that went to. But I guess I knew it all along. I always had that gut feeling that one day you would leave me just the way I expected you to leave me. A text said you no longer wanted to talk to me because some of my friends talked about you and me and that you trusted me. So what did you want me to do? Keep it a secret? Didn't you say that you were not afraid of what people would talk about us? What happened to that?

It all started as usual, as strangers who didn't know of each other's existence. I wasn't into you from the beginning. I had someone else in mind. But then I found out he was one of my cousin's boyfriends and I had to let it go, because I wasn't going to fight my cousin over some dude. And then I thought that you and the sister from the church that you had a reunion with were together, since you two looked cute next to each other. I felt pretty lonely there, since I didn't have the girls in the other reunion to talk to. So it was evident that being quiet was kind of hard, because I had to listen to the conversations around me. To which, I found it entertaining listening to the stories of the brothers and sisters. It was as if I could relate, and I was intrigued to listen eagerly. I found myself listening to their stories and being fascinated by how they described their stories.

At some point, my mother started to talk about you on Christmas day in the year 2018. My mother and her daughter-in-law, as well as my sister-in-law's daughter, started to talk about possible boyfriends for me in church, as well as me marrying one of their nephews since they're my step-family and we're not blood-related. You were mentioned, someone else from the church was mentioned, and two other boys were mentioned. I felt kind of pressured at some point in the conversation because I wasn't planning on having a boyfriend any time soon. I wanted to go to the Marines, and then plan to have some time without a boyfriend and just enjoy the single life before I started to settle down. I never thought that my family was worried about my future. I mean sure, I was worried about my own future as well, but I didn't want to dwell on it for too long, so I kind of put it aside. After all, it wasn't my timing; it was God's timing. And I regret not waiting for it. And I think that's when I started to think a little more about you in a romantic way, instead of "he's just another brother from the church" or "he is very nice and humble and I hope that God gives him a good wife."

And then, I started to notice you. I always wondered why you never squeezed my hand like the other brothers from church did, so for a long time, you have been unconsciously in my mind. I cannot even point out what made me fall for you, but the passion that you preached about God's plans for every one of us, our purpose of life, the way that God works, how we should be better people and how to forgive to be forgiven. Or I don't know if it was your smile,

continued next page

your laughter, your eyes, your soft hands, your ears that stick out... I really wouldn't know which of those were. But I fell hard for you once I started to notice you. At some point, I texted you because my mother was in such great pain and I was desperate for her to feel better. I cried a few times because I felt useless no matter what I did to make her feel better. And you said that you were gonna pray for her, and asked who was the one texting you. I really didn't want to be the first one to text you, I only got your phone number because my mother had it, and I kind of took it from her without her knowledge. Sure, I itched to text you, but then I stopped myself because I didn't know if I would be harassing you.

And the more we texted the more we talked, I got to know you a little better and things were going right. Then my feelings for you got stronger, and I couldn't help but fall deeply in love with you. And one day, before the 4th of July of 2019, I heard my parents and you make plans over the phone for that day since no one was going to be working. I felt excited and looking forward to that day. My mother bought a lot of meat and chicken and a lot of other things to season meat and chicken. Two days before July 4th, we seasoned the meat and chicken, and my mother jokingly approached me since she knew very well that I liked you.

"We're going to the Tomahawk Lake with your boyfriend," she teased.

I couldn't help but blush, even though you hadn't asked me to be your girlfriend. I blushed, "I know, right?"

Two days later, we woke up a little late, and I rushed to get ready since I knew that you were coming to our apartment to have breakfast with us. I looked like a hot mess. I don't even know what you thought about me since my hair wasn't even done, and I was a nervous wreck. I couldn't even look at you, because I couldn't help but smile like an idiot. My stomach was doing flips, what the heck, was this the butterflies that people spoke of? All I knew was that I was a blushing mess, and that every time I caught you looking at me, I couldn't help but be overly self-conscious and often asked myself, "Do I look okay?" or "Is there something wrong with my face or outfit?" I really couldn't help but just overthink and worry about my appearance and what I was doing. It wasn't the first time you were in our apartment; it was the second time actually.

My parents had no clue I was talking to you over the phone. They were really clueless about our conversations and our feelings towards one another, even though they both knew I liked you and that I had an interest in you. They didn't know that I was deeply in love with you.

When breakfast was done, we went to my mother's car and both of us sat in the back of the car. We drove to CVS and my father went to pick up some ice from there. My mother was growing impatient since she was the one driving, so she asked me to get down and look for my dad. I really didn't want to get out of the car. I wanted to be there with you. But I didn't want to be a rebel, so I obediently got off and luckily, my father was already checking out the ice, and I happily went back to the car.

"He's coming," I told her.

You smiled and I couldn't help but smile wider and feel blissful by just having you right there beside me. My dad put the ice bags in the back and we drove to 7 Eleven to meet with the brother and sister of the church who knew how to get to Tomahawk Lake. Sometimes I

sneaked glances over at you and you'd catch me looking at you. I can remember my face hurting from smiling so much. It was all like a dream, my parents were chill with you, I was bursting in fireworks, and I was endlessly joyful. It was all finally coming true, little by little, and finally my dream of being with you was coming true. Everything was going perfectly well.

At some point, we played with our hands. I wanted to grab your hand and hold it, but you didn't let me. I was getting a little frustrated because I wanted to hold it. I wanted to see if you had scars in your hands as mine did. I wanted to trace every line that your hands had. I wanted to cherish every little flaw about you, and I honestly found them beautiful once I did find them. At some point, I firmly grabbed your hand and not let you tease me by caressing our hands together. I grabbed it and scanned it. I felt happy because I finally got a hold of your hand and scanned it, finding scars like mine and silently asked you about a little fine line that I found in your inner forearm. I asked you where you hurt yourself there.

"I don't know. I don't even notice where I get them and I don't even know how I got it," you whispered silently.

I felt my heart hurt a little, and I was more than determined to never let anything nor anyone hurt you, even if you didn't notice it yourself. But I proposed that I would take care of you and your heart, so that you won't ever have to be hurt anymore. I kissed your knuckles. I kissed the scars that I found in your left hand. I kissed the back of your hand, and you kissed mine. I smiled sadly, for how long have you been hurting and for how long have I not been noticing it myself? I knew you were hurt, hiding it behind the smile you often showed me, but I had no idea of the pain I saw in your eyes. Those eyes that I still adore to this day, hid the most painful memories that I didn't force you to tell me. But I could only imagine how hard it must have been for you. And my love for your flaws and every bit of your whole being started growing more than I intended to. I never found reasons to hate you. I only found reasons to love you.

Those long minutes of staring at each other and lightly smiling at each other felt like minutes. They felt so short, and I really wanted them to last. When we did arrive, we unpacked and put stuff in tables to reserve them for ourselves and the brothers and sisters of the church that would come with us. After we settled down, I asked my mother if I could change into my swimming suit, to which she said yes and I went to change.

I remember I looked at myself in the mirror and hated who I saw in the mirror. I wondered, "How can he love someone like me?"

To me, I looked hideous with the pimple scars on my face and the dark spots on my skin. I felt disgusted at myself. I then started to wonder why you even liked me. But that 4th of July you said something that I really ignored.

"I want to fall in love with you, because I know that you love me."

Now that I look back at it, you never really meant it when you said that you loved me, right? You never meant all those words. You loved the attention I gave you, how important I made you feel, and how I never failed to show you that I loved you. All those kisses, all those hugs, all the flirting, all the calls, all the texts, from beginning to end, it was all just to lead me on, right?

continued next page

That's why it was so easy for you to let go of me when someone told you that one of my friends was talking about the text messages that I showed them in a screenshot. you told me you didn't care what people said, so why did it matter that someone who I trusted my secret with leaked it out? You never really planned to stay with me, right? Even after everything that I had to go through just to stay by your side, you never really loved me. It was all infatuation. You thought I was perfect. I knew that you weren't perfect and I still loved you. Now that I think about it clearly, I chose you over myself. I chose to love you more than I ever loved anyone else and even myself. And that was my mistake. I gave you all my love believing that one day you would love me back, and I thought you loved me back. I thought that every time you told me that you loved me and you called me by those cute nicknames that you finally had fallen in love with me. But thank you for showing me your true colors. I will never make someone a priority when I'm only their choice.

Thank you for replacing me in two weeks after our "breakup." It showed me who loved more and who didn't love at all. You have no idea how worthless you made me feel. All those months soaking my pillow with tears meant nothing to you. You slept well meanwhile I lost sleep and cried myself to sleep. Even though we were not boyfriend and girlfriend, we almost were, and what killed me was how replaceable I was to you. And you know what? Although I don't hate you for what you made me go through, I will never let anyone in so close. You made me realize that no matter how real you are with someone, how much you showed them that you loved them, they can walk away as if you meant nothing to them.

So after I lost you, I found myself. I found the broken little girl I should have cherished more than your cheap love. I had to lose you to love myself. And Selena Gomez really did an amazing job describing it in one song. All the humiliation I suffered because I loved you from my parents was worthless. I wish I could go back and just not have texted you on that day no matter how bad my stepmother felt that day. I regret letting you feed me lies.



"Seeing through the Lies"

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

Liars Are Cowards in Disguise

Amaya Nicole Shallo

their eyes are lying
their words are lying
to them lying is satisfying
to them lying should be horrifying
to them it is putting a false suit on
not a false perception as small as a mask
not as humongous as the universe surrounding us
not a simple task to unmask their suit
did your mama ever tell you lying wasn't cute?
don't ya know nobody loves a menace
they aren't human
they aren't beast
they are cowards
karma will have its feast
cowards decreased by every hour



“Empty Cover”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

Super Secret
Kristine Olivares-Gonzalez

My eyes are shut
And there's a feeling in my gut to keep them closed
I don't listen
And there you are
Your dark eyes suck me in like black holes once more
And...
Wait
Who is she?
She's standing on ground that once was reserved for me
I taste poison at the thought of your lips touching hers
I'm speaking with the rage of a thousand suns
I'm sorry
For spilling my boiled blood on the page
But the thought of your hands reaching for her make me burn
That in my rage the world becomes flammable
Even girls with paper complexions
The world around me is on fire
And
I'm sorry
You may have never been mine
but for a moment I was yours

Time Well Spent

Adam Stevens

Moments

Feels like we're living our lives in past tense
Under the false notion and pretense
That we're spending our time wisely,
And though we might be,
We never really know until it's too late.

And though we might try to escape our habits,
We know we can't cause we're mad as rabbits,
Puttin' our eggs all in one basket,
Makin' Easter a 'lil more tragic.

But we don't need magic to pull ourselves out of hats,
We can change our reality, just not the facts.
But we don't need to look back at what everything meant,
Cause as long as you're happy it was time well spent.
You don't need to be stressed over every event,
Cause as long as you're happy it was time well spent.

I don't mean to kill the fun,
But it's easier said than done,
To keep your life in line with a clock or a stopwatch.
To keep a routine in tip top tick tock shape
Is hard to run on the clocks that your grandfather's made
Back in their old school clockwork ways.

Oh please, their clocks were cuckoo,
It's all about the dream and routine that you choose.
Since now that you're grown,
You're time's own,
So spend it how you want,
But just not alone.

chemo's hymn

a.a.

father, they're broken
pour your grace inside

mother, she's suffering
see her little light
see it's alive

injected and fried
day in, day out
loud whirring sterility
inside and out

help her through the mist
take her hand
bring her back to us

it's back again



“Waiting in the Shadows”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)



“Growing”

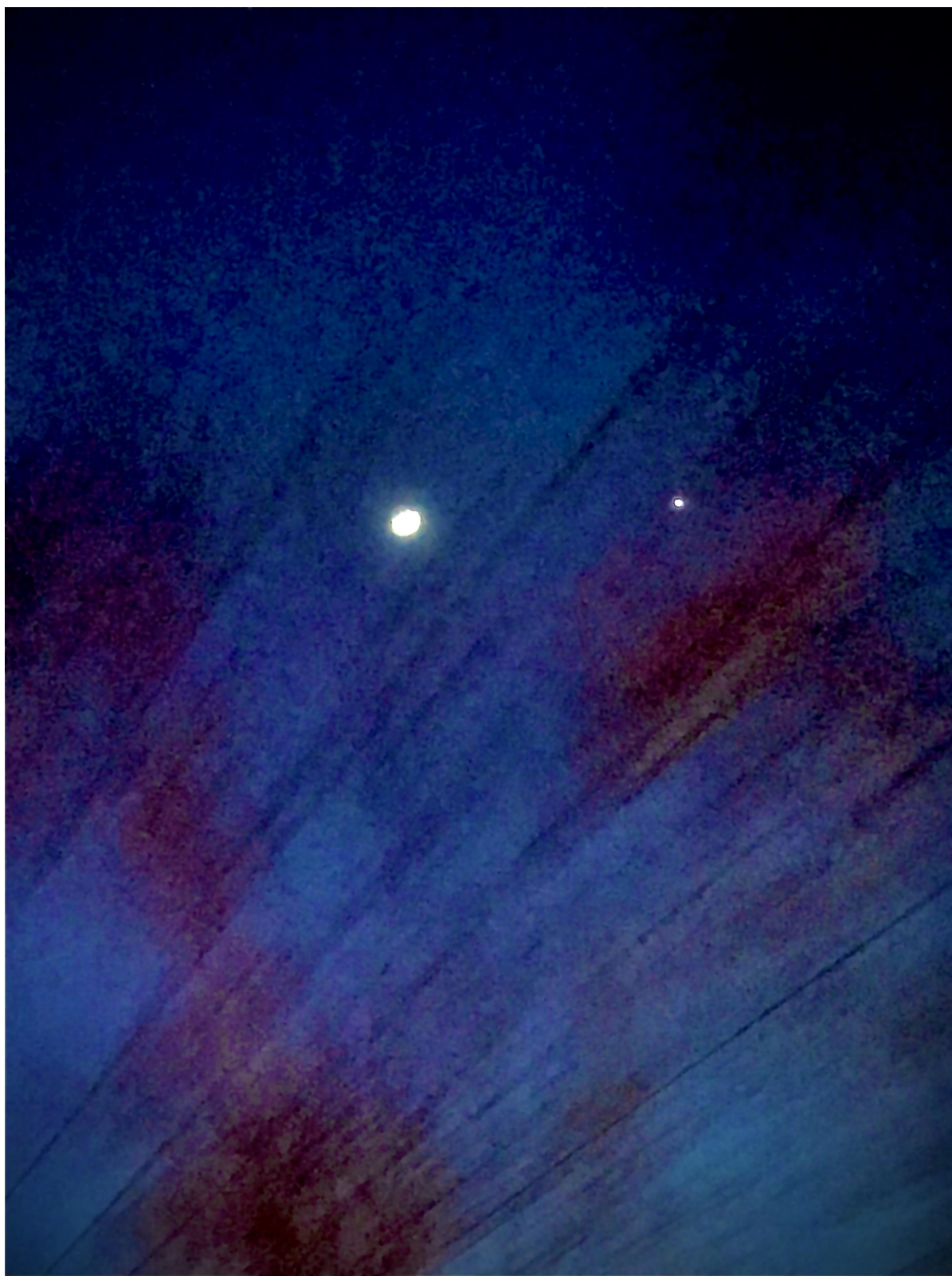
By Johan Restrepo

(Pencil Drawing)

WING



IN TONGUES



“Language of the Moon” by Maria Williams-Guardado
(Digital Photo)

the trees hate us

a.a.

9:44 p.m.

home alone

wrap me in you

sigh

i'm covered in brambles

thorns pricking my skin

twigs breaking under us

as the cicadas sing aloud

take my hand

down by the water

i'll wade through the murk

trying to find you

Survive until Then

Jonnathan Josias

Living through each day lying in a crying mess
Surrounded by only my loneliness
But no one will ever notice

Depression attacks me
When it knows I'm weakest
But I am never at my best
I just have not tapped into it

With no one to support me
I just start to fade away
The me I want to be is not near the me I am currently

I'm in an eternal slump
And I will not get back up
Until I see
What is it that I can be

Now all I need to do is clean up my mess
With it there I'll never be at my best
I have to begin to see what I can be

I can't just throw my life away
I have to live until the very last day
Then say I was able to make it

Life will try to put me through eternal suffering
Try to make me hate it till the end
I wonder if I'll last until then

Bravery may be able to bring me to victory
But do I really have any
Or is it just for show

Bad thoughts constantly chase me
And try to outpace me
They try to prove that they really have power over me

Lots of people detest me
I'm not sure how many like me
But I will show
That I'm still under control

I notice lots of people out there hate me
But that does not show who I'm supposed to be
I know there's at least one person who loves me

I cannot fill my life with scars
Because the future is not really far
I know that it's waiting out there for me

I just have to survive until then



“Scars on Cars”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo
(Digital Photo)

The Power of Decisions

Fatima Ramos Mateus

Every undocumented family always sees situations where families get divided while trying to come into the United States. However, nobody ever expects this to happen to them and their families. Especially when they are doing it without them having a clue of what's happening. This is the case of the Ramirez family. The Ramirez family was a family who had come to the United States from Spain in search of new opportunities, like most immigrants. Lisa and Hector were the parents of two beautiful children, Lupe and Jose. Lupe was 9 and Jose was 13 when they first came. The family was originally from Colombia, but had migrated to Spain in search of a cure for his son. Seven months after Jose was born, he was diagnosed with hemophilia.

Hemophilia is a medical condition in which the ability of the blood to clot is severely reduced, causing the sufferer to bleed profusely from even a slight injury. Lisa and Hector were paying for treatments to help Jose every two weeks, but these treatments were really expensive back then and they weren't working. The nurses told Lisa that she could either keep going with the treatment that wasn't working or stop the treatment. They told Lisa that they couldn't do anything else for him and that he eventually would die. This lasted for about a year. Realizing all of this, Lisa and Hector decided to move to Spain, since they saw that they were prioritizing and giving free healthcare to children.

At first, it was hard for them since they didn't have any relatives. Everything was new to them and they had to start from the bottom. After a couple of treatments, they started seeing a change in Jose. Lisa and Hector were really happy and started building their home. They had Lupe a few years later. After about five years with this treatment, Jose finally was cured and was a healthy kid. Lisa and Hector were really happy. They got their apartment, their car, and had two well-paid jobs. Everything was going great until after about twelve years of living in Spain, they got fired from their jobs. Lisa started working as a cleaning lady in a house, and Hector worked in different unstable jobs.

Every month, he had a new job for almost a year. Most people in Spain did not have a job, especially men. The government would send those people to study so they could try to find a job. But Hector couldn't find any. For a while, Lisa would work two jobs almost every day and sometimes even work in different places to support their family. In those other jobs, Hector would help her clean. Hector was mad because he thought that this wasn't fair for his wife. Hector left for Brussels to see if they had any jobs there, but he wasn't lucky. He then went to the United States in search of a job. He had cousins there so they would help him find one. He was there for about a month and seeing he had opportunities there, he went back to Spain to get his family. Lisa wasn't a fan of going to the United States and not going back to Spain. They even bought plane tickets for all his family. Hector had to convince Lisa to come, so he showed her the plane tickets and told her they were going to come back. He knew this wasn't going to happen, but for Lisa to agree to go, he had to lie to her. Lisa agreed to go, and just a month before their trip, she found out he had lied to her. She was furious at him. Then they had to sell everything they had to get some money. They sold their apartment, which they had worked for and remodeled for a price less than what they had bought it for. They also sold their brand new car, which only had about three years of use. Everything that they had worked for they had left to go and get some money.

When they landed at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, Hector's cousin Willy picked them up and took them to his house. Hector and Lisa slept in the basement that had one small bed, and Lupe and Jose had gone to sleep with Willie's kids on a bunk bed. This situation was for a couple of

months. Later, when they were economically stable, they rented an apartment and put the kids in school. A few years passed by, and by the time they realized it, Jose was already graduating. Jose knew he wanted to go to college, but he didn't know if he could since he was undocumented. They consulted an immigration lawyer who told them they had to send Jose back to Spain so he could get a student visa and come back to study. They said that everything would go fine and that Jose would be back in about less than a month. They believed him, but Lisa decided to consult another lawyer to see if this plan would work. All the other lawyers they went to told them this wouldn't be a good plan.

They began to have many doubts, but in an urge to get Jose in college, Hector signed the contract they made with the lawyer to make this plan work, without consulting and coming to an agreement with Lisa. She was tired of Hector never discussing with her important decisions like this one, but there wasn't anything she could do regarding it. They decided to keep going with the plan since the money wasn't refundable. They got everything ready, and it was time to go.

Jose was scared since it was the first time he was flying solo, but he also wanted to go back to his home country and see his friends again. The Ramirez family went to the airport along with some other relatives to say goodbye to Jose, but his cousin who was on the way came late and made Jose miss his plane. They got another plane ticket for the next day, still not realizing what they were doing and reevaluating their decision. The second time, Jose was calmer, but his parents couldn't make it to the airport since they had work and this made him upset.

Days passed by, and Jose had to go to the embassy of the United States in Spain to see if they could give him the visa to come to the U.S. to study. Nobody of the relatives he lived with went with him. He went alone and had to figure things out by himself. He was new to this whole thing, and he didn't know what to expect. The lawyers had not prepared him on what to say nor contacted him on what he should bring. After long hours of waiting, it was finally Jose's time to meet with the person. He walked in really scared. What if it doesn't work out? Am I going to be stuck here by myself? Jose thought to himself. The lady had asked questions that Jose didn't know how to answer. After meeting with her, the lady concluded not to give Jose the visa. This news for Jose hit him hard. He wouldn't be able to see his family for ten years. He had just turned 18 and was in a country that had no one he could rely on. Time went by, and Jose started working and realized that if he wasn't going to be able to study in the U.S., that wouldn't stop him from following a career and doing what he wanted to do. He began studying in one of the best colleges in Madrid. He also had a beautiful son named Thiago that looked just like him. He continued to have communication with his family and didn't let anything stop him from following his dreams.

Jose was forced to mature in a country that had nobody he could trust nor rely on. Every major holiday like Christmas or New Year's, he would get emotional since it's one more year without hugging or being able to see his family. Now, as the new year comes, his biggest wish is to reunite with his family at least one more time. His family misses him so much and sometimes blame themselves for not listening to the opinion of other lawyers. Like Jose, many undocumented families face this when they separate them from their families. They never know if there's going to be a next time the family will see them or not. Especially if the cause of this is a poor decision they had made, like Hector and Lisa had done. Today, Jose is hopeful that one day, he will be able to travel to the United States and tell his family how much he has missed them.

Never Got to Say

Kristine Olivares-Gonzalez

I'm petrified
I have this dam in my throat
That prevents the words from coming out
Building up
More
And
More
Till the ball cracks with the pressure
The words won't stop coming out
They flow and fall like waterfalls
Out my mouth
Till the room begins to flood
And oh dear
My words swarm around me
Squeezing out my breath
I'm trapped
Drowning in the words
I never got to say



“Pipe Dreams”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

Right This Moment

Jonnathan Josias

Walking down this path that we call life
I want to see what is it that I can be
But I'm held back by all of the fear in me
It's as if I'm too scared to go beyond

A voice is speaking to me telling me that I have nowhere that I can go in life
It is pulling me away from my goal
It won't let me advance

I cannot let the fear in me stop me from moving
Because I know if I do, I won't get anywhere in life
No matter how big
No matter how strong
I can't let it stop me

I have to keep pushing forward
No matter what
Because there's a rope around me that keeps stopping me from moving
I have no time to sit down and cry anymore
I have to wipe my tears away
Right this moment

Every time I try to take a step forward
It's as if I take two steps back

It as if a knife was plunged into my thigh stopping me from moving anymore
It's as if blood is dripping from my leg
But I still run forward

I can feel the pain vibrating through my whole body
I almost can hear the sound of a cry from my being
But no matter what
I still want to move
Because I'm still breathing

I used to think that I was walking all alone
But the more I walk the more I see the people right beside me
When I stumble they are there to help me stand up
They keep on stretching out their hand

As I go walking down this road
No longer alone
My pace continues to fasten
First I was walking
Now I am running
Eagerly going towards a new future
I can no longer feel pain in my legs all I can now feel is new energy

I cannot let the fear in me stop me from moving
Because I know if I do, I won't get anywhere in life
No matter how big
No matter how strong
I can't let it stop me

I have to keep pushing forward
No matter what
Because there's a rope around me that keeps stopping me from moving
I have no time to sit down and cry anymore
I have to wipe my tears away
Right this moment

I have to see the potential in me
I have to find the strength in me
Right this moment



“Standing Still”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo
(Digital Photo)

canned laughter

a.a.

shhhh

flipping through the channels
at 4:22 a.m.

you flash across the screen
i see your eyes

shhhh

your gaze breaks my soul
into a million little shards

your smile
the gap between us growing

shhhh

i could watch you forever



“Early a.m.”

by Maria Williams-Guardado

(Digital Photo)

51 Ever Growing

Relationships Destroy Friendships

Zuri Felton

“Talk to you later Alissa! Love you,” Josh sleepily said, as he hung up after talking for hours and hours on the phone with his best friend, Alissa Moore.

Lying in bed, Alissa sighed dreamily, smiling as she thought about her long-term best friend Josh Stevens, who also happened to be her hot crush. Biting her lip, she thought about the hectic last four months. But soon, guilt crept over her when the thought of her other best friend came into play. Harley Brookes was the final piece to this scandalous best friend trio. Ever since they were in diapers, Harley, Josh, and Alissa have been inseparable. They did everything together, from playing outside to going to the pizza parlor, to even picking out shoes. As close as can be for the last sixteen years. Well, kinda. You see, Josh and Harley started dating two years back in freshman year. Since then, things have been different. They went from hanging out together to it being Harley and Josh hanging out and Alissa being the third wheel. But Alissa didn't seem to mind. She loved them and that's all that mattered. Until four months ago, when Alicia Moore grew madly in love with Josh Stevens.

Alissa had always had a little crush on Josh, and Harley knew it too. But she thought that if she claimed Josh first, Alissa's feelings would go away. And in her eyes they did, but little did she know that isn't the case at all. *If only she knew*, Alissa thought to herself. Her cheeks grew hot the more she thought about it. She needed something to get her mind off of things. She figured Netflix would do the trick. Hopping in bed with her cozy pajamas on, she turned on the TV before checking her phone one last time. As always, watching *Friends* dozed her off to sleep. She calls this binge-watching but really, she only watches a good 10 minutes of the show and is knocked out for the rest of it.

A loud gasp came from Alissa's room when she woke up in the middle of the night, sweating. With her heart nearly bursting out of her chest, Alissa thought back on the dream she just had, the dream that exposed once again her deepest secret. She knew guilt got the best of her in her sleep. The only thing comforting her is the fact that nobody knew this secret. Nobody but Josh. The two had agreed upon that this secret would be taken to the grave. Sworn to secrecy, Alissa got a quick glass of water from the kitchen and forced herself back to sleep, her body still on edge.

Soon, it's the next morning and the start of a new day. Mondays aren't exactly her “forte,” but Alissa still finds the will power to get out of bed, and ready for school. After brushing her teeth and washing her face, she throws on her favorite pair of light wash jeans and a hoodie nicely paired with her new Jordan 11s. Stylish but comfy. Perfect for her. By the time she's ready to go downstairs, her long, curly hair is slicked back in a ponytail with not a frizz to be found. She's careful not to crease her shoes as she trots down the stairs simultaneously sliding a pair of earrings in her ear, hoops to be exact. After a daily morning chit-chat with her mother, Alissa speeds out the door with her bagel, bookbag, and phone all in hand.

Second period has hit and Alissa is miserable as she has still not seen either Josh or Harley, which doesn't really matter since she's gonna see Josh next period anyways. A bell

ring bursts in the air and throughout the school, snatching Alissa out of her whirlwind of thoughts before she starts to pack up her papers. Alissa has always been such a good student and is always focused on her academics. So, when her math teacher stops her as she's heading out of her class, worry floods her body and thoughts just zoom in and out of her head. *What could she possibly have done?*

"Hey Alissa, can we talk for a minute?" Mr. Mackivich proposes.

"Yeah, sure," agreed Alissa, pulling out her most warming smile, in an effort to charm away any bad news.

The math teacher explains to his star student about his ideas of her tutoring one of her classmates. Apparently, Alissa's performance has been so "astonishing" lately, that he feels "she's the right leader for the pack, the right cheese for the mouse." Alissa starts to laugh at his play of words on the inside, but, as always, manages to keep her composure.

"Is the library at 3:30 okay for you, Ms. Moore?"

"Yes sir, that's perfect," Alissa responds.

"Great. Josh Stevens will meet you there," Mr. Mackivich says as he walks off to his lunch.

Of course, out of everyone, he chose ME to tutor Josh, she thought. Alissa can already tell that tutoring Josh is a recipe for disaster, considering their secretive past.

The next seven periods go by at its slowest. All Alissa can think about is *Josh, Josh, Josh*. And only Josh. She thought about all the possibilities of what could happen. More like what's going to happen. She has to control herself.

Alissa and Harley have lunch together seventh period. They always meet up at Harley's locker before walking to lunch. Alissa is surprised when she sees Josh and Harley arguing as she approaches Harley's locker. Looking her up and down, Josh says a good "wassup" to Alicia as she gets closer, then walks away.

"Hey, girl what's going on?" Alissa asks while staring at Josh's back.

"Nothing. Josh has just been acting different lately." Harley sighs and they begin to walk their way to lunch.

During lunch, all Harley talks about is her problems with Josh. Alissa tries to be a supportive friend, but she can't stop thinking about her own problems with Josh. Talking with her best friend made her feel even worse. Alissa loves this girl to death. If Harley finds out she will never forgive her. All she can think about is her feelings for Josh. Flashbacks of the hot and heavy kisses shared between Josh and Alissa race in and out of her mind. Her thoughts quickly crumbled when she heard Harley ask a question.

"Alissa, can I come over later? We haven't hung out there in a while."

"Yea of course! Oh and I forgot to tell you I'm tutoring somebody around 3:30 so you can come at like 4:30 when we're done."

"Okay, great."

continued next page

The last periods of the day go by super slow. 3:30 can't come any faster. Even in eighth period, it's still *Josh, Josh, Josh* for Alissa.

Ring, Ring, Rinnnggggg!

Finally! Alissa thought as the dismissal bell poured into her ears. *Josh, Josh, Josh.*

Alissa texts Josh and tells him to meet her at her house for their session. About five minutes after Alissa gets home, Josh arrives.

"Hey," he says as he knocks on her door. He peeps in.

Alissa's cheeks go rose red when Josh appears. He gives her a flirtatious smile back, knowing the reason behind those blushy tan cheeks of hers. The two start to study, first on math. Giggling and laughing beams from Alissa's room as they continue working together. After thirty minutes, laughter simmers down. Josh stares into Alissa's eyes. She instantly gets nervous. He leans in for a kiss. Alissa wanted to push him away, but she couldn't resist. The two kiss for a while until they are interrupted by a guest. It's Harley. The smile on her face rapidly distinguishes into a disappointed frown.

"OH MY GOSH.... *(she stares at the two sinners)*. I can't believe you guys would do this to me." Harley darts out of the house.

Josh follows her. Alissa sits on the couch full of regret. She completely forgot Harley was coming over. This is all Alissa's fault. She knew something bad would happen if she didn't stay away from Josh. Alissa's relationship with her best friend is destroyed.



"Rolled the Dice"

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

Sick to My Stomach

Amaya Nicole Shallo

I've tried everything to make good
I did everything I could
yet I still feel sick to my stomach
as my heart is aching
while my limbs are shakin'
my body can't control itself
my body feels the guilt
my mind knows I did the best I could
yet my body contains the guilt
I can't even pour it out of my body
from my own tears I've already shed
I acted as if nothing happened lifting up my head
I learn to conquer myself
by expressing myself
I learned to ease my pain
no matter how hard it rains
I learned to erase my suffering
my emotion of happiness is slumbering
I can see it will soon awake
when my sorrow is slain

WORLD OF LIGHT



“Walking until the Darkness Disperses”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

soulstice

a.a.

when i waded through the grass at evertide
and felt the delicate marine gust on the shore
when the sweet rain comforted those who cried
and the songbirds in morning light would glide

when summer meant watermelon and smiles
and the night awakened with violet skies,
when the ocean seemed to go on for miles
and weekends with friends meant burgers and fries

when the somber left their hibernation for the pool
and the music went on until the early morning
the brown earth under bare feet felt soft and cool
and Fleetwood Mac would soothe those mourning

When jovial summer was here
and the burning sun was near

those memories are so clear

Relentless

Jonnathan Josias

I fall down but I get back up no matter how many times I fall
I can see it
A great future that is waiting right there for me

I'm walking down the street on a very fine day
Not worrying about anything in my way
Hate
Spite
That ain't right
But what do I have to say
It's not a problem if we keep it all out of sight
It's time to make all of our anger retire
Instead of wasting time on hate, we can reach higher
Working together we can make everything okay
But we can't let things like this stay in our way

Now run toward the future
Hard work pays off with every passing day
If you have passion
You can get to the top and not let anything stop you

Now it's about time that you stand up
You have a dream that you don't want to give
No matter what comes up
you push through and try to make your dream come true
How many people can make their dream come true without any effort at all
It takes passion
And a heart that's willing to take it all in

I'm kicking back in a chair on a hot summer's day
Watching some shows to make the day pass away
Bleach
One Piece
The hours increase
Yet I'm still watching
The heat should not be my excuse to be lazy

Rain or shine I should be pushing forward
Not letting the hours pass by
I should be trying
To make the best of the potential dormant in me

Now it's about time that I get up
Stretch out my limbs and then begin to set up
To work hard
To achieve the dream that I have been living for
I can't make my dream come true if I cannot push through
It takes hard work
And a heart that tells you not to be lazy through the day

The future is still far
Waiting for it can be a pain
Are all my efforts in vain
Will my dream ever come true

But when I'm enthusiastic
The future seems only a day away
Then the sun rises and everything becomes clear and I know what I should do

The Day You Took My Good Away

Sarah Mohamed

Jason sighed and saw her standing at the bridge looking off at the moon and stars. He shifted his foot, turning the small bouquet in his hands before looking up pitifully. Not to her, for himself. He was such an idiot. He could never confess or kiss her or anything like that. And she looked so pretty tonight. A floral dress and a black jacket wrapped on her to protect herself from the cold. She didn't have shoes; she hated shoes. Besides, she lived close enough to walk without scratching her feet up too much. Jason smiled at her, though she didn't notice.

Jason set down the bouquet and then turned, going back from where he came. Maybe he would try to tell her tomorrow. However, he is a huge procrastinator. This is probably the fifty millionth time he's backed out, and it wasn't something to be proud of.

He was so distracted that he didn't see her silently swing her leg around the railing, then her other. She let go of a soft sob that she didn't even know she was holding, then let go of the railing and pushed herself away.

"Hello, love... I miss you..." Jason whispered and set down the bouquet he meant to give her at the bridge. He ruined everything. He could have saved her; she could be alive if he wasn't such an idiot. He sank to his knees as he re-read the words he had carved on her stone: "Our loss, Heaven's gain."

"Excuse me," a soft voice came from behind Jason. He turned over to see a girl his age in black, and her face red and puffy like his. She sniffled before continuing, "I-I just wanted to say it g-gets easier. I lost someone recently as well."

"Oh," Jason said and slowly stood up, looking back to the flowers for a second. "I'm sorry for your loss."

She nodded slowly then looked to the grave, "It's terrible that people so young die."

"S-She committed suicide."

"My boyfriend did too, Carlos... Do you, maybe us, want to get a coffee? Sorry, I just want to forget about this for a second, or numb the pain at least," she mumbled and Jason nodded slowly in agreement. With one last look, he led the girl out of the cemetery and to a local coffee shop, feeling a light shine down on them happily.

He looked up at the light with hope, thinking that it might be her. He shook his head. That was a stupid idea.

The coffee with the girl, which he later found out her name was Aria, was nice, but it wasn't enough to numb the pain. He returned to her grave; he just couldn't get her memory out of his head. He put his hand into his pocket and felt a piece of paper. It was folded up in a way that it would fit in his pocket perfectly, and burn perfectly as well.

"When I saw you standing on that bridge, I knew that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with you." Jason read aloud to the grave as if she was there listening to him. "Right then I knew that I'd love you for all time. You cracked a smile up towards the sky, and with that

fact alone will keep me happy for all time. But I just have one question, how can angels fly while you're still on the ground? I've been crying since the day you took all my good... away."

He threw the note onto the ground. He couldn't bear to look at it anymore; it would only remind him of his faults and her death.

When he visited her mother, she said that she was up above and that all she wanted was a man to love. He fell to his knees and broke down again. She was the angel that he was looking for his whole life, and she had left him on the ground. He thought that he was going to die alone, but Aria had given him hope. He can't give up now, he has to keep going, not just for him, but for her as well.



"Footprints in Time"

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

perfecting

a.a.

chisel me
change my mind
my demeanor

mold me into
who you want me to be
make me in your image
hear my pleas

perfecting (reprise)

a.a.

i'm starving
fill the biggest hole
the crater in my chest

color inside the lines
fill in the blank
drink me, breathe me

make me feel you again



“The Wilds of Green”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo

(Digital Photo)

Red Flags

Kristine Olivares-Gonzalez

You were a shark infested sea
Full of danger I just could not see
The red flags in front of me
But I'm in too deep I cannot flee

I've made you a saint
But smoke and mirrors
Are a distraction
From what the picture is
Beneath the paint

While you're carefree
I'm lost at sea
Drown in the debris
Of you and me

Running through the Storm

Jonnathan Josias

They tell me to be confident as if it's that easy
They act as if they understand me but they really don't
Telling me that being brave all the time is the right way to go
But through my experience I know that that isn't so
Just like happiness and rage
Sometimes fear breaks out its cage
But that does not mean it can't be controlled

They laughed saying that I can't run through the storm
But the fire in my heart keeps blazing on
Even when I am scared
I will not run away
Certainly I will not run but walk through the storm

If you do not take the shot you'll miss 100%
Many times we fail to make it cause we don't take a chance
Being scared shouldn't be your excuse to run away screaming
If you cannot handle your fear you can't handle temptation
Even if the enemy is charging in
And I am the only one left standing
I will grip onto my weapon and charge right back at them

Though my legs are shaking and my hands are trembling
I will charge through anything standing in my path
I won't lie and say that I don't feel any fear
Cause to tell the truth I can only move because I'm afraid

Just like happiness and anger
Fear can be controlled

Who can tell the truth and say they're never scared?

Who can?

They laughed saying that I can't run through the storm
But the fire in my heart keeps blazing on
Even when I am scared
I will not run away
Certainly I will not run but walk through the storm

It's okay to feel fear but we must understand
That we can't allow this feeling to take control



“No Progress by Sleeping”
by Amaya Nicole Shallo
(Digital Photo)

Unexpected Coffee Bumps

Jasmin Guillen

“Guys, that scanner isn’t working!” Mr. Bell, frustrated, started stomping around.

I was walking to go to the office’s printer when I bumped into him. Now, we both don’t talk at all to each other. Perhaps this was the first time we even glanced at each other.

“Oh god, I’m so sorry! Uh...” I stammered with my wording, trying to pick up some folders frantically before his spilt coffee could reach it.

Mr. Bell, got down to his knees to help me pick up my folders. “Jeez, no one knows where they’re going nowadays, huh?”

I sighed. *What a first impression*, I thought to myself. *It really was quite the first impression of each other.*

Once all the folders were picked up, I looked through each to see if everything in them was still in order. Thoughts were racing through my head, more cursing him out than anything, it was really annoying. Before I could go off, I felt a hand on my shoulder.

“Who’re you?” he asked.

“Um...,” I became flustered. Normally I don’t talk to others in the office unless necessary.

“Um?”

“...”

“Hmph, Miss Um it is then. Get me another coffee after you’re done whatever it is you’re doing.”

“But don’t you-”

He cut me off when he walked away back to his office, taking off his dress shirt.

The coffee must’ve spilt on him when we bumped into each other, great.

After all my work had been done, I gave the folders to my friend in the cubicle behind me to check everything over. Got out of my cubical, went downstairs to brew some coffee for Mr. Bell and came back up to our office. Walked into his separate office off to the left corner of the wide room and was about to knock on the door until it sprung wide open to reveal an upset woman. The reaction from both of us fumbled and she bumped right into me, spilling yet again, another cup of coffee...

"Ahh, I'm sorry!" I cried out quietly even though most of the coffee spilt on me.

"Tch," the woman turned around, "your office is filled with klutz isn't it?" And with that, the woman rushed out.

Mr. Bell sighed, got up from his chair and scolded me yet again. Even so, he helped me clean up and gave me his blazer to cover up.

"Sorry about that, she can be a tough woman to deal with." He got up and walked into his office. "You don't need to get another coffee."

"Mm..." I responded.

I sighed and walked back into my cubicle. Not noticing, Mr. Bell showed a small smile while watching me walk off.



"It Was All a Blur"

by Maria Williams-Guardado

(Digital Photo)

Baby Stem

Amaya Nicole Shallo

you're fragile now but you'll grow up strong
you're kind but the world is bitter
you're headstrong
one day may be taken from you
you will survive, no matter what you are going through
but you're a giver and will still give to others
while expecting nothing back
you take care of them like you're their mother
when you barely have nothing
yet you don't lack in those rare traits
the world will see your kindness
It won't reward you but it will make you blessed

I and You

Amaya Nicole Shallo

Who are you?
Who am I?
Who are we?
Are you I or you?
Am I or you?
Do you like the sky?
As do I
Do you wish to fly?
Like I
Do you wish to never say goodbye?
As do I

momento mori

a.a.

etched into me, in loving memory
as dead leaves flee and blow away

you remind me of
the darkness i fear
and the light i search for

wedding dance

a.a.

i long for freedom
but i can't stop trapping myself

in your smile and your voice
and the music has begun

pretty ugly

a.a.

floor to ceiling
black roses bloom
you're knocking on my tomb
your voice echoes throughout

i still wear your ring around my neck

orchid's song come to life
the stench of rotting meat
collides with floral sweet

molded over, it's pretty ugly

The Wonders of Rain

Amaya Nicole Shallo

the puffy clouds shower the rain down to the ground
my shoes are soaked as I stand in a puddle
the rain falling onto my umbrella as it rolls off, I love that sound
I like to pretend that nature is creating a musical beat
It is a settled gentle sound more than loud
leaving disquiet for me to no longer feel
although in the rain it may be cold without warmth nor heat
Instead of hearing the sky sorrows
I see the roses bloom and grow
absorbing the water droplets
as if the roses were listening to the sky sorrows



“Forecast of Rain”

by Amaya Nicole Shallo
(Digital Photo)

71 Ever Growing

Passionate Perseverance

Amaya Nicole Shallo

The golden woman walking on air
dancing on the waves of the ocean
Beautiful like how a ballet swirls
throughout midnight and dawn
never once she yawned
her elegance is more gorgeous than a thousand pearls
she even endures the storm
she won't stop performing
she hasn't given up on her passion
unknown of what is going on in the mansion of her brain
To dance for too long, to get sore wouldn't that bring pain
It is like nobody is there and she is stranded on an island
as her feet tip toe silently from the ocean up to the clouds
no matter what you say
the golden woman keeps on dancing
she was in the shadows cast by the light
she saved her from her own chaotic demons
she gave reasons not to fright; their world

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“Waiting for Light” by Maria Williams-Guardado (Digital Photo)

Dear Happiness
Amaya Nicole Shallo

You begin to come and go but never stay. Why are you letting sadness drive you away? Happiness please come back, you're the one that helps me get through the day. You're the sunlight that makes my eyes shine bright. You're the one that makes me want to hold on to life tightly. I'm not all right, but I'll sit tight waiting for you to come back. I hope you come back before my soul becomes pitch black. When you do, I can't wait for my heart to flutter instead of shutter. I can finally catch my breath to laugh joyfully again. You'll protect me from the pain sadness caused, won't you?



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