

Canuckling 2011 Canuckling 2011

Volume 56 THE LITERARY-ART MAGAZINE OF NORTH PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL 34 WILSON AVENUE NORTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060

Chapters of the Road Chapters of the Road

AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION First Place with Special Merit 2010

COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION Silver Medalist Award 2010



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 M. O'Brien as the General Adviser and F. Bockius as the Art Director. We are proud to be a part of this tradition, now in its 56th year, as we graduate a class of approximately 200 bright, shining students.

2011 CANUCKLING STAFF

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Mr. John DeLaurentis English and Creative Writing Teacher Ms. Nicole DiTrani English Teacher

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> Staff: Fernanda Altamirano Tiana Rosa Samantha Padilla Tryce Reyes Michael Small Chloe Williams Chris Wong

Special Thanks to the English and Art Departments

Check out the new Canuckling website! Go to: <u>http://www.nplainfield.org/hs/site/default.asp</u> Click Publications tab and choose Canuckling

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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 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, 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 2011, 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.

Cover

Milton Medina, a junior, drew the image on the cover entitled "Inspiration." The medium is Pen.

Letter from the Editors

As the editors of this year's edition of *Canuckling*, we are proud and honored to present the 2011 edition of North Plainfield High School's literary-art magazine. The staff has taken extreme time and effort in going over and reviewing the various talented creativity found in our school, involving literacy, artwork, and photography. This year we are thrilled to present our theme of the magazine-*Chapters of the Road*. Together, as a staff, we chose this theme because we thought it reflects the paths and choices we take on through high school and life. Be they right or wrong, the decisions we make will forever alter our daily lives.

It is why we divided our theme into the following categories: Ninety-Nine Miles Ahead ..., Road Block/Under Construction, U-Turn, The Paths Not Taken, and Light at the *End of the Tunnel*. Each of these categories is based upon signs found on the open road and reflects the struggles and experiences we have making choices: from independent, selfachieving goals and visions, the answers and solutions we find in our personal struggles, to our own worst epiphany which causes us to stop and think about the decisions we've made, whether they were right or wrong. Together, as a staff, we were able to find and choose many artistic, literary, and photographic pieces we thought best describe our theme, and we found much creativity, styles, independence, expression, and goals represented among the students of our school. We are pleased to see the effort, hopes, talents, and creativity found amongst our fellow students. The combined staff and editors were able to go through various submissions and artwork, in order to express our theme along with the struggles

and achievements imaged in our students' minds.

Each poem, story, and artwork found in this year's *Canuckling*, vividly describes and explores the emotions, thoughts, and hopes found in our students' life. Month by month, we have taken extreme measure in combining the pieces of our vivid imaginative puzzle to present the many talents of *Canuckling*. You will also notice on pages 14-15 that we have included a remarkable piece of literature and art under *"Blast from the Past."* Since last year's edition of *Canuckling*, we felt it significant to remember older, unforgettable pieces from our past. We have been extremely thankful to the majority of the staff who put in their effort, dedication, and thought in combining the pieces of *Canuckling* together. We would also like to thank our advisers and the outside judges who help us by giving their point of view for the magazine.

We hope that you, as an audience will enjoy and discover the aptitude of art and literacy found in the students of North Plainfield High School, so that you may reflect and connect with each individual whose artwork, story, and poem has drawn great inspiration and hopes in making the world a better place and achieving their life-long dreams. We, again, are greatly honored to present to you this wondrous and inspiring version of the 2011 version of *Canuckling: Chapters of the Road*.

Note from the Advisers

Our dedicated staff this year worked very hard to produce a visually appealing issue. Since the theme was *Chapters of the Road*, a more minimalist approach was sought from our black and white cover to the various "road" inspired background digital photos (taken by our own adviser John DeLaurentis). We hope you enjoy the journey that lies ahead as you explore the various stops on the road of life. May your odyssey be one filled with more light than darkness. Travel on!

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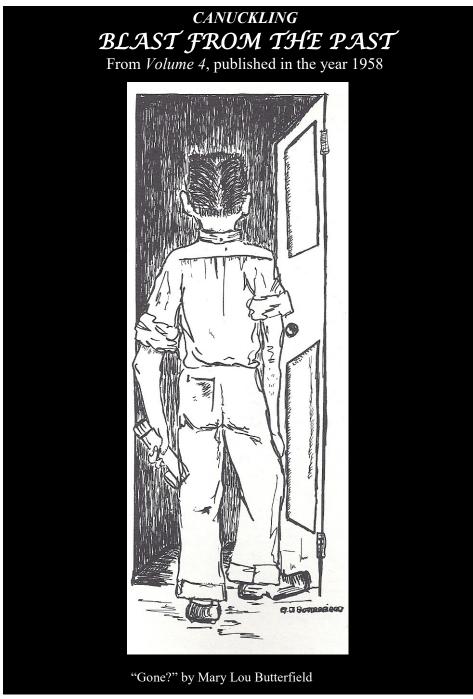
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CANUCKLING BLAST FROM THE PAST

From Volume 4, published in the year 1958

A THOUGHT PROVOKED

Judy Brown

The long grey passage stretching out before me Is usually just a path from room to room, And rarely as I use it, do I give a thought to being One of many, swept as dust before a broom.

Today this silent, empty passage holds Opened umbrellas, scattered here and there; And as I move along, passing from side to side, I notice things of which I never was aware.

Each square that shapes the floor is set in order. The doorways are exact in width and height. Together the lights form a line of even flame, And deep, serious thoughts are stirred by what's in sight.

Each man insists he must not be like others, And all profess their individuality; But when I look around and see so much the same, I must admit it strange: man's personality.

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GONE

Billy Stevens

It was all so very new. The feeling was different, yet familiar. A slight tingle in his eyes. Unconscious glances that he hoped would be reciprocated. And there it was. That word. Hope. It reverberated through him, echoed in the chambers of his restarting mind. For so long, there had been no hope. A starvation of desire. A false need for his demise had previously invaded his thoughts. But this. This was new. His heart expanded, as if *it* was breathing. As if *it* was the only organ needed for survival.

Maybe he had suffered enough. Maybe the universe was done screwing with him. Maybe she could fill the gap, and take the pain away. Maybe he was getting far too ahead of himself. Maybe she wasn't an angel. Maybe she was just like the rest: another nightmare trigger.

And yet, when he seldom heard that gentle voice, it stuck. The kindness wrought within it, forged by a deity that had long ago left him for dead. Golden strands like a mirror. Its purpose to reflect the signals sent from a higher power. Fate? Coincidence? Nature? God? It did not matter.

He was all too tired of thinking, but figured that it was time to indulge in his feelings, even if only for a brief period. Even if it wasn't real, at least he could feel what happiness is like. In a shrouded cloud above the city, she held him like he deserved to be held.

What if she was just like him? What if they could somehow synchronize beyond normal speech? Clock shaped hearts, gears locking into place like they belong. Could it be possible that they were the same? Could she, just maybe, understand? What if they were both set down on this decaying rock to feel miserable, until bliss would ensue. And then, like clockwork, they would stop inhaling.

But it was nothing more than a depressed, hypnotic fantasy. She would not even remember his name let alone comprehend what he was thinking, and it was impossible to see beneath, to visualize true emotion, and to act rationally, without getting blood on you again.

The slashing lines returned, and he no longer cared. The cloud dissipated, turned to rain. They tumbled through the sky, moisture striking his skin. The air gained an icy edge. He hit the ground. She was gone.

TOXIC WORDS Mikaelah Villacruz

Will you take me away again Off to the distant black My nightmare; anti-wonderland In mirth it sorely lacks

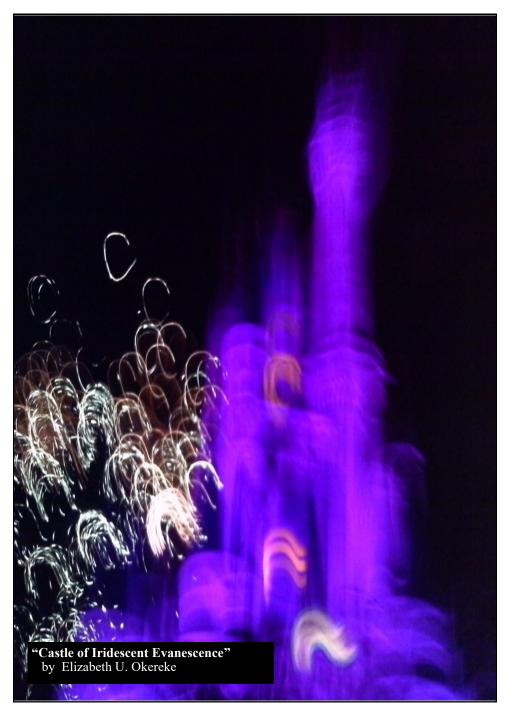
Perhaps it is the way your gaze Lingers a fraction too long Hazel eyes with a hungry glint Sing the bloody siren song

Toxic words that you cannot speak I think you just want me In stone silence, my innards weep Yes, I think you want me

Perspectives change against my own will My hope falters a bit Hoping you'll take me away To no avail, I sit

I wouldn't mind being in your dream As forbidden as it's true These toxic words I will not speak I think I just want you

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LONELINESS KILLS Tiana Rosa

So many people are walking around Having no where to go Everyone is so busy though But do nothing to accomplish

I'm so lonely

It's so crowded and tight here That I can't breathe Everybody needs some help But where will that take me?

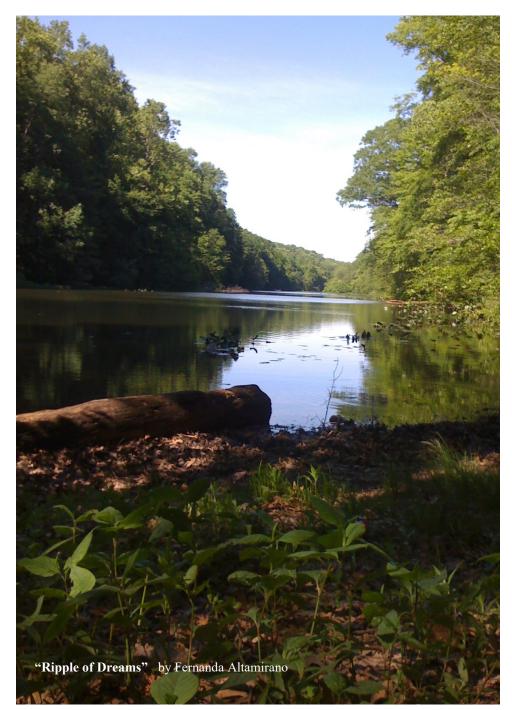
I want to see you

I kept seeing beautiful pictures From the dreams of the people Remember to never skip something You might miss what is true

But I don't know who you are

Nobody ever sees the shadows They cover so much of our lives The rain washes everything The single drop slips away

I want to see you before my dreams die



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What You Love Isn't Always What You Want Emily Anne Giambalvo

Secrets are dripping down the stone, Covering all the halls. Skulls on her dresser contrast with Pink hearts drawn on the walls. Black clothes and heavy makeup are Mixed with light and bright smiles. Scathing quotes and insulting lines Join pretty dolls in piles.

Macabre horror sits on shelves Beside books called "antic." She rolls eyes at the "We're in love," A hopeless romantic. Painful emotions haunt her past. Anything can scare her. Yet while she's scared and crying out, Her mouth spews out laughter.

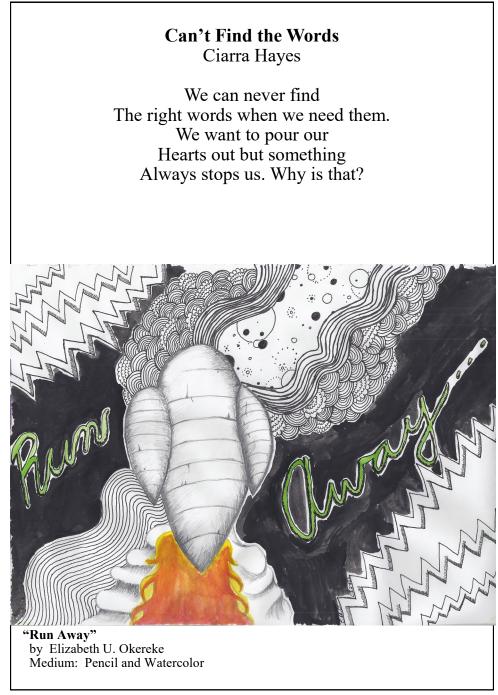
She is loud and she's outspoken, She's cripplingly shy. She hates having to explain things, But she always asks, "Why?" She wears outlandish outfits, but Hates receiving weird looks. While she thinks she's rather dumb, She's always reading books.

She's used to fighting to survive, Knows how to fight, kick, shove. She wants to make it *everywhere*, She aches to fall in love. She's reminded that she's crazy Hearing the child's screams, But she won't let that stop her from Living all of her dreams.

Thunderstorms leave her shaking, though She loves how they're so wild. She's skeptic, a nonbeliever, More naïve than a child. The strange is sure intriguing, but She lives it everyday, So while she *loves* the abnormal, She still *wants* the cliché.

My Rainy Night Elizabeth U. Okereke

Can't you hear the earth breathing? It sounds like desperate weeping, tendons dancing under the thinnest of the thin, yes, that's bones under my skin. I like that glass Moving slowly, slowly, slowly into the thinnest of the thin. No blood seeps through, but the pain is all the same Driving through this rainy day, unslain Highway lanes, let's travel far Forever like a guitar chord The villa is alive, the villain in time Shall conquer for a while and not with a smile, But we shall prevail, my love, my soul I believe, I believe, I believe, That our hearts shall roam free, Put your ears to the earth, hear her breathing, It's the rain coming down, coming down Make the dark show in 67 degree night Dark, silent, solitude, prime All in my rainy night, my rainy night my rainy night.



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Friendship Chloe Williams

Friendship is special and rare. It's unique and beautiful that two people share. It's as ordinary as a name, Yet must be treated like a sacred flame. Friends come and go, This we all know. But when a new friend is made. It seems the flame will never fade. Some friends we need, When all hope is gone, and we can't help but bleed. And others are simply there to take and to share. Friendship is special and rare. You know a true friend will always care. The ones who simply waste your time Aren't worth a dime. Then there are the ones who seem unreal. It can't be explained, what two people feel. When they meet, it's like fate, Real and true, not just bait. This friend you love is not a mistake, and no matter how hard they try, It's not something that you can break. The bond is genuine, unvarnished and clear. Nothing an actor can even come near. Some people haven't found this, And some never will. Others find it with many, and appreciate every penny. It's not easy to find something this true. But lucky for me I found it with you.

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Old Flame

Kiah Walker

The alarm clock woke Nicole as she rose out of the bed. She halfway opened her eyes to peer at the clock. It read 6 a.m. For some strange reason she was happy about this morning. It was just another Friday morning, but for some reason, she was very happy about this particular Friday.

Nicole proceeded with her morning schedule and got ready to go to work. She picked out a cute outfit and had on some nice pumps. Her hair was even looking shinier and bouncier than usual.

"Hmm, maybe God has something real good in store for me today!" exclaimed Nicole to herself.

As she left out of the door, she grabbed her keys and got in the car to be on her way.

After Nicole arrived at work, she was in a wonderful mood. She said hello to everyone at the office and then during her lunch break, her best friend Monique came and they went and ate lunch together. It was, unexpectedly, a good day so far.

On her way home from work, she remembered she had to stop by Shop Rite for some seasoning for the house. So she made her way to Shop Rite and went inside.

While looking in the seasoning section, from the corner of her eye, Nicole thought she saw this guy that she's been madly in love with since working at a diner with him years ago. She was so shocked; she froze for a few seconds. Regaining her composure, she looked at him again. After glancing again and again and again, she knew it was him. The last time she caught herself staring. He must have felt her stare burning into him because he looked up at her. Nicole quickly looked away, blushing. She hoped he hadn't realized who she was. Her hopes came crashing down when she heard footsteps getting closer and closer as they seemed to be approaching her. Nicole's heart was beating a hundred miles a minute. It almost stopped when she felt a tap on her shoulder.

"Hi. You look very familiar. Do I know you from somewhere?" asked the deep, sexy, yet anything but unrecognizable voice of James.

Nicole was temporarily in shock. She took in the whole sight of James Looc. Since he had on a beater, she took in the tattoo of his mom's name on the inner part of his right arm. She looked at his face and took in everything. She saw his gorgeous smile and the nice, full pink lips that pulled back to show it. She saw the little beard he had. Nicole glanced down at his hands and examined them with her eyes. She admired the strength they possessed and the scar he had on his right hand from a previous fight. All of this examining went on without Nicole even meeting his eyes. It all took place in under 7 seconds.

"Um, yeah, you do," said Nicole, blushing more with every word.

"Oh, I thought so. Wait, I remember you now!" said James grabbing Nicole's hand with pure excitement.

"Really?" asked Nicole, meeting James's eyes for the first time.

"Yes, I do! Nicole from working in that diner back in '08!" said James.

"You do remember. But yeah. It's been a while. You look really good, by the way," said James. Nicole thought she saw a hint of red in his cheeks.

"Oh, thanks, I try. You do too!" said Nicole, trying not to look at him too hard.

"Well, you definitely succeed. But, um, I got to get going. Maybe we can have dinner tomorrow night and play catch up?"

"Um, yeah, sure. Do you have a number or something I can reach you at?" "Yeah, 918-555-9999."

"Okay, I'm about to text you, so when you get it, save my number."

"All right, got it. See you later, Nicole," said James as he reached in and gave Nicole a hug.

"Okay, bye," said Nicole as she watched him walk away.

As soon as he was gone and out of sight, she jumped up and down and let out a little scream. Then Nicole immediately picked up the phone and called her best friend, Monique.

"Mo, Mo, Mo!" Nicole screamed into the phone.

"What, what? What happened?!" said Monique.

"Oh. My. Gosh, guess who I just saw at Shop Rite?!?!"

"Don't keep me in suspense! WHO?"

"James!

"James from way back!? The real fine, light skinned one you used to talk

to?!" "YES!"

"Whooo, girl!"

"I know! We are supposed to go to dinner tomorrow night! I'm SO excited! But let me call you back because I'm in the store screaming on the phone," giggled Nicole.

"Haha, okay. Bye, girl!"

Nicole hung up the phone and then got the rest of whatever she was going to buy and checked out of the store.

When she got home, she couldn't get to sleep. She lay in bed all day and thought about James. She was still, obviously, madly in love with him. She wondered if he felt the same. She wanted to call him so bad, but decided she would call him later at around 5 to see what plans they were going to make.

As the clock hit around 5:20, she decided to call him.

"Hello?" said James.

"Hi James, it's Nicole."

"I know. What's up Nicole?"

"Nothing. I was just going to take you up on your offer for dinner tonight." "Oh, I'm so relieved. I thought you wouldn't call."

"Oh no, it's been a while, I wanted to catch up on everything."

"Okay, good. Do you know where Safari's is?" asked James.

"Yes."

"Okay, so meet me there at 8."

"Okay."

"Can't wait to see you."

"Me either, I'm going to go get ready so I'll see you there," Nicole said with a wide grin on her face.

"Okay, bye."

James hung up the phone and Nicole ran to her closet, already knowing what dress she was wearing. It was a red, slim fitting dress that showed off her shape, perfectly. She then hopped in the shower, washed her hair, and did something real cute with it. She curled all of it, and then had her side bang out. She had to admit she looked pretty good. She put a little bit of makeup on and then peeked at the clock. It was almost 7:30. She decided to hurry and go so she wouldn't be late.

When she arrived there, she searched for James. When she found him, she went and he pulled her chair out like a gentleman. Nicole was impressed and very happy at how much of a gentleman he was.

"So, how is your food?" asked James, in that deep, seductive voice of his. "Oh, um, it's really good. I'm surprised I enjoyed it so much," Nicole

giggled.

"Okay, that's good. I did good on the restaurant."

"Yes. Yes, you did. But how are you though?"

"I've been fine. But this is not the reason I brought you here.

A look of alarm crossed Nicole's face.

"Oh, so why did you bring me here?"

"I don't know how to say it, so I'm going to just come out with it."

"Go 'head, I'm listening."

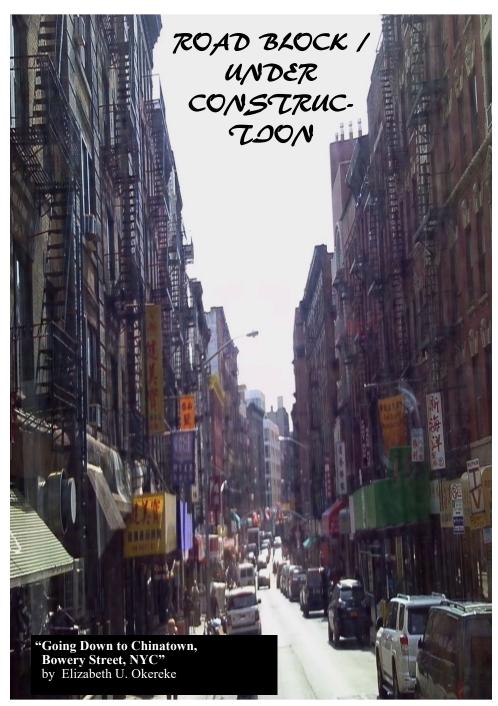
"I'm madly in love with you, Nicole."

Nicole ran into James on the other side of the table.

"Oh my god, James. I'm in love with you too. I have been every since the diner days."

"Okay, good. I didn't want to feel stupid," laughed James.

Nicole went across the table and gave James one of the most passionate kisses ever. The look they exchanged afterwards needed no words. It was a new beginning for the both of them.



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March Billy Stevens

The calm spring air reminds me of you Moisture in the sky: your embrace Yet this electric blanket, is a reflection of fury

> Progress Progress keeps me level

Keeps me on an ever elevating level Elevating towards a true, lasting destination Peace

There is too much turmoil To comprehend how I should reply Solemn neurological connections are gone Why is it I feel the urge to care, When no amorous feelings exist?

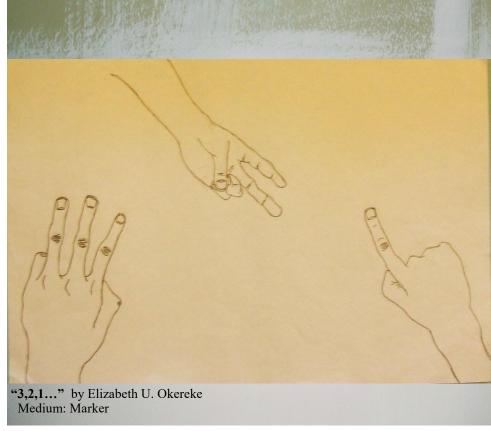
I can't help but be reminded of you One day, I will look back at it all I will smile, only lightly, memories fleeting Until that day, I will do my best to forget To repress, choke, bury

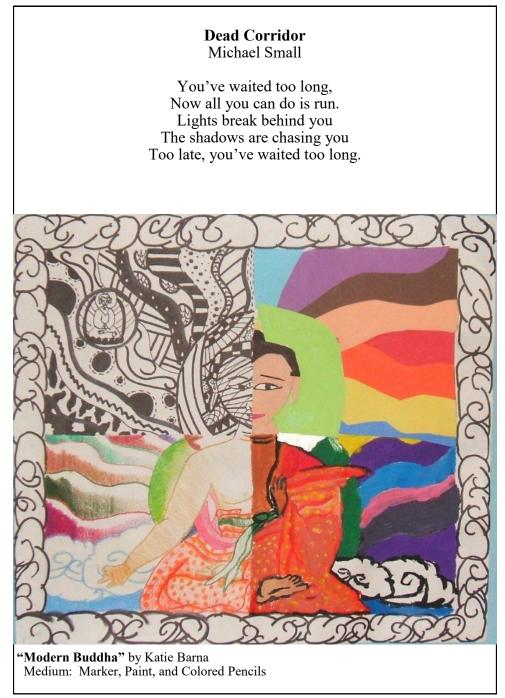
How long will this breeze last?

Silence Marie Jose Guevara in the silence is where all my questions are being asked. where no answers are being found where all I think of, is you. you, to calm my thousand fears you, to answer my thousand doubts. In the silence is where I cry where no one listens or lies. where no one is able to make fun of my tears, or fun of my thousand fears. is where I don't lie. where I get everything out, all I'm keeping inside. in the silence is not that hard, where I'm always asking if you are the right one, the one I deserved, or the one I want. the only place I can think and realize what isn't real, where I can judge and feel. think of what I didn't accomplish, and what I did. during my mornings, during my nights always thinking what's right. where I always remember where is hard to forget. where the film of my remembrances is always being played. reminding me what I did wrong and what hurts the most. in the silence is where I can really say how much I truly love you. how I truly feel or think about you. because silence is the only one that listens. always wishing silence could talk to me. to answer my questions and answer them all. in the silence I always remember

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I always regret. always regret how I closed my eyes and trusted you. I'm so tired of fighting. and then slowly I start to remember again thanks to that film that runs in my head. in the silence is where I wish you to stay with me the whole life. deep deep breaths; the only sound being made. while my story is being told all over again. thank you silence for always being there, thank you for always being willing to help. thank you for your cold and loneliness up there in my room where I need you, when I'm alone. thank you silence for always listening to me. thank you for always listening to the same exact thing.





Dreams Abraham Davis

Dreams are imaginary tales We choose to have at night. Sleep is so much soothing to us So our beds are just right.

Romantic dreams, scary ones too. They're unpredictable We look forward to them Cause the main character is you!

 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 dreams a night Our minds always roaming
 We twist and turn when things get hot Hoping it's not real burning.

Dreams are our inner most fears Or they might be pleasures. Waking up really sucks 'Cause my dream was getting better.

Eternal Darkness Michael Small

Marcus Donovan was returning from his business trip at four in the morning. As he was driving, the road appeared in front of the headlights. The wheels hummed under his car. His eyes began to droop as his hands weakened off of the wheel. He tried his best to fight it, but suddenly...BOOM!

Marcus awoke in a daze. He had crashed into an electric pole. "Damn it!" yelled Marcus.

There was no way he could fix the damages tonight, so he started walking in hope of finding a place to spend the night. He spotted a motel. He ran up through the empty lot to a small building labeled, "Main Office" in neon lights. There, he met an odd looking man, but once he had opened his mouth, Marcus knew that he sounded much weirder than he looked.

"How can I help you sir?" said the manager in a very eerie voice. "Uh...I would like a room for the night," responded Marcus.

"Good. Well according to motel policy, you have to pay in advance," he said with a forced smile.

"Um, where does it say that?" questioned Marcus.

"Are you questioning me?" groaned the manager, as he leaned forward.

Marcus did not want to argue, so he quickly paid.

"I would like my room keys now," said Marcus in an annoyed tone.

His room was on the 3rd floor. The hallway was dark, filthy, tainted, and smeared in heaven knows what. It was vile and disgusting. Marcus opened the door to his room and jerked back quickly. The smell of the room was awful. As he walked in slowly, he was scared to step on anything. The bed, he didn't even want to touch the bed. It was marked, tainted, and left with questionable stains. The bathroom, he'd rather urinate all over the motel carpet before stepping in there.

Marcus opted for sleeping on a leather chair in the room instead of the bed. He turned out the lights and put his head down.

"CRASH!"

Marcus quickly turned on the lights, and saw a shadow zip across the room. Marcus knew something was horribly wrong.

"What the hell was that?" panicked Marcus. He thought to himself, "I did not just see that, and besides, I've got to get some sleep. I need it for work in the morning; this'll all pass over."

Marcus turned off the lights and heard an unnatural scream from outside the door.

"SCREEEEEEEE!"

This he could not ignore. Marcus whipped the lights back on and crouched against the corner of the room. "All right, Marcus, it's all in your head, all those sounds are just nothing!" he assured himself.

Marcus wanted to leave as soon as possible, but he had already paid for the room, and he knew he wouldn't be able to get that money back.

"BANG!"

Marcus jumped up and saw the door was being banged on by someone...or something. The banging was not in the usual friendly way, but in single loud bangs. He quickly stuck his head out of the window to see that the manager was still in his office and no one else had stayed for the night. Marcus was starting to freak out as he saw screws bouncing from his door. He had lost all choices, but one. He tried to open the window, but it was netted shut for safety reasons. He kicked it out and climbed out onto the window sill. He looked back to see that the door was giving way. Marcus jumped from the window and rolled onto the platform of the second floor. As he darted down the path to the stair case, the lights behind him started to go out one by one.

The lights in front of him were going out as well. Marcus made a second leap and crashed onto the pavement. Marcus had lain on the ground in a daze. When he had come to, he realized that the manager's office was completely dark. Marcus looked up to see a sign he had not noticed before. It said, "Closed for Renovation." Then he also noticed the motel signs were barely hanging onto their boards, and there was a large tarp covering part of the motel. The building was cracked and looked like it could fall apart at any moment. There was a loud banging coming from the office now. What the hell was going on here? Marcus darted back onto the road. He was surely awake now.

Chapters of the Road 37

He had been running for what seemed to be a mile. Marcus thought he heard something behind him. He looked back to see what it was. He then regretted it. Street lights behind him had been going out with a "SHATTER," as if being stomped out. Marcus began to sprint, but he couldn't run any faster. The lights were exploding faster now. "POP" -"POP" - "POP," as the ground shook.

It was too late. The darkness had swallowed him whole, and then the street lights ahead were exploding too quickly for him to keep up. Marcus had been gasping as he watched the street lights shut off in front of him for miles. He sat there in the middle of the road and closed his eyes, and then from the darkness...

"SCREEEEE!"

When he opened his eyes, he saw a truck in front of him. The driver stuck his head out. "Ay!" yelled the trucker. "What the hell do you think you're doing in the middle of the road?!"

"Oh, thank God, do you think you can give me a ride?" asked Marcus as he trembled.

"Ah, I might as well. I got nothin' better to do. Hop in," groaned the trucker.

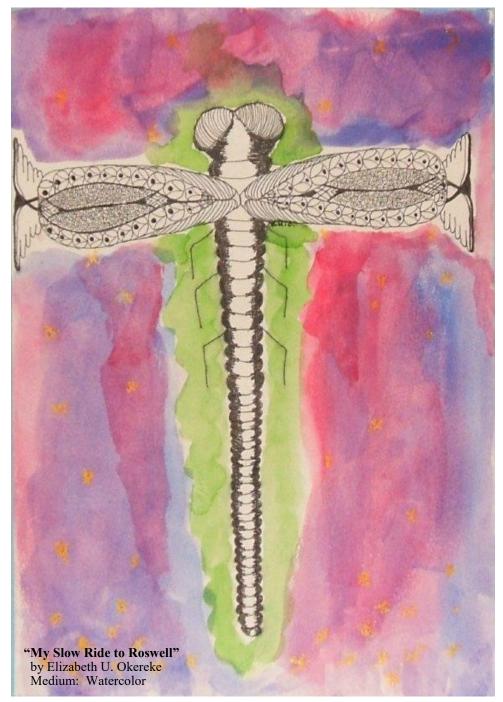
"Thank you!" cheered Marcus.

The truck driver dropped him off at the nearest bus station. Marcus got onto the first bus out of town and never looked back. He never did go back for his car. He didn't think it was worth the risk going back for it.

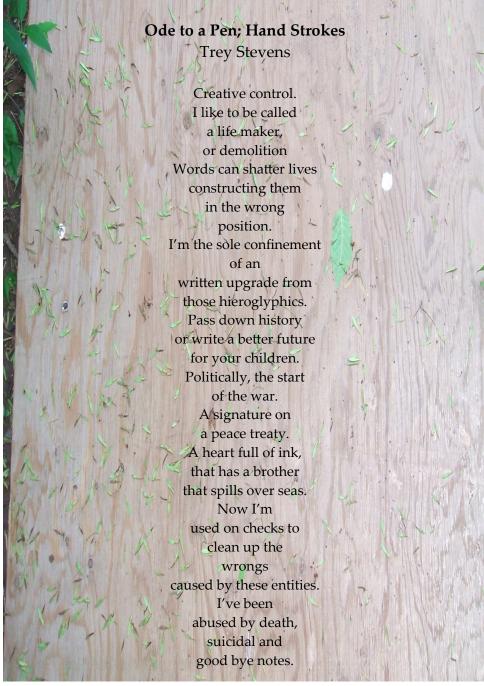
Marcus immediately quit the job when he was told that he would have to go back on another business trip. To this day he works at Dunkin' Donuts.

Blank CD Gladys Hernandez

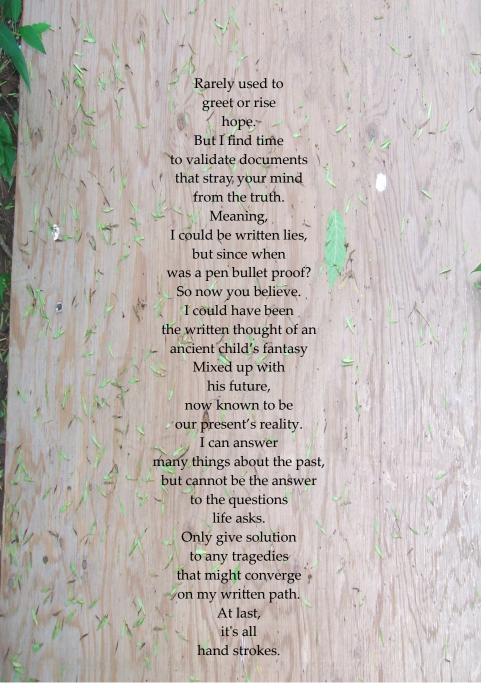
Hit the reset button Try and get back what you had Press play, stop or pause You still won't get back your love Replaying a blank CD



Chapters of the Road 39



40 Canuckling 2011



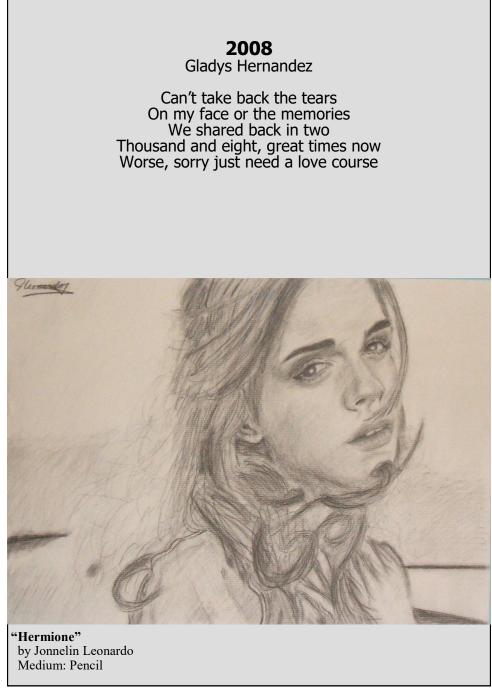
Chapters of the Road 41

The Way of the World Ciarra Hayes

We lie, we cheat, we even steal at times. We don't always stop and think of what's right. Your world could change at the drop of a dime. You never know what karma can ignite.

> Do what you want. Hurt who you can. Lie your way to the top. Enjoy it while it lasts.

We use the ones we know will never leave. So many lies will soon become the truth. It sucks but this is the way of the world. We lie, we cheat, we even steal at times.

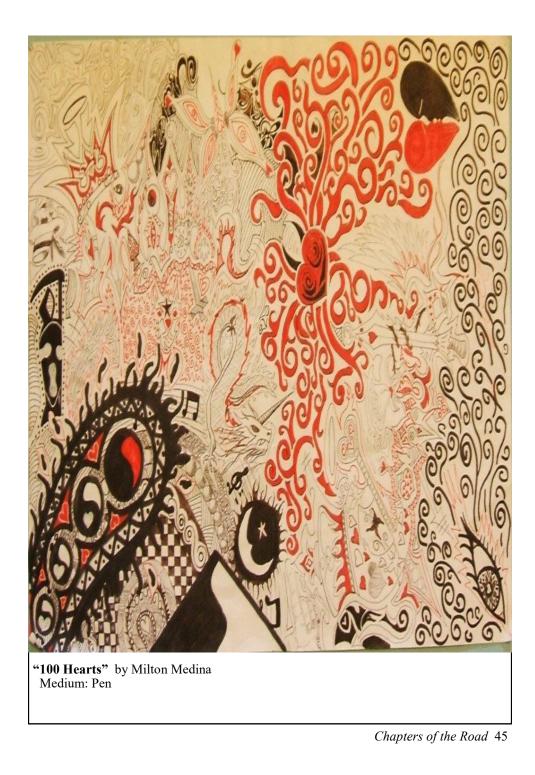


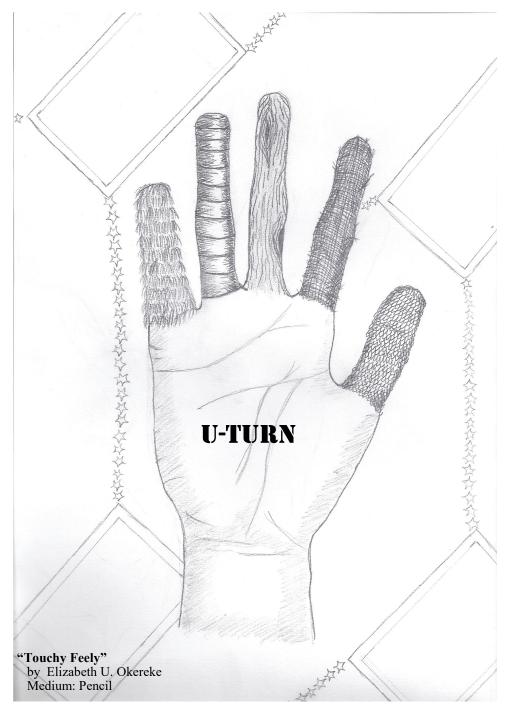
Red

Kiah Walker

When you said that, I felt the color red.
The words even made a couple tears shed.
I don't know why you treat me like you do.
Like I'm a toddler and only age two.
You don't realize that I'm now in high school.
I'm 15 and I sometimes break a rule.
It's not hard to believe, I'm at that age.
When this chapter's over, I'll turn the page.
Give me a chance to see what I've done wrong.
I just need to think, it won't take long.
I cannot trust you with facts about me.
It seems like you will not just let me be.
You always talk like you've been here before.
But all of my same problems, you ignore.

44 Canuckling 2011







"Crash" by Stephanie Hatala



Chapters of the Road 47



Chapters of the Road 49



50 Canuckling 2011



Chapters of the Road 51



"Bright Dancers" by Elizabeth U. Okereke Medium: Oil Pastel

Better Things Come for Those Who Wait Jocelyn Gutiérrez

I don't understand why I can't at least make one of them change for love. I've heard of love at first sight and love for a moment or a one night kind of thing, but I am not familiar with any of them. Let me tell you, I'm not a bad looking guy. My mom tells me how handsome I am and how my hair is beautifully brown and curly. My sister loves my eyes since it goes with the weather. I believe it's called seasoned eyes. It changes from brown to green and green to blue. I am very tall, not as tall as a tree but about six feet. Body type? Well all I can say is that I'm a football player, so you kind of get the idea. My personality? I'm very outgoing, I love being with my friends and family, and I don't get in trouble.

My friends tell me to get a girl, but I tell them that girls don't care about me; all they care about is sex. Let me tell you this, girls, well, they are like sharks and I'm the only fish in the sea. Or let me put it this way, me being the fishermen and they the fishes who are desperately wanting to get caught. Yeah, I know no fish want to be caught, but they literally put themselves out there with their short shorts, those pants that by my surprise won't rip when they sit, those tank tops that show all their cleavage, that heavy makeup that at the end of the day will drip and make them look like raccoons, and their hair that is gelled up so not even the air can move it. Yeah, practically every girl out there tries too hard to impress a boy.

I may seem modern, but I'm different than all those guys out there. Guys are like books. Weird, since many boys don't like them, but we are because we are judged like a book, by its cover, and our judges are the girls. They don't even care how we are or if we are easy to understand. All they do is tell us if we cared about them or tell us we don't love them. Why do they tell us what we do and don't feel?

Still I haven't seen that girl that takes my breath away. Well since I'm saying everything, let me just add that I haven't had a girl to kiss me or vice versa. I haven't held a girl's hand or even hugged one, not because I'm not attractive but because I don't want to be hugging on girls and make them feel like I had some kind of feeling for them. Many girls are gullible. They would think that a smile can mean the world to them. Not really. It's just being friendly, but they get it all twisted. I'm just going to wait on the right girl that's going to be that rare rose in the winter.

Not really. It's just being friendly, but they get it all twisted. I'm just going to wait on the right girl who's going to be that rare rose in the winter.

"Dude! I heard there is a new girl in school. She is good looking. Get at her."

"Nah, I told you I'm not in a hurry."

"Like, don't say I never told you though."

Well he may be right but I just hope she is not like plastic.

"David Ortiz please report to the main office. David Ortiz come down to the main office, thank you," said the loud speaker. Walking down the hallway, I wondered what they needed me for. I see my counselor. Walking with her she takes me to her office and as soon as I turn my eyes I see an angel. Wow I was breathless! My mouth was forced to smile at her, my eyes were like magnets attracted to her eyes, and she was impossible not to look at. Her hair was long and wavy. Her skin was a nice tan color, and it looked so soft. The way she sat was so perfect. She had good posture. When she smiled back I felt like heaven was falling from the sky into this room. Her face looked like it was carved from an angel's face. When God made this girl he broke the mold. She had no makeup on, which made me see her natural beauty. Suddenly she puts her head down gently. I have no idea why, but it was nice.

"You are going to be her guide and take her to her classrooms. Don't make her late. Any questions?" my counselor asked.

"No, none, can we leave now?"

"Yes, go."

I made a gesture with my hand for her to walk in front of me. She gets up and gives me this shy smile, she flips her hair to her left, and without trying it lands perfectly, while she puts her purse on her shoulder.

"Let's go," she said giving me this soft smile. I was speechless, since this girl continued to amaze me. As we walked to her class, I didn't say much, just the regular questions, what school she came from or for my convenience how old she was. She responded to all of these perfectly. She even added that she was a Christian. I told her I was one also. When we got to her class, I told her teacher she was new. As soon as I turned around, I saw all the guys already "checking her out" and for the first

time I felt jealous and scared of losing her. All I thought was she was going to be fine, and if she was meant to be for me, she will stay like that forever. When I walked out of that classroom, I knew my future was about to be changed.

"Ringggg," the bell rings and I'm already at the door waiting for her. With a smile on my face, I'm ready to see her.

"Hey, how was this class?" I asked.

"Well very interesting. Are all the guys and girls like that?" "What do you mean?"

"Like, are they all full of interesting things to say?"

"Yeah. Are you a junior?"

"Yeah."

"Okay then."

"What's wrong?"

"Oh nothing, just that I thought you were different."

"Oh." I paused since we arrived at her class. "Well, I'll see you later."

I was confused since she gave me no good or bad emotion whatsoever. Sitting down at my desk, I looked at everything around me, paying attention to things that I didn't even bother looking at. For example: the window, it looked new but it had a crack in it, or the floor, it was polished and I could see my reflection, but the crack on that window caught my eyes. It made the difference. Yeah, just like that girl whose name I cannot forget. She is different. She makes me feel something inside of me that wants to come out. My mind only thinks about her, and I've only met her for a few hours, and I want to marry her. She shines in my eyes, she is gorgeous, and she is beautiful.

"Man, why are you smiling alone? Dude? Hello?" my friend said. Then he grabs my hand from holding up my head.

"What?" I answered, still confused to why he did that.

"Are you okay? You didn't even react to me hitting your arm."

"Yeah," I answered calmly.

"Are you...?"

"No I'm not 'high'! You know I don't do that."

"Yeah, but it looks like you were thinking so hard about something and you were digging into your emotions."

"Sure, whatever you say." I answered trying to go back to that mellow moment that thinking about Angela had taken me.

"Dude seriously. Snap out of it! I don't know why I'm asking, but do you like someone?"

"I guess I do, man."

I asked the teacher to leave a few moments before the bell rang. The bell rings and I'm not there, so I run to her class and she is there waiting for me.

"Hey!" she exclaimed. Seemed like she was happy to see me too. "Hi!" I replied, trying to catch my breath.

"I was thinking of you."

"Really? So was I." As we walked down the hall, she asked for my name."David," I replied.

"Amazing. So I have something to tell you next period."

As always, she would keep me wondering what it could possibly be. I loved it though. Every period, I walked her to class. She would keep me thinking of her. The day went on with her asking me things and me responding. I didn't ask her why she kept asking too many questions about me. Last period came and even before she asked something, I asked her first. "What do you think of me?"

"I like you, because even though it's been only one day, you look and sound very honest with me, and you didn't have to say much in order for me to hear from you, because your actions speak louder than words."

She leaned against me and gave me a kiss on the cheek and said goodbye, but I replied with a see you later.

The next day I didn't have to escort her to her class, but I wanted to do it so I did. Every time the bell rang, I would be waiting for her at the door. My friends were happy that I found that special girl in my life. I told them that the best things come for those who wait.

A year passed and we liked each other but didn't say anything. At one time she took me to her family dinner and we had an awesome time. Time passed on and I decided to ask her mother something in private.

"Would you give me your daughter's hand in marriage?"

Both her parents approved and thanked me for including them in my thoughts. This did not make things easy, but nervous since I had planned all this from the time we met. I had a conversation with my

mother that same day asking her what she thought if I got married.

"It's about time son you got married with that girl. She is very nice and I like her. You both are about to graduate from college this year, so go ahead and start your future together." She gave me a big hug and her blessings.

I ran to Angela and asked her if she wanted to go to the aquarium that night. When she replied with a yes, it made things even more nerveracking for me. When we got there, we had so much fun and I realized that I still loved her just as much as at the start.

"Hey, I got something for you." I opened a bag of chips that were her favorite, but before I handed it to her, I put the ring inside the chips.

We walked a few, but as soon as we turned to go see the dolphins, she stopped and looked at me with surprise, and said, "Yes. I would love you to be the man who will fill my life with joy and happiness." She hugged me and kissed me on the lips, and it was like the Fourth of July at that moment because we created fireworks from our love.

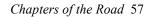
Six months later I find myself wearing a suit standing in front of the altar just waiting for the soon to be beautiful bride.

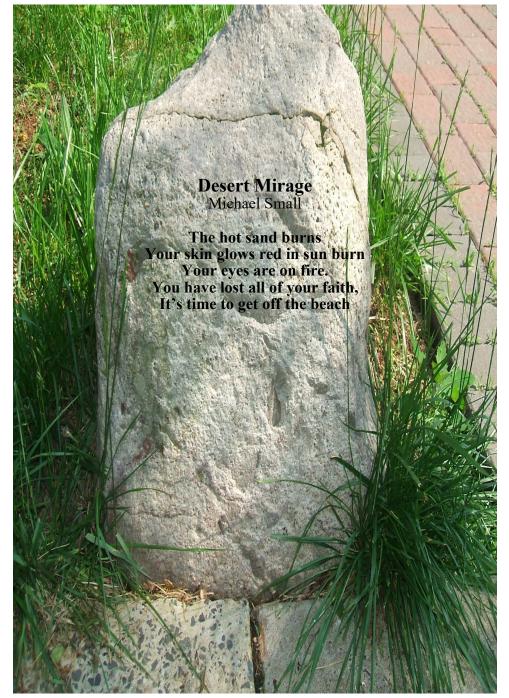
"Here she comes," everyone's saying. They take pictures, and I feel my legs all weak. I see her and she was glowing. She looked so pure in my eyes.

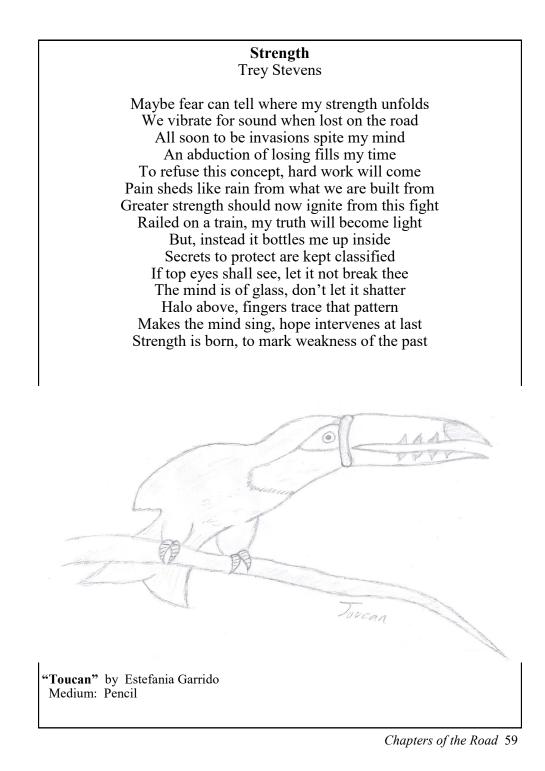
She came up next to me and said, "I love you."

I told her with tears in my eyes, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

I started our marriage with the word of God. A new page had begun and a new life full of love.







THE PATHS NOT TAKEN

"Unknown Tracks" by Fernanda Altamirano

8:25 Billy Stevens

On top of stinging waterfalls we'll conquer this world

Ours alone Strung together by a collaborative effort that only two like minds would share

Like picturesque fireworks and still sky frames, only we could form I want you there with me

> The simple truth is that i'll love you 'till comets collide and rain turns to acid

As the earth deteriorates and crumbles in our hands I'll hold you tight, darling and watch the end

It's impossible for my heart to burn any faster than when i look at you I see sanity and a comfort i need in your eyes

> The clocks may say 8:25 but i know, we have hours to go



"Mask #0002" by Elizabeth U. Okereke Medium: Marker

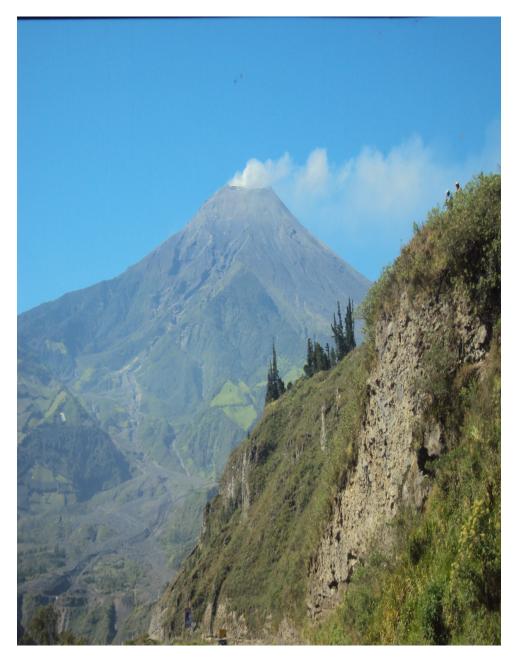
Wonder Elizabeth U. Okereke

I wonder, I wonder, Where would I fit in? Am I the first thing in your suitcase, or the thing you almost forgot but threw in at the last minute? Can all of me, quiet and contemplative, fit in with all of your sweet happiness. We are not oil and water, we can mix. We are salt and vinegar chips, once the sour taste subsides and you can taste the sweet salt. You are my Ashes, out of you comes a phoenix ashes from which come fire, our fire, light and hope.

They are just thoughts...they are just feelings Maria Jose Guevara

Thinking you is ugly Or that you can't be better than others. And everyday lying to yourself About things that aren't true About things, that hurt you every day. That from you I hate so much But I'm not judging you, neither criticizing you Because, I might not be any different from you. Observing you every day, I always ask what made you that way I always ask what made me the very same way Nothing fits us right. I look bad in dark colors, even worse in bright. Always thinking you are not enough Not smart and maybe beautiful inside. Knowing that no one likes me, And no one ever did. Only a simple toy to everyone we are. use it whenever you need it, and easily disposable become.

thinking you are nothing but skin and a bunch of bones that no one respects, that no one values, but yes scared of. always rejected, and never accepted it this is reality...and the smiles? ... I guess we are forced to fake them. is actually not that hard, after all we've been through in our lives I'm so sorry for anyone who feels this way, I hope this could end one day. all the thoughts of being ugly, the feeling, the thoughts of not being good enough for anyone. the thoughts that hurt the thoughts are just thoughts we can't control and no matter what people say no matter how many times they tell you how pretty, how beautiful you are. is never the right answer. we never believe because we got way too many scars, to prove that every single cruel lie is wrong mostly when we been lied to, way too much ...



"Tunguraguah, Ecuador" by Fernanda Altamirano

Better Billy Stevens

The future looks oh so much better I no longer wish to feel the chaos You're gone And it's better that way, you tyrannical little burden You can't get to me anymore

You aren't missing anymore You aren't wanted anymore The only problem, is that you aren't fully replaced

Someone better will find me Someone will understand me Someone will stay with me Someone better than you

And life will be better because I don't have to care about you I can recover, and live again So very free from your torment

Even though you meant so much You are the past I don't need you, it's over And in realizing that, I feel so much better

The Final Text Gladys Hernandez

She smiled at her phone, as she received a new text message from Kyle. Her heart seemed to get bigger and bigger. It was as if her heart could somehow smile as she was, too. *Saturday at 7:00*, read the message. Kyle Chester, her high school sweetheart and the guy she had first fallen in love with was on the other side replying. Angel and Kyle were voted couple of the year in 1989, as seniors. It was now 2011 and for some reason Angel could not get over her feelings for Kyle. They did have a horrible break up, but the memories couldn't compare. Everything happened for a reason.

Angel thanked Facebook daily for their reconnection, but one thing was killing her. His relationship status was labeled *married*. There wasn't a day she didn't stalk her lover's page. Who could he possibly marry? He probably hadn't gotten over Angel. Mr. and Mrs. Chester were the future. It had to be, right?

Saturday arrived. As Angel woke up she seemed very different inside. A smile rose on her face, she was confident and for the first time in a while, she was happy. Not just any type of happy, but a real, special happy. Since her break up with Kyle, never had she had this unique feeling. It seemed as if it was the old high school years, again.

"Hello?" answered Angel, with her Blackberry to her ear.

"Hi. Um, are you ready?" said Mr.Chester.

"Yeah. Almost. See you there in an hour?"

"Sure thing. Bye love." He hung up.

"Whoa! Love? Did he confuse me with his wife? Oh my, this is crazy," whispered Angel, in her pink bathroom ready to shower.

Although, Angel was happy to hear those words, she did not want to be part of an affair. Her heart told her to not take the risk of going. Her body was forcing her to go. Angel's theory was if a man was taken, you should not be messing with him. At least, you wouldn't want anyone to do that to you.

"I don't think I can go. I would feel terribly bad for the wife."

Angel reminisced on her childhood, remembering when her dad left. As much as she wanted to attend such an event, her

pride would not let her. She couldn't even bring herself to tell Kyle about how she felt. Looking at the bear he had given her from before, she let out a big gasp. What was the point of trying to get Kyle back if he had a ring on his finger? He will probably be awaiting her, but she couldn't attend. Her phone ringed over and over again, but her small fingers could not press answer.

"Damn."

Hours passed. After a while the phone stopped ringing. What was going to be her excuse? It was such a rude and cruel thing she had done.

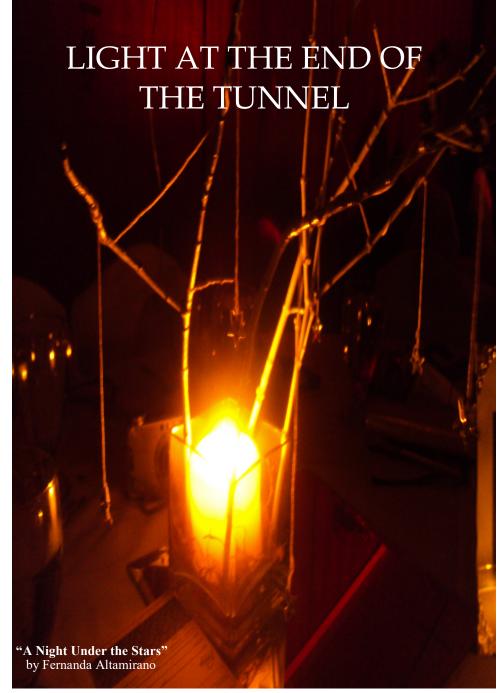
"Why did I get myself into this?"

Just when Angel had given up all hope, the phone vibrated. New message from Kyle. A smile rose across her face as she read his lovely text.

I have a confession. I am in love with you. If your wondering why my Facebook is labeled married, it's because I will always dream of walking down the aisle with YOU. I understand why you did not come tonight. I'm willing to take time for us to reconnect. To gain our relationship back, just like old times. See you later love. \bigcirc



Dragonfly with Ghost Eyes" by Elizabeth U. Okereke Medium: Pencil



Symbiosis Billy Stevens

Part 1: Eternal

Those stars. Those vexing stars. Laughing at him. Saying "This is what perfection looks like. You can see it. It will never be yours." He hated omens. He rolled over. She was already asleep. The fire, coals dimly glowing. There was no way he could relax. Even if he managed to close his eyes and lose consciousness, the dreams would hurt too much regardless. It was better this way. It saved everyone a lot of pain.

Knowing that it can't last forever is the hardest part. Realizing that you are too weak to let go is a close second. Go out with a bang, he always thought. He accepted it would be a fizzle. Like dipping a dying sparkler into a tin of water.

He looked back at his star. Wind swept the plain. Dust blew past him. He kept his eyes open. Her hair brushed back and forth. This was all he wanted. Being content. Isolated yes, but content nonetheless.

He thought he heard the striking of a match. He slapped the ground, scrounging for his magnum. That had been happening a lot lately. He didn't care. Habit became reflex. He settled back in.

Clouds soon marred the sky. The temperature dropped. He crossed his arms. He couldn't remember what he was looking at. He eventually figured it to be the black denim material covering his left knee. The coals had dissipated.

A familiar tightness in his chest returned. He clutched at his left side. Breathed in hard. Out again. It went away. He flipped up his hood above his blackened locks. They used to be blonde. He couldn't remember when they changed. He pulled his leather gloves up the remainder of his bony wrists. He stood up, shoving the covered hands into his jacket pockets. He turned to face east. He would remain for several hours.

Inspiration is hard to find, even when it resides mere feet away.

He came back to life as the sun inched its way, illuminating the seemingly endless ocean of sand. He shook his head, stretched slightly, and turned back to his original location. She was still there. At least everything would not collapse at once. Her eyes fluttered, revealing deep concentric circles of mahogany. Her arms expanded away from her chest.

"Did you to that standing thing again?" she questioned, obviously fatigued in her speech.

"You should be aware of how I operate by now."

"You still amaze me," she said dryly.

"Be that as it may, we have a long way to go, and no destination in sight."

"That made no sense."

"Then you fail to realize the sensibility of the situation."

"And you fail to realize I woke up thirty seconds ago, you stared at the ground all night, and are uttering utter nonsense."

"Don't I always?"

"Yes. But generally I can translate for myself."

"Anyway. Do we have everything?" Looking around the area where they had rested. Probably for too long.

She pointed at a holster filled with a berretta on her right thigh. "I believe so."

He grabbed her hand. They began walking towards the sun, leaving a low blanket of dust in their wake.

They said nothing for quite a while. She, as usual, broke the silence.

"It's colder than I thought it would be this morning."

"If you want my jacket, you just have to ask."

"Then that leaves the possibility of you saying no."

"Have I ever said no?"

"No."

"Then there is your answer."

"You are unfair."

He handed the jacket, revealing on himself a faded t-shirt of a band that no longer existed. She left his hand long enough to put the article of clothing on herself. She then hurriedly thrust her

delicate, also gloved, appendage back to its rightful place.

He tried to keep his vision up ahead, but would continually look at her when he believed she would not notice.

"Hey..." she began. "Kiss me."

They locked, for several moments and several breaths.

"It's been too long," she said.

He nodded. "Promise me something."

"What's that?"

"Promise you'll come with me to the end of the earth." "Of course."

He squeezed her hand once. She smiled.

Time went by more quickly than it used to.

"Do you ever think about what it would be like if we were still back there?" she asked.

"I do. They aren't pleasant thoughts. Then I look back at you, and everything is okay." Their eyes connected.

"How much longer do you think we have left?"

"Just enough," he replied starkly. Her expression became blank, worrisome. "Try not to think about it," he said, smiling as best as he could. He squeezed her hand again. She laughed through a singular tear. She wiped it away on her glove.

"Don't let go," she said.

"Until you tell me to, I will never let go."

"It isn't fair," she cried.

"I know." He did his best to hold back the liquid stored behind his eyes.

The wind picked up. Her hair swirled sporadically. Dust rose from the ground. Instinctively, they covered their mouths. Looking to the right, there was a collection of large rocks. They crouched behind them, the tempest of particles washing above their heads, able to breathe in again.

She leaned her head on his shoulders.

"We can't keep doing this," she said.

"We have to."

"I know."

"I don't want to breathe without you."

"If you make me cry again I swear..."

He pulled her gently so her head was on his stomach. He leaned down and they locked together. The wind was changing directions, and he shielded her from the debris. They stayed for several minutes. The dust storm subsided. Darkness encroached faster than they would have liked.

They patted their bodies off. A tan, dry mist had been stuck to them like baby powder. It was best if they settled against the rock for the night.

"I'm so sorry," he said. Doubt and uneasiness lingered his brief words.

"Shh. You know what worrying does to you."

"I know. I just need you so much."

"And this is why we work. We are here for each other. Nothing else. Now, sleep while you can."

And he did. He was thankful, that for one night, he could ignore the terrors, and only remember her embrace. Her words resonated as he drifted into the black. We are here for each other.

Despite the unconscious coughing fits, he slept surprisingly well. As in he stayed within that other realm. She actually woke up first. She left him alone, knowing the pressure he has been under. He has trouble taking care of himself, but the fact that he thinks for two people isn't easy. He takes both the weight of their individual burdens to heart. Which means that weight goes directly to his head. He thinks until it takes up everything. He swells in it. She tries her best to make it less difficult on him. She really does.

She watched him. His head slumped to one side. Arms crossed. She never knew how anyone could rest like that. He always claimed it was as close as he could get to being comfortable. Deep, introspective breaths. She knew he was going over fifty different situations in his head. Mentally dealing with each consequence.

Their surroundings, hardly pleasing. The sun was pale. As if someone had poured mineral soap over its original gold. Everything else was a uniform color. The sand, rocks, essentially every expanse of land was the same tan. The dull sunlight did not help in

differentiating shadows or forms. Days were not as long as they should have been. Each passing day seemed to get smaller and smaller, even if by a few seconds. A few seconds that could be felt.

His eyes sprang open. He casually stood up. She was somewhat startled. He stretched his arms, tightened his gloves, and smacked his holster. A ritual.

> "Should we get going?" he asked, almost rhetorically. "Of course."

Leather touched leather as they clenched hands. Again, they trotted the way of the faded sun.

There was not much to discuss. Occasionally she would glance at him. She felt safe. And even though he would likely not admit it, he felt the same way with her there. She knew.

It was hard to tell how long they had been walking. No concept of an hour existed anymore. He used to measure steps instead. It got annoying quickly. A metallic pang rang all through the wasteland. The familiar sound of bullet hitting rock restored a sickness inside of him. They dropped for cover, firearms in hand.

"Do you see anyone?"

"No," she said confidently, as shells chipped away at the boulder formation they had braced their backs against. He glanced sideways out of the corner of his eye. He couldn't see a trace of anything. He had a plan. He removed his left glove. He edged closer to the end of the rock, shots still more than audible. He tossed the glove far to the opposite side in an arc, high in the air. A masked figure made itself, inadvertently, known. He unloaded two shots as the figure focused on the glove, utterly vulnerable. One square in the chest. The other below the jaw.

Cautiously, he listened for more gunfire. Almost certain there was no present danger, he headed for the corpse. Picking up the former adversarial revolver, he removed its contents. He checked the other pockets of the carrion. Nothing of any value or use. What a shame.

Turning around, he had a berretta staring him between the eyes.

"Very funny. Should we get moving? Also, see my glove anywhere?"

She fired. His eyes closed. A body hit the ground.

"Thanks," he said, clearing his ears of the ringing, plucking the glove from her gesturing hand. He stepped backwards over the second assailant. He hadn't been carrying much either, just like his partner. Nothing to help them on their way. They continued to the point of exhaustion.

Part 2: And All Things Must End/Gunslingers Forever

Something told him it would happen this way. As usual, he doubted himself. There was really only one decision requiring his attention, but the way it seemed to exponentially expand made it difficult to bear. He had had all of this time to think of what to say, and how to say it. It all should have come so easily, if it meant that much. And maybe that was the problem within itself. This all meant nothing, he concluded. And that was the mindset he would go forward with. He didn't believe a word of it.

The thunder called out to him. There was a sprawling world in front of him. He wanted nothing to do with it, just as it wanted nothing to do with him. He wasn't supposed to be this weak. But he couldn't manage. He only had himself to blame. He allowed his brain to attack itself, with very little resistance. Years of torment remained hidden and silent to the outside.

He was never forced to say goodbye before. It was much smoother to think about the words, rather than tell another living organism. There would be no going back, no apologies, no guilt. He would save both of them this way. She deserved so much more, if only she could see it. Then maybe she would go instead, so he wouldn't have to go through all of this pain. Remorseless pain.

But the timing was right. He could feel that miserable apathy crawling and searing its way up his body. The veins in his arms grew dark. It had to be done now.

"Hey," he struggled to breathe out.

She rushed over, seeing his deteriorating condition, visibly sick in the skin, a charcoaled tint to his face. She slid her hands folded under his, the liquid pulsating; she could feel all of it. Tears, weighing heavily down, etched into her cheeks.

"Don't... Don't do this... we're almost there, I know it...don't leave me here... Le-let me do something... anything!" she broke down, sadness becoming frustration.

"Hey... don't worry... jus-just listen to me..." he coughed out. "You are going to have to be by yourself from now on. It might seem scary, but you will have to keep walking, and never, ever look back, just like we never looked back," he struggled to say, ashen tears utilizing gravity to drop from his eyes to their collected hands.

"I can't do that... I can't lose you. I'm not strong enough..."

"Are you kidding me? You're the strongest person to inhabit this world. You were able to put up with me, saintly in its own right. And so far, you've outlasted this infection. That's pretty damn strong." He continued to dim, his life being sucked away. His eyes began to shut.

"No," she shouted at him, voice cracking. "What happened to not letting go until I tell you to?"

"And that was the truth. It's time. Tell me to let go."

"I won't. I refuse. We're too close. We can fix this."

But that was it. His eyes closed. She wasn't finished. She checked his breathing. Very coarse, with seemingly infinite pauses between. This had to be done quickly. Reaching into her pocket she pulled out a short length of plastic tubing, no more than a few millimeters in diameter, with razor syringes on both ends. She rolled up her sleeve and taking a deep breath, plunged the needle into her forearm.

Without another gasp of air, she did the same to him. The ink-like liquid flowed, and as soon as it hit her flesh it was over. She ignored the pain, even felt a wave of happiness wash over her. She smiled. She saved him. Laying her head on his shoulder, the poison within traveled until it reached her heart, where, now unable to pump blood, imploded on itself.

Part 3: Letting Go

He wouldn't wake up for much, much longer after she passed. Confused, he looked at the lifeless body next to him. He felt his arm, noticed the tube jutting out of it. No. What had she done? He cradled her head, beyond tears, rocking back and forth on his knees. Her eyes blankly open, staring knives through him. Black trickled out of her mouth. So very cold. He held her for the rest of the night. Starlight reflected the depth of her irises.

The pale sun laughed at him as it rose. Once again, he had a choice. But once again, not the faintest idea of what to do. He could commit suicide, in the furthest hopes that there was an afterlife, and she would be there with arms wide open waiting for him. But that was cliché at best. And improbable. He could keep on walking, like he told her to do, leaving the possibility of finding help for the venom that had plagued them. But what good would that do? Prolong his stay in a world he had no stake in, had so much disdain for, and without the only thing he ever cared about? And what if there was no chance of finding help? Was it not the destination, but rather the journey? Unlikely. He was surprised at his lack of sadness. There was no feeling. With her gone, all emotion escaped as well. He should truly be happy for her. No more pain, no more wandering, no more doubt. She was better off without him. But it should have been his body propped against the stone. What could he have done differently? How could he have stopped her? The contemplations would not cease. She had not saved him. She had robbed any humanity that was left in him.

He couldn't blame her. It was all his fault in the end. He gazed in her eyes for the last time, wiped away the black, and kissed her icy lips, trying to resurrect the feeling. Nothing remained. He covered the body with his jacket, tightened his gloves, and walked away from the sun.

"All things must end," he whispered, knowing he would never look back.

Exposed Mikaelah Villacruz

I'll give you the honest truth. I'll try not to cover it up with large words and vague expressions. I love you.

All of you, every single part of you. Your cheesy smile and lovely green eyes. The way you get mad when the Steelers don't win. You brighten up my mood, when everything

is falling and crashing. When my world is falling and crashing. I think to myself, 'At least, you're here.' Never failing me, never disappointing me. You're here. As my guardian, my protector. Everything I need to get through the day is you. Because, truthfully, honestly, and I swear, I'm not covering up, you're my everything, and I love you.



"City Windows" by Fernanda Altamirano

The Tragedy That We Will Never Forget Hugo Veliz

It all happened when I was almost fifteen on December 5, 2009. The tragedy occurred when a police officer was in front of the door telling my family about a terrible loss. My uncle died around 40. He died because his car and some other car had crashed.

Rodolfo was my uncle and a second father to me. I always came to visit my uncle, my aunt, and my cousins. My uncle was the best person in my life because he was always there for me. The best part about having him in my life was the moments we shared.

December 8, 2009 was my birthday, and I didn't want anything to deal with except going to my uncle's funeral. My whole family and friends came to his funeral because they all cared about him. It was very depressing when my dad and cousin had told me that my uncle had passed away. I couldn't believe it; I was rejecting it the whole time. Then I knew it by the way my cousin was crying on the phone. I spent hours and hours in the car thinking about how sad it was that this tragic incident occurred.

When I arrived at my uncle's house, I saw my family crying with one another. I knew this day was going to be a sad memory. As I came into the house, I hugged everyone, especially my aunt and cousins. I tried to find the rest of my family, but there were lots of people inside and outside the house. We were all waiting for the coffin to arrive. Suddenly, a black car came by with the black coffin. The people who helped bring the coffin were putting it in the living room. We were all waiting for the coffin to be opened so we could see my uncle's face one more time.

In the evening my family, friends, and I dressed in black so we can pray to god that he is protected. It was almost night, and I still hadn't seen my uncle. I didn't want to see him because I was so weak and afraid of death pounding on my chest. I love my uncle, as my father loves him, but it wasn't the right time to see him. We always prayed for him again and again. Tomorrow my family, friends, and I had to go to church because we wanted to thank god that my uncle was in a better place.

It was the big day today. We had to go to church to see my uncle for the last time. I finally knew it was the right time to see my uncle. I walked slowly towards the coffin and my heart started beating faster each second that I got closer. As I opened my eyes, he was there. My uncle had a big smile, as if he were alive, and he was pale. I knew I wasn't going to forget about him because of the connection I had when I touched him. We said our prayers for him fast because he had to go to another country where he was going to be buried. We said our last bye to him before he left with the people who brought him over to my uncle's house. Church had finished and it was time. My uncle had left and was placed in the black car. We all knew this was going to happen someday. We cried as the car went a long distance from us. As we reached for our hearts, we knew we would all reunite someday.

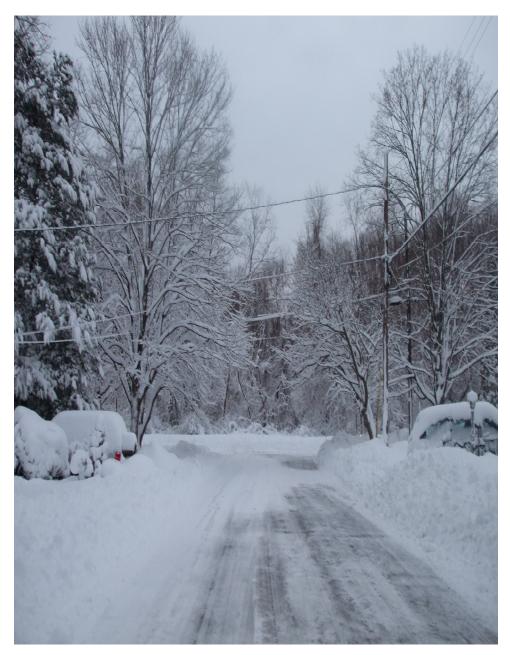
"As loved ones go to another world, you have to be prepared for what comes after you. Be strong and keep moving on with loved ones in your heart."



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My Guardian Angel Zahirah L. Brown

I have a guardian angel And he's my uncle Ty He comes with me everywhere Although I cannot see him But I know he is always there When I'm drowning in the darkness He shines a light to guide my way through When I'm suffering with sadness My uncle "Tyrone" now brightens up my day He now holds my hand as I'm feeling lonely But smiles with me when I'm glad We may have good and bad days but He is the shine around me And the whistle in the wind With each day that does go by My uncle is the brightest star Shining high up in the sky....



"The Mess After the Storm" by Kaitlin Rink

A Wake Up Call Kendra Wiggan

Shut my eyes to pleasant thoughts of Goals I might have in mind But only to find my future Fly past with eyes that blind

Maybe I was losing my mind Of these thoughts that were blind Or it might have been something kind That I'm shuffling to find

In a state of lifeless dreamy sleep That's just too deep to think Eyes too heavy that want to weep Can't stop its making my eyes pink

Just wanted to fall fast asleep Thinking of goals to keep Knowing it was a tiny peep But this dream went too deep

A Plea

Billy Stevens

You were my world Then you threw me away Said you would be there Help me through Help me deal fight my fear

I never existed Erased our past Your newfound freedom is a lie You're afraid of me I don't blame you

But I'm still here Holding razor blades for you Gripped to what's left I saved you countless times When I need saving You're a minesweeper

> I'm lost I've given you the map Like a fictional God, you mock me

> > I'm still here
> > and waiting
> > I'm still here
> > and breathing

For how much longer? I cannot say You wouldn't help me anyway

I've wasted away eight days of the week Unbeknownst to you, you have the power

To go back, to finish what was started Before it's too late Instead, you use my senses against me The sight of you, burning my brain From afar, controlling every emotion Like a tension compressed wire I'm going to burst Are you lying to yourself? Is this in my head? How can you be in every dream, when I don't have dreams? You manipulate without knowing Leave me crawling in the gravel Notes left behind A link to your heart That used to beat with mine Our wavelengths used to be the same You've turned off your receptor My chest is tightening Ticking away Oh darling angel, Pull my string this way Maybe I don't know what to do Only that you should be here Little star, burn a little brighter Come home, heal me Give me your comfort prescription Hand over your love Bask in our glow Let me prove it Let me show you What life is



"Enjoy the Walk (While You Still Can)" by Kaitlin Rink

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