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ROOTS AND BRANCHES

Volume 57
THE LITERARY-ART MAGAZINE
OF
NORTH PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
34 WILSON AVENUE
NORTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

CANUCKLING 2012

AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION First Place with Special Merit 2011

COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION Silver Medalist Award 2011



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 in its 57th year, as we graduate a class of approximately 200 bright, shining students.

2012 CANUCKLING STAFF

Literary and Technical Advisers

Mr. John DeLaurentis English and Creative Writing Teacher Ms. Chelsea Howson English Teacher

Yamna Anwar, Editor-in-Chief Charlotte Brockway, Literary Editor Kaitlin Rink, Literary Editor Elizabeth U. Okereke, Photographic/Art Editor Chris Wong, Photographic/Art Editor

Staff:

Veronica Attis
Victoria Attis
Victoria Attis
Maddy Ekpo
Jairo Martinez
Camilo Marulanda
Shatori Morgan
Tryce Reyes
Jalynn Rivera
Michael Small
Charlotte Williams

Special Thanks to the English and Art Departments

Policy

Canuckling invites all North Plainfield High School students to submit original works of literature and art. Students may submit work to the English, Art, World Language, or Computer 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 Tuesdays 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, grade and English teacher on the back. Submissions cannot be returned. It is the hope of the staff that the magazine is representative of the creative talent of North Plainfield.

Colophon

Canuckling 2012, the literary and art magazine of North Plainfield High School, was printed with a press run of 200 copies on 28# laser stock and bound by Minuteman Press in Parsippany, NJ. The software used for the layout of the Canuckling is Microsoft Publisher. The font type used throughout this issue is Modern No. 20.

Cover

Elizabeth U. Okereke, a junior, drew the image on the cover entitled "Lotus Flower Bomb." The medium is Ink, Marker, and Colored Pencil.

Letter from the Editors

All of the editors and dedicated team members of the Canuckling Club are extremely excited and eager to bring to you the 2012 edition of the Canuckling, North Plainfield High School's literary-art magazine. Throughout the year, our staff has met frequently to put time and effort toward making this year's *Canuckling* an impressive and inspiring collection showcasing the artistic and literary talents of our students. We have endlessly reviewed innumerable artistic, literary, and photographic submissions in order to choose those that would reflect our chosen theme for this year: *Roots and Branches*. As a staff, we felt that the community of North Plainfield has such an eclectic identity that we should not only appreciate, but also display because it is evident in our talent. By using this theme as a beginning, we found that each submission was permeated by the identity of its artist, author, or photographer. The collection of works that you will find in this edition of the Canuckling show the riety of our school's beautiful mixture of cultures, backgrounds, dreams, and experiences.

We thank the staff members who developed previous issues of Canuckling for providing examples from which we learned and adjusted, and we would like to congratulate them on their admirable work. As the editors and leaders of a team of hardworking, dedicated, and committed staff members, we would like to congratulate the Canuckling Club on its success this year. As editors, we are extremely proud of your effort, your attendance, your critique, and your contributions to truly making our collaborative work a masterpiece. For being each other's strength, and for working harmonically and supportively with each other, with us, and with our advisers, we thank you. This year, we undoubtedly continued the tradition of the Canuckling Club by giving time and dedication to our school's literary magazine, which has been published annually since 1955. Surely, with our success, we have made those who dedicated themselves to Canuckling in the past very proud of our work. We also wish the best of luck to next year's Canuckling Club, and we are sure that the future members of this team will continue our tradition and excellence and commitment.

Unquestionably, our advisers, Mr. John DeLaurentis and Ms. Chelsea Howson, deserve our sincere gratitude, appreciate, and respect for guiding us this year and providing the tools with which we were able to make our vision of the *Canuckling 2012* a reality. Thank you for helping

us, for providing the technology and answers we needed, and for encouraging us to continue to work hard and stay on track toward our goal. As a very strong component of our team, you have helped to further our talent and hard-work this year.

As you merge into our masterpiece, we hope that you will find yourself amidst the *Roots and Branches* of our community here at North Plainfield High School. This year's issue is divided into the following five subcategories: Buried in the Heartwood, Under the Shade, Dirt on My Hands, A Year of Drought, and Aquatic Ambitions. Each reflective of the actual denotation of *Roots and Branches*, we also hope that each subcategory will provide a glimpse of different parts of our identity and our dreams. We hope that through this year's *Canuckling*, you can ponder about your own roots, and how they have branched into your identity, and we hope that we can share with you our perspective of what it means to belong to North Plainfield High School. Our aim is to go above and beyond in reaching each of our readers' minds and causing them to reflect on their own experiences, and how important it can be to stay true to ourselves and our roots. We hope that you will appreciate the unforgettable talent of our students as much as we did.

Welcome aboard this year's issue of the *Canuckling*, and we wish you all the best as you journey your way through our *Roots and Branches*.

Note from the Advisers

This year has been an exciting time for the Canuckling Club, as we have seen yet another year of creative outpouring from our talented high school students. The members of the club have worked hard to improve the quality of this year's issue. This year, we welcome our new adviser, Ms. Chelsea Howson, who has taken over from Ms. Nicole DiTrani. After this issue, we say goodbye with sadness to our Editor-in-Chief, Yamna Anwar, a senior. She has done a great job each year to help make the Canuckling a great success. Yamna has the honor of being accepted into Harvard University! We wish her a fond farewell and commend her contributions to the Canuckling over the years. To all our readers, please enjoy this year's issue as we explore the importance of roots and branches in each individual's life. Also, don't miss our special article on our retiring Assistant Principal in the *Blast from the Past* section on pages 14-17. Enjoy!

BURIED IN THE HEARTWOOD

The Image I Portray by Vanessa Ocampo	18
A Traveler Enveloped by Tryce Reyes	20
The Real Journey by Jamal Ghanim	23
Obsession by Rafael Hernandez	24
Doors by Oreoluwa Fawole	26
Dancing Poetry by Shatori Morgan	28
Love by Kelly Woienski	30
Corvids by Victoria Attis	31
Welcome to the Earth by Evan Lopatosky	32
One Less Suicide Today by Jalynn Rivera	34
The Goodbye Song by Billy Stevens	36
Time Waits for No Man by Oreoluwa Fawole	37
If There's Anything I'm Sure Of by Veronica Attis	38
Monster by Shatori Morgan	41
Images	
Abstract Pathways by Elizabeth U. Okereke Something Big, Something Small	22
by Elizabeth U. Okereke	29
Not Quite Hidden by Stephanie Hatala	33
32 and Counting by Stephanie Hatala	33
Looking for Direction by Stephanie Hatala	35
The Path by Yamna Anwar	36
Things Inc. by Lorena Torres	40

UNDER THE SHADE

Bad Girl, Good Boy by Rafael Hernandez I'll Be There in the Morning by Billy Stevens Beowulf and the Golden Dragon by Charlotte Brockway Journey to My Fantasy by Devin Newsome	43 44 46 50
Images	
Where Do You Get Your Inspiration? by Stephanie Hatala Won't You Catch My Dreams? by Elizabeth U. Okereke Full Moon by Lorena Torres	42 43 49

DIRT ON MY HANDS

Myself Alone Must Carry the Banner	
by Billy Stevens	53
Writer's Block by Arassely Chipa	55
The Boy Who Felt No Guilt by Billy Stevens	58
Don't Get It Mixed Up by Jamal Ghanim	61
Images	
Washed in Confusion by Stephanie Hatala	52
Broken by Veronica Attis	54
House of Dreams by Lorena Torres	58
Heart Adhesives by Elizabeth U. Okereke	60

A YEAR OF DROUGHT

Leaving by Billy Stevens	63
I'm All Ears by Anonymous	64
Tick by Jalynn Rivera	67
Stockholm by Billy Stevens	68

Images

Collapsed by Stephanie Hatala 62

AQUATIC AMBITIONS

Dive by Veronica Attis	71
Going Everywhere by Lorena Torres	72
Sun's Pure Light by Vanessa Ocampo	75
Elemental Journey by David Zhu	76
Ode to Water by Vanessa Ocampo	78
I'd Give Anything by Vanessa Ocampo	81
Ode to Mirrors by Kelly Woienski	82
Nature's Witness by Vanessa Ocampo	84
Images	
Toss in the Coin by Yamna Anwar	70
Flight by Yamna Anwar	73
Dog Days by Elizabeth U. Okereke	74
Leia to Death by Elizabeth U. Okereke	77
Thesis of Love by Lorena Torres	80
When the Light Hits by Lorena Torres	85
Tree of Life by Veronica Attis	85



Honoring Our Roots: Mr. Ralph Sorrentino

by Yamna Anwar, Class of 2012

North Plainfield High School takes pride in being a community composed of talented, hardworking students, a very committed staff, and a cohesive character that makes us who we are. Each and every part of NPHS is important in its identity, and one of our most dedicated administrators has become an icon of what it means to be a part of North Plainfield High School. After graduating from this school in 1958, and serving in the United States military, Mr. Ralph Sorrentino returned as a teacher here and soon became the athletic director and then an administrator. He currently is the Assistant Principal.

When asked about his time as a student at NPHS,

Mr. Sorrentino reminisces about his involvement in sports. He was a star on the football team and the basketball team during his high school career, and his fondest memory when looking back is of winning the state championship with North Plainfield finishing second best in the state. Mr. Sorrentino held the record for the most touchdowns in one year for 35 vears. He also commented on how many things were different during his time in this school. For instance, each vear, the senior class, which was half the size of what it is now in 1958, went on a weekend trip to Washington, D.C. instead of having a senior picnic. Also, every Friday night, students would socialize at "Canuckateen" in the old

gymnasium, where they would dance, play games, and relax. More clubs, such as Future Nurses of America and the swimming team were available then, but Mr. Sorrentino added portant thing a teacher should that today more resources, such as online databases or student

mentors, are available to students.

Per Mr. Sorrentino, "a teacher should attempt to help every child reach his or her potential."

 $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{s}$ a staff

member, Mr. Sorrentino has enjoyed many aspects of his time at North Plainfield High School. He loved coaching wrestling for 17 years, during which they became Somerset County champions many times. Teaching also is a fond memory for him because he loved seeing his students engaged and enthusiastic about learning in classes such as health, physical education, and especially drivers' educa-

tion, behind the wheel training, and advanced driving for seniors. He even taught riflery and bowling! Mr. Sorrentino believes that the most imaim for in the classroom is to instill interest in the students

by designing hands on lessons, a variety of instructional activities, integrating tech-

nology, and attempting to help every child reach his or her potential.

Mr. Sorrentino believes that the four years of high school are critical for each and every student, and he believes that now more than ever, it is vital for students to focus on and continue their education, not only in high school, but in their post-high school lives as well. He says, "You must study because you will need it!"

He is always seen around the building encouraging students to do their very best, and he stresses that it is also important for students to be engaged in their education and take maximum advantage of the resources

around them, such as college visits and free after-

Mr. Sorrentino's advice to students: "You must study because you will need it!"

school tutoring.

As one of the people who has spent an incredible amount of time at North Plainfield High School, Mr. Sorrentino calls it his second home. "I love North Plainfield," Mr. Sorrentino added. Mr. Sorrentino will be retiring this year, but he will continue to be attached to our community. Voted "most popular" during his senior year here in 1958, he is still very much loved and admired by

the members of the community at North Plainfield High School. The time he has spent here and the memories that link him to this community are innumerable, and he has an immense importance in the

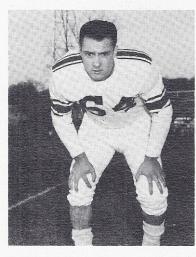
lives of students
and faculty, to
whom he has
always made
himself available for guidance and help.
He is still the

first person in the building each day, and usually the last to leave. Like the building, the classes, the relationships between faculty and students built between these walls, Mr. Sorrentino is an icon of what it means to be a part of North Plainfield High School.

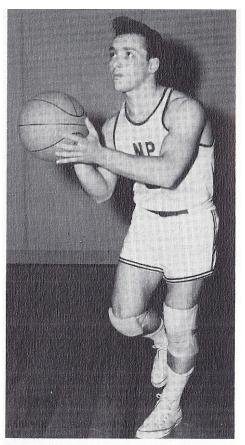
Endnote: We wish our beloved Assistant Principal a rewarding retirement. He will be missed but will remain with us in spirit.

When Ralph Sorrentino graduated North Plainfield High School in 1958, he was voted Most Popular and Lady's Man. He was also very athletic, being involved with Football, Basketball, Baseball, and Track. Enjoy these photos from the Canuck Yearbook of 1958.

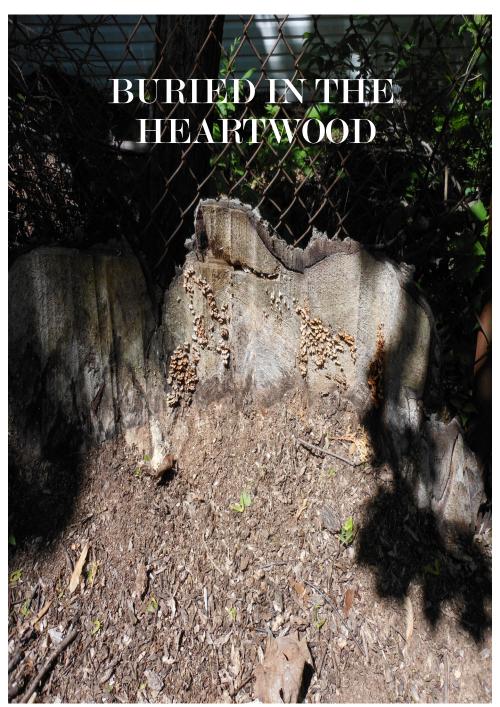




RALPH SORRENTINO—Halfback First Team All State Group II First Team All County



RALPH SORRENTINO-Senior Guard



18 Canuckling 2012

The Image I Portray

Vanessa Ocampo

The image I portray isn't really me. "Who am I?" I ask myself every day. My true identity is hard to see.

It's better if I stay like this, you see. Since, I fear the real me will be gray, The image I portray isn't really me.

Yes, I still search for that being called "me."
I put on different acts — a one woman play.
My true identity is hard to see.

My thoughts should be expressed and left to flee. But I hide behind a mask, like you say. The image I portray isn't really me.

It is better to set my feelings free But they're left to bottle up. In a way, My true identity is hard to see.

I search for myself like those on "The Glee."
Others know who they are and unlike they
The image I portray isn't really me.
My true identity is hard to see.

A TRAVELER ENVELOPED

Tryce Reyes

A trance into the darkness is a lethargic submission. I involuntarily descend to the deepest realms of my mind. It's impossible to discern why you are there. Your conscience controls you

at the most opportune moment

every night and

forces you to face the darkest scenarios sometimes. It feels impossible to escape, but before you know it, you're awake and left on a cliff with nothing but questions and the possible unraveling of your repressed feelings and fears.

I am in the darkest of all rooms with nothing in front of me. A profound feeling penetrates my core, so intense, a heavy weight on my chest, it makes me sick, it gives me chills, and I quiver. I can be brave, but at this very moment I'm not allowed to. I just want to grasp whatever is

it and

never

let go,

these

arms

there, grab "A profound feeling penetrates my core, so intense...it makes me sick. It gives me chills, and I quiver."

aren't mine anymore. I am waiting, the fog will be here soon, you vanish, no I vanish, you'll always be there. You will be the girl next to me or maybe the hand deafening my screams, that is what you know. I know nothing, I think nothing, it's out of my control.

The despair I contain, I want to think, be able to touch, say, and be heard. I am a traveler for my health. I have no rights. I can only face it all. It's a moment where I can be crushed down to the simplest element, where my every cell can just be doused in

acid that
will burn
me, but I
just sit
there. I

don't fight it, I don't even

think about it, I don't try to justify with innocence. I accept it. I did this to myself and the release is imminent. It's something to think about before closing your eyes.

I know, I understand, comprehend, realize, and appreciate everything now. You were show-

ing me, I am the medium. I repressed them. It was the only release of the immense tension. I get it, and I get why.

When I wake up, I will only remember the mere blurred façade of the one chasing me or the one pushing me down a flight

"You were showing me, I am the medium. I repressed them."

done, sealed and

of stairs.

Our deal

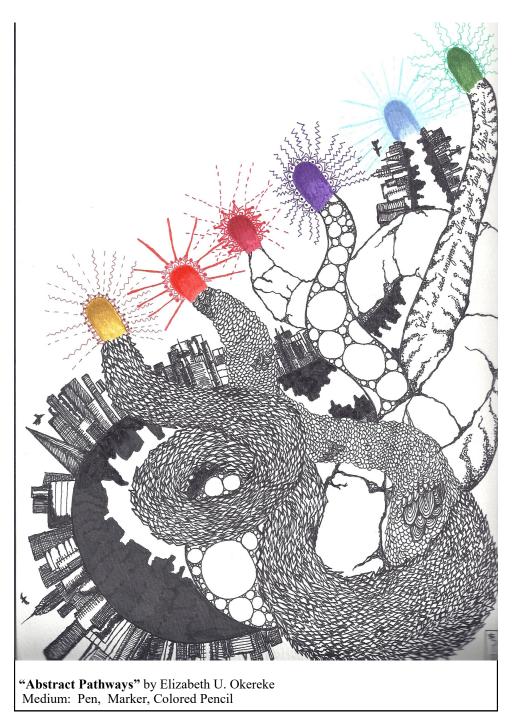
for the

circum-

stance

will be

stored forever, for your satisfaction and contempt. I won't remember, and life will just go on. We are both going to be okay. For now, I just see the dark air surrounding me and feel your presence hiding between it.



22 Canuckling 2012

THE REAL JOURNEY

Jamal Ghanim

I want to go to every place in the world With my footprint everywhere I'll tattoo the world While others are just destroying it Ill reach the top of the universe Without going there by just feeling it I will go to the holy land to feel more holy I'll go to Sierra Leone to see the people not the diamonds I'll go to Chicago to see my family not the city I'll listen to a song for its lyrics not its beat I'll do something nice because I care not just to smell like a rose I'll keep finding new places I haven't been 'Till I have been there all Lastly I'll keep living my life Which is the real journey

OBSESSION

Rafael Hernandez

You saw me I saw you We knew each other The mirror shaped me The mirror broke you Its cold touch Warm answer Show me the future Make it last Bring back the past Were made the same Made of glass You hate me Never answer me Just look at me With the truth The naked truth Lie to me sometimes Tell me I'm this When you're really that Attempted to hit you But that will kill us The eyes to my soul If I gave you the look Would you give it back?

If I touch you
Am I touching me?
The darkness parts us
The light brings us together
You're the pieces
I look at
Obsession
Torn and wanted
My hands on yours
Your touch is how
When I close my eyes
Will you be there?
The same way we started
You saw me
I saw you

Doors Oreoluwa Fawole

The doorway to life is always open;
With welcoming arms it calls you in
An open door says, "Come in."
A shut door says, "Who are you?"
Shadows and ghosts go through shut doors.
If a door is shut and you want it shut,
Why open it?
If a door is open and you want it open,
Why shut it?
We have to enter new doors each fresh day;

We have to enter new doors each fresh day;

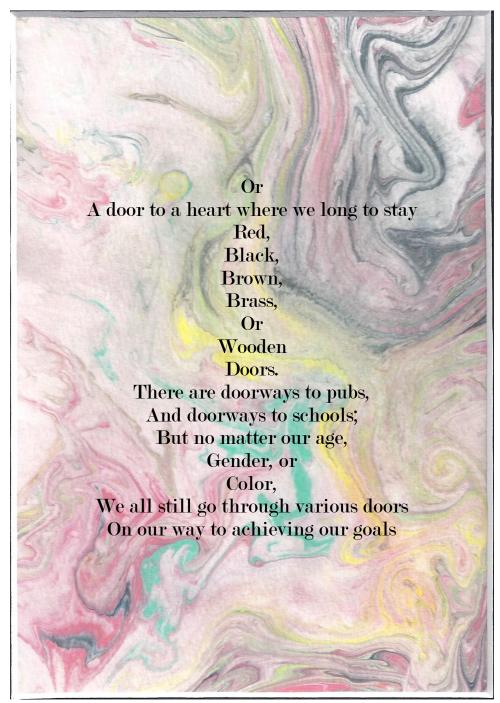
To take us forever onwards
In opening new chapters in life's
Endless search for avenues of learning.
Some doors are large,
And some are small
But no matter the size,
They still do the same purpose

Which is
To let you into a room,
A garden,

Or

Anywhere. For instance,

A door to a church where we go to pray.



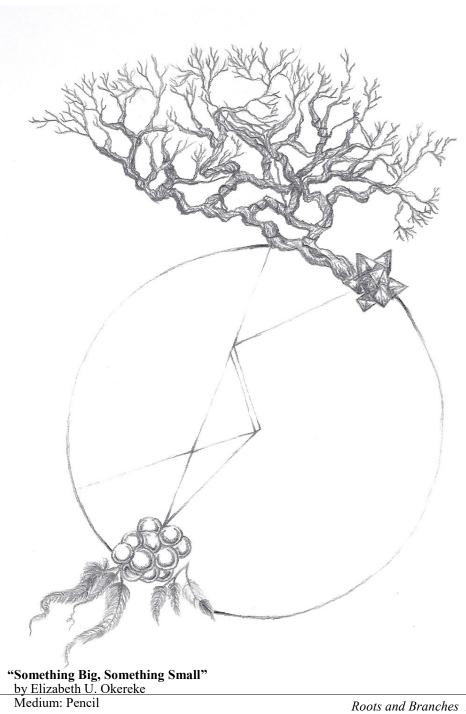
DANCING POETRY

Shatori Morgan

Come on, hit the floor with your two left feet You can't just stand there holding up the wall It gets real simple just follow the beat Enjoy yourself don't worry if you fall

Dance. Two steps
Turn Around and glide
Jump around
And flip

Dancing is poetry for the body
The busy and active floor, is paper
The rhythm of the music, a pencil
Come on, hit the floor with your two left feet



Roots and Branches 29

Love

Kelly Woienski

Love knows no ethnicity

Love knows no gender Love knows no religion

I come from, Hatred toward an ethnic race Indifference toward another religion Miscomprehension of the opposite sex

I believe, Hatred comes from lack of intelligence Indifference is pure laziness And miscomprehension is ignorance

My goals are, Teaching tolerance toward others Strength against peer pressure Acceptance towards difference

I will, Not tolerate ignorance Participate in discrimination Become a follower

My family history has traveled a vast journey
Starting at discriminatory ignorance
Ending in tolerance and acceptance
Not all journeys have to be physical to make an impact
Emotional impact will stay in your heart forever

Corvids Victoria Attis

I see a black bird Gliding through the air Like a shadow In the sky A crow No, a raven A corvid As black as night Skimming the air Searching the skies For its flock Then suddenly Tons of ravens Racing through the clouds Beating the air with their wings The black bird follows And soon disappears Within the flock of Corvids

Welcome to the Earth

Evan Lopatosky

Roaring sky above
Rain pelting down upon them
Travelers move on

Pushing and pulling
Must watch the mood of the sea
Or you will vanish

Thunder in the air Flowers sheltered under rocks Safe from the storm's wrath

Buzzing bee works on Constantly bringing home food Buzzing bee works on

Sounds of waterfalls
These sounds bring a scare to those
Who ride the river

Burning plans in sight
Wasteland is in front of you
Welcome to the Earth





Roots and Branches 33

One Less Suicide Today

Jalynn Rivera

Throw away that blade of yours,
Drop your razor to the floor.
Discard your knife and lose the rope.
Forget the pills before you choke.
There's no need for self-harm.
Grab a pen and write "LOVE" on your arms.

You want to die, but why can't you stay? I'm not going to let you slip away. I won't let go, I'll hold your hand. I'll keep you safe, understand? You're so beautiful, yet so pained. You're so full and yet so drained. Smile, beautiful, for I know that you can. Now's your chance to make a stand.

Self-destruction is not the way.
Keep far away from the charm of the blade.
Never give up, darling keep fighting.
Save yourself, hear the words I am writing.
I've got your back, I'll help you through.
I will always be here for you.
Baby, I know it hurts to cry.
But one day I promise you'll reach the sky.
Until then stay strong, you know the way;
Drop the razor and leave the blade.
Hold your head up, smile today.

I promise your hurt will go away.
Somebody loves you, you're in their heart.
Don't be the one to tear that apart.
So please don't scream and please don't shout.
Inhale, exhale, breathe in and breathe out.
Self-harm and destruction are not the way.
Let's make it one less suicide today.



"Looking for Direction" by Stephanie Hatala



The music of your laughter calms me down when I'm about to crack

You pluck me off the ledge, each and everyday

You paint the colors that force me to see this world

The persistent reality of pills and razor blades sublimes at your touch

You always know what to say as you make it up on the spot

This is for you
Just as it always has been

Every line in dedication, all the thoughts in memory of the future

Even if this doesn't seem right, I'm doing this for you Only you, just as it always has been

"The Path" by Yamna Anwar

Time Waits for No Man

Oreoluwa Fawole

The question that is asked the most;

We hear it every day,

"What time is it?" they want to know,

And then they go away.

It's time for bed,

It's time for work,

Or time to feed the fishes,

It's time to take your medicine,

Or wash and dry the dishes.

Time in seconds,

Time in hours,

So many freckles past a hair,

Depending on the zone,

Or whether day light savings were there.

Time is measured many ways from minutes to months,

Time is what keeps everything from happening at once!

A time to live,

A time to die,

A time for having fun,

Clocks and calendars alike,

All scheduled by the sun.

Intervals that can't be hurried, will not be denied,

A season that we know that's coming, as surely as the tide

If there ever comes a time when time will be no more,

I wonder how we'll know to quit, or when it was before.

Do we hurry?

Do we loaf?

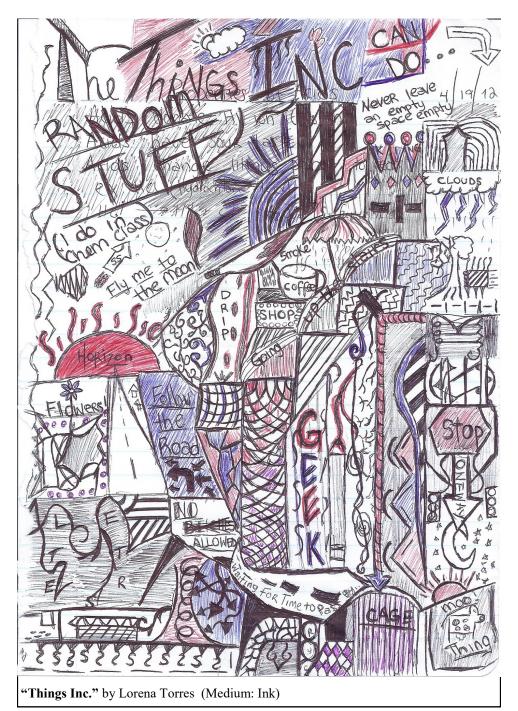
It depends upon the time...

Had we started earlier, we'd be finished with this rhyme.

If There's Anything I'm Sure Of Veronica Attis

If there's anything I'm sure of It's that we need music To keep our minds Working And our gears Turning It is true that Music is a part Of me Its pulsing beat in my veins Through every fiber Of my Being. It starts Slow or fast It can be Steady and vast Or wild and crazy Or calm Some might only like one type Or enjoy them all Anywhere you go

Music is there And a tap of keyboard And a strum of a guitar Will create feelings Of happiness and joy Or sadness and hurt Or love and value Or hate and rejection Whether it is Meant for singing or Meant for dancing Music is there It will always be A part of you And will always be A part of us And will always be A part of me.



40 Canuckling 2012

MONSTER

Shatori Morgan

M is for the Momentum O is for the Obstacles N is for the Newborns S is for the Success T is for the Travel E is for the Experience R is for the Readiness

"If you find a road with no obstacles It doesn't lead anywhere" Obstacles equal monsters The one who inspires horror or disgust

The road is uncharted Which makes life unpredictable So the journey of a thousand miles Begins with a single step

Everyone wants to take the short cut A path with no Fiends The Monsters are the Haters, the Cheaters, the Losers, The Liars, the Phonies, and best of all The Motivators

They don't kill me
Only make me stronger
Gives me a reason to keep trying
They are my biggest fans
And my travel buddies



"Where Do You Get Your Inspiration?" by Stephanie Hatala

UNDER THE SHADE

Bad Girl, Good Boy

Rafael Hernandez

You're my bright halo Obsession is what I see I'm your burning <u>horns</u>

Hold my hands, don't go You're just a memory now My eyes watched you grow

I'm the rich hard Gold You're the pebbles I've broken The statue of M.E.

Change is what we want We love to hate each other Unwilling to change

You're my bad secret I promise to never tell Take it to the grave

Torn between the two Feels so wrong but it's just right Let's play with wild hearts

I'll Be There in the Morning

Billy Stevens

The days count upwards on their own I'm losing time with you And I vainly can't make it last With the winds of summer, I'm gone With the fall of autumn, I'm forgotten

I'll need several promises from you, as I will do as you request:

Remember think of me, as often as you can

Have no other, have the memories, embellish them if it helps

And most importantly:

Don't lose that feeling That breathless momentum, eyes transfixed, hands clasped, heads pointed towards five years

Don't change it,
Don't flip your mind
Don't confuse yourself
JustDon't stop loving me

And I promise, soon enough, I'll be there in the morning.



"Won't You Catch My Dream?" by Elizabeth U. Okereke Medium: Pencil

Beowulf and the Golden Dragon

Charlotte Brockway

The Golden Dragon

Far o'er that golden horizon, yonder tall gray mountains, down to caverns deep and dungeons old, there he dwelled. That proud majestic beast of lore lurked beneath the mountains, within his chamber hall, bathing his glory in gold. His skin: flawless and invulnerable, blended with his sacred hoard. Tall as the giants with the power of the storm, his strength outmatched the mightiest of warriors. Yet, with great power his magnificence harbored ill will in God's eves. And so God exiled and drove him away as a spawn of Satan. For centuries, that proud, greedy disciple of Lucifer, with the armor of a fish, the claws of a lion and the wings of a bat, slithered through his hole. Not once had that writhing beast emerged from his lair, at least under the reign of King Beowulf, whose wealth and fame bode valiantly across the lands. Even now, as the Geats lived happily with all the pleasurable joys as though the Holy Ruler favored their existence; men of valor and strength blessed with wondrous riches made lovely by the heavens. Jealous with these so claimed men of honor, only then

did he leave his lair, determined to bring vengeance upon the Geats. After centuries of hiding in the tunnels of those ancient mountains, that titan of hell wreaked his havoc upon the world once again, turning glory into chaos as one deforms gold into hot, melted liquid. Houses went up in vomits of fire and ash; men were gobbled up as Lucifer's breath descended on their homeland. Fear and destruction grew rapid through Geatland like a plague, as though the gates of hell unleashed their wrath of unending rage.

King Beowulf

Never before had the kingdom of Geatland; a massive country inhabited by strong-willed people, been threatened by such a god of beasts. It wouldn't be long now before the specter of Satan raised Geatland to the ground. The Geats slowly allowed fear, an unknown sensation, to overcome their bravery, save but one who still found the will to bear through this nightmare. Strongest of the Geats and savior of the Danes, his legends lived on for years in songs and tales. Higlac's follower and only heir traveled across the seas 50 years ago, vowing to avenge King Hrothgar's mead hall and all those purged by the monster, Grendal. Twas a noble man of valor and unparalleled strength that defeated the descendants of Cain.

Twas he who stood up to Grendal, he who brought the monster's mother to justice and he who succeeded Higlac's throne. Yet after 50 years, his spirit withered and his body rapidly grew feeble. Upon his throne, he lay with the posture of statue; his state of mind resembled as though an unknown force hold sway over him. His hair: like soot and smoke, his eyes: tired and dull. Through the years his mental state still pondered the mere memories of battling Gren-

semble a band of his finest men who had long ago indebted and committed their very lives for their king. Without waiting for a response, he descended into those dark dank tunnels. The labyrinth reeked of brimstone and heat. Volcanic gases emerged from every corner. The very air the men breathed fumed of poison. Sweat began to trickle down their foreheads. Those who dubiously followed him, into the deadly bowels of the mountain sensed the heavy beating of their

dal and his mother.

But as the heathen wyrm soared

above his

"Twas a noble man of valor and unparalleled strength that defeated the descendants of Cain."

homeland, threatening to eradicate everything he valued deeply, disinclined to stand idly by while the destroyer swallowed nearly every village in a conflagration. Regardless of old age, Higlac's follower never let anyone down, nor would he fail his own people. He would take the fight directly to the wyrm.

The Battle with the Golden Dragon

Before the sun set on the seventh day of the third month, he approached the entrance to the beast's home, as before. He sought to ashearts. This
hellfire beast
made his
home the very
chasm of hell
on earth.
They marched
miles further

down into the maze, until finally they reached the doorway to the wyrm's chamber. Inside they gazed at the wondrous site of piles and piles of gold. No fingerprints lay on the irresistible treasure, as if Midas himself touched the entire room with a tip of his finger. Unbeknownst to the Geats, the dragon lay asleep beneath his glittering gold, dreaming dreams of dark deep desires. For ages, he kept his hoard secret and guarded under full protection. When all at once, he smelled intruders lurking near, armed and prepared for battle, poised for the exact moment to leap

But his thoughts, quicker than mortal men, found the perfect opportunity to outwit his prey, by deceiving them with his golden skin, which camouflaged perfectly with his surroundings. Suddenly, before anyone could attack, a fool-hearted Geat touched a piece of treasure, below the wyrm's claw. Enraged, the flamethrower writhed from his slumber, roaring with hate. He unsheathed his

"Those who dubiously followed

him, into the deadly bowels of

the mountain sensed the heavy

beating of their hearts."

sheathed his wings wildly, brandished his fangs, and violently raised his tail knocking back at least 13 warri-

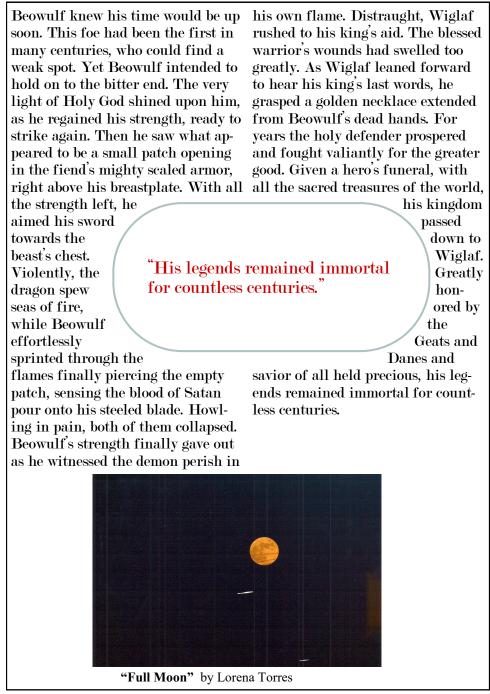
ors. Without warning, he vomited fire onto the floor where the rest of Beowulf's band stood. Overcome by fear, they fled, all of Beowulf's army headed straight from whence they came, all but one, who kept true to his vows. Wiglaf, a man in his late twenties, sworn to valor and to Beowulf. For he knew Beowulf since childhood and remained his trusted friend for years. He and Beowulf remained in the hall, swords in hand and ready to strike a blow. The titan raised his longed neck high and poured fuming blazes out of his mouth, separating the two Geats from each other. Wiglaf, tried to make effort to run to his lord's

defense but the mighty snake recoiled ferociously, thrashing his
armored tail back and forth. His
slobbering jaws aimed for Beowulf
and Beowulf only. Flames erupted
from every corner as the heathen
fiend expelled his breath of death.
No escape could be found from this
now enflamed hall; endless fire surrounded them, left and right. Still,
the hardy Geat held his ground,
taking every pre-

caution necessary. Beowulf, with
his steel
swung
high, aimed
towards the
wyrm's ar-

mored nape. He

hacked vigorously at the impenetrable skin, but could not pierce an opening to the devil's soul. Suddenly the savage hellion welcomed Beowulf in his claws and hurled him across the room. Without warning, the malignant flamethrower aimed his club-tail high above Beowulf and pierced an opening in the right side of his chest. The Geat King cried out in agony, sensing his own blood oozing out. Wiglaf, burned with magnificent madness, hurled himself and cut apart the foul demon's tail. Finally the archfiend was penetrated at long last. His ability to fly had greatly weakened with the breaking of his tail.



Roots and Branches 49

Journey to My Fantasy Devin Newsome

When the waves of silence overflow the room and the sun is washed out by the moon, I can't wait to take that journey... Journey to that place like outer space. Where stress has no weight. The entrance to this place is a most simple gate, it is the cool soft pillow to which I lay my face. It's more of a teleportation device that occasionally turns on at night. Sometimes I get sent to this place, and when I'm there everything goes right. And I escape the harsh reality of everyday life. If anything it's like a nonstop fairy tale... My desires are met, I get the girl and all is well. Sometimes I experience alternate realities, Created by different decisions and rationalities. This place is warm like a heated house on a winter day. I'm warm cuz sometimes she makes it to this place. A few hours here, but there it's like a whole day. The only down side...is that I can't stay. Every time I visit, it's always something new, There's never a dull moment, always stuff to do. Sometimes I foresee the future, or I'll see old friends. Just hoping tonight's the night I get in. See I don't get in every night, I don't know why. And I can't go there the harder I try. So I appreciate when I do go and I try to relax. Like a breezy spring day when the sun is out, and so is school. Care free with not a thing holding me back. The next thing I know, there I am, I'm back.

DIRT ON MY HANDS



"Washed in Confusion" by Stephanie Hatala

Myself Alone Must Carry the Banner

Billy Stevens

Hemingway taught me to value sleep. It acts as a shield. Anxiety is nonexistent in my nonexistent little corner. I freely avoid. Call it a defense mechanism; I think it's more preemptive than anything else.

Because I know that when I

walk down those steps, I have to guard myself. I have to defend my words and my actions. I've gotten quite good

"You tried so hard to keep away your demons that you let the devil slip through."

at it, but even that isn't enough for you. I've been working my whole life, yet you only point out the failures, the ineptness. I don't know where you got your standards from, but you make sure that I know I'm not up to par.

Sorry I don't follow your plan. I refuse, and defend my refusal, and the consequences of that are my own, so save your breath, maybe for someone that can command your attention.

I almost wish you drank; that way I'd have a valid reason for this resentment. Maybe you thought that you could toughen me up for the real world. You succeeded in pushing me away. And here I am, as

reluctant and stubborn as ever, prone to the occasional breakdown, or several.

I guess there's a hole in this Kevlar, after all, and your strategy wasn't so perfect. You tried so hard to keep away your demons that you let the devil slip through.

It was you that made me this way. And although I distribute the blame, I feel like I should thank you, in a way. My conditioning has

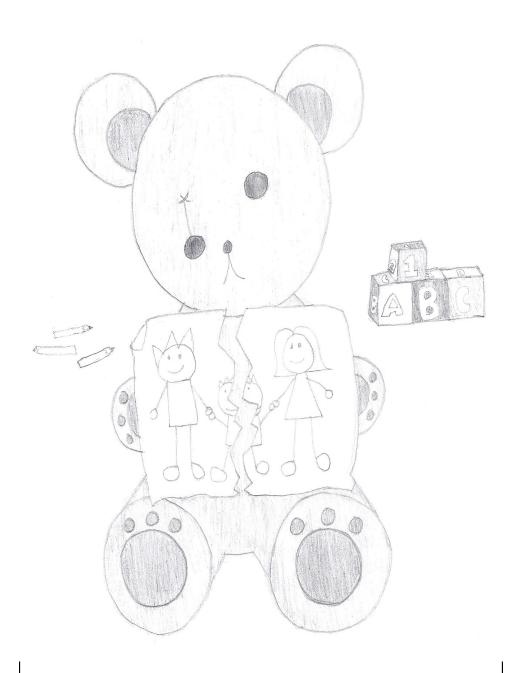
lead me to
want
nothing
to do
with
you, and
that's for
the better.

I'm leaving, and

I hold all the power.

I can choose to never see you again. I know for certain that I don't want to get close to you. That ship sailed around age eleven. We coated the bridge with gasoline, but you forgot to light the match. Consider this me striking against the box.

And the absolute best part of it all? You'll never see this. It could be published, it could be on every website, every newspaper, every billboard, staring you in the face, but you won't bother to read it. And you'll wonder why you haven't heard from me, and I won't be around for you to interrogate.



"Broken" by Veronica Attis (Medium: Pencil)

Writer's Block Arassely Chipa

Having writer's block Blocks away the emotions Emotions you hate Hate with a passion Passionate like the first kiss Kiss the thought goodbye Goodbye distractions Distracted by loud silence Silence the bad lines Lines that don't make sense Sense of completely nothing Nothing is perfect Perfection laid still Still stuck on the same damn thing Things not thought about About almost there There I was with the worst poems Poems aren't my thing.

Rich Man's World Jamal Ghanim

Everything here revolves around that green paper called money Why not strive for it, it's the maker of power Let's not lie, with these things you gain respect These three things add up like an addition problem It's hard to get but easy to understand This is the goal for our entire human race

What about the old woman who doesn't care about money What does she strive for love not power She is old, she should already gain respect See I have found the real problem For some people who really never understand Please slow down think things through, it's not a race

When will people wake up and see that it's not the money Or the things that come with money like power It's being rich and still showing self-respect Forgetting how you are that's the real problem These people are fast livers and think it's a race

It's your soul that's valuable not the money
In the end they will see that God has the power
They will have no choice but to show God respect
In that moment you will see the problem
You will have care for people and understand
This can happen to anyone of any race

Save this info. In your head and save it like money Having the ability to learn, that's the real power It's the answer to rich people's problems You will experience it if you don't understand You are lost like people in a desert storm race

The truth is we all will want more money
With that money comes responsibility and power
Show humility and great respect
That will repair almost every world problem
Yes it will make a difference, you must understand
And make us better as a whole human race

People need to do right with their money and power When you show respect you will fix the problem Understand you are 1% of our race



"House of Dreams" by Lorena Torres

The Boy Who Felt No Guilt Billy Stevens

Staring starkly, hands quaking
The boy, he felt no guilt
People marveled as they passed
Nothing could stir him

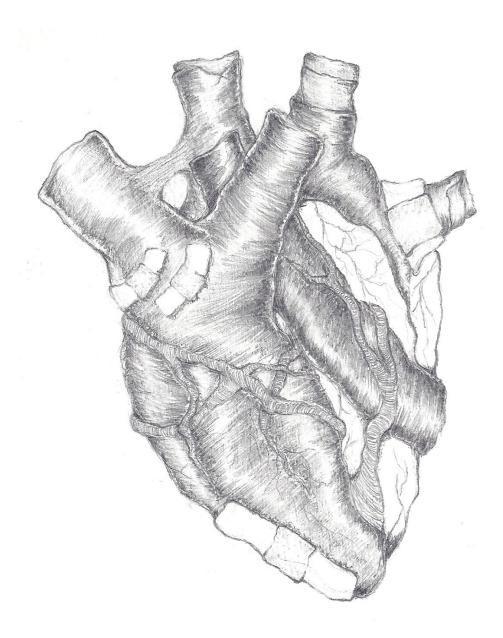
He spouted off lies, he said as he pleased, but empathy eluded him He wanted to remain alone Cars exploded, cities burned, people fell before him, bursting their throats for help He did not think to move

Sympathetic to none, the boy walked idly by. But when he saw her, the whitewash film on his eyes, melted away

He sat next to her,
not a word was said.
And he wasn't sure why,
but he didn't want to leave
And when that little girl was happy,
his eyes lit up to receive her warmth
but when she felt the singing pain,
the boy expelled his dormant tears
and blamed only himself for her discomfort

From then on, every day
that little boy would sit
by that little girl,
and stash her pain away
And each day, she would feel a little bit better

The little boy, who felt no guilt, saved the little girl, who felt everyone else's And she saved him, too



"Heart Adhesives" by Elizabeth U. Okereke Medium: Pencil

Don't Get It Mixed Up Jamal Ghanim

Fighting the oppression Got my own thoughts and ideas It's a mind control game

> Revolution will return It's only a matter of time You will see don't worry

I want payback now It will come later unexpectedly Hope you love surprises

Forgotten moments lost I wonder how much I lost Too much to think of

Memories never die They're always there no matter what Use them as a weapon

Minds will get hungry So feed them with positive thinking Don't get it mixed up

A YEAR OF DROUGHT



"Collapsed" by Stephanie Hatala

Leaving Billy Stevens

These tears sting my mouth I don't want to get any older I don't want to let go I want to go back when we were little, when we made each other happy I have to leave My photographic heart says no And no, it isn't fair But holding you, doesn't quite cut it anymore And before the calendar turns for the eighth time Promise not to forget And I'll do my damnedest to do the same I'm not strong enough for this line of work And I can't call out for your voice because we just aren't that close anymore You're just that stranger in my head that only my inner child remembers to love

I'm All EarsAnonymous

I can't remember when I first got my hearing aids but it was about 14 or 15 years ago. My mom started to notice that I wasn't responding to her whenever she called my name or asked me questions. She said I would just stare blankly at her smiling, not saying a word. She thought I was just being stubborn and ignoring her but I wasn't. So doing what any worried mother would do, she took me to an Audiologist. There I met Ms. R. and Dr. M. Ms. R. is an older black woman with the best smile in the world. Her smile made me less scared to be in the doctor's office. Dr. M. on the other hand was the complete opposite. He was a very old white man around 60 years old or more. Im pretty sure he had a nice smile before the tobacco got to it, but he was friendly nonetheless.

They put me in what they called a booth. The booth is a very small sound proof room with a speaker and a chair in it and in front of the chair is a very thick glass window where there is another room. Ms. R. would put these headphones on my head and then leave the room and close the door tight. She would be behind the glass window. She spoke through a microphone, which I would hear through the headphones. She would then turn on this machine that made noises. For each time I heard a beep, I would raise my hand. She did this to both ears separately and at different volumes. Turns out I was hard of hearing. My parents had two choices: get hearing aids for me or put me in a school for the deaf. They chose to get hearing aids for me so I can go to a normal school and live a normal life like other kids my age.

Preschool and kindergarten to second grade was a breeze mainly because I spent most of my time in speech therapy. It was in third grade that I realized that I was different from the other kids from the simple fact that I was picked on constantly. I was laughed at because I couldn't pronounce a certain word or if the teacher called me and I didn't respond, she would yell at me as if I was ignoring her on purpose. The teachers would label me as inattentive, incoherent, or even absent minded. The weird part is that I was the smartest kid in my

class and my report card was always an A or B average. So

learning the subject wasn't hard, but being social was a nightmare.

Fourth grade was very challenging. Fourth grade is the time when little boys and little girls learn to curse. So I've been called many names, but that didn't bother me. What bothered me was when someone calls my name and mouths words to me; as a matter of fact, it wasn't even words. Kids would just move their mouth as if they were saying something to me and then laugh with their friends.

Even teachers made fun of me. Not directly, but I knew they did it to make their students laugh so they can seem liked. At the end of that year my parents said that I was going to a new school called Somerset Intermediate School because it was closer to home and safer.

As I started Somerset in 5th grade I learned that being

"The teachers would label

me as inattentive."

the new kid sucks. It wasn't just because I didn't know anybody there, it

was because this was a whole new school district for me and my classmates knew some subjects that I hadn't learned yet. So that was a major setback. The main problem is that somehow my hearing aid in my left ear didn't work. I went to the doctor, and they said that the hearing aid was working perfectly fine and that the problem was my left ear. The hearing in my left ear had decreased. So for a while I never wore a hearing aid in that ear until they gave me new ones, which were much

louder.

I was expecting to get harassed in $5^{\rm th}$ and $6^{\rm th}$ grade, but what I didn't realize was I would be the one to ridicule myself. I thought I was broken and that being deaf is terrible. People often told me to join sign language, but I refused because sign language was for the deaf and I didn't want to

be reminded that I was hard-ofhearing. I thought of myself as a mistake or a failure. This

"I have learned to be tolerant and not let my hearing problems stop me from achieving my goals and experiencing life."

lasted all the way to the end of 7th grade. By 8th grade, I was able to speak for myself and let I might become deaf and I the teacher know that I could hear them. Another problem I ran into is that my left hearing had decreased even more to the point where a hearing aid couldn't help me. The doctors preferred a cochlea implant. They said that I don't have to get one now, but they believed that a cochlea implant was in my future.

Freshman year was the turning point. I was beginning to accept myself and say I wasn't broken or a mistake. The idea of being reminded that I was hard-of-hearing still disturbed me a little. I avoided any activities that reminded me I had a hearing problem like swimming, music classes, sign language classes,

> and some sports. I stuck to writing and reading mostly plays. In the beginning of sophomore year, I took Amer-

ican Sign Language (ASL) because I had a strong belief that wanted to be prepared. I took interest in the Deaf Community. Learning about the Deaf Community made me accept my deafness as a part of me. I was actually mad at myself for not taking ASL earlier. I have learned to be tolerant and not let my hearing problems stop me from achieving my goals and experiencing life.

Tick

Jalynn Rivera

Tick Tick Tick Staring at the clock As if this was my last moment Trying to grasp it I have my hold on it. Tick Tick Tick A room full of strangers and no one to control me I'm a puppet with no strings and every day I try to change my Battery Tick Tick Tick Having no time to waste. Everybody is at the wrong place at the wrong time. But time is All we got. Tick Tick Tick Trying to find the words to say but No words have rolled off my tongue Every rhyme, every line, every quote In my head I could say to you... Tick Tick Tick Trying not to get caught up with stupid fantasies Without it being you and me... So I'll start with Hello.

Stockholm

Billy Stevens

I'm tired of hiding my words So withdrawn and hidden in redundant syllables

I've begun speaking bluntly, but my results fair no better; I'd just hate to see you leave

It's Stockholm syndrome in the purest sense I am trapped here, but I don't mind being your prisoner I'd rather be tortured, than for you to leave

I know my sentence is almost up I knew it wouldn't last

I am all too aware, of what this is doing to me I didn't know I was a masochist

If loving you means living in pain, At least I can feel something

At least I can pretend to be pressed against your lips

At least you're somewhat close to me

And yet, there are times where I can picture you dead And it comes quite naturally All the false truths and migraines All the lying glances, and sleepless gestures And yet, I love your detestable self

And in all my self-humiliation, I was wrong from the start, I will always be wrong, wrong to believe

But long ago, I murdered that doubt, And I am being punished for my crime

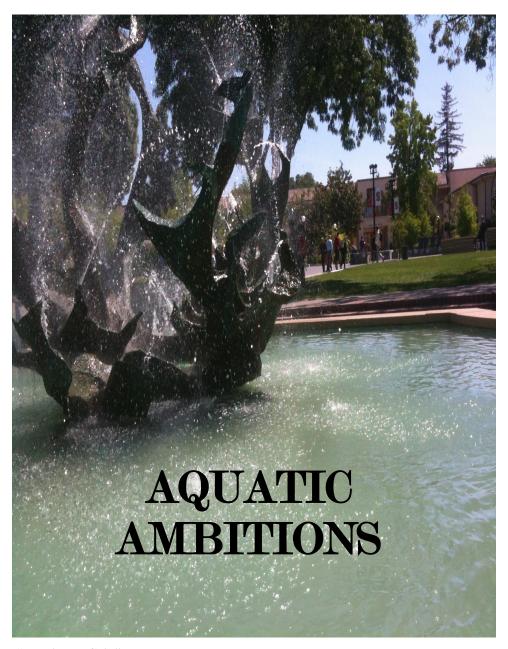
And on death row, I am my own executioner, blinded by the hood of false idols The tenets of my core beliefs were inconsistent, irrational

But I believed And that makes everything I have ever done, wrong

I want so badly to hate you, to be disgusted by every action, To desire seeing you dead. But I'm not that good of a liar

I want to capture the way air moved in and out without a care, without hesitation The gentle waves of skin envelope my eyes

Now I live only to dream To think and dream of your movements, memories of movements.



"Toss in the Coin" by Yamna Anwar

70 Canuckling 2012

DIVE

Veronica Attis

Look down at the water below you Blue and sparkling in the sunlight Raise your arms up high But don't be afraid Take a deep breath (enough that you can smell the sunscreen slathered on you) And plunge For a moment, everything stops Then a sudden rush of Water and energy flows Feel the coolness around you (You accidentally taste a bit of chlorine But never mind that) Rise and bob your head out of the water Hear the cheering loudly Echoing your name

Going Everywhere Lorena Torres

I used to live in a town in New York
But I always dreamed of going to France
Visit some of my friends in Italy
Maybe take a job in Argentina
Take a road trip to California
Or drive up to Toronto, Canada

Enjoy the view of Niagara Falls, Canada
Drive around the Big Apple or New York
Or see famous people in California
The most romantic city ever in France
Visit my family in Argentina
And take a grand tour of Italy

I've always wanted to go to Italy
But I'll probably go to Canada
Because it's closer than Argentina
I can go to the city of New York
All the time that's why I'll go to France
But first enjoy the sun of California

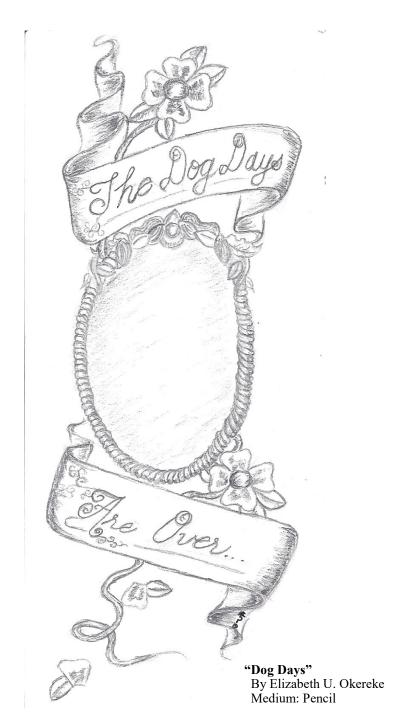
Staying in the coast of California
Enjoying good pizza from Italy
Visiting the Eiffel tower in France
Or during the break take a trip to Canada
Go to my old home town in New York
See the nice people of Argentina

Only once I've been to Argentina
Take a nap in the coast of California
And get stuck in traffic in New York
Or get lost somewhere in Italy
I would never live in Canada
Or eat a lot of food from France

Hopefully one day fall in love in France Enjoy the yummy food in Argentina And hate the freezing weather in Canada Take my camera and go to California And send many post cards from Italy Got to the airport and fly out of New York

First I'll go to New York, Canada, and California Then find my way out of Italy, France, and Argentina

Background: "Flight" by Yamna Anwar



74 Canuckling 2012

Sun's Pure Light Vanessa Ocampo

The sun's pure light chews out my dark despair,
Reminding me another day is here
And as I deeply breathe in God's fresh air
I meditate on things that I hold near

Family and friends

Happiness, peace, memories Music's melody and

Things that make me smile

The rising sun is followed by a new day Another chance to think, to love, to dream, For just beyond the shadows of my mind The sun's pure light chews out my dark despair.

Elemental Journey David Zhu

The cycle of life can be defined by the four major elements of water, earth, fire, and air. Water is the element of change. It comes in many forms such as mist, blood, and ice. Without water, one cannot survive. Some say it's the strongest element. Those with the spirit of water Are people who can quickly Adapt to change and create peace. Earth is the element of substance. It is capable of turning into different strong forms such as rock, land, or metal. Unlike metal, earth is a stubborn element; Difficult to control, but those with the spirit of earth form strong bonds with each other, like metal. Their strength lies in numbers and trust.

Fire is the element of power.
Those with the spirit of fire
Are constantly seeking for power
To hunt, to think, to rule.
It is the cause of human ruthlessness
But it is also called the element of life.
Without it, there is no beginning of
passion, warmth, or life.
Air is the element of freedom.
Like Angels, those with the spirit of air
Can detach themselves from troubles
To create peace, bonds, and freedom.
These four basic elements work
In a forever circling journey
To create or to destroy.



Ode to Water

Vanessa Ocampo

Water you are

The inspiration of artists.

Gods and Goddesses

Were named in your honor.

You are of angels and magic,

Sacred gardens,

Deep blue seas

And ponds

Yes you are everywhere

As well as in everyone.

From drinks

For the thirsty

To cleanliness

For the dirty.

You are referred

As H2O to scientists

Hydrogen bonding

Gets all the credit

But I know

It was all

Part of your plan

You are DNA

Our life-sustaining blood

Thank you

Clear, shapeless water

For you are

Truly the original

Life-giving force

Without you,

humans would dry up

As wrinkly as a raisin

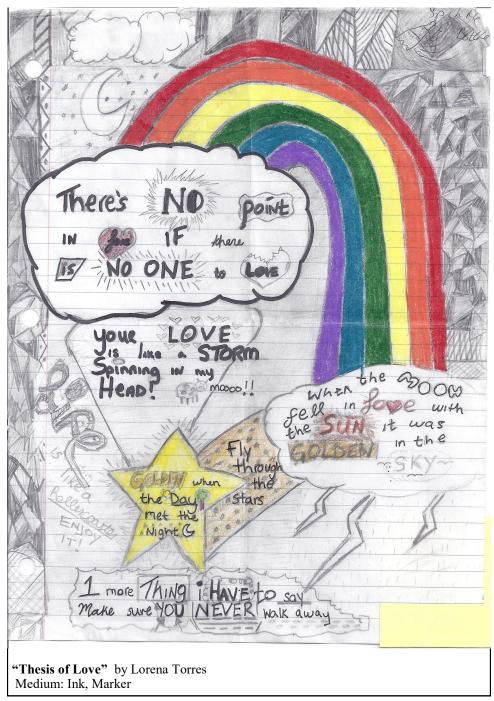
We have learned

From your many phases

And all of them astound us

So mysterious Even the brightest of chemists Are still perplexed by your Undving enchantment Your transparency Is one-of-a-kind Hiding nothing Withstanding no secrets. Do you know your boundaries? Will you stay in your place? I'm afraid not As seen in the eyes Of terrified drowning mortals Terror raging flowing terror You have the right To be enraged For we take You for granted And yet Your wise enough To still sustain us Making us a whole You will forever be a part of us Merging Through the mainstreams of our lives Cleansing Our impurities that intoxicate us Nurturing Our spirits and bodies Dissolving Our tears of waste and sadness Challenging Us to acknowledge

Your great Power over us



80 Canuckling 2012

I'd Give Anything

Vanessa Ocampo

I'd give anything to see the sun set on the horizon, I'd do anything to gaze at a full moon in the night sky; Even a rainbow would make me smile, And I'd love to swim in crystal clear waters Of an untouched sea. Sometimes I'll see a shooting star, And try to gaze from afar, At all the diamonds in the night sky The mist on the mountains is breathtaking, As is walking in a rainforest. To see cascading waterfalls I'd do anything for, As to stand on the highest peak in the world, And look at the sights below. I'd love to soar on wings above the clouds, Across the bluest skies. I'd do anything to see, All the beautiful things in the world, Like a red rose blooming in the Sahara, Like a river twisting through a dusty land, All the beautiful things in the world. But I also know I am looking at The world's most beautiful creation, Every time you smile, And every time I look into your eyes.

Ode to Mirrors

Kelly Woienski

Glass painted silver

Staring

Back at you

To show your,

Insecurities?

Glass painted silver

Staring

Back at you

To show your,

Beauty?

It's your choice

What do you perceive?

But,

The mirror never lies!

It is

What it is.

I believe both.

There are no rules for beauty.

You will see your flaws

And

You will see your gifts.

Now in society,

Women are not happy unless,

They are 99 pounds

With long luscious hair

Beautiful light eyes And a perfect skin tone. Now in society, Men are not confident unless, They have muscles like, John Cena, With a perfect shape-up, a luring smile, and facial hair. But yet, When the two "perfect" figures, Glance at the Silver painted glass They will stop, Point out their flaws And Walk away But again, The mirror never lies! It's how you perceive it.

Nature's Witness Vanessa Ocampo

As wind blows softly, Nature wakes up from its nap. Bees buzzing, "It's spring."

> Beaches are open Strong waves are hitting the rocks Kids are coming back

Children are playing Sun is out and shining bright Green grass is growing

> Birds chirping their song Building a nest for their home All ready for spring

Birds and bees flying Soft blades of grass on my feet New flowers are blooming

> Fragrant smells combine Bursts of colors come alive Witness the beauty





"Tree of Life" by Veronica Attis

Roots and Branches 85

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