Hope, Healing, and Humor. OUHSD Poetry Slam Anthology 2022-2023

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SPIT SHINE PUBLISHING
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA
2023

First SPIT SHINE Publishing Edition, November 2023

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Foreword by Corrinne Abbott

Cover Art by Melissa Polanco
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Edited by Fernando Albert Salinas

Sponsored by Oxnard Union High School District and California Poets in the Schools.

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Hope

noun
A feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

Healing

noun
The process of becoming healthy again.

adjective
Therapeutic

Humor

noun
The quality of being amusing or comic.

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Foreword

Seven years ago, Oxnard High School's Teacher Librarian Jennifer Brickey envisioned a stage where OHS students fearlessly performed their original poetry and captured their audience with their words. Fast forward, and we now celebrate the culmination of that vision with the Oxnard Union High School District's annual poetry slam, art contest, and poetry anthology. This year, Pacifica High School hosted OU's 2023 Poetry Slam: Hope, Healing, and Humor, with the event live-streamed on YouTube in classrooms throughout the district. Students district-wide now share their art and words through multiple platforms. The anthology you are reading, either digitally or in our bound publication, celebrates our OU students and their fearless voices.

This year's theme Hope, Healing, and Humor encouraged levity, a way to take a fresh collective breath and celebrate our resilience. After the worldwide pandemic, we slowly reemerged into a collective state of caution. With time, we began to heal and share the hope of connectedness. We aren't back to normal, we are creating our new normal. Students representing Adolfo Camarillo, Oxnard, Pacifica, Rancho Campana, and Rio Mesa took the stage to redefine our new social construct.

The development of our program began with the tireless dedication of the Literary Arts Program Coordinator for the Ventura County Arts Council and Oxnard Union's, California Poets in the Schools Master Poet-Teacher, Fernando Albert Salinas. His talent and love of poetry and the spoken word ignite a spark in our students as he travels to our campus libraries teaching poetry workshops. His mentorship provides students with guidance and courage to speak their authentic selves. In addition, he helped judge the Slam and performed for our audience. We thank you for all you do.

This year's Poetry Slam judges also included Angelina Leaños, the 2021-2022 Youth Poet Laureate and board member of both the Ventura County Arts Council and California Poets in the Schools; Genesis Perez, a Poet-Teacher at CPITS and staff at Beyond Baroque in Venice; and student judges Miles Jefferson and Carmen Rocha, both PHS seniors.

Over the years, the Slam's development and growth would not have been possible without the support of Dr. Tom McCoy, our Oxnard Union Superintendent, Richard Urias, our Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, Roger Adams, our Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services,

Teo Lopez, our Web and Multimedia Coordinator, and Tom Sharf, our theater and sound master (who never really retired). We warmly thank all Oxnard Union educators who support our vision and success, especially the teachers who promote our poetry workshops, attend our event, and affect the daily lives of our students.

The poetry slam's success attests to the shared cooperative spirit at Pacifica High School. A warm thank you to our performing arts teachers Lorraine Crane and Cathy Rogers for their helpfulness as we organized our district event, especially since our Performing Arts Center's schedule is booked solid throughout May. The counselors used the stage until 10 PM the night before the slam (thanks for leaving the plants for us!). Coach Moon came in clutch and rallied our football players to set our stage in record time that morning. Thank you to our audience for demonstrating empathy, respect, and encouragement during the performances and ensuring a seamless transition with one-hour periods during a two-hour presentation. Thank you to Claire Hunter in the attendance office who keeps all our records straight and supports our school activities regardless of all the work they create for her. Just think--a half hour after we took the last group picture of our poetry slam contestants, the Jazz ensemble was on stage setting up for their concert that evening. Without Principal Chris Ramirez and the administrative team's willingness to maintain our campus and welcome participants from schools throughout the district, we couldn't have had a successful Slam, and for that we thank you.

On behalf of the Oxnard Union Teacher Librarians--Jennifer Brickey (ACHS), Joel Graves (HHS), Heidi Resnik (ACHS), Margery Ricards (RMHS), and Kimberly Tahsuda-Nelson (HHS), I'd like to encourage all the Oxnard Union students to sound their voices proudly and hold tight to hope, healing, and humor.

Corrinne Abbott
Teacher Librarian
Pacifica High School
Oxnard, California

Hope, Healing, and Humor

Harmful Hope
by Janeth Melchor
Pacifica High School
Classroom Teacher – Mrs. Nuñez
1st Place Winner

My gender is what I choose!
I stare at the clock wondering how long 'til it's been decided
It's like a game of minny miney moo. Boy or girl!
You must decide fast!
The time is ticking!
You don't have time to be thinking!
Society will force you into a gender box
Faster than you learn how to walk..
Your time is up!
I'm so sorry that you have to have a body
It will now be the subject of so much of your fears
Wipe away those tears
God made you this way...
I chose to believe every word I was Fed
I spent so much time convincing myself I was broken.
How can a child grow up to be like this!
What morals did I dismiss?
I don't wear gender confusion for fun
Eyes Puffy from weeping and begging to god to take this!
Dear god, I want to be normal
I laugh, what exactly is normal?
Normal were immortal, I'd die tomorrow
Because both me and God know I'll never be normal
Instead, I'll listen to the person in the mirror and let them choose
Maybe I'm a nail screw on its loose.
Healing is like doing CPR on myself.
1.
2.
3
Wake up!
The old you is missing
The guilt is piling up—we are not alike!
The old me has died
I woke up hoping it was just a long nightmare

I look into the broken mirror and I am standing right there
This is no dream, more like my reality
I can't be what I want to be
That won't stop me. 1.2.3
I won't stop after 3! 4,5,6
I won't let them dismiss
You can't change what the cocoon turns out to be
All I know is they all turn out beautifully fully
I am not just a she, I'm also a he
People don't understand what that means
But let me explain it to you
We hope for acceptance
Hope for our parents to accept us
I'm sorry I can't make up my mind!
That I was not the gender that I was aligned!
I am not vanilla or chocolate ice cream
I am swirl!
Adding humor to my indecisiveness gives it less stress
I stare at the clock wondering how long till it's been decided.
Only this time there's no decision
It will be my mission
To accept these broken pieces and form art
Maybe I won't be the same as before
However this time I'll be more

Harmful Hope
By Jaxon Alfaro
Oxnard High School
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Kaval
2nd Place Winner

Walking down a path with invisible walls and ground,
strolling and strutting with hope on my hip like a pistol,
loaded with blazing bullets bulldozing through the fog of realism
and action. I'm stuck, in muck with chucks on my feet, tearing and
breaking down with my pistol fading in the background of this
chaos. I backed down. No longer walking, how could I without my
pistol of security. I am nothing. And I can't do anything

Of course it's not actually that hard to move without it.
All I had to do was move one foot in front of the other, but I
remained stuck. Stuck in this muck with this frozen mindset
that I can't move on. So hope had handed me a handgun. And I can't
go on, but stay here and watch everything move past me. Feeling like
a swim-less fish, I see the currents moving past me but currently
now I'm not breathing. And I hope someone can help me

It's back! My gun of ho-
What is this? It's just a water gun now
What happened to my pistol that passed through the fog of
practicality and effort? Well, that's just great.
I have a useless gun that, let me guess, if I just "put my mind to it"
it can be my powerful, precise pistol again

Day after day. Hour after hour, time being spent like a helpless child
crying for someone to come fix his broken bike. This feels like a big
deal. But somehow I'm glued to this mic, speaking my life, Still stuck
to this ground. I'm on a mound in the middle of the bottom inning.
But this is only the beginning. I can't take this anymore. I need
somewhere to show it. Can't someone see? These scars on my arm
aren't for show. But they did grow, all throughout my limbs.

I see now. They mean more than a deceitful deed. I've been so
ashamed of the harm I caused. I think I'm getting it. I think I can be
at ease. Knowing these scars I wear on my body like permanent

pearls are just as shiny. But they help me be more mindful of myself. I want to do better. I can do better. I will do better.
For me, for we, for you to see that I am getting better. I see my growth. I see it like a monstrously made enchanting tree, luminescing illustrious victory

The invisible walls and ground now are forming into beautiful intricate pieces of life, virtuous, violet Victorian walls, surrounding me, now with a complex and compelling work of parquet wooden craftsmanship. Below my feet Hope is now reunited on my hip once again, but this time it used to encourage me on my journey. I make of what is around me. And I'm not stuck

Blue Fish
by Calista Guese
Adolfo Camarillo High School
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Demorest
3rd Place Winner

I have an issue
Multiple in fact
They act like an endless cavern housing my past,
Present and what may be my future
They suffocate me with the weight of a whale
I grow pale in their presence,
I need to escape, afraid to assimilate
It's dark and cold
I pick up my feet and run
My neighborhood lined with 3 light posts turning each corner
Again and again a repetition like no other, I end at one light post,
The other begins to shimmer in the distance
It's silent
No neighbor mowing lawns, no kids running around
It's me and myself
The sound of my feet as I stride with direction
Beckoned by the light
The beat of my heart
A metronome of my body
The rhythm of my breath
As my feet move further and further
Block out the world, block out all issues
I don't want tissues, I don't want problems to deal with,
I just want answers.
So I keep running.
Greeting the same standard light post
That has a glow perched upon a beige stout.
Over and over again
My legs slowly give out
While my mind begins to scrap the unnecessary
The center of my attention is my legs screaming for help
Secondary is what I need to know and what I don't
Filtering the wrong answers, I can be less wary
I run faster
I find a rhythm

I find a focus, my true north, my cardinal direction

I reach each post tired and reach out for the next one
More hard-wired
It starts to make sense
It starts to connect,
Not like Connect 4. It's not so simple anymore, it can be more,
It's not one fish or two fish, it's the blue fish.
It's definitive and defined,
My mind is rewound and unbound, by my issues

Only then can I breathe
When my legs are heavy, my body's worn, my breath is thin
A type of therapy unrivaled
I stop running between two light posts
In the middle where it grows dark
The solution of the riddle to escape the endless cavern
This time the code was blue fish.

Adolfo Camarillo High School

Positive to the Negative
by Cynthia Ritz
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Myers

I am pessimistic and isolated.
I wonder “How hard is it to forgive?”
I see a future where I am on a stage joyful and bright.
I want people to laugh and live in grace.
I am pessimistic and isolated, was I always like this?

I pretend I can’t move on.
I feel light as a feather, I’ll float with the clouds at this rate.
I can touch the clouds, they are soft and fluffy.
I worry that I’ll miss something important.
I cry as my inner child grows up at last.
I am slowly becoming optimistic and close.

I understand the world is full of tragedy.
I speak the truth as long as we heal.
I dream of inspiring people all over the world.
I’ll try to remember the positives and accept the negatives.
I hope and believe those who are unsatisfied will find their wants.
I am the positive to my past negative.

Voices
by Cynthia Ritz
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Myers

I am quiet and reserved, you can hear a mouse squeak.
I wonder if this world would care if I made a move.
I see a dark and gloomy world with a shimmering light.
I hear the hoarse and dead tree's leaves rattling,
luring me into a trap.
I am quiet and reserved.

I pretend that I can't do something to help anything or anyone.
I feel my heart pounding against my ear, ready to be free.
I pull off my mask, knowing I have a chance.
I cry about my past, but now we are in the present.
I am talkative and observant, the animals seem quiet.

I understand it is hard to be yourself, but you must persevere.
I shall say "We must stand up against our fears, hates, and wants."
I dream that all of Earth can find themselves helping each and every one of us.
I will try to help others to find their voice.
I hope that I can help people find their perseverance.
I have a voice and am observant, nothing could be louder.

Channel Islands High School

Rose With Thorns
by Natalie Torres Alcantar
Classroom Teacher Mr. Santos

Burning love letters to get over you never worked out
nor did telling my friends when I found out you had a girlfriend,
“I hope they don't last.” I'm kidding, though. I wish you the best.
You weren't my person and time made me realize that.
I stayed up many nights thinking if you'd ever come back.
I changed myself completely and look at how that turned out.
I was lost for a long time, until one day,
I realized you weren't worth hurting myself.
I found it sad how I was constantly hoping you'd come back.
I was delusional.
You were with her and I didn't even cross your mind at all.
I was just a silly little girl desperate for your love.
Things were upside down for me til
I met the person that pushed me to get better for myself.
“Levántate, no llores por alguien que no vale la pena,” he'd tell me.
I was in a moment of realization where I thought hurting myself or
crying wasn't gonna do anything but make you feel pity for me.
I wasn't gonna wait for someone to take me back.
So, I got up and got ready.
Got rid of everything that reminded me of you and
did things to please me ’cause I was tired of pleasing others.
I was lost for a long time and no one ever saw that.
I healed in silence just like I hurt in silence.
Grew a whole garden for myself ’
cause I didn't need anyone to depend on.
I was enough for me, myself, and I, and that was enough.
I always thought moving on or healing was not loving that certain
someone anymore, but the truth is,
it's about finally accepting the reality of what I feared the most.
I gave myself the moon and stars ’cause I knew no one would.
I realized I had to let go of what was not meant for me
because as a wise person told me once,
I am gonna live in this body forever
so I have to take care of it.
For once I felt full. I felt free.

It took me a long time to accept the reality—
accept the fact that you were in my past
so you had to stay in it. I had to leave you in it.
I never thought I needed healing
but the moment I found myself crying for the same person
for the 100th time, I realized
I couldn't keep hurting myself that way.
It took me many tears and laughs (I laughed
about my pain to feel better) but I did it all alone
because I made the decision whether I wanted to move on or not.
Someone once asked me “Do you still love him?” and I told them
“You know, I always will but I don’t think I can be with someone like that again. He is just a lesson to me now.”
My petals bloomed and my scars turned into thorns,
I became the rose with thorns you'd never touch again.

Wonderland
by Belen Chavez
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Saunders

Once upon a time, actually not that long ago, a group of friends went to Wonderland. A magical place, filled with laughter and joy.
Filled with colors and madness, although a place not most people would choose to go. They laughed for hours, what felt like days but, when they woke up it got boring and mundane. The next day they went to school, a prison for most. Except for one friend, who felt an itch in his toes.

“A side effect of the trip” his friend had proposed.

His home life was shattered, in shambles they said. A dad and a mom that were in over their head.

“The worries and sorrows were a fog in my head, I wish I could go back to Wonderland again.”

The group snickered and laughed at his queer-sounding words, as the boy kneeled down, crying out word for word.

“Please tell me how to go back there again! “I wish to be free and happy again!”
They all sighed but one did a grin.

“I’ll show you how to go back there again”.

So after school the 2 walked to the “candy store” at the corner of 9th and Cloud. That was a place the adults called the “bad” part of town.

“How could this old place be bad?” He thought, “It’s nothing but trash and women with short tops. How could they hate this place?” A place where all the ‘home boys’ lived.”

“The man in the store is named, Mad Hatter. And don't ask him why his arms are in tatters.”

The boys walked into the store and there he was.

The man they called Mad Hatter but the police know him as Doug. The boy was perplexed by The Hatter's appearance, a man in his 30s yet his skin had an old, saggy appearance. His veins were black and outlined his body. His hair was gone and his eyes were chalky.

"Boy, are you dense? Have you lost your mind?! You should be in school and not be seen with my kind."

The Mad Hatter was mad, there was no doubt about that, the only thing missing now was his hat.

"My friend wants to go on one of your famous trips…," the friend said although he wasn't able to finish.

The Hatter spoke again, "Boy, are you dense? Have you lost your damn mind?! My famous trips are for adults, and not for your kind."

"Please Mr. Hatter, please let me go, I've gone and haven't even told a single soul."

The Hatter knew he had a difficult choice to make. It was either help the kid out or jail would be his fate. The Hatter sat up, up from his chair, then walked to a drawer, while the boys sat and stared. "Boy, you are dense but, I won't pay no mind. You get what you ask for, you'll learn that lesson in time."

"I do ask for payment no doubt about that, but maybe this time I'll cut you some slack."

"Just hand me some cash, enough for a pack, then leave this place, But I'm sure you'll come back…"

And The Hatter was right, the boy did go back. He went so much, The Hatter's hair grew back. So the years went on, much like this story. The boy grew up to find Wonderland boring. But one day, a man pulled up in a dark green nova.

"Homeboy looks sad, I ain't got a doubt, just swing by my place and I'll help you out."

So The Boy agreed, He went to his place, not knowing that he would end up on the news later that day. The boy's death spread like a fire in the woods. His friends felt sorry but one of them was shook. He ran back down to the corner with fright. Even though he was looking for a fight. But to his surprise, The Hatter was gone. Gone from the hotel room that was his shop all along. He punched and kicked the door, and began to fluster, crying and asking God if his friend had suffered.

The door opened up, just an inch at a time. A small rabbit hopped out, he was checking the time.

“Oh dear! Oh dear! Have you seen the time?! I must be off now, it's important! Bye-Bye!”

Shock and confusion painted the friend’s face. He scrambled to his feet and started a chase. Into the room and down a rabbit hole,
“I guess the story about Alice wasn’t just some old fable.”

He landed with a thump on the ground, and just like that, he was astounded. He was in a place only believed in his dreams, but unlike Neverland, here, the madness ran free. With teary eyes, he begged the question, “Where is my friend?” He sadly protested, “The Hatter must know! The Hatter knows all! Please young man, please don’t ball. Just follow me, we can’t be late! Every minute we wait decides our fate!”

They tread through the woods, not fast, not light, and finally, they got to see the light. And there he was in all his glory, with his hat and drinking tea at almost the end of this story.

The friend had fallen to the ground and cried, telling The Hatter to pay for his crime, “You prick you tricked him now he’s dead!”

“The trick is you, not me, dear friend. The dead are dead, that can’t be changed, To un-trick the dead is just something that cannot be obtained.”

The Mad Hatter looked down at the friend, “Boy, are you dense?

Have you lost common sense? Have you truly lost your mind? I did nothing wrong, it was him all along. He was the one who made up his mind."

To Commemorate The Great Edgar Alan Poe And His Wonderful Yet Woeful Works Of Poetry

by Belen Chavez
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Saunders

To my special Annabel Lee,
Thank you for staying with me in our kingdom by the sea.
I love you with all my heart, even if that light is so dim.
My love for you is strong, as strong as can be,
This love will never fade, well after it should be.
Your "love" for me is weak, as weak as can be,
To say you even feel love is as silly as can be.
The truth is you are as empty as a ghost,
But to me, you are my life, that is why I love you the most.
You don't get jealous, nor bat an eye,
All you do is "love" me, even when I come to you and cry.
Even in 10 years' time, you will still be my life,
For that is because you are the sun to my shine.
When the time comes, and I have to die,
I will have a note, saying to lay you by my side.
For my body will rot, and so will yours,
For you are my Annabel Lee,
And I am your Edgar Allan Poe.
For now, let's not worry for our fate to come,
Let us enjoy the moment, and cherish our love.
Because you are oh, so very special to me,
This is why I call you, my Annabel Lee.

Open Book
by Angela Martinez Dominguez
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Schlesinger

I need to be perfect
I need to think of my future and always get good grades
I need to be the perfect child that always behaves
and heaven forbid I get anything less than an A
because that simply isn't like me
no that's not like me at all
Everyone seems to have me all figured out
she's really smart, she always does her work
They seem to read me like an open book
And yet all the words appear to be scrambled
because although everyone seems to “know” me, no one really knows me at all
Perfect
that's the word people use to describe me
Or at least what they used to describe me
perfect
A word whose description doesn't sit well with me
I want to stop wearing a mask
I want people to know the real me
I want everyone to know I am who I am because of me
I need to be perfect
I need to not be depressed or anxious
I cannot let anyone else know that for I am who I am because of you
You made me who I am
The good and the bad
I need to be perfect
I am motivated I am not saddened or sorrowful because that's not like me at all
everyone knows I are always happy and smiling
you are being productive and not just lying on your bed right?
so show those pearly white teeth when you smile
show your perfect smile that took years to align
those teeth which gleam like the halo above your head
why am I like this
why can't I just be perfect
why can't I just be the perfect daughter my parents wanted the perfect sister my siblings needed

pick up your room why is it littered like a pigsty
pick up your smile why don't I know how to smile
pick up your grades I know I am sorry
I am sorry I am not perfect
I am sorry I am not who you wanted
I am sorry because this is not how you raised me
I am sorry I know you deserve better
I know how to fake a smile though
I need to be perfect I need to be perfect
like my parents wanted me to be
I need to be the perfect student the perfect daughter the perfect sister the perfect friend
perfect
the textbook definition is having all the desirable qualities or characteristics
perfect
how can I be something as impossible as that I ask
Be perfect like me
But I can't because I am not you
I cannot be perfect no matter how hard I try
I can't I really really can't and I know because I have tried to be
I have broken myself apart and put myself together again trying to accomplish the impossible
so I want to thank myself because only I know that I have been through
Maybe times will be different now that I am older
Maybe they will see me for what I am and not for what they want me to be
Maybe now I don't have to use humor to cope and can actually communicate with them right?
Things can be different this time right?
But that's a story for another time
And believe me there are other stories
Perfect
I know I am not perfect and I am sorry but can I finally be enough
Maybe now I don't have to huff and puff and try to do the impossible
Because that is simply what it is
It's impossible to be
Perfect

I apologize and apologize but now I know I am not perfect and that's okay with me
Perfect
Something I am not nor something I will ever be
and for that I am not sorry

Oxnard High School

Pondering Aloud
By Peter Cedillo-Arias
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Segovia

What is hope?
Is it an idea? A feeling? A belief?

If it *is* an idea, is it a decisive one?
Is it one that everybody agrees with?

And if it is a feeling, then is it a warm one?
Does it make you feel comfortable?

And if it is a belief, is it one that everybody has?
Or have some people given up on it?

The truth is, is that hope is whatever we *want* it to be.

It can be a light in the darkness, a flickering candle.
It can feel like sunshine and rain and whatever makes us happy.
Hope can heal the world.

What does it mean to heal?

Does it mean to cover a wound?
To take care of ourselves?
To ask for help?

If it means to cover a wound, then what bandages are best?
Does it still hurt or has the pain passed?

And if it means to take care of ourselves,
what is the best way to do that?
Being alone or surrounded by people that make us smile?

And if it means to ask for help, then who should be trusted?
Who do you know that will drop everything to help you
because they know you would do the same for them?

In the end, healing means taking the time to get better.

It means to overcome sickness and to make ourselves whole again. To process and understand that something is wrong and make an effort to fix it. To accept help even when you believe you don't need it. Healing means to laugh after going so long without doing it.

What does it mean to laugh?

Does it mean to be optimistic? To tell a joke? To break the tension?

If it does mean to be optimistic, then is happiness bright?
Will it chase away the darkness until we can see again?

And if it means to tell a joke, then was it a funny one?
Will the response be positive?

And if it means to break the tension,
then what caused the tension in the first place?
Or was it sadness that filled this room?

To be honest, to laugh means to experience and share joy.

It means to hear a melodic noise that sounds just like wind chimes and sunshine. To bring up the spirits of yourself and other people. To make a person's day just a little bit better. It means to overpower what pains us.

Are these things connected? Do you *need* to laugh to heal? To heal and feel hope? To hope and laugh? Or can you experience these things on their own?

Have you ever felt hope? Have you ever needed to heal? To laugh?

That is a rather silly question, isn't it?

Of course, you have. Everybody has.

I think what I mean is this; Was it ever *hard* to do those things?

To feel hope when all you wanted to do was give up? To heal when all you wanted to do was be alone? To laugh when all you could seem to do was cry?

Was it easy for you to overcome these things? Or is it true that hope can diminish and healing takes too much time and laughter can't solve everything?

Is hope hard to find? Does healing hurt? Does laughter seem meaningless?

Do my questions mean anything to you? Do my *answers* mean anything?

Or am I just humoring you?

Despertar De Un Profundo Sueño
by Elizabeth Galvez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

La noche me llegó sin aviso previo.
El ayer no volverá,
solo queda el hoy.
Me siento como la luna sin estrellas.
Me estoy despertando de un largo sueño.

Toco mi cara suavemente,
Miro mi reflejo en la luna,
Siento el olor de la primavera,
Estoy floreciendo sin cesar.

Oigo el canto de los pájaros,
Mis ojos vuelven a brillar como las estrellas.
Mi corazón está volviendo a decir 'Boom.'
La blanca luz de la esperanza comienza a iluminarse.

Me estoy despertando suavemente,
Con una sonrisa brillante.
El amanecer está llegando,
La noche en mi se está yendo.

Waking Up From a Deep Sleep
by Elizabeth Galvez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

The night came without warning.
Yesterday will not return,
only today remains.
I feel like the moon without stars.
I am waking up from a long sleep.

I touch my face gently,
I look at my reflection in the moon,
I feel the smell of spring,
I'm blooming endlessly.

I hear the birds singing,
My eyes begin to shine like the stars.
My heart is going 'Boom' once more.
The white light of hope begins to shine.

I'm waking up gently,
with a bright smile.
The dawn is coming for me,
And the night within me leaves.

What's the Point?
by Karina Guido

Hope
A feeling when you finally see the light

I feel like I am stuck in a void
Surrounded by darkness
Looking all around as my chest starts to go tight
Hoping I will see the light
Not even an ounce of color in sight
Trying to hold back tears
As I slowly start to panic
Take a deep breath and all will be fine
As people start to push me down
Their negative words start to fill my head
You can't do this, you can't do that

STOP
STOP
STOP

I would keep my head up high
And keep looking for that light
Because I still have Hope

Healing
When you finally feel at ease

I never did see that light
What's the point?
There is nothing but darkness and it will never change
As I recall the past
My eyes start to water
Wishing I was back to when I was younger
When I was running in a field dreaming of me being older
Just as I thought it was all over
I heard a voice come from around the corner,
"Don't give up and come back stronger"
Who knew some words could relight the spark
In an endless darkness

I stand up and smile
Hoping no one saw me at my lowest
I keep walking
Because I know one day it will all be over
And my healing will finally be able to conquer

Humor
Trying to make others feel good even when you can't

I am still not fully healed
And I don't really have hope
But I do have a good sense of humor
I will laugh and smile my way through
So you don't see me for who I really am
Why would I make you sad when I can make you happy
It's like giving a candy to a kid and then stealing it out of their hands

What's the point of that?

Why would I bug you with stuff that is irrelevant to you?

I wanna see you happy
I wanna see you smile

That's all I will need to forget what trauma I have
All I ask is for a hug and a smile

And I will keep joking about all the bad that I deal with
And keep smiling and laughing through the pain

Even though our paths may go a different way
Don't feel bad for me
Don't show me no sympathy
Treat me like you did before you knew my story
Because at the end of the day
This is,
My hope,
My healing,
and my humor

Where I'm From
by Christopher Steward
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Brickey

Marlboro Reds, filleted fish, and the scent of Teakwood
The words, "I'll give it up tomorrow" and "I'll just do it later"
I wonder who I belong to and who I serve
To be honest, I haven't a clue

I'm from smelling the morning cigarette and four in the morning
The music in my ears never stops
Where I am from, you better know your knots and know them well.
It's part of the course when the Greylight has the Seabass in the morning dew
When the passengers drink, they tip the captain and his crew better

I am from an acoustic guitar, strumming until the tips of my fingers bled
Until the Wood Warped and the Neck bent
Learning Nirvana, Slipknot, and Metallica
And imitating my fellow gap tooth, Mac DeMarco

I belong to the frying of fish and turkeys during the holidays.
To Grandma putting the masa on the Tamales
To the midnight rides to clear my mind with my cousin William
Venting about how our youth was stripped of us too soon.
To the comforting prayers of my mother, and the work ethic of my father.
Some say I even twin his face and his smile
I have my mother's mind and heart too.

I remember the last breaths of my family and saying my goodbyes to those who have left before me
Taken by the Lord for their eternal reward
Toss their bones in the ocean, forever they will be
When my time comes, throw mine in there too.
I remember the fallen, do they think of me?

Pacifica High School

Once Upon a Time

By Alysia Mikayla Clayton
Classroom Teacher – Mrs. Simpson

Once upon a time, I hoped for our journey
to be a lifetime and last forever like a fairytale
But I should have known that's only in the movies
I wanted to become the impossible and prove it's possible
I wished to prove the rumors wrong
but they weren't rumors, just wise words I ignored
It felt like it was just me and you against the world
I told myself to make everyone regret what they said about you
In order to, I follow you along this road even if I know it is wrong
I desired to prove everyone wrong, I wanted to be right about you
Until I saw you for who you were, who you really were
The words you said to me were always false
but I was blinded by your lies
I saw you holding hands with another, and
my world was falling apart
You fell for someone else, while I fell for you
It hit like a dagger going through my heart as you kissed my lips,
tears flowing down my cheeks
This wound left me scarred and broken
Thinking back I believed you were my Romeo and I was your Juliet
Now I accept you are the dagger that killed me
From punching the walls until my fists bled
Blasting music in my ears to block the noise
To slowly trying to convince myself I never needed you
Somedays I wished time travel existed so I never met you
How could someone impact your life so much?
So now when they are gone it feels like you can't live without them
I'm trying to heal from the pain you gave
to someone who loved you more than anyone did
I'm healed but yet still scarred
Humor comes from knowing how blind I was
In order to blind myself I made pain into a joke
This levity felt like I was in a different reality,
I wished to stay in the dream

When I joke around about pain to hide my sorrow
from drowning in a river to using humor as a shield
I laugh at what we could have been
For humor provides a shield for my pain

Life of the Fat
by Christian Garcia
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

The world adores equality, and the country calls for
freedom, yet the words of hatred separate us all.
The color of your skin cries out in fear because
apparently there's no such thing as being equal.
The borders and the rights,
not giving us an equal fight.
In a world so diverse, and extremely powerful
people are constantly fighting the odds.
Trying to fit in yet standing out because
the only thing people see is the outside.
The many shades and different cultures
trying to seek their own justice.
But at the end of the day, we all bleed the same.
We're all humans, right?
The world seeks peace yet the human heart
produces the fruit of envy.
Different treatments for the ones
who look different from the rest.
Many lost opportunities and dreams down the drain
all because of some simple nonsense.
Racial injustice and the hate we give separates us all.

The Development of a Broken Star Who Had Thought of Themselves as Too Greedy: The Glass Under Repair

by Lucero Esmeralda Guillen
Classroom Teacher – Mrs. Nuñez

Young, hoping to become one of "those adults"
Desire for independence, freedom from rules, and
idealism from families
Young, and not enjoying the present too much
Present, wasn't for now but an "Oh I'm going to think of it later"
Should've thought of the present as a now and not just later
The present defined the future, in retrospect,
it was better to be productive
Enjoy the present, the future will come
But it wasn't enjoyable as once thought
The future would one day be the present
Past was a lesson for the present and the future
Learn from mistakes, make them your success
Successful when you have your own place that you can call home
Real success comes from hard work, right decisions and
reaching your heart
Greediness leads to a life of misery, blindness, ambition, darkness,
and corruption
There's a limit to greediness
Too much greed can lead to a good or a bad future
Greediness depends on what is taken
Those considered good and others considered bad
What was once good will one day become the worst nightmare
or it will be paradise
A nightmare, fear confusion, paradise the opposite heaven.
Heaven, peace, tranquility, health and goodness
Once in heaven, shot down by fire
Fire of pain, sadness, absences, regret, overthinking, lies
Shot down by fire, never the same
Lost trying to find brightness
Once shiny and beautiful,
A past that would be unforgettable and sweet
Sweet as candy lingering on the tongue

A fallen star should always come back stronger than what they once brightened

If a fallen star decides to stop, they can
But if they never come then they will lose all meaning of life and will fall under a puddle of Illusion
Falling under sadness, darkness and they will live life as a misery
A fallen star doesn't lose its brightness, but loses inspiration and motivation
Greediness for fallen stars will be a huge savior
Greediness for fallen stars can lead to making them be motivated
Fallen stars under repair have the courage to stand up once again
Repairment takes a bit of time
Repairments aren't all secured
Once broken it can always be broken or repaired halfway
Repairments don't mean that it will be complete as it was once seen or was
Repairments is like healing
Healing isn't all about time as heard
Healing isn't all about taking therapy
Healing isn't all about distracting, being humorous, to basically killing the soul
Healing isn't about being hopeful that one day everything's better
Healing is all about focusing on oneself, talking or writing it down, expressing feelings, letting it Out, crying it out
Don't run away, confront it
If not healed yet the possibility of hurting others or oneself can one day occur
Once thought of healed can one day hit back harder than ever
Healing takes a slow process, it's never good to think otherwise for so it can hurt you
What hurts today can hurt stronger tomorrow
Pain will leave a scar that will always be there
A scar won't disappear
A scar is like an illness
Illnesses don't all have cures
Illnesses have medicine and an amount that you can take per day
If too much medicine is taken it's going to hurt
Sickness and illness have similarity but they're different
Sickness stays for a period of time then it'll eventually leave
Sicknesses can be treated with medicine
An illness can't be known when it will leave or be cured

Illness is partly deadly and harmful to the body
Illness if treated, can be returned to where it was left at
The human body, and mind are alike glass
Push or hold too hard it will break
Holding on to someone that isn't making the effort
can lead to an uneven balance
Being balanced in a friendship, relationship is essential
and a requirement
Holding on to something that isn't equal can lead to
a far distance from one another
It's better to give and get
If not balanced it will fall eventually
It will fall later or sooner
Don't give too much when on the other hand it isn't secure that it's
safe or on your side
Humoring someone or being humored by someone doesn't mean
that they like you or you like Them
Humor is like a pair of new shoes
New shoes don't mean that they'll always be clean and new
New shoes have their charms but if used too much
they'll lose their value
Humor is great and all but once amusing can be annoying
Humor is like a joke
If you say the joke over and over again it will lose its value
that it once time had

Life of the Fat
by Lydia Jenelle Gutierrez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

Fat, that is my name
I am called no other but lame
Do I have a voice?
Is that even a question

Am I considered pretty?
Not in the eyes of society
Ask me where I want to eat
I won't hesitate

I am selected to play tag
They always know I'll lag
But I laugh and prove them wrong
By heading to the bathroom and staying long

I wish I was a friend
Make birthday parties I knew no one will attend
But instead, I hid in the bathrooms and played pretend

Do we get the guy?
Our kind isn't even in their eye
We stand by, I mean behind the skinnies
Considered Invisible

We are there to break the silence
But it is hard when you are on 24 hour surveillance

Don't be afraid
For the way you are portrayed
Be who you are
And let yourself be loved

Words of wisdom
Coming from my mom
Wiping my tears
While I'm hiding my fears

Should I show the real me?
Will they nod and say they hate me?
What should I do, when you come out of the blue
With my heart in your hands
Saying things untrue

“Tell me your dreams
Do they make you beam?
I'll find a way to crush it
And make you scream”

Does it bring you joy?
When you make me cry
When you spit, poke, and pour juice on me

For the size I am?
For nothing?
Nothing.
Is that my new name?

There's a drawing on these walls
They represent my flaws
But not only my flaws my dreams
Bet they made fun of that too

Will this ever end?
Who am I?
Who am I?

I am beautiful
And you may not see
But you’re one of the few
Who doesn't get to view it

Paint Brush
by Lydia Jenelle Gutierrez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

The paintbrush presents herself as independent.
She walks with confidence—
in a way that she knows where she is going,
and she never looks back.
Her skin is soft and her steps are quiet.
The paintbrush is kind and understanding,
She never second-guesses herself.
She lets it go and calls it freefall.
She wears every piece of her clothing like a blanket,
no matter the color she feels beautiful.
She dips her feet into a pool of paint and goes dancing.
She dances all night, knowing everyone is watching.
She knows who she is and will never change for any painter.

A Million Dreams
by Mayra Tello Hernandez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

A million dreams ago
when I was a little girl
in a big yard with four
fences and it was summer—
As long as I can remember
I sat down in the grass at night,
cover in a frog blanket as I
watch the moon shine with
no stars—just the moon itself
and watch the kitchen window
with mom there as I wondered,
What was she doing? And then,
watch the chimney smoke and
my mom cooking. When I went
to see what was she cooking
she was cooking my favorite and
I ran into the kitchen to give her a big hug

I Know
by Jessica Khalil
Classroom Teacher – Mrs. Castanon

I know you hate this
Whatever it may be
If the tears could stop rolling
You may just drown in it instead
If that was ever possible

I know it’s hard
Hard to get up there
To be yourself in fear
Nobody would like it
Because you may be different

I know how hard
It is to control the trembling and shaking
And the feeling you might not get it quite right
Or performing in front of people
Because you'll know what'll happen

I wish I knew
How crazy your life may be
Maybe you push yourself
Over a limit you know will ruin you
In a rush to complete before the deadline

And how hurt you must be
When the person you’ve trusted
Didn't trust you back or
Walked away with everything you thought
You had left

Or the fact that anyone will believe
The words coming from a snake's mouth
But not yours
And maybe that burns you with anger
A deep passionate anger

Although you know
You know it's not true
And you should always believe in yourself
As corny as it sounds
And as much as I sound like a grandma

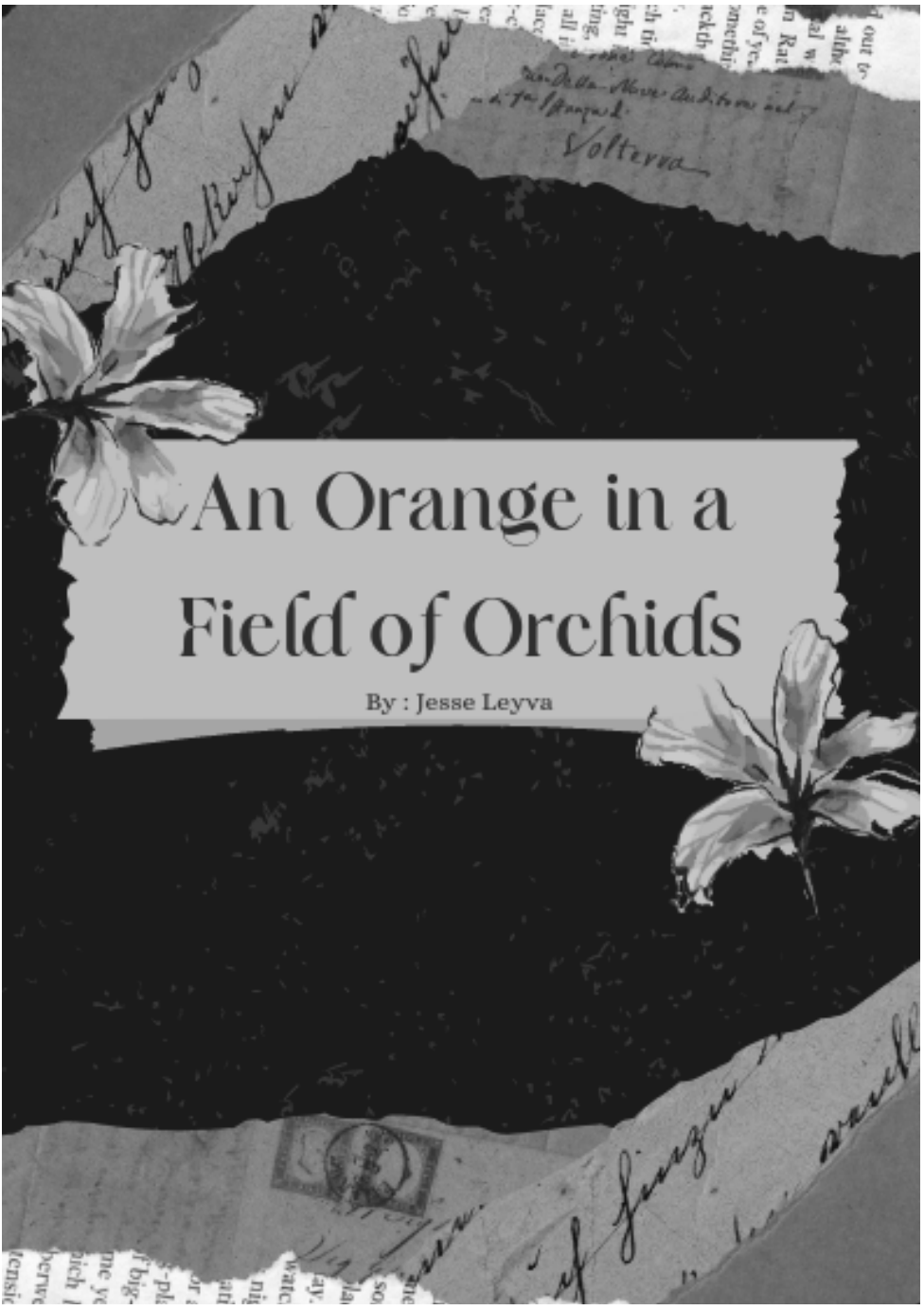
But I believe everyone has hope
At least a little deep down below
Where the insecurities lie
And a kid hides away
Where no one can see them

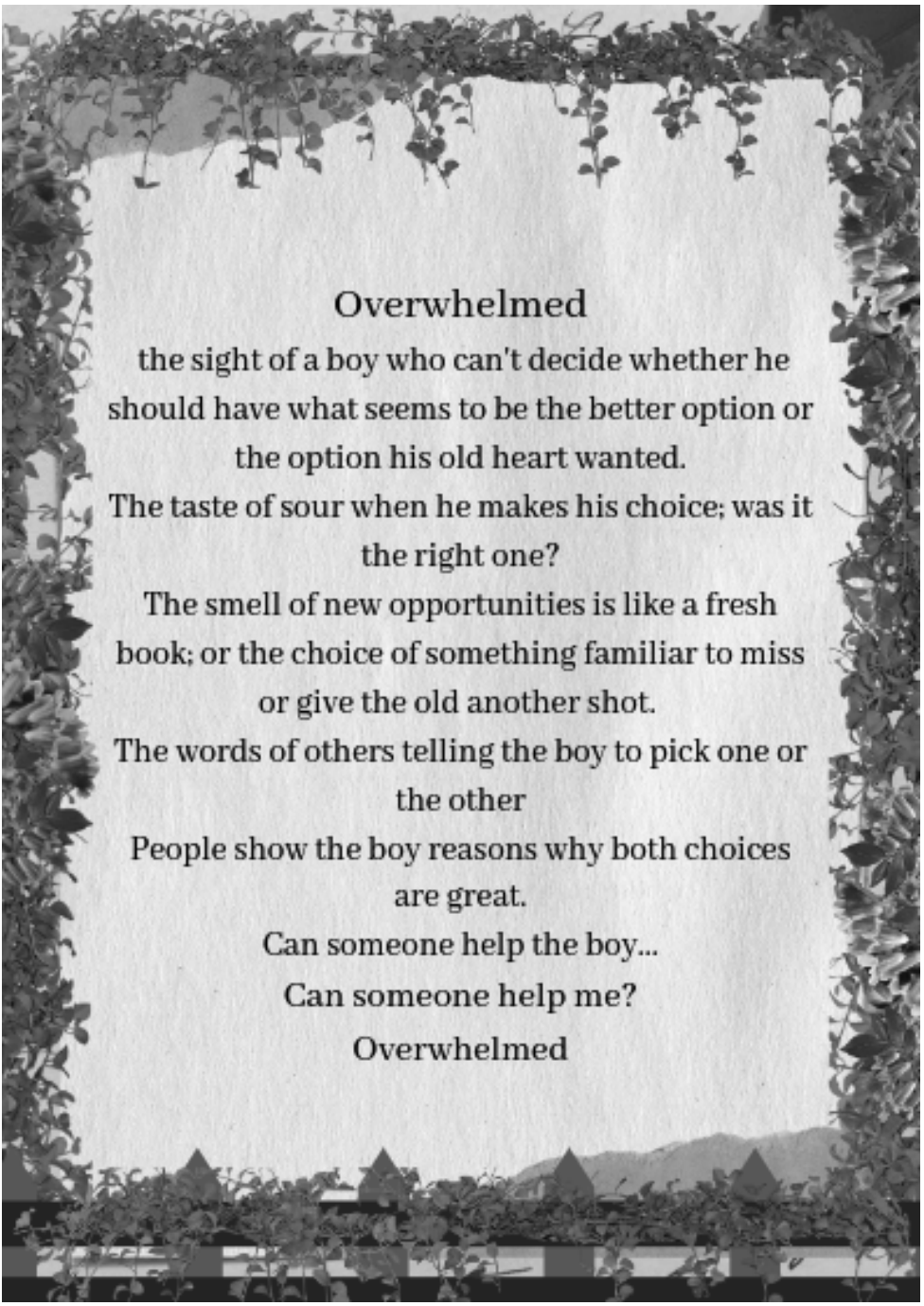
Scared to get hurt
But there will always be that person
Who is willing to stay as long as
Old music Is popular and Harry Styles too
They'll give you that ounce of hope you needed

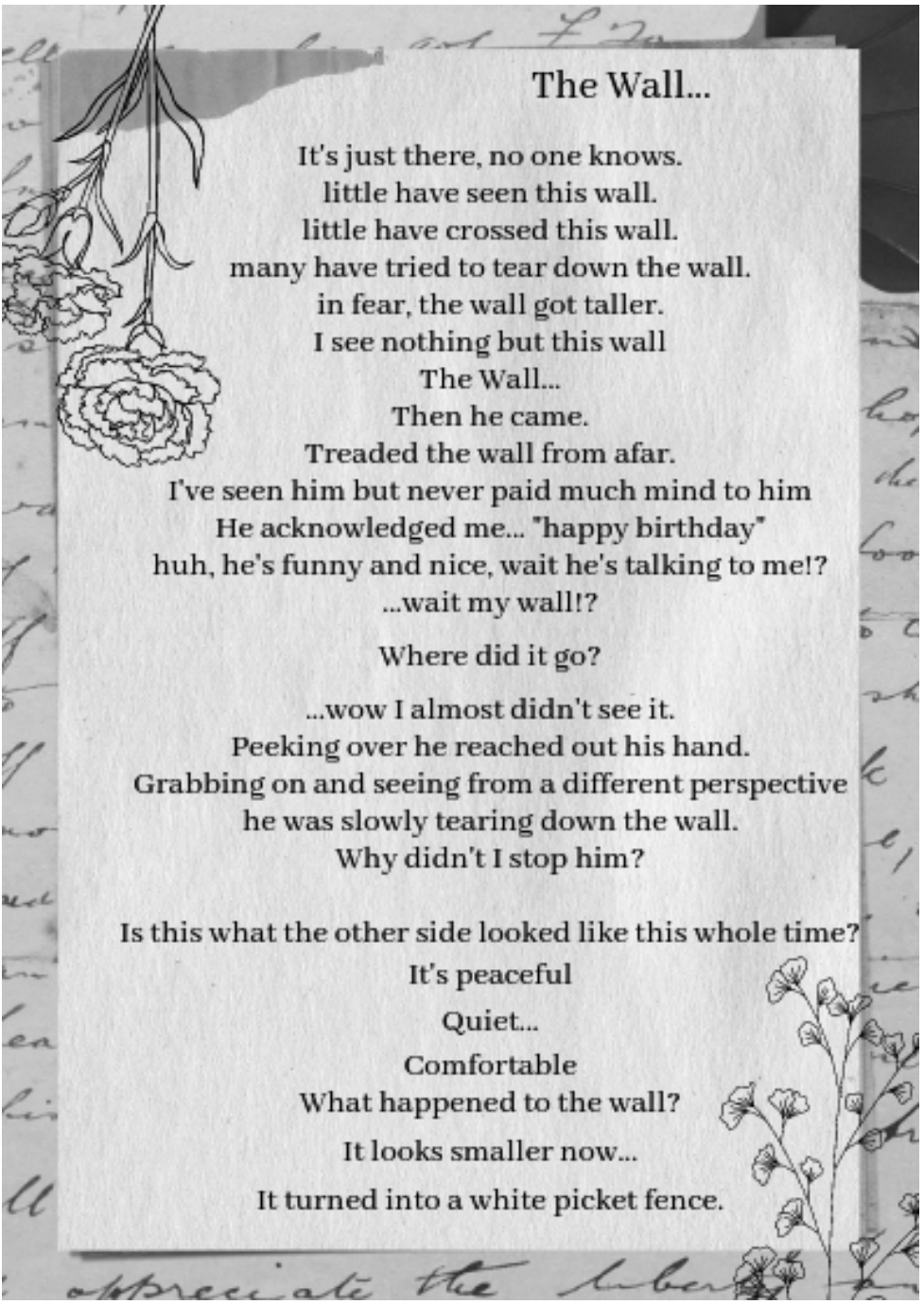
And so as long as you know
You did nothing wrong
Someday you'll find that thing that makes you happy
And don't say drugs either
I think you just need a big hug

I won't say to stop worrying
Because that's not how it works
But I will say to find something worth looking for
Whatever it may be, Big or small
And don't stick with one thing like everyone says to

Keep your hand out and I'll come find it
And I'll be your friend
Unless you like Crocs, no requirements needed
So get up and try again
Keep that handout and
I or someone else will come find it


An Orange in a Field of Orchids
By : Jesse Leyva


Overwhelmed
the sight of a boy who can't decide whether he should have what seems to be the better option or the option his old heart wanted.
The taste of sour when he makes his choice; was it the right one?
The smell of new opportunities is like a fresh book; or the choice of something familiar to miss or give the old another shot.
The words of others telling the boy to pick one or the other
People show the boy reasons why both choices are great.
Can someone help the boy...
Can someone help me?
Overwhelmed



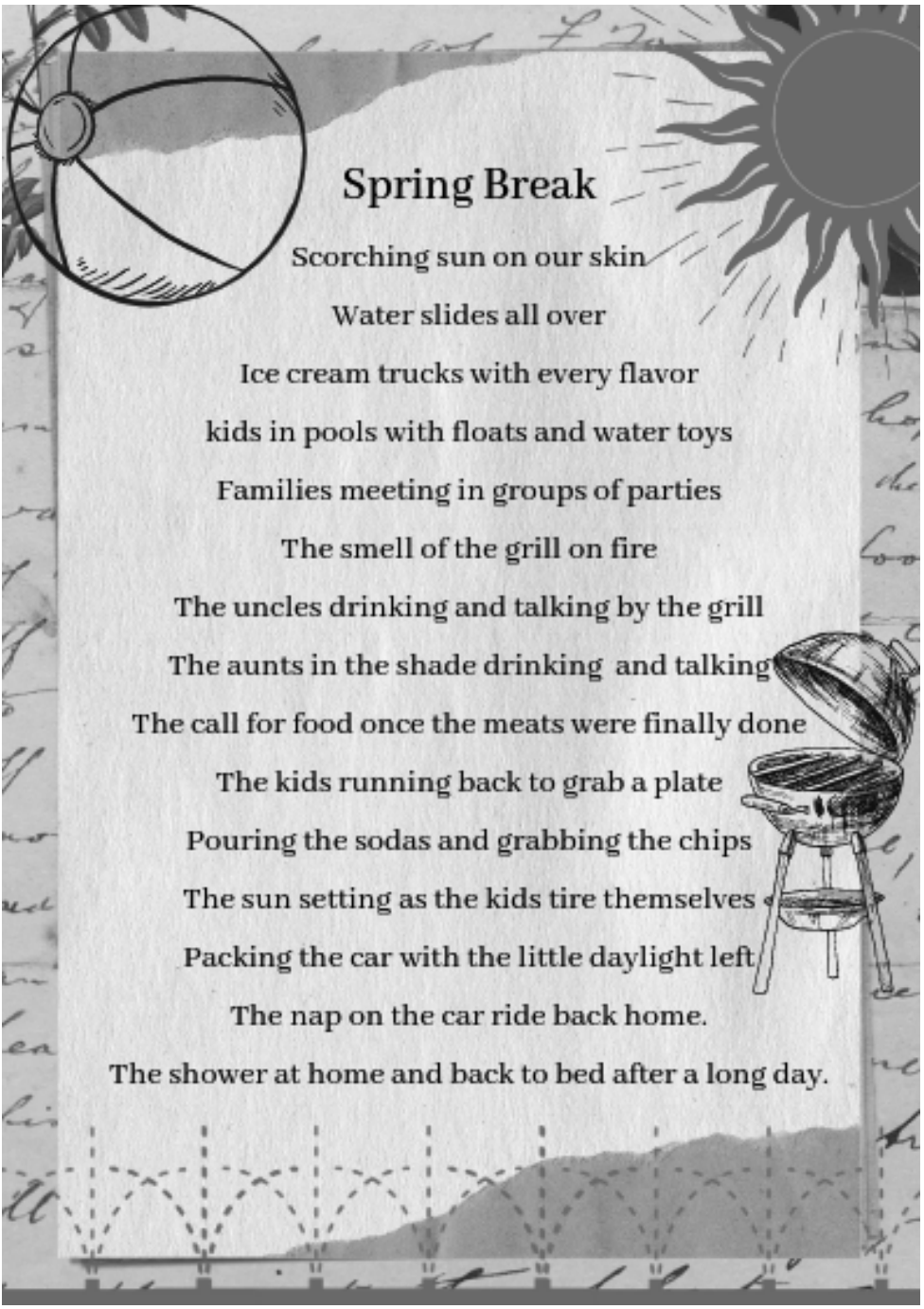
The Wall...

It's just there, no one knows.
little have seen this wall.
little have crossed this wall.
many have tried to tear down the wall.
in fear, the wall got taller.
I see nothing but this wall
The Wall...
Then he came.
Treaded the wall from afar.
I've seen him but never paid much mind to him
He acknowledged me... "happy birthday"
huh, he's funny and nice, wait he's talking to me!?
...wait my wall!?

Where did it go?

...wow I almost didn't see it.
Peeking over he reached out his hand.
Grabbing on and seeing from a different perspective
he was slowly tearing down the wall.
Why didn't I stop him?

Is this what the other side looked like this whole time?
It's peaceful
Quiet...
Comfortable
What happened to the wall?
It looks smaller now...
It turned into a white picket fence.


Spring Break
Scorching sun on our skin
Water slides all over
Ice cream trucks with every flavor
kids in pools with floats and water toys
Families meeting in groups of parties
The smell of the grill on fire
The uncles drinking and talking by the grill
The aunts in the shade drinking and talking
The call for food once the meats were finally done
The kids running back to grab a plate
Pouring the sodas and grabbing the chips
The sun setting as the kids tire themselves
Packing the car with the little daylight left
The nap on the car ride back home.
The shower at home and back to bed after a long day.

Journey

From a baby and a Malus Flower and the Neroli Flower as well.

To an adult, An apple, and an Orange.

different situations and problems

Still coming out differently in their own ways.

Some lasting months while others years.

They had their opinions.

Do you think the Neroli flower cares?

She had it rough but still had "family"

Still, a beautiful orange that was loved by her new family.

Do you think the Malus flower cared?

He was chill but not comforted.

He shunned them away but leaned to love.

He was that delicious apple all love for everyone.

Do you think the baby has a care in the world?

Maybe, but still, she's an adult who overcame her own obstacles.

Everyone has a journey that can be different.

Wether its "easy" for some or real for most?

Winter Vail

Shunned with a veil of her own insecurities
alone with all the attempts for something real
the coldness of being alone and surrendering.
The veil of which is put on oneself to be hiding.
He came to her in a notice of her veil
This veil is beautiful
the tones of different winter-toned fabrics.
Helping her with the weight of the veil.
Take this winter veil from off your eyes
with her a new veil for which she loved.
One day the summer sun will someday rise
This one of summer-toned patterns all over.
Keeping the veils as reminders of what she has missed
Thankful for what has happened...
She awoke...
The sun shining through the curtains
waking up a different woman than before.

Young
by Perla Lopez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

I remember when I was young, I enjoyed many things

I wanted to experience many things
I said to myself when I'm older
I want to be a singer, dancer, police and in the Army

I loved playing outside with rain or no rain

I did not care how I looked
School was not stressing

I did not have to worry about many things

I did not care if people judged me or not

It really did not matter to me what I was in people eyes

When I was younger I could rely on my older cousins

When I was younger all I cared about was if I played outside

I only cared about having friends in school

I loved going to school because
There was the place where I spent the most time playing

I loved school because there was a
place where they had the most toys
My only worries were if I was going to get to play

My Abuelito, My Roots
by Cecilia Nava
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

A thousand miles ago,
When I was a young little girl
in the green, grassy, rural side of León, Guanajuato,
I rode in the back of my Abuelito's maroon, Chevy, vintage truck,
with the cool, fresh air flicking my hair from side to side,
going to his corn fields, entering the rows of maize,
getting lost in a world of beautiful nature,
running up the green hills,
picking up pink muhly grass,
wearing a smile from side to side,
as I looked at the beauty of the world's nature,
enjoying my Abuelito's memorable stories,
and the cold, heavy, raindrops falling from the sky,
hitting my head with a hefty force,
causing us to run back to the truck,
and into my Abuelito's house, we went,
where the rain would come to an end,
and the chirping of the crickets,

would infiltrate into the crisp, cool air of the night,
with toads croaking their way into my house,
and my mom taking them outside,
where the fireflies lighted up the grass,
as if the stars had come down to earth,
and now the memories,

the memories of the beautiful world of nature,
with my Abuelito and my family's roots,
remaining in my heart and soul,
keeping me connected,
forever and ever.

Her Brain Needs a Band-Aid
by Abril Perez
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

I am the one who thinks
I think so much, If my mind had lungs
they would burn from how much my mind runs.
I think about everything like a curious child
who lifts a rock to see what's underneath.
I think yes and no at the same time.
I even think backward.
I think about the things that will make me cry.
My brain is stubborn.
When I think, it holds onto that thought, refusing to let go.
Am I going to fracture my brain?

My Siamese Twin
by Melissa Polanco
Classroom Teacher – Mrs. Cybulski

it feels like divine intervention
the way you fluttered into my life
you felt like light seeping through the blinds
you handle me so delicately
oh how did i let you
bloom your tulip petals so comfortably in my heart
you tie up your ballet shoes
leap jump and spin my siamese twin
oh where could you have been?
when you look into my eyes it's like you can read my mind
when i look into you eyes i see they reflect the moons crevices and craters
your eyes glow against the great dark sky as the stars illuminate the way for you to tear away my pain
when the waves crash against my legs
i turn to you only to see that you fled
it's so funny that you love the ocean but can't handle it's wrath
oh it gives me a good laugh
the seashells i collect look their best when clipped against your lengthy cherry red hair
oh yes we dressed your hair in red
it stained your hands, your tub, your nails,
but we've had worse fails
we listen to midwest emo songs before we board the bus and sip on sodas that taste like orange-zest
i hum melody's and i fill them with complexities so our band can be a success
you're my destiny
you're my muse
you're my heavenly chorus in a moody blues song
you're like a dove after the flood
you're my guardian angel, here to clean up my blood
i wish to sing you songs with soft strums to lull you to sleep so our celestial bodies can disco, salsa, and waltz in our dreams
i know one day we'll make in the scene
and i cant wait to see your smile gleam
thank you for always sticking with me

The Picture You Painted of Me
by Maria-Teresa Robles
Classroom Teacher - Mrs. Nuñez

Before you even heard my name, you painted a picture
The picture was of me
Painted with the stereotypes you've heard
All of what you thought I'd be

The words and phrases used to describe me
Poverty, Alcoholism, drugs, and gangs
I can't change or destroy the picture you painted
You already have me in a lane

Nothing I say or do will change the prejudice you hold
I'm not the painting you created
I am not the things that you were told

Your voice builds up as a pile
As I won't be provoked
Would it hurt you to see me smile
The things you said went up in smoke

I smile and live my life
I walk with power and with strife
Like the Big, Beautiful, Bright girl that I am
I hope your words hit me with a bam!

So you see me stand with pride
So I could show you how your words don't affect me
If you want to see me cry, you'll be in for a long ride
So you can see how happy I could be

So what if I fit the picture you painted
So what if I'm loud, Am I tainted?
So what if I have millions of cousins
So what if my family comes by the dozen

I have fun; I laugh, dance, and sing
I love myself while you make hatred out of anything
I dance to the music that I grew up with, and love

But you think it's the only music I know and love

I am loud and proud; I might be tainted; who knows
You still have hate in your voice because that is what you chose
I love my family no matter how many I have
You spit your words with venom while I laugh

Like a star, I shine bright; I shine with a light
Leaving you to live in my shadow
Though you try so hard to fight
I'm thinking of how you're so shallow

And as I sit here writing my thoughts
I know that all you could see
Was all the words that would get your point across
The painting you made of me

You thought you had me figured out
Before you even heard my name
'Cause you're you and unsatisfied
That I am not the same

I know that all you can see
Is the stereotype of me
All that you thought I'd ever be
Is the picture you painted of me

A Single Story
by Julianne Mae Tuazon
Classroom Teacher - Gabriel Valdez

As an Asian American, I often think about
the questions we get asked from time to time.
Mostly if we're really good at math or
if all Asians are of the same kind.

Apparently, it's common knowledge
that all Asians are either Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.
But it has been forgotten that Asians
from all over the continent are from the same region.

It is also prior knowledge that Asians eat dogs,
And we also apparently just consume anything
that roams around on their paws.

All Asians have small eyes.
Our food smells bad.
Our factories are the cause of every environmental issue
this world has ever had.

And although these are all common stereotypes
us Asians are associated with,
these are not statements I would consider
completely false.
But ones that have originated from a single story
that has remained unfinished.

A story that has been shown over and over again
to portray who we are as people
and that is what we become.
One story becomes our only story
and others will never question
where those stories have come from.

Yes, Asia is a continent full of catastrophes.
The genocide in Bangladesh,
the Vietnam War,
the Yemeni Civil War,

and the Super Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines—
these are all examples of such tragedies.

But aside from all of Asia's catastrophic events,
there are stories that are just as important—
the ones that highlight the continent's beauty and
the true stories within.

A community where everyone knows one another,
Like when I see a fellow Filipino in the supermarket
And we refer to each other as sister and brother.
Our bloodlines have no connection,
But our hearts are tied together.

Our world was once dim.
But there was a glimpse of light hiding behind these gray clouds,
so we fought until we were down to our very last limb.

The rain once poured.
But we believed that the sun would shine again.

These thoughts flood my mind
like the view of the blue ocean waves in Boracay
when I could feel the warmth of the sun sink into my skin.
I don't just see the bigger picture,
but the true stories within.

The togetherness of a variety of unique cultures
is where the true beauty lies.
When we can come to terms with the fact
that there is no single story about Asia
or any other place in this world,
humanity will regain a new kind of paradise.

The One Who Never Speaks

by Jazmin Vazquez
Classroom Teacher Ms. Hernandez

I am the one who never speaks
you only call me when you need something
you only come into my room to insult me
Why don't you ever ask about me?
we always disagree
you always assume you know everything about me
but do you really?
every sentence, every word, every thought
you disagree with
you're always right.
you have to be.
you're better than ill ever be because you raised me
that's why I never speak
everything I say is wrong in your eyes
let's try to get along.
Please agree to disagree.

Mother Earth
by Arely Villa
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Hernandez

Never in my life,
Did I imagine Mother Earth,
Continue to bloom and grow,
While her children continue to pollute, destroy, and kill her.
They dump thousands of gallons of oil in the ocean.
Polluting the air, to the point where one day we won't be able to take a deep breath of fresh air.
Everything she created is being killed by humanity.
For what?
We won't realize what we're doing, because
we are blinded by money and power.
Once we realize,
It will be too late.

Rancho Campana High School

The Comforting Memories of My Youth
by Casey Zhang
Classroom Teacher – Ms. Pelayo

A new year began without a warning
With no friends to be had
Afraid, excited, and glad
I venture over to some familiar faces

Ah, I am to this day so grateful for those faces
The people who I spent my youth
Happiest feelings
Making memories and laughter echoing

I cherished the good moments we had
I do not reflect on the bad
I recall with melancholy
The feelings of memories comfort me

When I look back now and see, we were all so young
We didn't understand and were as immature as could be
I loved each and every one of you with all my being
I wonder what you were all thinking

When I broke off and went away
Did everyone have someone to blame
Was it me, I was the problem
The cause of the pieces of our shattered plans

Hurt so hard that I hurt no more
Processing betrayals
Salt and lemon rubbed into the wounds of my youth
Wishing to be back, back to that year

Time passes and what's done is done
I don't regret my actions
Another year has passed and I have realized
I wouldn't have ended it any other way

I’m letting go now
I’m ready
The sand speck of youth
Turned into a precious pearl

But it’s time to grow up
It’s time to let the ocean foam wash away
My precious pearl of my youth
The first year of when we were young
Will be my fond memories of love

The Mountain
by Juno Azuz Zacher
Classroom Teachers – Ms. Eglitis and Ms. Pelayo

The mountain stood there
Unmoving.
I watched it's fur rustle in the
morning gloom of fog and
stood with the mountain
Unmoving.

The oldest standoff of time
between man and a mountain
The question long answered from
Time's heavy bleeding; my efforts
appeared defeated to stand longer
then the bushy mound.
I stood by a mountain
Twitching.
Itching to move far beyond the eye's
Sight, but gloom of the fog and the sky
and eucalyptus trees and bushes and footprints
and the mountain.
Terminated my journey.

I could not leave from this place of tumbleweeds,
Nightly skies of heaven, far-reaching pastures, and daily
Hues of blue and green. I could not leave the mountain.
When you yearn for something new you do not see the beauty
Present. When you yearn for something new you've sunk yourself
with an anchor, refusing to let go, and float back to the surface
where once you were.

I could not leave from this place of tumbleweeds,
Dirt roads, and deserted seas; and. I could not leave
Nightly skies of heaven, far-reaching pastures, and daily
Hues of blue and green. I could not leave the mountain.

The mountain became my enemy.

My solace, my companion
Now angered me to my core.
The enemy in my dreams, the reason I could not leave.

Yet. Now I am past the mountain. I traveled around,
Yes, I traveled around- as simple as that.
A path of worn soil traversing round my so-called toil.
Traded in my tail for legs, so to say,
I walk amongst a new display.
No tumbleweeds, dirt roads, deserted seas in sight for me!
Yet. And now I yearn for something old.

And now I go back to my mountain
and I breath in the tumbleweeds, dirt roads, deserted seas,
nightly skies of heaven, far reaching pastures and hues of blue and green,
and yearn to stand
with
my mountain,
unmoving,
once more.

Rio Mesa High School

Phase of Life
by Noah Distler
Classroom Teacher – Mr. Zoesch

In this phase of life,
We have been living
Under this deadly price.
We all are scared to move,
To breath, to groove.

When you see the darkness
Overtaking our world,
We grow loneliness,
We create space to find normal.

We all wait patiently for the end,
But we get drained to go outside.
You think this will never end,
So, you go to fake light.

We become hurt from what people do,
And our pain settles within our hearts.
We try something new,
And we try to grow strong,
But we fail to grow into new.

We need to come together
And do the best we can,
so that we conquer
And reclaim our land.

Peace and harmony I say,
Our wantings will drive us to bay.
I understand this has gotten heavy,
But if you are with me, I know the way.

These viruses will control no longer.
Until we find one more,
We will push ourselves to break
These strands will fall and flake.

I will go to the end and beyond
While you are with me,
Or you will be gone,
And you will see.

I will not hide,
I will give life, love, and thy light.
“When life leaves us blind,
Love keeps us kind!”
(Chester Bennington from Linkin Park in “The Messenger”)

This phase of life will end,
But we must enjoy the next.
Each phase will begin,
Each phase will end.