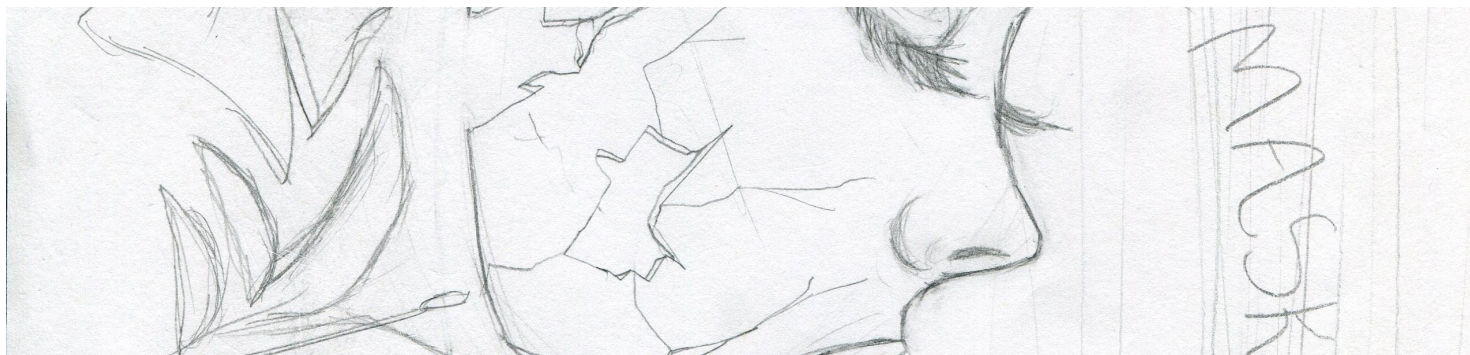




CANUCKLING 2017

Volume 62

THE MASK HAS FALLEN



**CANUCKLING 2017**

**THE MASK HAS FALLEN**

**VOLUME 62**

Check out the *Canuckling* website:  
<http://www.nplainfield.org/Domain/477>  
Click Publications tab

# **THE MASK HAS FALLEN**

**Volume 62**

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

**CANUCKLING  
2017**

**AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION  
First Place with Special Merit 2016**

**COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION  
Silver Medalist Award 2016**

# STAFF

Name: **Nermeen Girgis**, Editor-in-Chief

Grade: 12

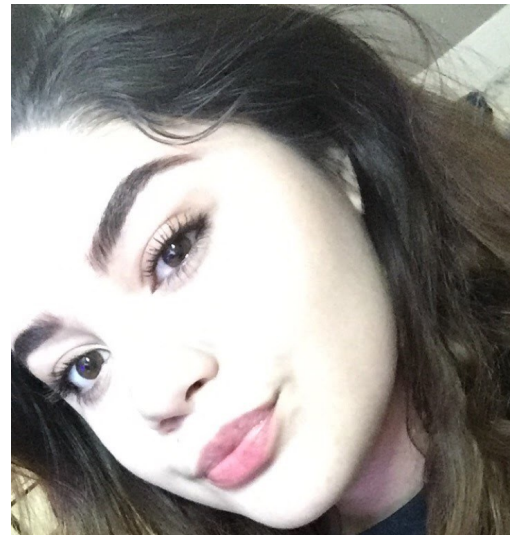
Favorite Quote: Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game." - Babe Ruth



Name: **Jessie Corchado**, Literary Editor

Grade: 12

Favorite Quote: "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." - Abraham Lincoln



Name: **Alexandra Novillo**, Literary Editor

Grade: 11

Favorite Quote: "Thank you for the tragedy. I need it for my art"  
- Kurt Cobain



# STAFF PHOTO



## OUR ADVISER



**Mr. John DeLaurentis**



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

The *Canuckling* magazine, though not quite as ancient as the school, was first published in 1955 in hardcover with Ms. Marie O'Brien as the General Adviser and Ms. Frieda T. Bockius as the Art Director. We are proud to be a part of this tradition, now celebrating our 62nd anniversary year, as we graduate a class of approximately 200 bright, talented students.

6 *Canuckling* 2017

# **2017 CANUCKLING STAFF**

Literary and Technical Adviser:  
Mr. John DeLaurentis  
English and Creative Writing Teacher

Nermeen Girgis, Editor-in-Chief  
Jessie Corchado, Literary Editor  
Alexandra Novillo, Literary Editor

## **Staff:**

Emely Alphonse  
Maria Gonzalez  
Samantha Merendino  
Ryan Narine  
Angelica Nono  
Kimberly Perez  
Adriana Rojas  
Jordan Sample  
Katherine Sandoval  
Irvin Solis  
Jonnelle Steward  
Jeremiah Weaver

## **Policy**

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

## **Colophon**

*Canuckling 2017*, 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 GMPC Printing of Clifton, NJ. The software used for the layout of the *Canuckling* is Microsoft Publisher. The font types used in this issue are Papyrus and Tahoma.

## **Cover**

Mobolaji Falowo, a sophomore, drew the illustration on the cover with pencil.

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

All the dedicated editors and members of the Canuckling Club are immensely excited and eager to present to you the 2017 edition of *Canuckling*, the literary-art magazine of North Plainfield High School. Our staff met frequently throughout the year to put together the issue and do our best. As a team we have worked to review all the wonderful submissions from our fellow students and chose those that would best fit our theme *The Mask Has Fallen* and our subcategories *Beautiful Tragedy*, *Chasing the Moon*, *The Rise and Fall of It All*, and *The Start of the End*. We were inspired to have *The Mask Has Fallen* as our theme because through our art and poetry we take off the masks we use to hide ourselves from the world and to reveal the innermost vulnerable emotions we experience through life.

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 hard-working, 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 harmoniously and supportively with each other, with us, and with our adviser, 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 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 of excellence and commitment.

Unquestionably, our adviser, Mr. John DeLaurentis, deserves our sincere gratitude, appreciation, and respect for guiding us this year and providing the tools with which we were able to make our vision of *Canuckling* 2017 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 further our talent and hard work this year. We welcome you on this journey with us through our creative minds. We hope our words inspire and uplift you while making you ponder the beautiful, opposing nature of life. We hope you never forget us as the artists we have grown to be. Finally we hope you enjoy our truly treasured words from behind the mask.

Nermeen Girgis  
Editor-in-Chief

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

From *Canuckling* 2000

## DAY BREAK

*The darkness stirs with a new found life,  
Light of dawn creeps to kiss the dew  
Of night-chilled grass,  
Scarlet skies pale to a pink hue,  
Melodies echo through the genesis of a  
New day...*

Rachel Pinkerton



pen and ink sketch by phoebe north

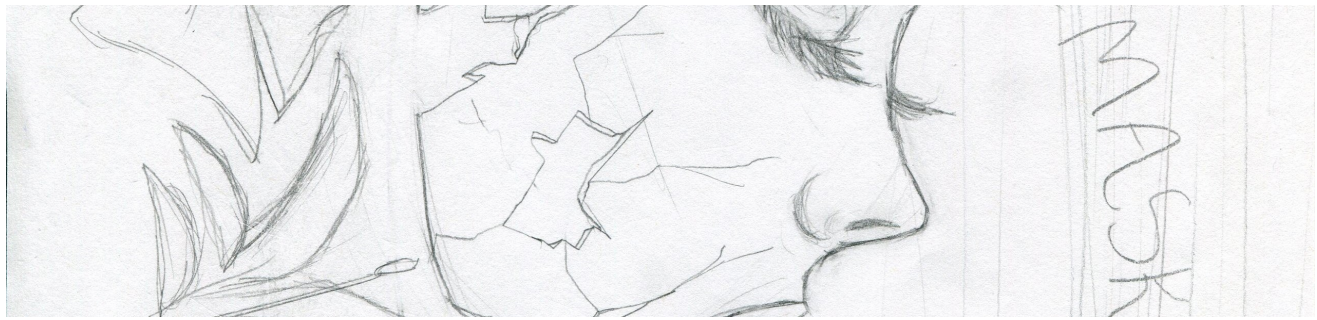
# BLAST FROM THE PAST

From *Canuckling* 1958



**"Midnight Rain"**

Illustration by Vallery Duhig



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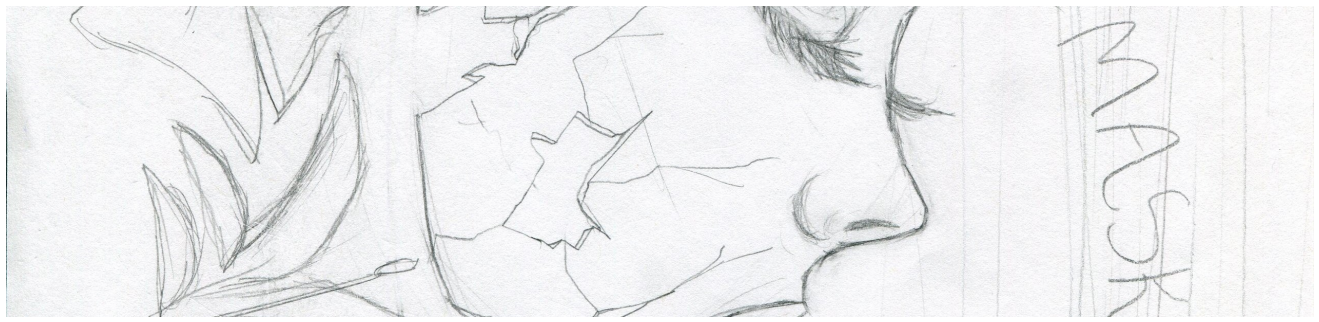
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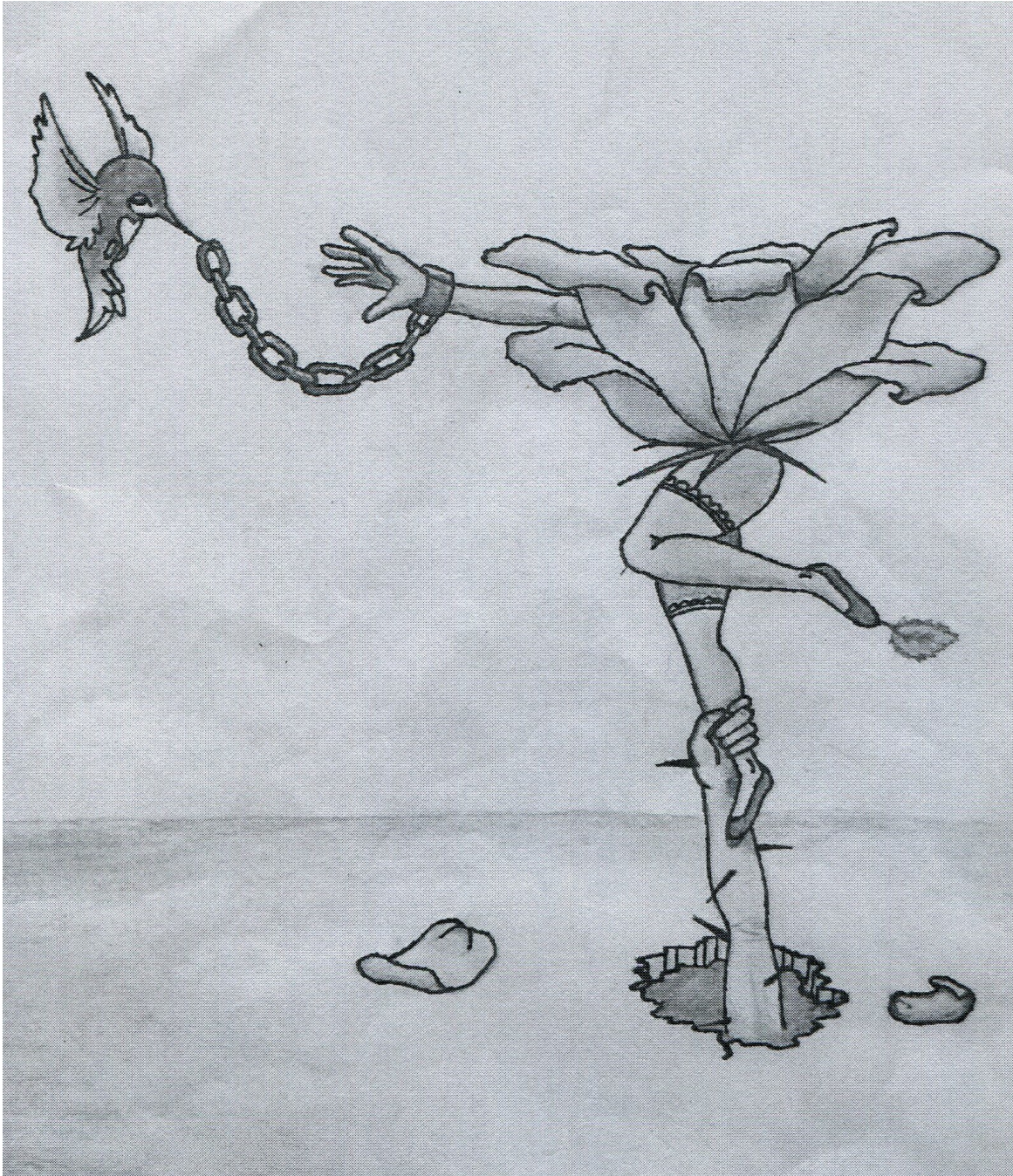
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# BEAUTIFUL TRAGEDY



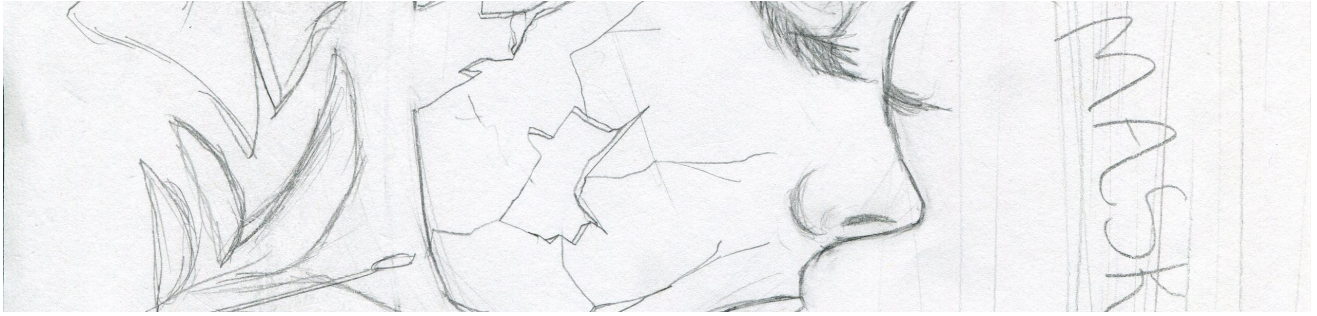
**"But he who dares not grasp the thorn should never crave the rose"** (Anne Brontë)  
by Scott Reeves (Inspired by the character Ophelia.) (Pencil drawing)

## **On/Off**

Jasmine Negron

You sit in empty rooms of pure darkness  
You were only being adventurous  
Here is where you discovered your sadness  
You do not know you can overcome this  
You are not living, you are surviving  
All this negativity is tiring  
You are struggling but you are still fighting  
How far you've come is so inspiring  
You are undeserving of this pain  
You are finding happiness once again  
I know you're trying to keep yourself sane  
It will last if you stay away from pain  
You are more than them, you're better, you're bright  
Don't let it get to you, turn on the lights

(Jasmine Negron is in tenth grade. She likes to draw and paint. She also likes to write and spends a lot of free time doing so.)



## **Lascivious**

Alexandra Novillo

That girl was born to be a storm  
Who started off as just the sun  
Her light shined so bright  
that her presence made even the dead feel alive  
The dark clouds came and took her light away  
Left with a mélange of heat and fog  
Lust and uncertainty  
The rain was the last of her innocence  
The thunder, the lightning, the wind made her a woman

Those who fear the storm stay behind closed doors  
The darkness  
The heat and fog  
Lust and uncertainty  
Shadows arise alive in the night time  
They want to take her last remnant of innocence away  
The purity of her nightly rain

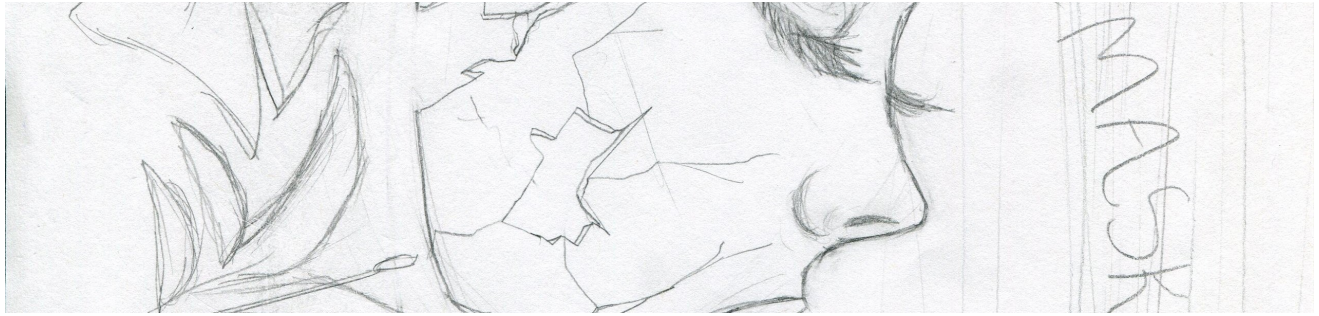
The shadows plead with thirst  
As though her waters were from utopian springs  
As though they had never tasted anything of such sweetness, such beauty, such richness  
They'd get on their knees and beg  
with every inch of deceit and broken promises  
softly singing every conniving and convincing melody  
hoping they'd get the first sip of her precious waters

She let it rain  
For a bunch of shadows without a shame  
For a bunch of souls who simply wanted to drink just to drink and not to revere  
She let it rain  
Knowing that once the rain shall pass  
She would see the shadows nevermore  
They would leave her alone  
Find another beautiful storm to quench their thirsts  
She let it rain knowing with every drop  
every ounce of her innocence was pouring down with it

The darkness  
The heat and the fog  
Lust and uncertainty  
Those who beg for the rain desire her for her waters  
Storm turns into a hurricane  
The thunder, the lightning, the wind, the rain  
that made her a woman  
too much can kill and destroy  
The storm so belligerent  
so wild  
so untamed  
simply without a care  
inconsiderate of who or what is in its path  
Fear of what you've been yearning for  
For you might get more than what you ever desired.

(Alexandra Novillo is in eleventh grade. She likes creative writing because it is a way to release her inner most feelings into an art.)





## **Light of Day**

Emely Alphonse

I am too broken to realize that I am the problem within my eyes.  
My heart is shattered and bleeds by the way of life.  
Nor to understand, I'm merely just not informed.

Threats adjust to the way you speak  
So formally  
Not to imply  
I seek for the way to be alive  
Just so tender at peak  
I speak as a deceased  
So many to be free.

Threats go on and so forth  
Life was fine before the sore  
Now I speak with content  
To see the light of day.

Day and night we sleep,  
So happily to walk with our feet.

(Emely Alphonse is in eleventh grade. She enjoys the casual laughs with her friends in school. Also, she enjoys that poetry, like art, has no limitations. )



**"Waking Up"** by Jessie Corchado (Digital Photo)

# **My Angel**

Glinka Alondra Jimenez Reyes

You're sleeping so peacefully  
You're destroyed completely  
Fly while you still have time  
Please don't be mine

My angel  
All I do is hurt you  
My angel  
All I want to do is hold you

My angel  
Meet me later  
My angel  
Or maybe never

My angel  
Fly away  
My angel  
See you someday

This is for the best  
Best for you and I  
Forget the rest  
There was never a you and I

I'm sorry  
This is it  
I'm sorry  
Get over it

I'm sorry for all my mistakes  
Please forgive me  
Forget me, whatever it takes  
Erase me

My memory hurts you  
My everything  
I'm tormenting you  
My everything

I'll set you free  
So you'll never come back  
Take flight with the breeze  
A group of angels, a pack

I'll miss you  
You know that  
I love you  
You knew that

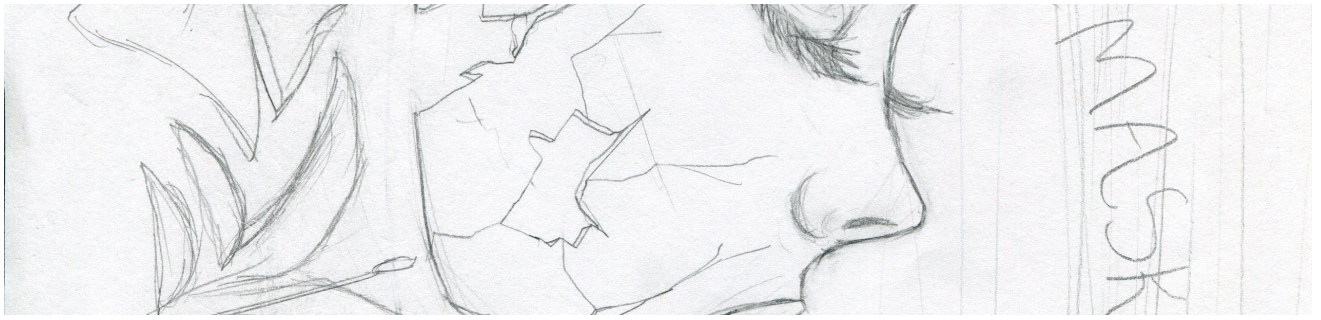
I break  
I shatter  
My stupid mistake  
I scatter

I miss you  
I love you  
I break you  
I destroy you

Forgive me  
Stop loving me  
Stop crying for me  
Don't hug me

My angel  
I love you  
My angel  
I'll never forget you

(Glinka Jimenez is in ninth grade. She loves to write stories, write songs, listen to music, draw, dance, and sing. She is very creative and thinks outside the box to become a better version of herself. She sang "My Angel" at the Third Annual Creative Show on May 19, 2017.)



## **Melancholic Happiness**

Matthew Bordfeld

Sometimes it is hard for me to express  
These feelings inside that you make me feel  
You are my melancholic happiness

You make me happy, you make me depressed  
You make everything in my life feel real  
Sometimes it is hard for me to express

Just how much you make me want to progress  
and just how much you make me want to spiel  
You are my melancholic happiness

I don't know what it is, I have no guess  
Why you make me feel colored, red, blue, teal  
Sometimes it is hard for me to express

How much you mean to me but nonetheless  
You are the one thing that won't let me heal  
You are my melancholic happiness

Looking at you is like liquid sunsets  
And being with you makes me feel surreal  
Sometimes it is hard for me to express  
You are my melancholic happiness

(Matthew Bordfeld is in twelfth grade. He is a three sport athlete and captain of the football team. He is going to be attending Mercyhurst University in the fall on a full football scholarship.)

# Happily Asleep Alone

Maria Gonzalez

Here, happily asleep alone  
No one knows where to find  
An almost soulless quiet soul  
No one's thought to be kind

Solitude in a busy place  
Glimpsed at without reason  
No reason to stay, go away  
This is not the season

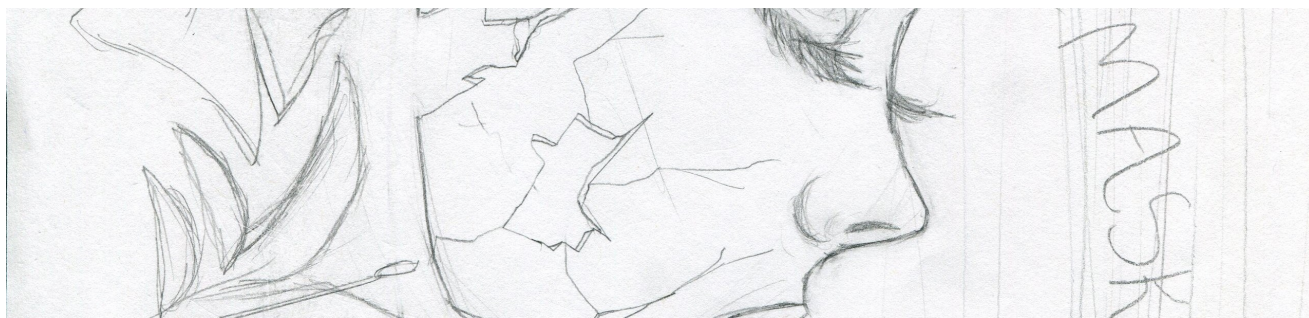
Oh wait! I have made a mistake  
I have no time to waste  
I've a poor little dog at home  
He's without food to taste

What a strong little guy he is  
Much more lively than I  
Alive and well, alive and well  
Maybe he'll still gaze at the sky

My sister was always a pain  
She wouldn't go away  
For sure I'll love her forever  
For sure she'd make me stay

At times, the earth to me was kind  
At times it'd pain my head  
I suppose none of that matters  
Because now I am dead

(Maria Gonzalez is Peter Pan, who is four years old, and that magical creature listens to lotsa, lotsa, lotsa Disney music. You can find Peter Pan at the nearest Never Neverland at the second star to the right and straight on 'til morning.)



## **Remember Me?**

Glinka Alondra Jimenez Reyes

Long lost friendship  
Rebuild partnership  
World torn apart  
Terrifying work of art

It's been such a long time  
I just wonder, do you remember me?  
No one can tame me  
But then again, do you remember me?

We've changed  
We have differences  
We're broken  
Stupid distances

It's been such a long time  
I just wonder, do you remember me?  
No one can tame me  
But then again, do you remember me?

We've been fools  
Yes, only fools  
We're childish  
Yes, still childish

It's been such a long time  
I just wonder, do you remember me?  
No one can tame me  
But then again, do you remember me?

Where are all my friends?  
Why am I standing alone?  
Is this where it ends?  
Is everyone already gone?

It's been such a long time  
I just wonder, do you remember me?  
No one can tame me  
But then again, do you remember me?

Dear friend, do you remember me?  
Because I clearly remember you...



# Introduction to the poem "A Better Place"

Jasmine Hernandez

This poem is dedicated to someone who is an inspiration, especially to me. Her name is Aaliyah. Aaliyah Juarbe. She was a part of the Class of 2015 and she left this school with everything set, her goals ready. She was a very talented writer. She's the reason why I took the Creative Writing class. The passion she had for writing was unbreakable. Her main goal was to have a piece of her writing published. *Awaken* was the name of the book she had been working really hard on. And it was this that she loved to do. Tragically, Aaliyah passed away December 29, 2016. We were very close, and since we were little I saw how she wasn't able to do many of the things her friends did, but never did I hear a complaint from her. She had an ambitious and hopeful personality that is going to live on and continue to inspire. Aaliyah didn't let the medical condition she had define her. It was her smile that did.

## A Better Place

Jasmine Hernandez

I miss my sister more and more each day  
They say she isn't suffering anymore  
But I just wish she wasn't taken away

I knew her in and out  
And If I had the chance to go back  
I would take it

Back to that time when we talked for hours  
So sad to say I just walk to your grave now  
And put down some flowers

So delicate and beautiful like you  
See you later Aaliyah  
I'll miss you too



(Jasmine Hernandez is in ninth grade. She likes to write what's on her mind. Almost everything she writes is based off of real life experiences.)

# **Tribute to a Lost Love**

Nermeen Girgis

Aaliyah

Your name brings back every  
Laugh we shared and all the memories  
We have made. I still can't believe it happened

I'm writing this and imagining how  
If you saw me right now you'd hit me  
And tell me to suck it up and write something else  
But I can't these days you've invaded my every thought.

I'm sorry I hadn't talked to you in so long  
I promise I'll continue to try and make you proud  
I'll try not to be a wuss and continue to openly discuss  
My feelings the way I usually do.

I remember how you were so mad at me  
For making you read that book and I laugh every time  
I think of how much my arm hurt that day when you hit me  
And I remember how it frustrated you to deal with my

Sarcasm over your grammar mistakes.  
Don't worry I still do that to everyone around me.  
I wish you had had the chance to publish your work  
The world should've been able to see your  
Talent with words. You were an Angel sent to me  
To show me how God works through people  
And there won't be a day that passes where I  
Won't remember you.

I'll miss you my angel.

(Nermeen Girgis is in twelfth grade. She likes the Creative Writing and Advanced Creative classes because you can have fun with the writing and express yourself in more than one way.)

# CHASING THE MOON



**"I Never Walk Alone"** by Glinka Alondra Jimenez Reyes  
(Colored Pencils and Markers)

# **I'm Capable of So Much More than You Limit Me To**

Jasmine Negrón

I will not let you make me  
Feel small  
I am not your toy  
You cannot control me  
But still  
Somehow you do

I am so much more than you will ever realize  
And I'm done trying to prove it to you

I'm capable of building buildings, leading the world,  
Being successful  
Supporting myself  
Making my own money  
Being happy

I will not put my life into your hands for you to control



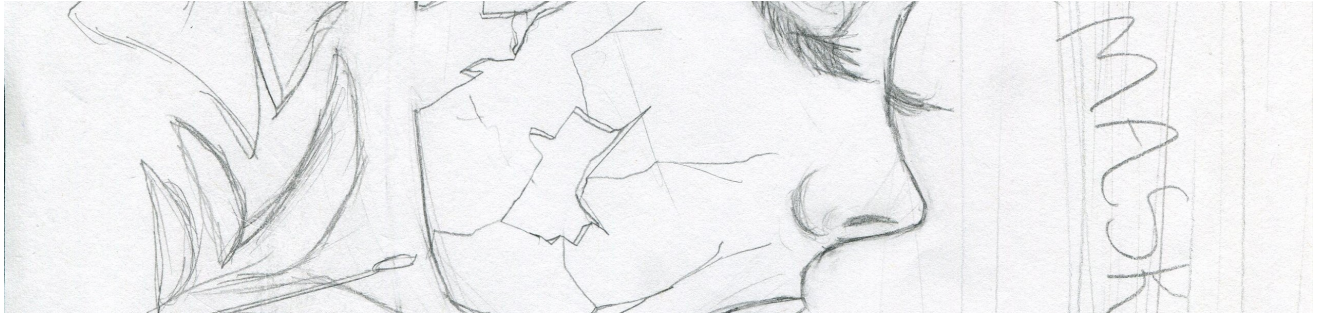
# Speaking in Tongues

Adriana Rojas

Love must have been his second language  
He did not speak it well  
He stuttered  
You could feel his primary language buried within his kisses  
Tripping over his words with his actions  
You see, I don't think he knew half the things he said  
He probably misunderstood words and what they were intended to do  
So when he said he loved me  
He was unaware of how he realigned the stars in the sky  
Unaware of how he was moving mountains  
Unaware of how I'd stare at his lips,  
Like a godly given thing that only spoke heavenly hymns  
You see,  
I'm certain he confused love with the other L word  
I don't blame him  
They both consisted of four letters  
People would often talk about one in reference to the other  
As if both were equals,  
Water and oil are not the same thing  
One is always greater than the other  
And what he had to offer me was much less  
We did not mix.  
He spoke a different language  
I, I could not make him understand mine,  
And his, his was a pressure I did not want  
Like acting impulsively  
His tongued venom was fast yet clear,  
It's easy to teach,  
But my mouth can not seem to follow his  
Lust must have been his primary language  
His tongue dances with others  
But I have two left feet that don't seem to like this choreography  
When someone's accent was too thick for him  
He grew eager with hope that he'd be able to teach them,  
the "proper" way to speak  
Pursing his lips in such a way that he could make any female flood  
With the thought of him alone,

He knew how to make a body tremble with a single stare  
He knew how to send vibrations to the deepest of places  
I, I was not easily moved,  
yet this man shook the earth I walked on  
A natural disaster  
Earthquake, tsunami, flood  
I was a tornado chaser  
This man talked to me  
But I did not speak his language  
He failed to realize his vernacular was different from mine  
Like we were living in two alternate worlds within the same soil  
I spoke vividly  
And he, he was color blind  
He did not know that there was more than eyes could see  
More than hands could touch  
More than lips could feel  
He did not know what I knew  
How to love with more than eyes  
What being intimate was  
How to leave worries on the floor  
Behind closed doors  
No,  
He knew body like a maze  
The right places  
The right way to move  
A labyrinth he knew his way in and out of  
But this is all he knew  
Skin for skin  
Lust must have been his primary language  
We were immiscible,  
Unable to come together  
You only knew what you were fluent in  
So accents too thick had to be thinned  
Should I have came with subtitles  
Handed you a dictionary maybe?  
But none of these would have helped would they?  
You'd have to want to read to understand  
And you're obviously not that kind of man  
You wanted me to be your quick fix  
But like I said,  
Water and oil do not mix

(Adriana Rojas is in eleventh grade. She likes how there are no limits to what you can write.)



## **Ode to Maya Angelou**

Shelia Villacis

Today will not be the day  
Nor tomorrow, or the day after  
It's a shame they want her blue sky grey  
because they fear her booming laughter

She's naïve of the world's true harm  
Through loving everyone and everything  
They seethe in envy of her effortless charm  
It's sad to see what the world truly brings

Life continued on and her smile shined brighter  
She became what many feared  
They inspired her to be a fighter  
And above all, she wanted everyone to know  
She was more than what she appeared

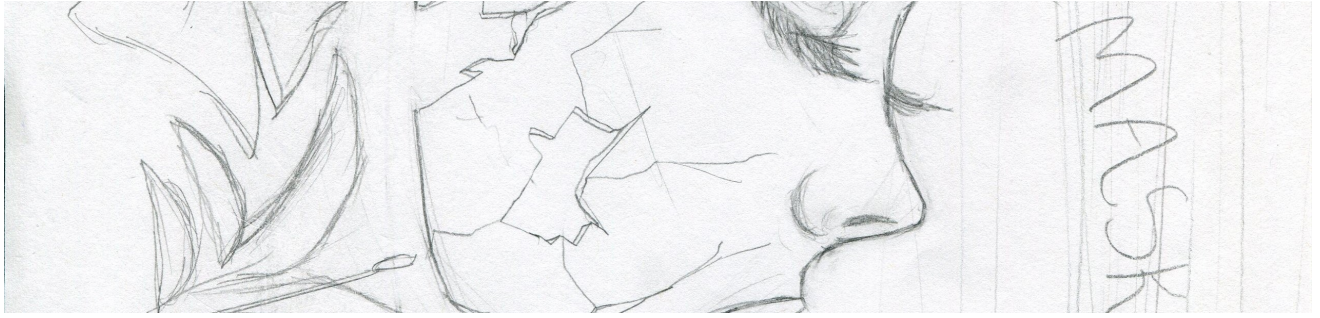
(Shelia Villacis in tenth grade. She enjoys writing, adventure, and playing video games. Most of her time is consumed by Netflix and homework. Yet she still finds the time to make those close to her smile.)

# Ode to the Aux

Ryley Payan

"pass the Aux"  
the first words  
to come out of my mouth  
My second step  
turn the volume up  
even before the car is on  
routine  
no matter where I am  
no matter whose car  
I can't imagine life without you  
with you  
I don't gotta listen to commercials  
or the same song over  
and over  
and over  
again  
Through your power  
is a manifestation of me  
me and you connect  
more often than not  
you're the solution the equation  
when we're together  
time flies  
from one end  
to another  
the music flows  
through your wiring  
you make me feel alive  
a tasteful  
combo of sounds  
to be blown out the speakers  
and digested by my ears  
like it has time  
and time  
again  
It's almost sad  
each time I have to leave  
but I'll be back  
for another adventure  
just you and me

(Ryley Payan is in tenth grade. He enjoys writing, acting, and music. He spends 98% of his time laughing and entertaining friends. He's been called relatable, humorous, and creative.)



## **Ode to Braces**

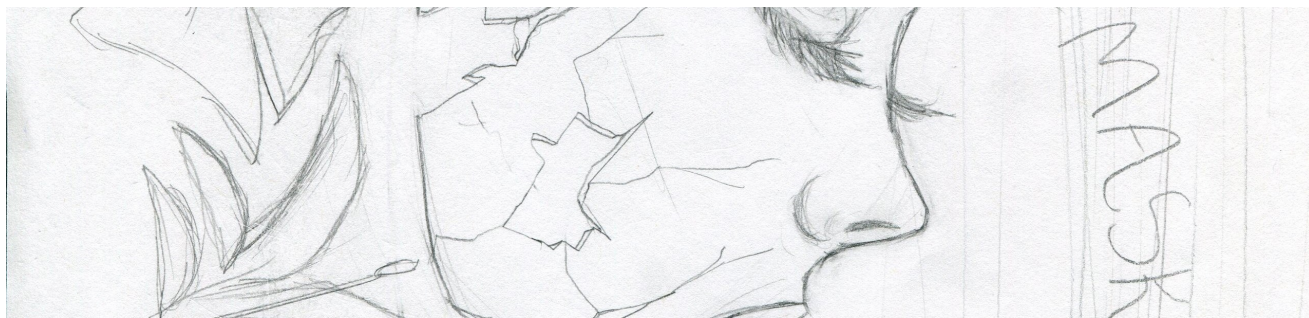
Jason Rodriguez

i didn't want you to begin with  
and i wasn't even asked.  
but my parents demanded  
so i had no choice.  
i'd lose so much  
i thought to myself.  
no more candy or gum  
or bagels and pretzels  
this did not seem like fun.  
the day finally came  
and man was i upset.  
my teeth were in pain  
and my cheeks were all sore  
these two years will be such a bore.  
brushing and flossing seemed to be a chore  
dental hygiene products filled up my drawers.  
over a year has passed  
and i began to understand  
the real meaning behind you.  
once i thought that you were  
useless pieces of metal  
attached to one's teeth,  
but that just isn't it.  
you aren't just here for the outcome,

but you're also here for the support.  
because of you,  
i have been able to gain confidence.  
the idea of losing you in less than a year upsets me.  
you became a part of me  
and it will feel like half of me is gone  
even though your job will be done.  
soon my teeth will be straight,  
and you will be nothing but a memory.  
i always believed  
that you were an unnecessary pain,  
but then everything changed.  
the day will soon come  
and it'll never be the same.  
i will walk past every mirror  
and acknowledge what you've done.  
they are amazing  
i'll think  
so straight and so white.  
the torture of braces  
is well worth the time.

(Jason Rodriguez is in tenth grade. When he's not writing, you can find him complaining mainly about his grades. He is also an incredible Netflix enthusiast and would recommend that everyone watches *Friends*, an American sitcom that aired from 1994 to 2004, because he has probably watched the entire series about 100 times.)





## **Coffee**

Shelia Villacis

My favorite blend awaits  
when I awake  
and soon my tired eyes  
fade away

It's been three hours  
I need a fix again  
the steamy fragrant smell  
caught within the air

The fresh ground beans  
In a concoction  
mixed so well  
ever been so addictive

Homemade  
Store bought  
Frappuccinos  
Espresso Shots

Made worldwide  
Known as the Coffee Belt  
Celebrated on September 29th  
can be overdosed

Caffeine  
a drug  
a safe place  
a habit

Black liquid  
Loved by everyone  
hot or cold  
drunk throughout the day

Most taste like the brew  
Made from the first coffee tree  
shipped during the 1720s  
Into our country

Several blends  
mint  
vanilla  
mocha

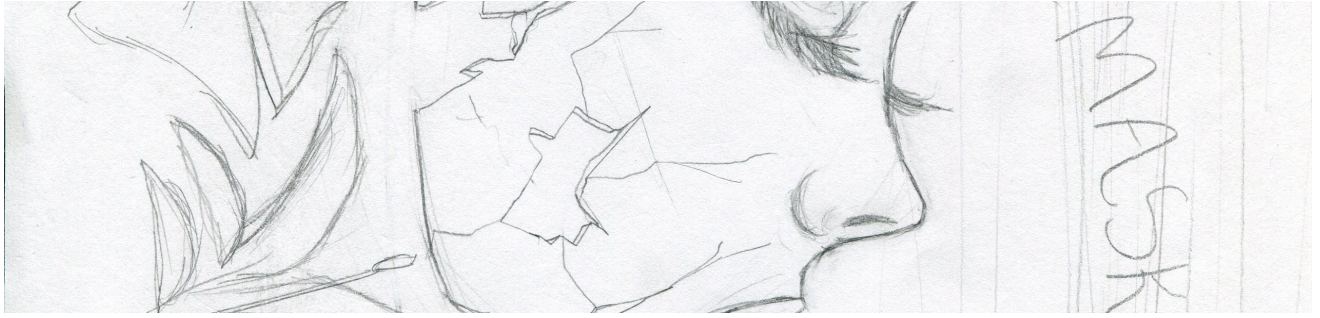
Or maybe plain  
in milk  
and whipped cream  
or even a little froth

The regular and decaf  
The constant spillage  
On my shirt,  
Or on my keyboard

In the end  
coffee has lived on  
and continues the legacy  
until further generations to come



**"Morning Ritual"** by  
Mr. John DeLaurentis (Adviser)  
(Digital Photos)



## **You**

Veronica Vega

However could you be more bright at night.  
Though luminescent you were in the day,  
Impure you were which gave me quite a fright.  
I honestly do not know what to say.  
With your eyes, what is there not to adore?  
I lose myself within your loving gaze;  
I will always find myself wanting more.  
You have me loving you for days.  
Is there a place with you I can call home?  
Oh, will I ever feel your warm embrace.  
My love for you is like a bad syndrome  
You are making me fall into deep space.  
Will you let me tell the story of us?  
Tell me you love me and we can discuss.

(Veronica Vega is in tenth grade. She likes to procrastinate, laugh, and overthink. She likes creative writing because it lets her express her deepest thoughts.)

# Is Poetry Dead?

Jasmine Negron

Poetry is not dead. It is very much alive, maybe just going a little unknown, a bit forgotten. Sure we may be required to learn and write it in school, but how else will people be exposed to it? Everyone should at least know that it exists. Poetry is important. It enriches our lives and our world, and poetry is one of the best things that has been introduced to me.

Poetry is still important. It's still important because it is a way of expression. Poetry has no specific way to be written. You do not have to use proper English, there's no rules. People of all ages can write it. It inspires people, it heals people, it educates them, it helps them. It's important to some people, because it helps them to know they can express themselves in a sense of words only some will understand in this world.

Poems enrich our lives and our world. They capture our feelings in such an incredible way. Poems make us feel certain ways, they make life a little bit better, a little more worth living.

To me, poetry means the world. It's cruel, lovely, harsh, truthful, romantic, sad, raging, mysterious, broken, whole, it's everything. Poetry allows me to pour every emotion I feel into a beautiful form of words. I can express myself without having to actually say anything. It's what I write when I'm at my highs and lows. It's always there for me to go to. It means everything to me.



# THE RISE AND FALL OF IT ALL



**"Sitting on a Leaf of Fall"** by Jessie Corchado  
(Digital Photo)

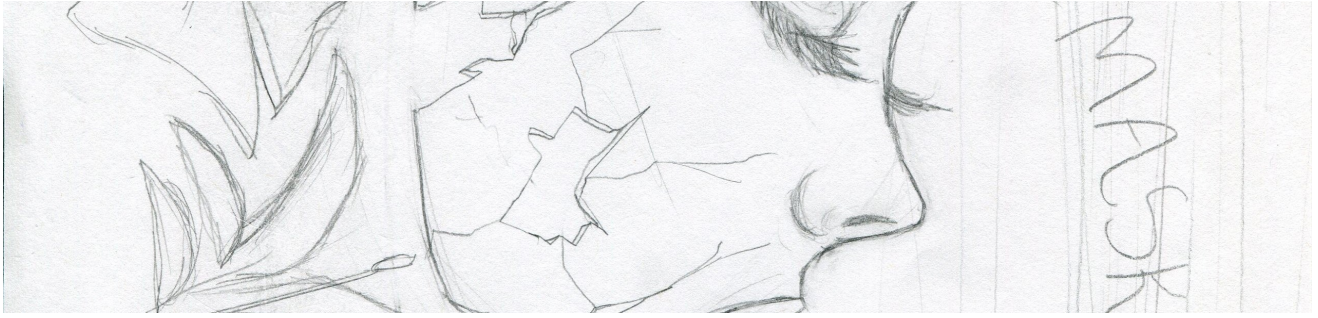
## **Youth of Today**

Jason Rodriguez

[our] modern world changes, and we blame the youth [of today].  
but how can we criticize the future,  
when it was us who made their world this way.  
children now live in a virtual world

a silent generation,  
that would much prefer to spend time on their devices  
rather than speaking face to face  
if only they knew that time is so valuable.

we stopped teaching kids that life is a gift  
kids should fly and not have to be tied down  
soon, a new generation will begin  
modern world changes, and we blame the youth [of today].



## **Letter to the Lost Ones**

Matthew Bordfeld

Dear whoever this may concern,

I hope you get this letter, whatever it is you're going through, I promise it will get better, we're a lot alike, you know, I mean the two of us, you're feeling lost right now and you don't know who to trust, I feel the pain you're going through, I was lost once too

I went through my own dark times, no light to light my view, and I know exactly what you're thinking, "he doesn't understand me, he's out of his mind, how could he possibly think he can relate to what's going on in my life?"

See, I was 12 years old when I lost my home, I was scared and confused and I didn't know where to go, I lived in hotels, rented places just to stay in, cried myself to sleep in the very bed I'd lay in, I watched my parents work, I knew that they were tired, but they refused to sleep they had to support their child, and I felt like I had nobody, I was a stranger to the world, always felt so helpless, like I didn't have control

I was always by myself, like I didn't have a friend, every night I prayed to God that my life would end, I never had a person tell me that things would be okay, I never had a hand to hold to walk along the way, I never had someone to explain the things that I'm telling you, because the outcome that you're hoping for is going to come soon, but listen to the words that I've written just for you

You will conquer whatever it is that you're going through, trust me when I tell you, the pain will not last, just keep moving and you'll leave it in the past, every tear you've ever shed won't be tears wasted, because the happiness that awaits for you is better than any happiness you've ever tasted

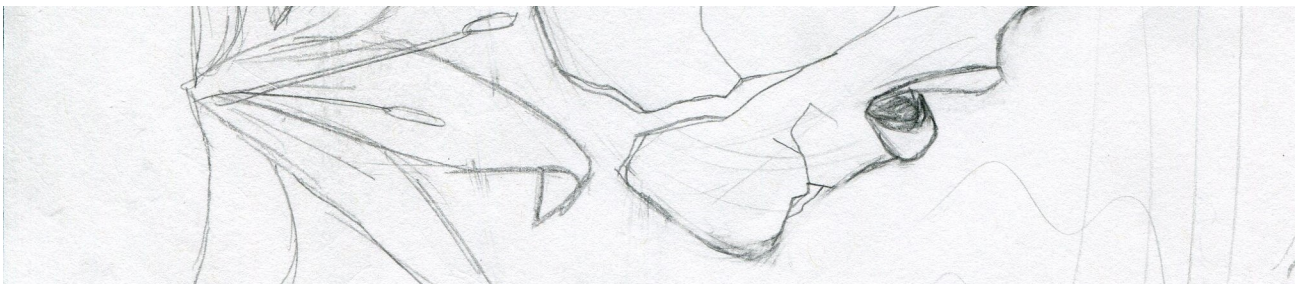
And you will become stronger and you will win this fight, and I promise you'll survive and I promise you'll be all right, so just keep moving on even if it hurts to walk, and scream to the world even if it hurts to talk, I know you will get through whatever pain you're going through, and if you're still confused on who-  
ever it is that this is addressed to, allow me to explain

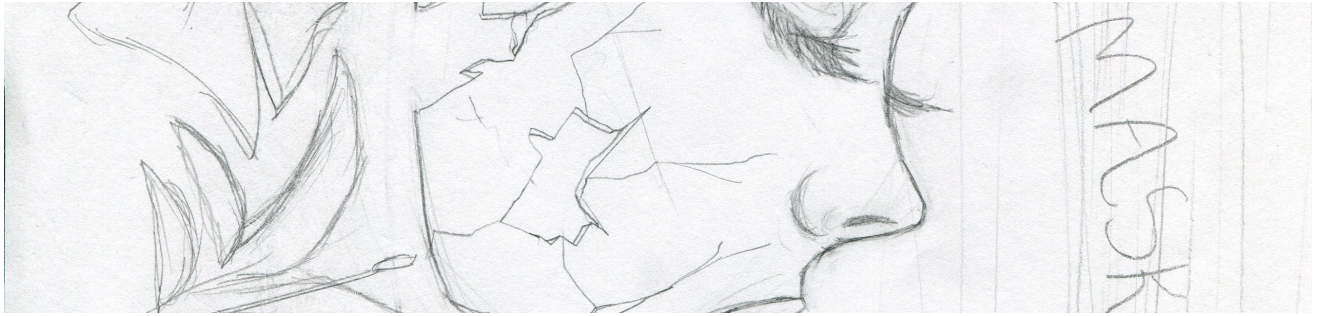
This is for the ones who think they have no name, this is for the broken, and the ones who are alone, this is for the lost souls who don't have a home, this is for the ones who just don't see an end, this is for the quiet ones who just need a friend, this is for the ones that just can't see the light, this is for the ones who just want to end the fight, this is for the ones with the blood stains on their wrists, and the pills in their lips and the bottle in their grip,

With their fingers down their throat and they're kneeling by the sink, this is for the ones who have nowhere else to go, the ones who have fears that nobody else knows, and if you're one of these people,

I know you'll be strong through whatever you're going through, and if nobody told you today, I'm someone who loves you, and as I end this letter that was written for whoever it was that this concerned, goodbye until later,

I'm sincerely yours





## **The Tranquility of Opposition**

Alexandra Novillo

I like to be alone sometimes  
In the presence of myself  
and only myself.

I like to know the world  
could go as silent and still  
as it goes loud and round  
I like to know my own strengths  
and weaknesses  
I like to know that as much as  
I can go up I can only go down.

I like to know the difference between  
the truth and lies  
I like to know I can love as much as I can despise  
I know I will fall but I will rise  
These opposite values will be with me until my own very  
demise.

I like to believe life is balanced  
That through the things I will face  
there are opposite forces for and against my favor  
I suppose I just like to give a little reasoning to the inexplicable unknown.  
Because finding some reason to live is all I've ever known.

# **To Be or Not to Be**

Nermeen Girgis

That was the question whether to be or not to be  
To suffer in the mind or to suffer in reality  
Who would it be that answers the question?  
The ghost of my past or that of my future  
Have I gone mad with his death?  
Or shall I suffer the sin of my mother  
To sleep? Perhaps a chance to dream  
A sleep of death for what other dreams may come  
Betrayed by a bare dagger  
Carried by the one you thought loved you  
Only to be poisoned by your own blood  
Shall that be thy dream or thy reality  
To live or die?  
To live as a coward  
Not avenging my own father's death  
Or to die trying  
Or perhaps die trying to live  
For how may a coward live  
Among those who have taken  
Away everything of worth  
He cannot, for I have tried  
Though my mother's sin does not  
Allow me to live in peace  
Knowing my father's death  
Was at her hands  
Or my uncle who with his bare hands  
Took away the life of his brother  
For power and a life in sin

# Going the Distance: A Memoir

Joshua Josias

I was getting into complete race mode. My music was playing in my ears. I was relaxing on the bus, trying to focus on the match up before me. It was another three-mile race, but I wasn't going to back down from it. Not at any moment have I ever backed down from a competition in a race. We were heading to Belvidere again for a race against every team in our division, which consisted of Rutgers Prep., South Hunterdon, Bound Brook, Belvidere, Gill St. Bernard's, Manville, and ourselves. I was planning on running my best race and staying in that range, for I was tired of always finishing in the same area.

Our race was up, and the fire inside of me was blazing extremely hot. I felt like the ice in my veins couldn't be defrosted. I was too cool for the competition. The gun went off and I was in the front pack of the competition. I was within the top range of this competition, and I wasn't planning on backing off. I sped in front and stayed there for a little while and backed off into my pacing. I was at an amazing pace for myself at a 6 minute 35 second first mile, so I was excited and hoped I would meet my goal.

However, all my aspirations went out the window when I started my second lap: my shoe had come loose! It was shaking as I tried to place my foot back inside. It came to the point that my foot was outside of my shoe, so I came to a grave decision. I took off my shoe in the middle of the race and ran with it in my hand!

In my head I knew this was a grave decision that could cost me, but I couldn't stop. My pride wouldn't allow me to stop in the middle of the race. My fighting spirit wouldn't let me lose my momentum and retie it. I had to take the shoe off and finish the race this way. I ran with confidence and poor stepping. Without the shoe, I had to watch where I was going. On top of that, I was practically blind because I always run without my glasses. I was safe until I hit the most dangerous part for me—the woods, where rocks and sticks come unexpectedly!

I tried to watch my step, but step after step, I would step on a rock or a twig or a root. I just wanted to finish the race! I knew that I couldn't stop in the middle of the race to tie a shoe! I couldn't stop since my pride wouldn't allow it. My fighting spirit wouldn't allow it! I pushed through this forest that I used to admire because of its steep slopes, which were the same slopes that ended up killing me in the end. I made it down these slopes, and I was almost at the end of the race. It's really hard to finish a race with one shoe, so if you're ever in this situation, at the end of the race, take off the other one as well. It will give you balance. However, because of my shoe, I was unable to meet my goal. I planned to do it on Saturday when we had our next meet, but I didn't know that it would be the toughest race I would ever run.

On that Saturday, we went to an invitational in a town called Holmdel. Apparently, it was the toughest course in New Jersey. This was supposed to be a great race. I was very excited, but I didn't know that my goal would be almost impossible on this course for me the way I was back then.

The race started on a miniature incline. It wasn't much, and I was doing very well. I looked from side to side to see if it would be safe with my teammates on both sides of me... *Why are my teammates next to me?* I thought. I always overtake most of my teammates in the races and see them once I cross, but three of the five teammates who I overtake were right next to me. So, I didn't know what to think. I gradually lost them all except one. I was doing well and didn't plan on letting him pass, until I saw I had other things to worry about: the hill that made Holmdel one of the most difficult courses.

I knew I could scale it, but the after effect killed me. I used a good amount of stamina to scale the hill, so I pushed on with the stamina I had left and my will to never give up. I pushed and pushed and pushed, but my teammate caught up when we got to the final 800 meters of the race. What scared me was that he was a very dangerous teammate. He was one of the teammates that if he were right next to me at the end of a race, I was sure to lose. I had to speed up a little. I was able to lose him for a bit, but there were other runners around me. I was able to catch up right when I got up the final hill getting into the final push. I moved my arms at top speed, causing my legs to keep moving faster and faster, but it wasn't enough.

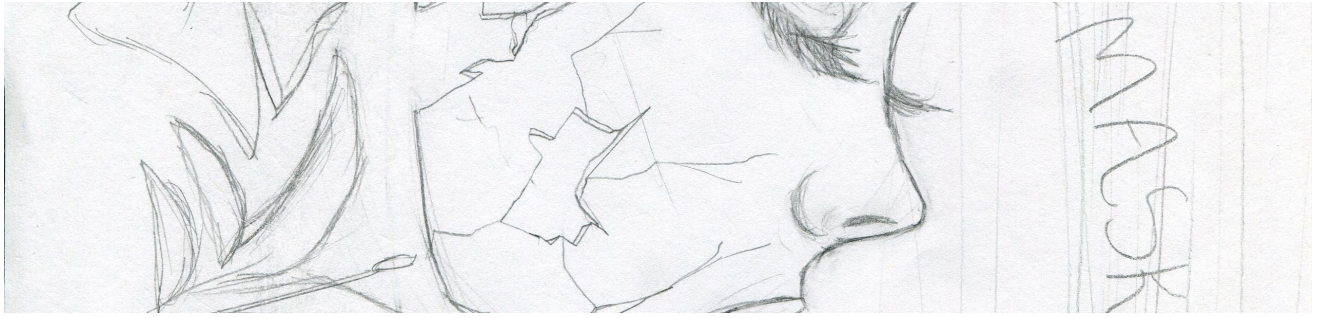
I couldn't believe it. I was really about to lose to someone else down the final stretch. A man who could catch up to someone 100 meters ahead of him in the final 110 meters was going to lose to someone right in front of him. That was supposed to be my specialty in distance races, being able to catch up to someone when they are within range. I was supposed to have demolished him in the final meters, and then a miracle happened. I somehow slid at perfect timing through the finish line, just like you would see in the MLB. My feet led my body, and I went through in perfect form.

I couldn't believe the luck I had. I was able to slide straight through the finish line and beat my opponent. Now if I could only do it intentionally, I could beat anyone who tried to pass me in a race to the finish. The training for a new finishing technique had begun.



**"Untied"**

By Mr. John DeLaurentis (Adviser)  
(Digital Photo with filter)



## **T(w)o Broken People**

Alexandra Novillo

(Background on title: It can be read as Two broken people or To broken people)

Tear me apart like I'm your favorite flower

Pick off my petals and wonder

"Does she care or does she not?"

"Is she lying or is she not?"

"She loves me, she loves me not?"

The truth mixes with lies when we're mad sometimes

It's hard to look at you with memories in your eyes

To know I is who you despise

To know You and I live in a garden of snake eyes

I am a sinner

But you are no saint

Angel in disguise

You took me to a paradise

With your wings you'd fly away

Like a bird, you'd find another nest to lay

As your chick that was the price I had to pay

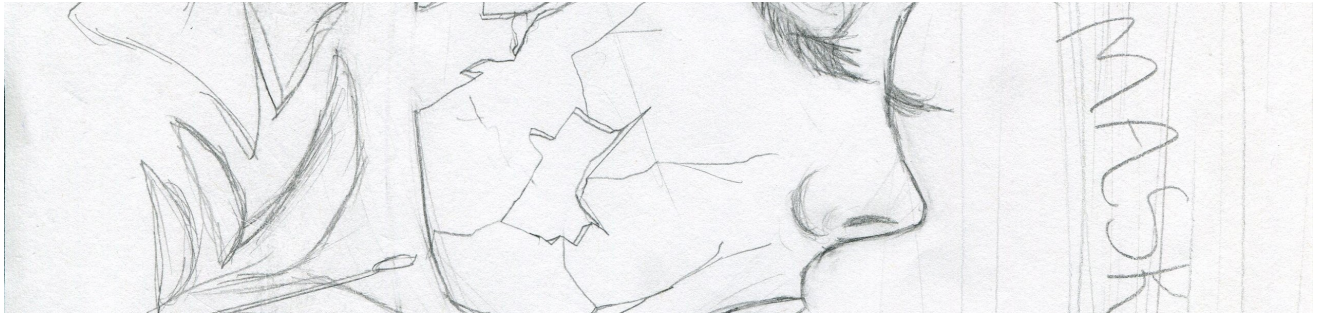
There you came along at night  
The fruit I bore you took a bite  
The flames inside us we'd ignite

One another we would betray  
We painted the sky and array of colors  
As though we believed colors did not fade  
Knowing red would turn to gray  
We walked a road quite astray

Bruise  
Break  
Blush  
We love and hate the touch  
Mentalities and spirits crushed  
We broke for the rush

I can't glue back the petals which you ripped from me  
I can't expect you to shine if all you do is rain  
You can't expect me to be honest with you if all we do is lie  
You can't expect me to fall in love with you if all we do is despise  
We can't expect each other to be happy if all we do is cry  
We can only expect to stay broken if we don't even try





## **Boy**

Hernán Ramírez

There is a boy looking up in the sky,  
Thinking and wondering how will death be;  
Falling down to flames or rise up and fly?

He made so many mistakes that he lied  
To his loved ones. He asked himself, "Why me?"  
There is one boy looking up in the sky.

He knows that lying was never his pride.  
"This evil thinking does not set me free."  
Falling down to flames or rise up and fly?

"Even if I pray as much as I try,  
This unwanted habit never leaves me."  
There is one boy looking up in the sky.

He thinks that he is not a normal guy,  
Life isn't easy like learning to say *oui*  
Falling down to flames or rise up and fly?

Always questioning for how long and why?  
But it's never too late to say sorry.  
Falling down to flames or rise up and fly?  
There is one boy looking up in the sky.

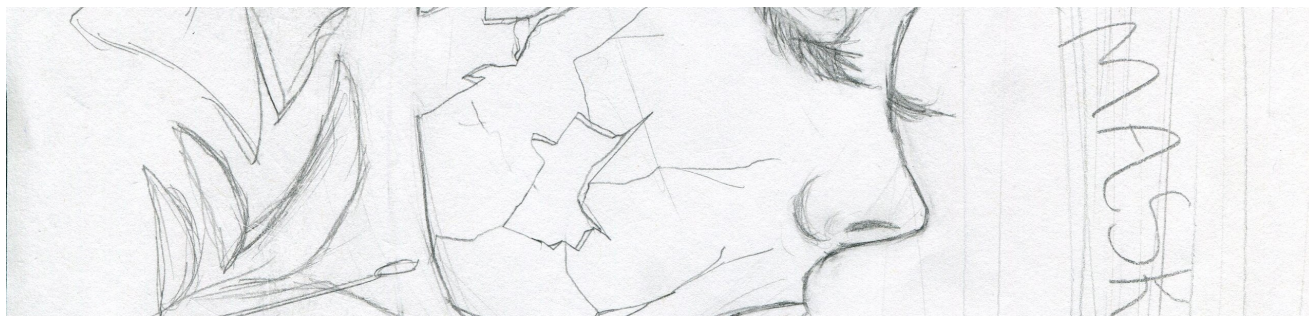
(Hernán Ramírez is in ninth grade. My family and some of my friends call me "El Nene." I spend my day with my friends and family, playing soccer but mostly listening to music.)

## **A Lost Promise**

Jason Rodriguez

another sleepless night thinking 'bout you  
several days have passed and you're still not here  
makes me upset to hear the coffee brew  
realizing you're not coming back makes me tear  
spending time wondering if you're okay  
i think about the fun we had in summer  
time moves slowly, month by month, day by day  
now everything seems like a bummer  
i write every day, with hope that you receive  
many questions have built up in my mind  
all i want to know is "why did you leave?"  
this is an answer i think i won't find  
several years have passed and you're still not back  
feels like my heart has been under attack.





## **Who Am I**

Joshua Josias

*Inspired by the poetry of Langston Hughes*

I'm told I sell at street corners for work,  
Yet I was told to go back to the fields  
They say that I have no right to education,  
Yet I was told to drop out of high school  
I was told I had no rights,  
yet had the dream that could have changed this country

I was seen as a menace to society  
since I was brought to this country on a boat  
packed with people just like me  
and see them as they see me,  
frightened, scared, and powerless

Yet we are treated like the lion at the zoo,  
we apparently are captured and taken out our habitat  
and forced into this new better scenery,  
only to be seen as a threat by the people who forced me here

Who Am I, that I had the dream that apparently  
could change this bountry country for the worse

Who Am I that I should be told to sell at corners  
just to be brought to a plantation

Who Am I, that I should wade in the water to gain freedom  
just to reach the same unachievable Dream  
as the low lives who brought me here  
to do their work in the hot sweaty fields  
who would swallow anything colorful that they see  
that looks like despair and sorrow incarnate.

Who Am I...

I'm the man who fought the earth back  
I'm the one who made it through the torture of the captors  
I'm the one with the great dream that died a few days after  
with a dream that stayed alive  
I'm the one who no matter what kind of painful trials  
you tried to put me through to put me to my knees and cry  
who got back up every single time  
no matter how hard you slammed back  
because I knew I was stronger than you thought I was

Why?

I'm the great underdog who always comes back to win  
I'm the man who went from the streets to top boss  
of your multi-billion company  
I'm the one who always saw the light you couldn't see  
and if there was no light I would make one, no matter what

I am a negro...A man who will never quit and never back down

(Joshua Josias is in tenth grade. He is in the Creative Writing class to use literature to its complete potential. He enjoys playing almost all sports and uses poetry to help think in more creative ways.)

# Through This

Jasmine Negron

My head begins to pound  
I've had enough  
I fall to the ground  
Life's been rough

I pull myself up and off the earth  
I remind myself that I am strong, I belong, and that after  
All I've been through, I am still here  
I try to remind myself of my own self-worth

But every now and then  
I fall once again  
This often happens when  
I think of everything I could've done to help you  
I think of everything I could've done to make you happy  
I think of everything I could've done to stop this  
I think of everything I could've done, but didn't do

I put the weight of the world on my shoulders  
And I struggle

Then I remind myself I'm strong once again, again  
That's when I rise

There are days when I fall back down  
But I pick myself back up  
I can get through this  
I will get through this

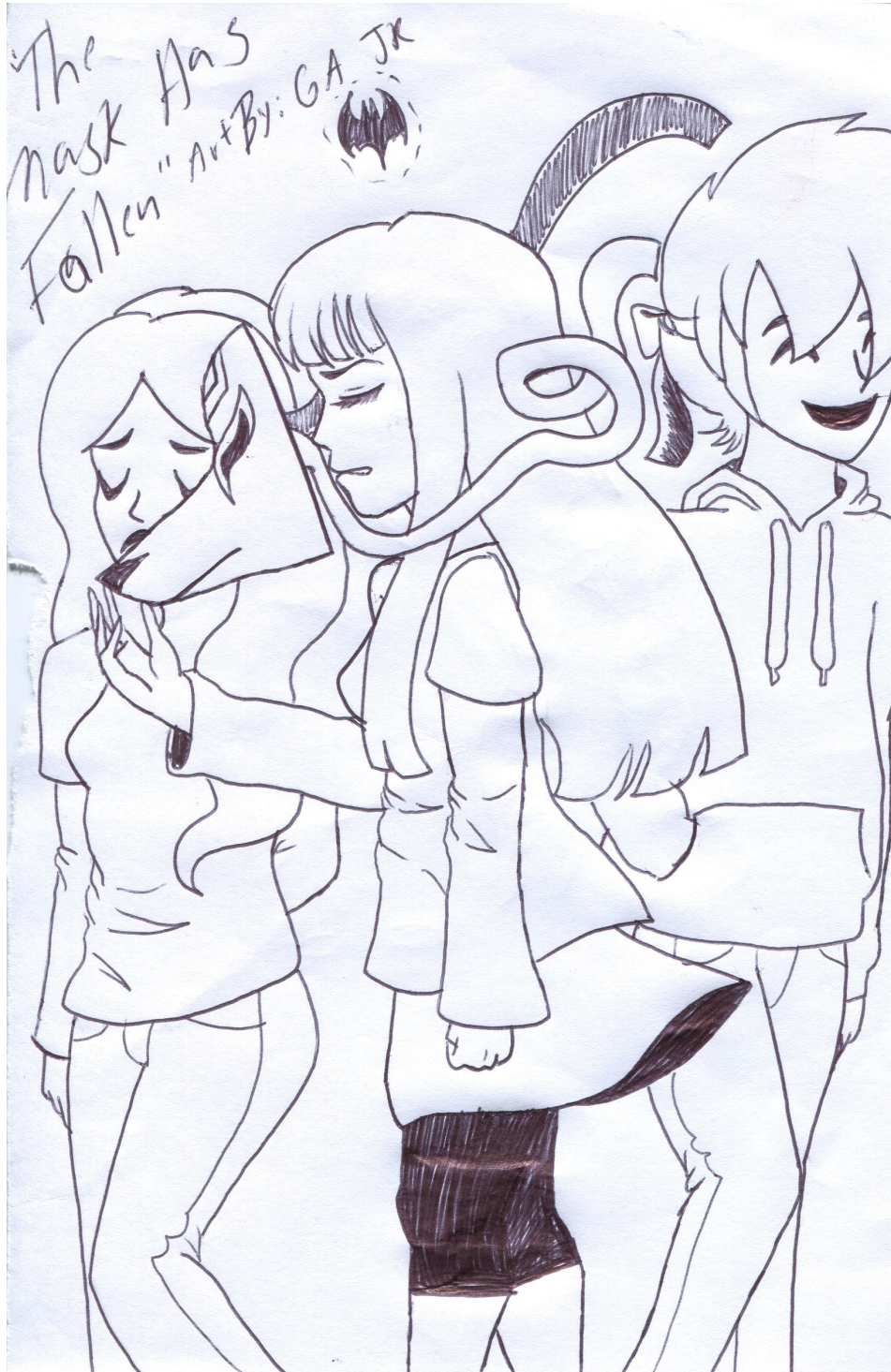


**"I Will Rise Again"**

By Jessie Corchado

(Digital Photo)

# THE START OF THE END



**"The Mask Has Fallen"**

By Glinka Alondra Jimenez Reyes (Ink Drawing)

58 *Canuckling* 2017

# **The Mask Has Fallen**

Jasmine Negrón

The mask has fallen  
It lays on the floor  
The identities you've stolen  
You are choosing to ignore

The mask has fallen  
You are exposed  
Every door you had open  
Now I closed

The mask has fallen  
This is you  
You can't hide anymore  
We see you

The mask has fallen  
You are broken and bleeding  
Every smile you had on  
Was misleading

# The Sudden Change

Jasmine Hernandez

*That was a long walk*, I thought to myself. Today was my day to walk the dog. It was beautiful weather, so I decided to take a long stroll around town. Horrible idea. Even Max was tired, I could hear him panting hard and fast. *We're almost home, right around the corner*. As we approached the steps, I heard unfamiliar voices. It sounded almost like a baby screaming, and another deep voice was in the room too. I unlocked the door and stepped in hesitantly. Max followed. I found myself looking at a middle-aged man sitting in the living room holding a baby. *Woah...new furniture too*.

"About time, that was long," said the strange man.

"What the hell, who are you? Get out of my house!" I panicked and attempted to make a run for the door. That's when a tall white woman blocked my exit and shut the door lock.

"What has gotten into you? Must be that heat you walked in. Come honey, it's almost time for dinner. I made your favorite—chicken parmesan," she said.

*How does she know that's my favorite?*

"Who's a good boy, Max?" She served him a bowl of water. Max didn't bark once at any of them, which is strange, as he *always* barks at strangers. Something is incredibly wrong here. I need to get out.

"What did you do with my parents!?" I could feel the tone of my voice shaking as I yelled.

"Baby, quiet down, you're gonna wake up your sister. Come on, food's ready." *That's definitely not my sister*. The lady then motioned me to the table. She *was* serving my favorite. Unsure what to do, I got my phone and Max and locked myself in the bathroom as I called 911.

"Hello, what's the--"

"Strangers are in my house. I live on 123 Apple Street, North Plainfield."

"Okay, honey, the police are on their way. Can you stay on the phone with me?"

"Yes...yea." I could hear the operator's voice trying to calm me down.

"Did they harm you at all?"

"No...but they are acting strange, and they even have a baby with them."

"Do you mind describing them for me, baby?" she asked. I got a clear picture of them, and I described both the adults and somewhat the baby. "Good, good. Now do you hear anything?" I put my ear to the door and heard the baby crying. I could also hear the two adults eating.

"Yes...I think they're eating and the baby is crying." But that's when I heard the doorbell ring and the door was opened.

"Is anyone here?" the police called. I slowly opened the door, and approached the cop and he asked me what the problem was.

"Them! Right there! Those strangers are in my house!" I pointed at the two trespassers sitting at the table. "They've done something with my *rea*/ parents and sister—and I don't even know who's baby that is!"

The cop looked calm. *Why isn't he doing anything!?* I thought. "Take them away! What are you doing?" I was getting impatient. The policeman then crouched down and looked right at me.

"Who are you pointing at?"

"The people around that table, right in front of you!"

"I don't see *anyone* there," the cop replied. "Stay right there, I am going to check around the house." He looked in all the rooms. "No one else is here."

"They're right there! And that baby! It's screaming its heart out!" The scream was so loud and clear. He hushed me and tried to listen.

"I don't hear anything," the cop said.

*No...no this can't be, I see them right there.* I then started to tremble and my eyes began to water.

"You're looking right at them! Why don't you see or hear them?! Officer, do some--"

"How 'bout this, we can go to the station and call your parents. How's that sound?" I had no reaction. I just continued to cry in frustration. The cop then took me with him to the police station. Once we got there, I gave him my parents' number and he called them. The line said "This number is no longer available."

"Are you sure this is their number?"

"Yes, I'm positive." He looked at me for a second in silence.

"Let's look for files under your parents' names instead...the phone's just acting weird."

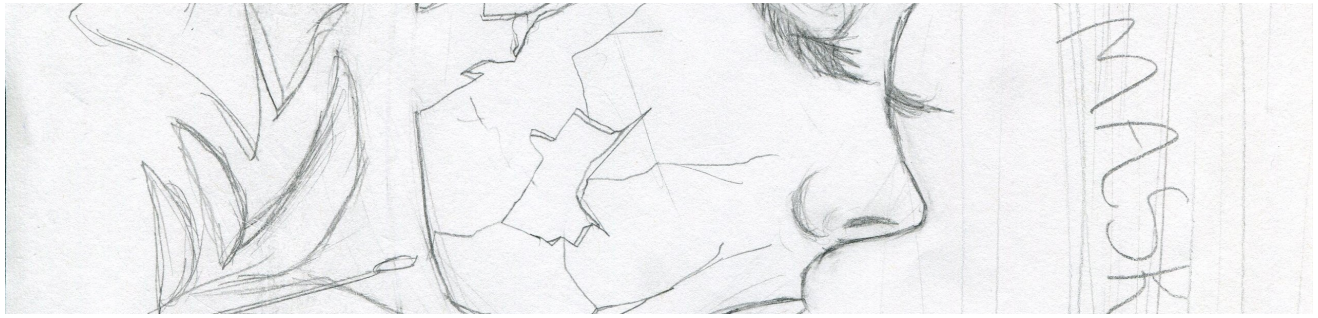
We walked to a nice woman's office and she greeted me kindly. After some small talk, she asked what are my parents' names. I told her and she typed it into her computer.

"Um...sweetie are these your parents?" She showed me a picture of each of them.

"Yes, that's them," I smiled. But then she motioned the officer to look at the screen. They looked at each other, both pale in the face. The nice woman got up from her seat and got close to me.

"Baby...your parents and sister all died in a fire along with the house...10 years ago."

I stood there in shock. I can't believe this. How did this happen? Why did this happen? Were the people I saw today my dead family?



## **Little Kid Again**

Matthew Bordfeld

I am 18 years old  
Looking back at my years  
All the good times laughing  
All the sad time tears  
There's nothing I'd change  
Everything to me was genuine  
Even all my mistakes  
I'd make them over again

But now  
I'm feeling kind of nostalgic  
It's hard for me to take it all in  
It's a lot of life for me to process  
There's not a lot I can do now  
Except sit back and reminisce  
Because once I'm handed adulthood  
I won't know what to do with it

I'm growing older, growing up  
Even though I don't really want to  
Go and face the real world  
I know that I've got to

Gotta grow up at some point  
I don't really know when  
I would give anything  
Just to be a little kid again

I miss  
being worry free, getting broken bones and scraping my knees, from doing stupid boy things, just to  
impress all the other kids  
I miss  
making castles in the sandbox and drawing on the sidewalk with chalk, where we'd play hopscotch

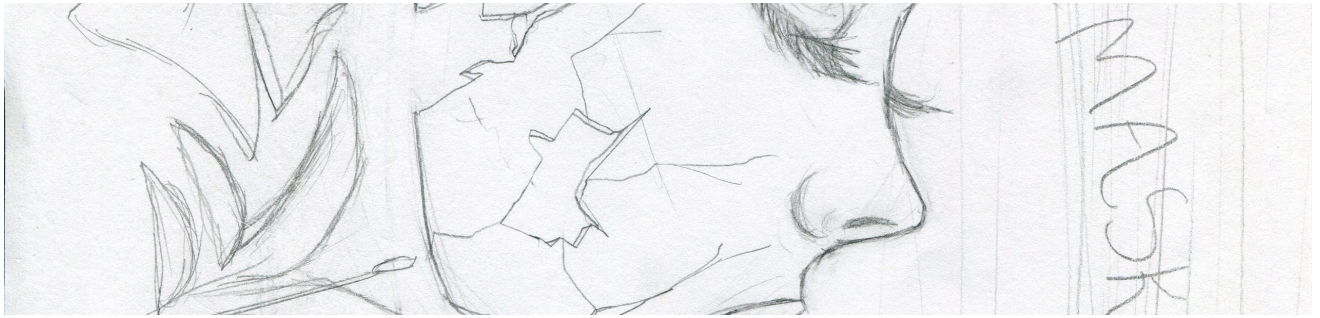
I miss  
riding bikes to the park, and playing ball in the street 'til it got dark  
I miss  
picking daisies off the side of the road, for the pretty little girl who lived across the street from my home  
I miss  
the thrill of my first kiss  
I miss  
not knowing what time it was, but knowing exactly when dinner is  
I miss  
seeing who could jump the highest off the swings and  
I miss  
when it didn't matter about the price and quality of your things  
I miss  
climbing trees and always being toothless, and  
I miss  
when mom's kisses could heal cuts and bruises, and  
I miss  
having my dad read to me off of the page, and  
I really miss  
how simple it was to be a single digit age  
I miss  
when we lived with no fear, regrets or sorrows, when if we got hurt, we'd cry about it today but laugh about it tomorrow  
I miss  
all the waving see you laters and when goodbyes only lasted for a little while  
I'm growing older, growing up,  
but I'll always love when I was a little child

I'm growing older, growing up  
Even though I don't really want to  
Go and face the real world  
I know that I've got to

Gotta grow up at some point  
I don't really know when  
I would give anything  
Just to be a little kid again

Gotta grow up at some point  
I don't really know when  
I would give anything  
Just to be a little kid again

Just to be a little kid again



## **Seven Deadly Sins**

Veronica Vega

### Sloth

I'm still getting up  
It seems to be taking long  
Just can't get up yet

### Envy

She is so pretty  
Why can't I be pretty too  
Don't I deserve it

### Gluttony

I love food so much  
It is going to kill me  
I still want more food

### Greed

More, more, more, more, more  
I have to have more, more, more  
I still want more, more

### Anger

I am so upset  
That I could murder you now  
And feel no remorse

## Lust

I see his big arms  
And I want them around me  
Squeezing out my breath

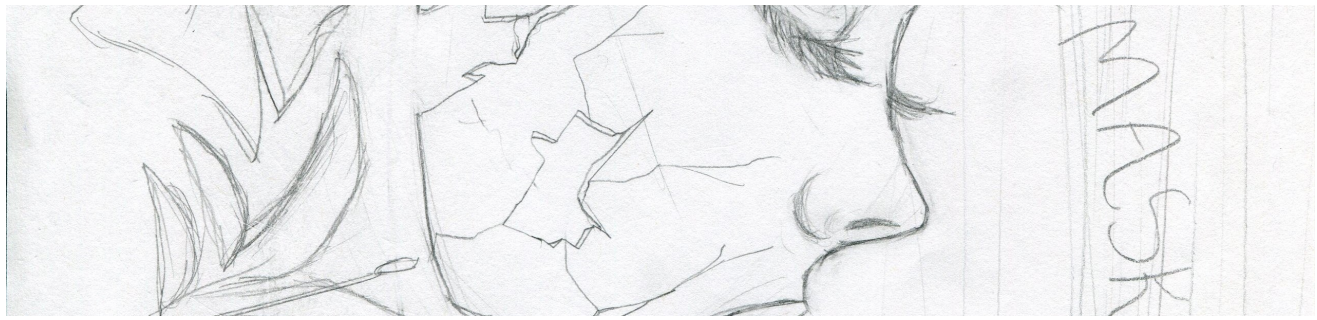
## Pride

Of all the great sins  
Perhaps none is more deadly  
Than being too proud

## **To Live Is to Experience**

Adriana Rojas

Be at ease  
Like trees dancing to the breeze  
Do that, go with it  
Don't try to go against what you don't see fit  
Let everything you encounter shape you  
Let it change your point of view  
When you get lost don't try to be found  
Enjoy the sound of the leaves rustling on the ground  
Don't run from the uncertainty  
Vibe with the unknown fearlessly  
Learn to adapt  
You'd be surprised what you attract when you become more relaxed  
Explore the garden of your mind  
Don't be scared of thoughts unkind  
Let them speak and let yourself yell  
Let there be adventures you can't wait to tell  
Don't try to force things  
Life is as it is, don't try to be the one pulling the strings  
It should be considered a sin to not enjoy what life brings.



## **The Truth?**

Emely Alphonse

Nothing can compare to the feelings you've brought upon me.  
The way you made me feel from head to toe.  
The pain that gave me hope.  
And yet nothing can compare to the feelings you've brought upon me

You hurt me, it burns  
The lies of a child shine bright on my scars  
You wouldn't tell me the real day you were born  
But nothing can compare to the feelings you've brought upon me.

Why oh, why, do you continuously lie?  
Is it to hide the crime of what died?  
Because I know that crime would have been me  
Whose heart cannot be revived.

I've tried so hard seeking for the truth,  
The more I look the more I see the darkness in your eyes.  
The pure black pupil with an innocent brown ring around  
Is it too hard to tell me that you have been married?

Do you love your life of a secret lie?  
Is this what you do to a daughter of your poisoned eyes?  
I can't hold it back no more,  
But must really knowing hurt much more?

## **Oops**

Maria Gonzalez

Tell me truths that are nothing more than lies  
Stories of origin, of formation,  
Of unicorns, and how ev'ryone dies

I have seen murderers murdered by spies,  
Flowers whose scents were of desperation.  
Tell me truths that are nothing more than lies

I have heard the screams of those who despise;  
Not knowing the whispers of creation,  
Of unicorns and how ev'ryone dies

I know of horrors that bring forth cries  
Ones that cut through any separation.  
Tell me truths that are nothing more than lies

I've tasted bitterness from severed ties  
Bitterness from misinterpretation  
Of unicorns and how ev'ryone dies

I have felt the stings of tears from souls' tries  
It was far too much of a sensation  
Tell me truths that are nothing more than lies  
Of unicorns and how ev'ryone dies

# **Rusty's Realization**

Adriana Rojas

Tired Rusty lays in bed as the clock's hands keep moving. If he doesn't wake up soon, he's sure to be late.

"God Rusty. Wake up!" his sister yells as she throws a pillow at him.

"Jesus Liz. Chill out," he replies.

"Hurry up and get ready. Mom's waiting for you," Liz says as she leaves his room.

The half-asleep boy drags himself out of bed and changes. He hurries to brush his teeth and just runs some gel through his hair sloppily leaving lumps of gel to harden in one single spot. Classic Rusty. He rushes to grab his lunch as he notices that he only has ten minutes to get to school.

"Mom hurry up!" he yells.

"I'm going. I'm going!" his mom repeats as she goes down the stairs putting on an earring.

"I'm gonna be late."

"Yeah well, maybe you should wake up earlier," the mother says.

They get in the car and head towards Rusty's school.

"Remember we're going to your uncle's house later, so don't come home late," the mother tells him as he exits the car.

"Which uncle? Luis?" Rusty asks.

"Yes. Uncle Luis. Don't forget," she says as she drives away.

Rusty goes through his day like nothing. He's actually looking forward to the end of the school day. He can't remember the last time he saw his favorite uncle. He had moved to a town too far from Bridgetop to shorten his commute to his new job so Rusty never really got to see him since. He's gone through the day quickly and before he realizes he's already in ninth period. *Ughh* he thinks. Math was not his subject and the teacher sure as hell didn't make it easier for him.

"All right, so today we're just going to be reviewing this week's material for the test tomorrow," Ms. Hill announces.

"What test?" Rusty asks.

"The test on all the material we covered this week," she says.

He doesn't say anything and tries his best to catch up on what he's missed. Not that he's been physically absent, but mentally? He's taken a long vacation. About twenty minutes before the bell rings, he's decided he's had enough.

"Miss, you never even taught us this," he says rudely.

"Maybe if you actually paid attention, you would know the material," she tells the boy as he sucks his teeth.

"Man, this is stupid. You never went over this at all this week," he snaps back.

The teacher ignores his comment and goes back to reviewing the quadratic formula and when to use it. This however does not help Rusty, so he just speaks out loud.

"Man, I'm not even gonna be here tomorrow, so forget it."

"Rusty, if you're going to keep interrupting my class, please leave," Ms. Hill tells him as politely as she could.

The boy sucks his teeth, gathers his things, and leaves.

"Go to the office," Ms. Hill tells him.

"Man, I'm going home," he tells her as he leaves.

"Okay. I'll write you up," is the last thing the teacher says before she continues with her review.

The boy walks home and finds his mother in the kitchen.

"Rusty, what're you doing home so early?"

"My teacher was absent, so I thought leaving a bit earlier wouldn't do any harm. Don't worry. I was marked present."

"All right, well don't do it again. Get ready now that you're home. We're leaving in a bit."

"What about Liz?" he asks.

"She has work today. She's going to be home late."

The boy showers and gets ready. He hops into the car when it's time to leave and grows a bit excited to hear from his favorite uncle. They arrive at a small pastel blue home.

They knock on the door and they're greeted by the one and only Luis.

"Erika!" he says as he brings his sister in for a hug. "It's so nice to see you. Hey Rusty. Come in. It's nice to see you guys."

"Happy Birthday, Uncle Luis!" Rusty says as he walks into the living room. Uncle Luis laughs and orders some pizza for his family. He hooks up his Play Station and begins to play with his nephew.

"So, how's school going Rusty?" he asks.

"Ehh. It's all right I guess. It's school."

"Man. Kids come into my office all the time and say the exact same thing when I ask them. It sucks to hear kids talk about school like that. Like come on man, you should be happy you're getting an education. Especially since it's free," he tells him.

Uncle Luis was a guidance counselor at Lincoln High School. The reason why he moved away was to shorten the commute to his work. Ironically, the subject of school was the major interest of his favorite person.

"You know last time I had a kid in my office come in because he got kicked out his class for cursing and cutting class, and I let him talk to me instead of facing bigger consequences. He was all like 'Mister these teachers are dumb. Like sometimes they just piss me off. The things I do aren't even intentional but man. They just aggravate me.'"

"Exactly! Honestly, Uncle Luis, they can be really aggravating," Rusty said while keeping his eyes on the TV screen and his hands on the controller.

"Okay, but you wanna know what I told him, Rusty?" Uncle Luis pauses the game and turns to his nephew.

"What?"

"I told him to imagine his parents or guardian being a teacher. I asked him how'd he feel knowing his caretaker got cursed at by some kids. Those teachers have kids too, like come on man. If you wouldn't want your parents or even yourself to be treated like that, why would you treat others that way. You know what I mean?"

The boy shifted his eyes somewhere else because even though his Uncle may have not known everything Rusty said to his teachers, he still felt too ashamed to look at him.

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Rusty replies in a low voice.

Truth be told, Rusty didn't even think of that before. The imagining of someone disrespecting his mom or Uncle Luis in a way like he's done with his teachers made him sick. When he returned to school the Monday following that weekend, he took notice of everything the teachers had to put up with on top of what they probably had going on in their personal life. He respected it and actually tried to get his peers to see what his Uncle helped him realize.

When the boy got to his last period, he was both ashamed and glad to go in. The mixture of these feelings were good signs though. He realized his actions were not the right way to handle frustration and that he was ready to apologize. The teacher handed everyone their test they took on Friday and of course Rusty never took it, so he went up to her desk and decided to apologize.

"Hey Ms. Hill, I'd honestly just like to say I'm sorry for spazzing out on you on Thursday. I guess it wasn't my day," he tells her.

"Everyone has those days, but that doesn't make it okay to treat others horribly," she says in a cold tone.

"Yeah I know that now. I'm sorry, Miss. I was wondering if I could still take that test though?"

You could hear the nervousness in his voice.

"Yeah. Come during your lunch period tomorrow. Your apology was nice, but you still have a Saturday for not going to the office and leaving early," she says with a slight smile.

"Yeah I know. I didn't come in hopes of getting away with things. I just wanted to give you a genuine apology."

He gives her a smile and goes back to his seat.



**"Consequences"** by Mr. John DeLaurentis (Adviser)

(Digital Photo)

# Be Like You

Nermeen Girgis

I want to be like you  
In that way that only you  
Can be. I want you to  
Show me where you get your  
Strength.

Where you get your wisdom  
And knowledge. How can I be like you  
When everything you stand for  
Is everything I'm not?

I want to learn how to walk  
And talk like you  
Because maybe if I do I'll be  
Good enough for them

They don't think of me  
As highly as they think of you  
They don't think of me at all  
But you, your name never leaves  
Their minds.

You're everything anyone wants  
You're funny and kind  
Sweet and compassionate

And I don't know  
How to be any of those  
Things. They think of me as an  
Animal.

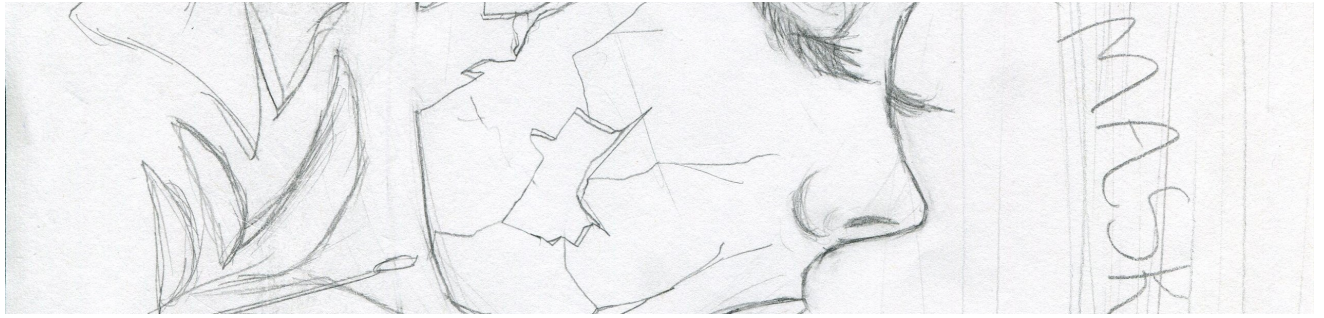
And I am, just one  
That's worse than  
Anything they can imagine  
But I need to continue  
To hide that from them

That's why I need to be like you

# **Simplicity**

Adriana Rojas

My complexity is quite simple  
You must understand that,  
I will be your sun and moon,  
I'll enlighten you my dear,  
But I'll be as dark as the shadows you hide in  
I'll change your perspective  
I'll be contradicting  
I am like the game of Russian roulette  
Would you dare to pull the trigger?  
You need to understand that,  
I am not predictable  
You cannot try to figure me out  
I do not have a routine,  
I am not stable  
I am not like a weather forecast  
I will not hit the highs,  
like you expect me to  
Nor will my hurricane hit you when you think,  
Clear skies today,  
Don't be sure of it, my love,  
But you will fall in love with me regardless  
You will love my way of being,  
But you'll find that there's too much of me,  
You'd lose yourself trying to understand me  
You'll find yourself in a labyrinth with no out  
And you will wish,  
That you could understand,  
How my simple complexity cannot be handled by any man.



## **Blink of an Eye**

Jasmine Hernandez

They always say they wish they could go back  
Back to the life that was just worry free  
Having all your school stuff in your backpack  
Answering questions like what is your dream?  
Sometimes we wanna grow up already  
But she tells me to enjoy the time now  
When you're old you can't just hope you're steady  
We are lucky, teachers please take a bow  
Cuz when we leave they'll no longer be there  
School first gives the lesson, but life gives the test  
You'll see for yourself that life isn't fair  
And just always want to be at your best  
So don't try to wish your childhood goodbye  
Cuz time will fly in the blink of an eye



## **"The Waves of Time"**

By Mr. John DeLaurentis (Adviser)

(Digital Photo)



Mr. DeLaurentis introduces the Third Annual Creative Writing show: *When Artists Collide*. The seven show performances were attended by over 500 students and staff.

(Video image capture recorded by Samantha Merendino.)

# How the Creative Writing Show Impacted My Life

Jessie Corchado

(Article reprinted courtesy of the *Tunlaw*, the newspaper of  
North Plainfield High School)

The Creative Writing show has impacted many of my peers from the Creative Writing class. For me personally, the Creative Writing show was an emotional and mental outlet. It was a way to express myself through words and movements. I had taken all three courses, Creative Writing I, II, and Advanced Creative Writing. This prepared me for the shows to come.

My first show happened to be the first show ever, so it was pretty nerve-wracking. I remember practicing in class everyday, which seemed tedious at first, but in the end it was worth it. The minute I walked into the library, I nearly backed out. I had to perform almost every period, and I knew it was going to be a long day. A few periods in, I began to feel confident as the minutes went by. Once the Creative Writing show was over, I felt a sense of accomplishment.

As Mr. DeLaurentis, the Creative Writing teacher and show coordinator, puts it, "The purpose of the Creative Writing show is to showcase the creative talents of the class through poetry, music, and prose."

He motivated many students, myself included, to continue their work after finishing his course.

"What motivated me to start this show was first because poetry is meant to be performed or read to an audience, and second, I wanted more people to hear all the incredible original work that the students were writing and sharing with the class. It also gave the opportunity for others to hear content that may help or inspire them," said DeLaurentis.

The Creative Writing show is truly impactful and changed my life for the better.

(Editor's note: Jessie Corchado performed in the first two Creative Writing shows: *The Sound of Thought* and *A Writer's Confession*.)

# Reflections on the Third Annual Creative Writing Show

Amaiana Sajjad

The Third Annual Creative Writing show took place on May 19th in the NPHS library. The title of the show, *When Artists Collide* was suggested by Adriana Rojas, a junior at NPHS. The title was chosen as all the students voted for it to be one of the three titles they had come up with in their Creative Writing course, taught by English and Creative Writing teacher, Mr. John DeLaurentis.

Samantha Merendino, junior at NPHS, has been part of the Creative Writing show for two years. "I performed last year in the show, unlike this year I helped organize it with some of the other Advanced Creative Writing students; however I realized last year we had a very strong and emotional poetry show, and this year it was a little bit of every emotion," said Merendino.

The show consisted of a variety of creative writings as there were some odes, short narratives, music, and poetry pieces. All these different forms of literature, emphasize the meaning of the title. "It shows how people who have a similar passion for writing can come together through the different ways in which we all write," said Merendino.

Towards the end of the show the literature pieces presented were a tribute to Aaliyah Juarbe, an alumni of the class of 2015 who recently passed away. Jasmine Hernandez, a freshman at NPHS and the cousin of Juarbe, and Nermeen Girgis, senior at NPHS are students who were really close friends to Juarbe. They performed their poetry in memory of Aaliyah Juarbe.

DeLaurentis said, "I think of how well the students have done over the years, and this year's show had an easier flow in terms of transitioning from one performance to another."

A yellow rectangular box containing the title "When Artists Collide" in a black, elegant script font. The text is centered and occupies most of the box.

*When Artists  
Collide*

# Face the Music

Song Lyrics by John DeLaurentis, Teacher of English and Creative Writing

(This song was performed at this year's Creative Writing show.)

When you think over the moments of life  
Each twist and turn, each joy and strife  
Do you make your aim to enjoy the time,  
Sharing with loved ones the sad and sublime?

Each day you're given is full of surprise  
It is filled with either truth or lies  
But what choices will you make this day?  
Will you strive to do the right thing or stray?

(Chorus):  
It's time to face the music and sing  
Enjoy each note played your life will bring  
Remember to love as if it's your last day  
Before what really matters is taken away

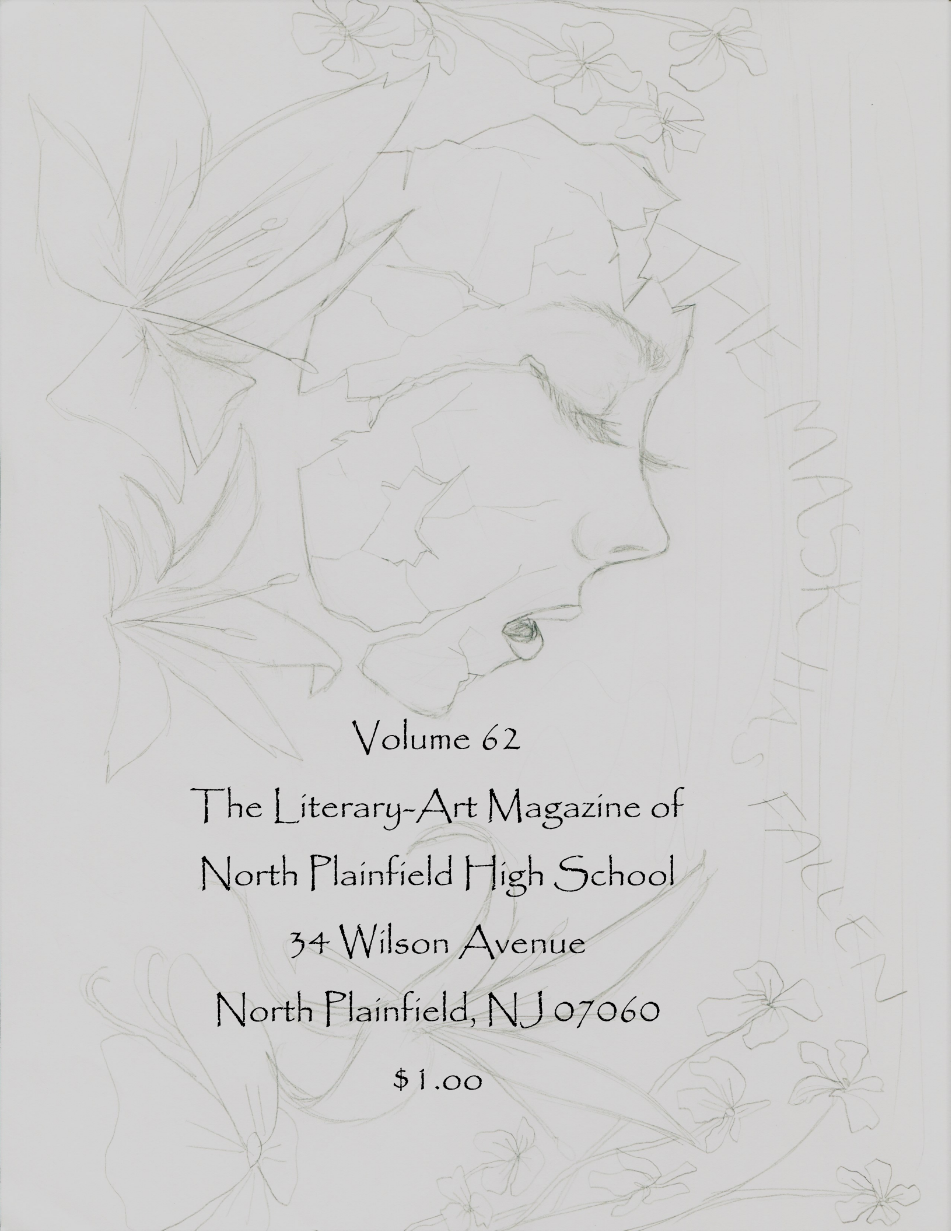
In each season you face good times and bad  
So how will you respond to smiles and the sad?  
Your walk on Earth could be long or short  
Will those who know you give a good report?

What legacy will you leave behind?  
Will you make a difference? Will you be mean or kind?  
Don't take for granted the blessing of breath  
Live a full life before you meet your death

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(I remember Aaliyah Juarbe in my Creative Writing class as an enthusiastic student, who had a passion for writing and for creating characters she wanted to come alive on the page. She passed from us too soon, as did another person this year: substitute teacher Kylynn Richardson-Bouie.

I wrote the song "Face the Music" with the theme of being thankful for life and not taking it for granted. You never know when loss may come, but every day we should celebrate the life we are given.)



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