

Sandscript

MRHS
2022



SANDSCRIPT

2025

Monomoy Regional High School

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Cover Design: Kyra Howard

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Now • By Jason Elhilow

Now, hush.

Everything's going to be alright.

"You think?"

Yes.

We're only going into the night.

"But my fright?"

Darling,

Don't waste all your might. We knew.

"Look! The ash. It's falling."

That's right. It's just Heaven's calling.

Each speck, a reminder that our time here is not sprawling.

"Compact? Not boundless?"

No, neat. Tortured. Meager. Lapsing.

But there's beauty in the limited.

"The scripture always said the Hour was honest!"

Indeed. And that each Minute was a maxim.

And that every Second was a sacrifice...

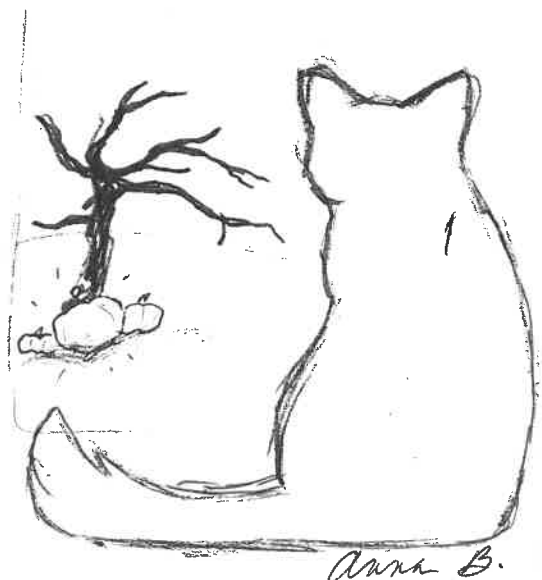
"Made by those who dared to serve..."

The system of our lord, our savior...

She and they and it that will never be named.

"But always remembered."

Yes. And as each layer drifts?



We shed the weight, the claim.

"Fading into the flame, into the same."

As said. The night is not so scary.

The end is just what's near.

"But are we less for it? Should we want more than what's meant?"

No, my dear.

No.

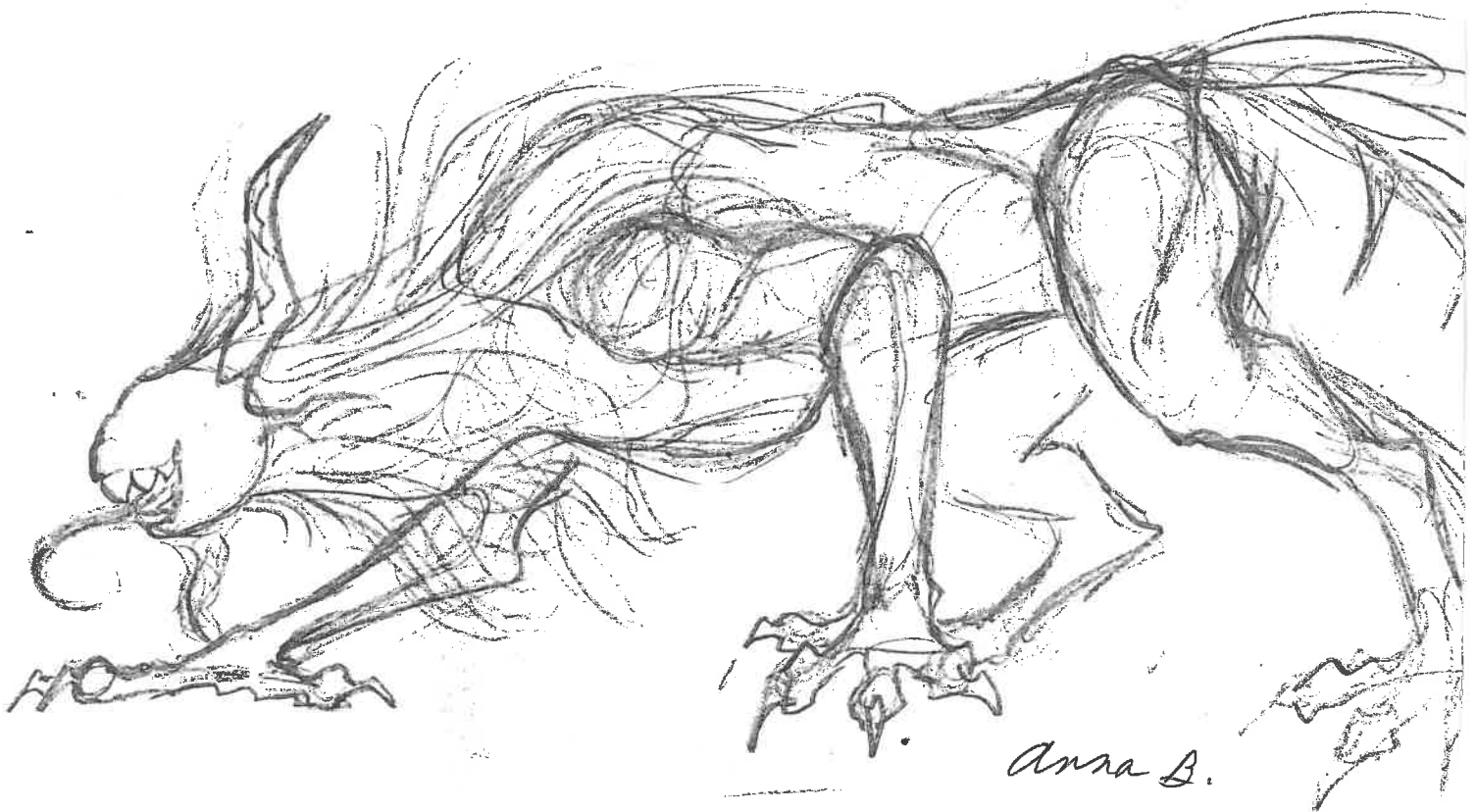
We are everything we were told to be—

A final breath, a quiet plea,

Before we dissolve,

Finding eternity in simplicity.

"And when we die, he will finally see."



Angel Trees

A Light

A Light within the woods

It spreads far within the woods

The essence makes it seems

Like an angel has fallen on earth

A beautiful angel

With wings that can sore for miles

And a heart of a kind soul

The angel face hidden

The wings moves

Flapping the leaves away

Soon claws start showing

Sharp claws that could harm a living soul

With one swipe

Will equal one death

The claws are loud

Scraping against the bark

The beautiful layers of the bark of trees

I pray that some are still left

Left for me to play upon

I run as that was all I could think of

Running from a problem that should be solved

I rest in my bed

Looking at the window

That light

The light that fills the woods

Is no angel

It's a loud noise that no one can put away

Soon it walks away

The light that lingers, is no more

Instead a land

A land that has no trees

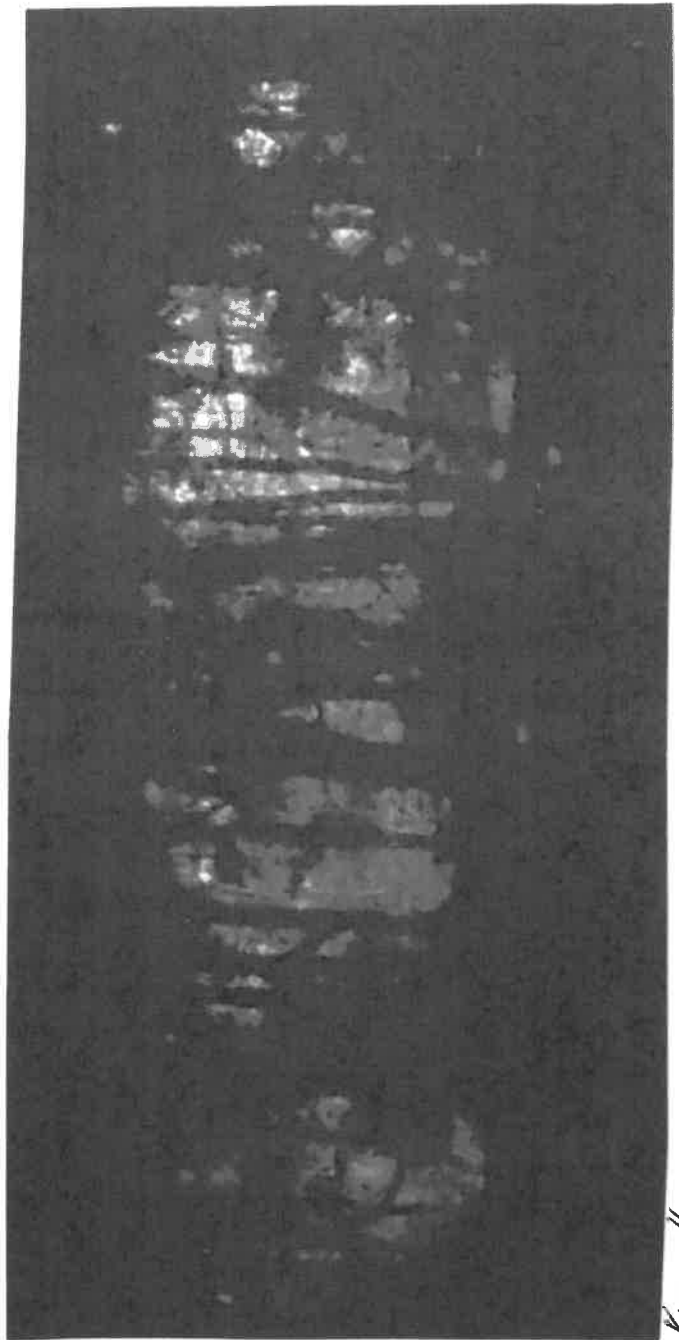
No roots

No wings

No soul

People play in these woods, leave some trees, grow some trees, to replace what you have attacked. They leave memories, memories like a beautiful angel.

Kyra Howard



Kyra H.

Eyes in the sky

Mistakes chain me to crimes that I can't comprehend,
Praying up to my God only to sin again,
Rise up tall just to fall and begin again,
Too hard to try.

My father fought for my victory,
He taught me lessons on justice and jealousy,
I feel like madness and malice made a mess of me,
So I turn towards the sky.

My head in the clouds I stare down at the stars,
I am cutting off chains but remain behind bars,
Will the words of the wise wash away all my scars?
Will I die?

Maybe my mind is made up of both bad and good,
If I could cough it all up on a canvas I would,
But I cannot be caught crying under my hood,
So I'll settle for seeing the world through my eyes in the sky.

Jude McMahon

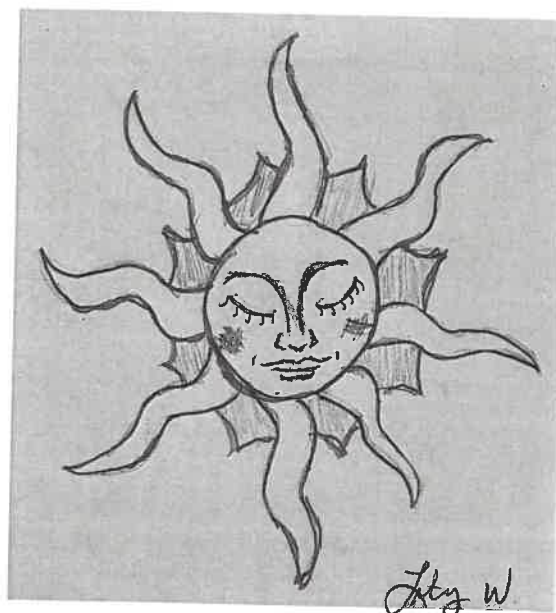


Jude M.

Sun

Dear big ball of fire,
Do you not like our wee eyes?
You are glorious.

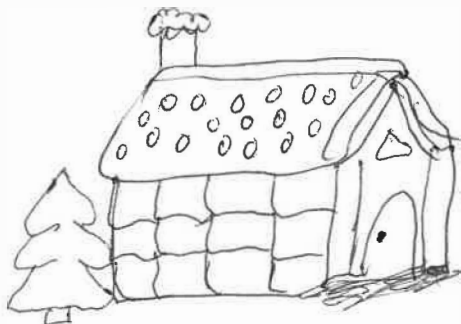
Lillian Williams



Lily W

I was your first friend and you were mine
 Together forever, 'till the end of the line
 We had each-others backs 'till the very end
 Little did we know, friendships could bend
 We've known each-other 10 years now
 Oh how the time flies, wow
 We've been there through thick and thin
 We're pretty much each-others' kin
 But the worst is yet to come
 Time for the end of the fun
 Were separated and lonely
 Or at least I was
 You're doing just fine I'm happy for you
 But I just can't lose you too
 Three more years of us torn apart
 Can we talk? When can you start?
 We used to tell each-other everything
 It's been so long and I've heard nothing
 Hey! Nice to finally see you!
 Let's talk, what's new?
 Nothing changed in so many months?
 You can tell me! I'm here for you.
 Just say something, I'm feeling blue.
 You have other friends, that's great!
 But do you have to cut me out of the slate?
 I know we're growing up and it's not the same
 But please don't let this go up in flames

Stella Seufert



Emma Capen
 The Perfect House

There are no problems
 In this created house

No visible imperfections
 Just a little strange

It may not have perfect sides
 Or shingles
 Or a perfect yard

But

It doesn't know death
 Loss
 Love
 Hurt
 Sickness.

It is able to experience without pain
 Or punishment.

Ahh to be a gingerbread house
 Not having to deal with the loss
 The pain
 The guilt.

To be free of it all,
 And not even knowing what you get to miss.

The Silent Love

A gentle touch, A whispered word,
A silent bond, forever heard.

Two souls entwined, a love so true,
My heart beats, just for you

Sani Brown



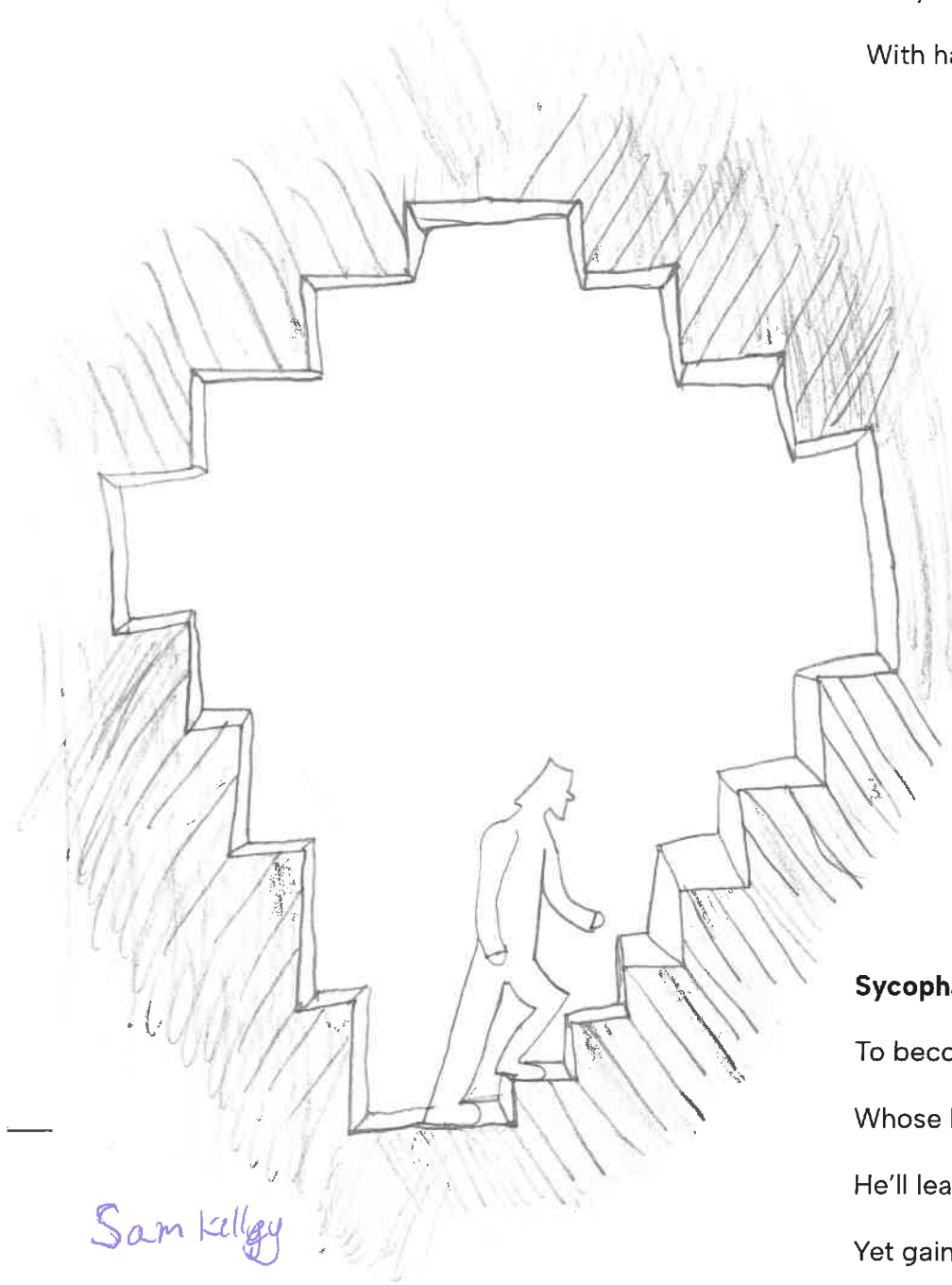
Love Letter

Love is everything it should be, and everything it can be.
It makes us alive,
It makes us feel.
You can't be greedy with love, and there's no need to act as if it's scarce.
But love makes you ache,
sometimes.
Yet sometimes,
It feels as if it's all you have left.
From a girl who felt as if she was hurt beyond repair,
This is my message to you.
Don't give up on love.
There's enough to go around,
And what's the point of life if you don't have love?

-Savannah Eldredge

Love, Hatred by Jude Hutchings-McMahon

Cruel words were once a pleasant song,
Upon the graceful lips of God,
Yet down here in the world of man,
They found harmony,
With hatred.



Sycophancy

To become like God is the dream of the flea,
Whose life is a spoonful of salt in the sea,
He'll leap up to the skies every day till he dies,
Yet gain nothing of God but misery.

Jude Hutchings-McMahon

Ben McGrath's stanzas of Terza Rima

When I ride it's dark and dreary
Cold like the crisp on my skin
Something chasing me, can you hear me?

I can hear the dogs howlin'
I've got the blues on a cold autumn night
Will I make it home? God willin'!

That dog's bite spinning in my mind
Waah, blues in the bin
Though, I ride through a land just fine.



Lillian Williams

books
are
words
that
is
symbolical to wonder
that
of
immature.
power.
that
age
take



It was St. Patrick's Day
And the leprechauns said, "Yay!"
All of the people, young and old
Went searching for the pot of gold
And were confused when it looked gray.

Stella Seufert

A Thankful List

I'm thankful for my family
The ones who never gave up on me.
I'm thankful for my pets,
For their loyalty and comforting presence.

I'm thankful for my friends,
Who stood by me by all my hard times.
I'm thankful for my siblings,
Who never fail to make me laugh.

I'm thankful for everything that is in my life-
The people, the pets, and even the small, simple things,
All of which gets me through my days and remind me,
How much there is to cherish.

Hayden Sweeney

Leaves of Three:

Leaves of three
Let it be
Not just with nature's poison
But also in society's prison
You spend your whole childhood
Looking to the future
Not knowing what's waiting
Friends never last
"Best Friends *Forever*" don't exist
So now your friends are gone
And you try to find new ones
But their all withdrawn
And you're left to eat the crumbs
Of what you used to have
So you tag along
With a group of two
And then there is three
Leaves of three
Let it be
An old saying
And a wise one
The other two
And you
The other two
And you
Two peas in a pod
With an outsider lagging behind
As they share their inside jokes
Hugs, teases, and pokes
You just smile and put on a happy face
Knowing this is not your place

Anonymous

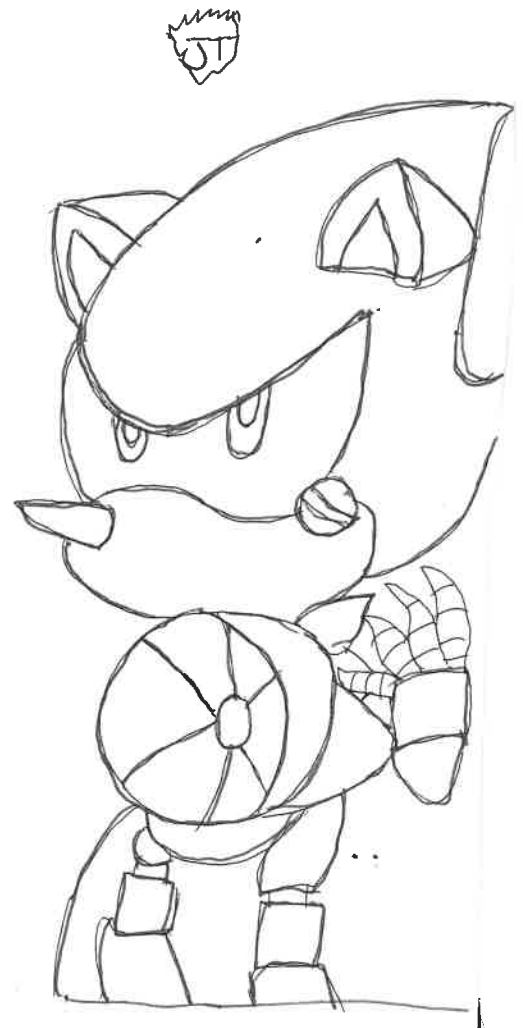
There once was a white wedding
That had a surprise heading
The bride and groom
Felt a sense of doom
When the priest came in bobsledding

Stella Seufert

Buzzing Bees

Buzzing Bees beeping as they buzz
Tipping turning flying round because
Tipping turning flowers smelling sweat not salty
Nectar sprinkled by sprinkling bees are turning
Wings flapping nectar sprinkling as they flying
Grasses lighted green by shining sun
Bees shining not green but yellow as the sun
Sharp stinging soft yellow evil devil
As flying pouring nectar
Still smelling sweat not salty
Beeping as they buzz

Marek Punty

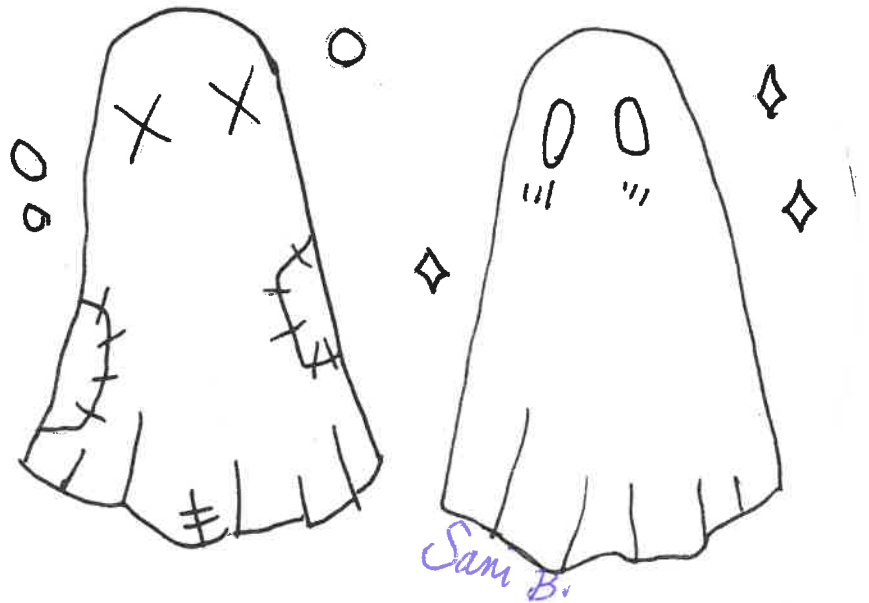


In the morning light, soft and clear,
I am thankful for the dawn's embrace,
For the promise of a brand new day.
I find myself thankful for comfortable silences with friends,
For their laughs and smiles,
Or to help them through their sad and lonely nights.

I am thankful for my family.
For being there for me through the ups and downs,
For always making me feel loved.

I am especially thankful for my big sister,
The one to hold me when our parents would be fighting,
The one to reassure that everything would be ok,
The one the could always make me laugh during any situation,
She will always be the one person I run to
I love her, forever and always

Makenzie Looney



Sin Watcher

With one hand pointing low to what must have been hell,
And one raised up high as if to graze the sun,
That man at the crossroads is the mute voice of judgment?
I deny him, with his sins, to judge anyone.

Jude Hutchings-McMahon

All Is Well at 94 Candy Cane Lane (the flames are getting closer)

by Chloe Horan

A pair of mad women reside at 94 Candy Cane Lane
They crave something,
Not something as simple as the candy on the walls,
But something that will shatter their hearts into more pieces
Than a broken candy cane if not achieved.

The bright appearance masks the grievous feeling of knowing the truth that lies within,
A feeling that bonds them together,
Yet, will kill each of them slowly
Tearing their lives apart
Everything they have ever known
Might just have turned out to be a hallucination.

Outside stands a singular man
One who has always gotten his way
One who puts on a performance for some
But when his true colors show
Things get monstrous.

The beast has awoken,
He's come for his sole care in the world:
Money.
Yet again, he has returned.
He is willing to tear this whole place down
In order to receive his wish.

The joyous memories that were once made at 94 Candy Cane Lane are at risk
Of fading into the distance
With no opportunities to create a future,
And if that were to happen,
She might just be stuck there forever in her fantasies.

But the big bad man has no care for the mere women's attachments.
They plead as though their life depends on it,
Little does he know,
In the end, it will.

Flames are being thrown,
The blaze overwhelms all involved,
But not as much as the two poor mad women,
And although it's officially a war,
He lit the first fire,
And he started it,
And now there will be no going back,
To what was once a paradise of happiness
At 94 Candy Cane Lane.



Anna B.

"I Hope, I Wish"
By Corinne Pina

Dear [Redacted],

I hope you never come to know
How terrible I feel right now.
I hope you never learn, although
I know it is your fault.

I wish that you'd be honest
When you say that you are sorry.
And I wish that you'd regret
How you've been leaving me behind.

But the empty pit you left
When you stopped being my friend
Feels to me a lot like theft
As so much came to an end.

You tossed me out like I was trash,
And made me think it true,
Yet the worst part is that in a flash
I would still forgive you.

An empty apology thrown my way,
Backed by nothing but your words
I have cried THREE TIMES today
And now I feel absurd.

But still I hope you never know
How heartbroken I feel.
Because all I wish is that you'd show
Your care for me is real.

My head is a scramble
Of thoughts, worries, and woes.
Full of stray and digression
Tilts high and then low.

But among all that scramble,
Is this one constant true
That among all this chaos
Lie thoughts of you.

The Sweet Cape Cod Clams

The sweet Cape Cod clams wash up on the shore
I stare them down
So lonely
So poor?

It's worth it
I say
To sit by the bay
And watch the Cape Cod clams
As they wash up
Peacefully

The sounds of the gulls as they fly overhead
A ringing in my ears
A reminder of the life I ride
And the love I feel
For the sand on the beach
And salt of the sea
I feel it
Its real

Marek Punty

Those thoughts can ground me
But nothing compares
To the ball in my chest
Filled with light and air.

The Mountain Goddess

The goddess sat atop the mountain
Staring down at the little people
And wondering what they do all day
"Strange little creatures," she smiled,
"I should go and meet them, those cute little things!"
So she made her way down to the village, where the cute little things would play.

When she arrived, the villagers were putting on a play
About the goddess on the mountain
And how she loves all things
Squirrels, rabbits, bees, bugs, trees, clouds, grass, rocks, and people
While she watched the villagers go on and on about their goddess, she smiled
And wished that play would continue all day

But it soon ended, and everyone continued on with their day
While exploring the village, the goddess found some children at play
And when they all saw her pretty face, the little ones smiled
"Wow, you look just like the goddess of the mountain!"
To this, she realized she did not look like normal people
And thought that maybe she should try more human things

"Humans love their things! Like shiny things, cloth things, and... other fun things!"
She thought, "I wonder if I do human things, I could be human for a day?"
The goddess looked around at all the people.
The actors were getting ready for another play
And merchants were advertising things that showed off her mountain
And when she approached a seller's stand, he smiled

"Lovely mountain goddess costume! I happen to have a discount for those in costume,"
he smiled.

The goddess looked around at the things,
And then found a little sculpture of her mountain
A little ceramic cone stained green, shining like jade in the day
It would be a perfect little memory of her mountain play
Made by her little people

Her favorite people
"I'll take this little mountain, thank you," the goddess smiled
She gave the man some of her gold, then went to watch all the people play

They danced and sang; with the sun coming down, there were all sorts of glowing things.
As night overcame day,
The villagers danced because of their goddess and her mountain.

After a lot of joy and dancing, the goddess returned to her mountain, sad to leave her people,

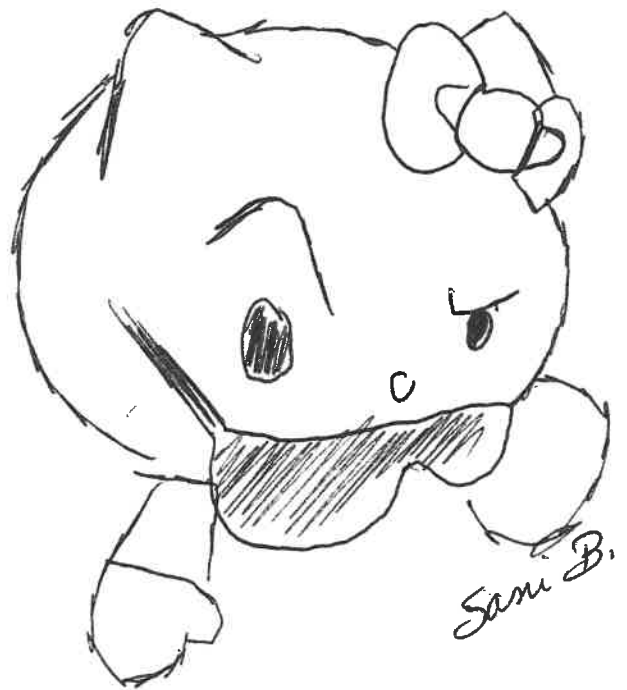
But overjoyed at her glorious day. Looking back at the village, it was sprinkling lights and covered in laughter, and she smiled,

Knowing that she was one of their favorite things, and they were hers. She knew that next year, she would return for their mountain goddess play.

Lillian Williams

I Am Not Okay:

I don't know how to say
I am not okay
Everyone always says
"Don't be insecure"
But it's not that easy
And I've been feeling queasy
How many friends have I lost
Are there lines I have crossed?
Trying to hold on
To the things that could've been
And trying to be seen
I have been ignored
It makes me bored
To not do anything on weekends
Everyone is always busy
I am never a priority
So I sit alone
And think of everyone I have known



But nobody bothers to see me
Is this how it will always be?
For the girl who wishes to be seen
And of the many times I get asked
"How are you?"
I never just say
I am not okay

Anonymous

Afghan Landays (22 syllables)

Flying a kite to make Baba proud
With a kite in his hand and Hassan right by his side

Feeling ashamed for his betrayal
Left wondering when his guilty conscience will subside

Alexa Azure

I do my best to make a landay
I am hoping Mrs. Doyle will think they are okay

Keith Arnold

You attacked us for years and you celebrated
You then cried when we retaliated.

Robert Mitchell

Withdrawal

Running and hiding away from *them*
People holding onto the planes, flying and falling

Anna Borzilleri

Two by Yssell

When the towers fell, and the sky turned dark
We buried the dead, but the smoke still rose.

I love my bald-headed dad, his scalp shines like the moon
I can see the light of my future

Yssell Rivas Batista

Two by Addie

Fighting kites like hungry predators
Falling swiftly, one by one, shooting stars down to dust

Darting eyes, guilt eating me alive
No evidence, just dark red drops on the bright white snow

Addie Thonus

More Afghan Landays

3 by Harry

Amir seeks his father's loving embrace
But it is always Hassan who receives his grace

He pushes away the ones who hold him dear
To gain the attention of his father's ear

These last five years have gone like a breeze
Sometimes I wish for this moment to just stop and freeze

Harry Michaud



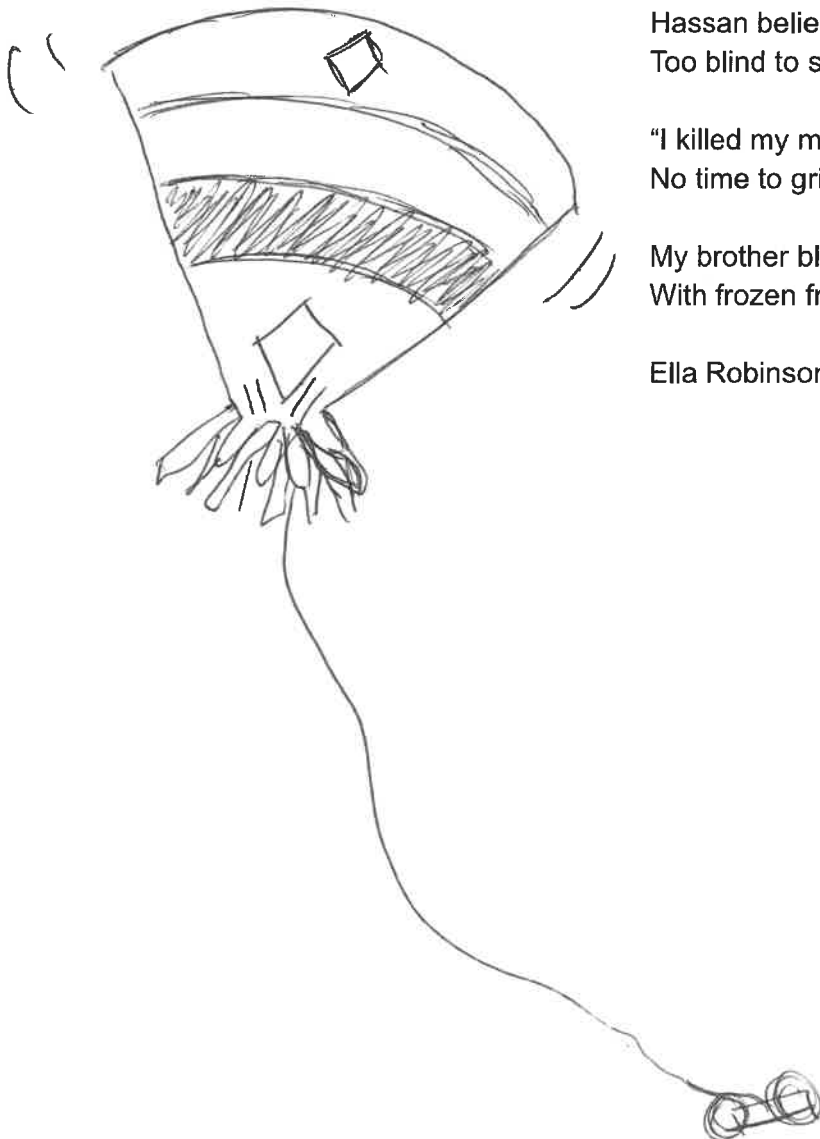
3 by Ella

Hassan believed Amir was his friend
Too blind to see their brotherly bond was just pretend

"I killed my mother," he always thought
No time to grieve but plenty to aim to be redeemed

My brother blends a tasty smoothie
With frozen fruit and protein. He says this poem stinks

Ella Robinson



Savannah E.

dear sir,

I walk with pleasure. I want to get away

I can

rub my eyes, it seemed so real:—

my heart

rules

me, my dear

your

sad

and

you

desire

me

Close at hand!

as if the

rising of

music

drew back the
the heavy chains

unlocked.

but could see no key

I knew then that to struggle

was useless. I was

could do nothing. But still

I was to be given to the wolves

I

cried out—

I

tears

covered my

Forgotten Grave

A blank piece of stone
Sits above
A body six feet under.

At some point,
It may have read a name
But time is not gentle
To the poor.

The price of poverty
Is that one is not remembered
As a person,
But rather a body lost to the ages.

Unlike those with fame; money
Who have pedestals
That tell the world
Of their life,

The body that lays
Under the forgotten grave
Forever rests
Alone.

Lillian Williams

The Real North Pole by Grace Powers

The town of Northbright has been around for hundreds of years. For the longest time, no one was aware of the town. Eventually, people started to notice it. They realized how beautiful it got in the wintertime--the trees with snow on the needles, the perfectly proportional houses with the candles in their windows, and the holiday decorations all across town. Slowly but surely, it became a tourist attraction. People came from all around to experience the town that had been dubbed "The Real North Pole". Despite all of the visitors, the residents of Northbright continued to live their lives as normal as possible. Tradition was a big part of life there; it was a rite of passage to be in the town's Christmas pageant, and one man was selected to act as Santa every year. Soon, a new family moved in. They had heard about this place since they were young, as everyone did. A house near the ice skating pond opened up, and they jumped at the chance to live in such a magical place. The family consisted of two adult sisters and the eldest sister's son; the sisters had reunited recently, and they were ecstatic. The boy was excited to live in a place like Northbright. Upon entering town, the current residents were not as welcoming as they had hoped. They treated the family as they would treat any other tourist family; they smiled at them while walking, but they didn't actually strike up a conversation with them. The boy had talked to a few kids at school, but not nearly as many as his mother had hoped. She began to grow worried, and she wondered if the move was a bad decision. On Christmas Eve, the two sisters and the boy realized they didn't have everything they needed for their cookies. As they walked out of the house, the entire town lit up and all of the residents ran towards them, smiling. They had been holding off on welcoming them for weeks in order to organize a big surprise. The sisters laughed, and the boy was dragged to an arts-and-craft table by the other kids. They were building gingerbread houses, sloppily putting them together with frosting and marshmallows. The boy held up his homemade gingerbread house, with a leaning sugar cone tree, marshmallows for snow, and three gummy bears out front representing their family.



Gabby Bicalho

Odyssey • By Jason Elhilow

We were sailors once, moving with the tide,
Measuring time in the hush between waves,
Watching the sky shift, hands brushing in the dark,
The salt of the ocean settling on our skin.

The wind carried us forward.
Your voice was steady, a compass I trusted.
Nights blurred into mornings,
The horizon pulling us somewhere unseen.

But the sea is never still.
Currents twist. Storms rise without warning.
One moment, your hand in mine.
The next: the space between us widening.

I called your name into the wind.
The wind had no answer.
Only the sound of the ripples,
Only the weight of what was left behind.

Now I drift, searching for echoes,
For footprints in water, for a shape in the mist.

No shore, no stars to follow,

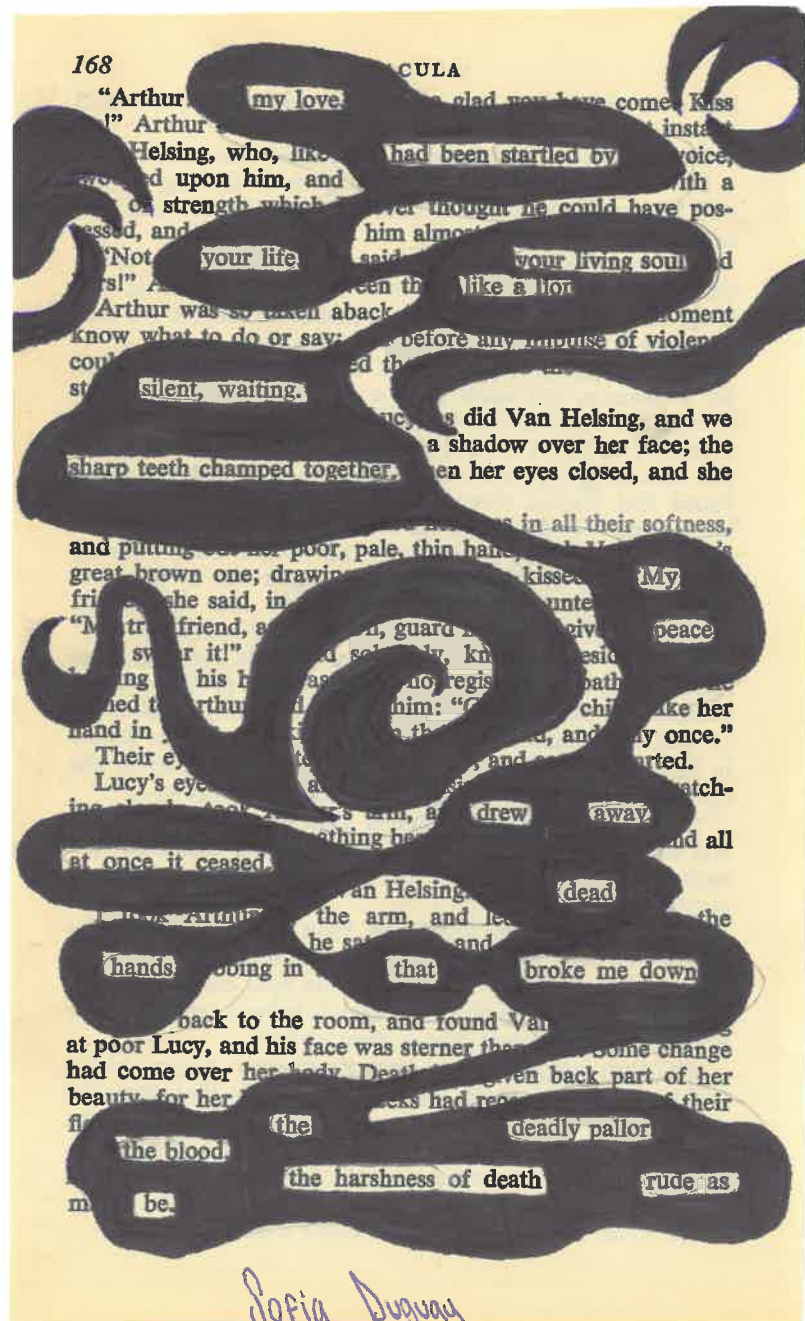
Only the endless motion of memory.

And if, through some quiet shift, you return with the tide,

I will not ask where you have been.

I will only move toward you.

As if I had never stopped.



Sofia Dugway

Mama, What About the Horseshoe?

Mama, mama!
Shouldn't it look different when it dies?
How can this be?
It has the same legs and eyes,
As far as I can see.

Oh, dear child!
There is more to be known,
So keep your worries mild,
As this is only what is left,
After it has grown.

Will that happen to me, too,
After I grow up?
Will my body wear through my skin
And leave what's left of me
On the sand, all curled up?

Don't worry, my love.
Unlike this little one, no,
Your skin won't slip off like a glove.
Your body will grow,
And your skin with it.

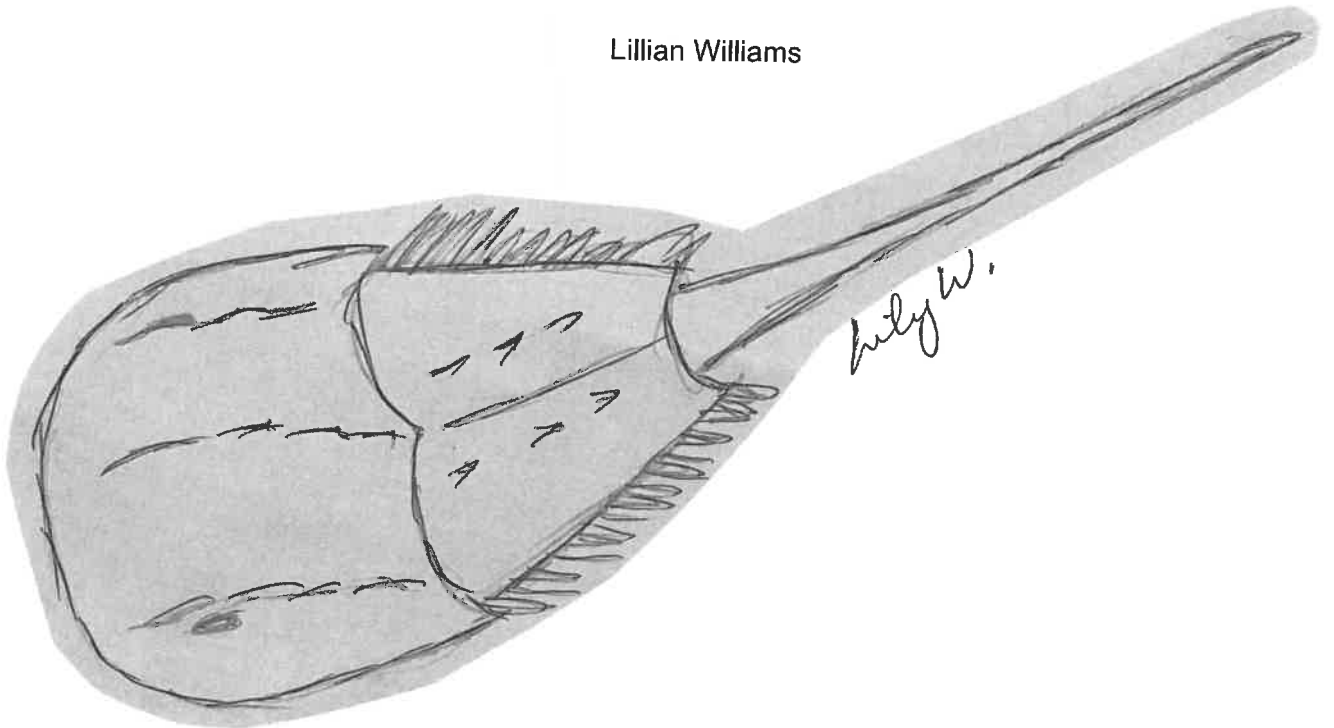
But what about the crab?
Where is he now?

Does he think his new body is drab?
Does he miss being little?
How does he live without skin, anyhow?

He is free,
Out in the sea,
Having fun after growing up,
Because he is stronger,
And has lived a little longer.

Okay, mama.
I get it now.
This is only the crab's old pajamas!
Now I wanna be a horseshoe,
So I can be in the sea all day through.

Lillian Williams



Speak Up:

I used to talk a lot
But not anymore
I feel unsure
When I speak
Will I be heard
Or just sound absurd
I know I'm the youngest
But I might also be the strongest
If you felt the weight I carry
Would you be so quick to dismiss
When I reminisce
On the good times when I felt bliss
I used to talk a lot
But not anymore
Yes, I'm sure
I'm sure it's not as important
Nothing is as important
As the dishes
Your phone
Those emails
But I'm falling apart
And I don't know how to start
To heal my broken heart
I used to talk a lot
But not anymore
When I do I'm not heard
I know it sounds absurd
But it's true
And I look at the marks of black and blue
I'm not sure how they got there,
I always look down
To hide the ever-pressing frown
That has stuck to my face
That is it's place
Forever.
What a strange endeavor
That we all embark on
And we listen to the same song
The song of life but in different keys

The whines of babies
Water, flowing with ease
The cries
The laughs
The skies
The paths
The song that is life
Some lyrics are heard
But mine sound absurd
And I used to talk a lot
But not anymore
It's not worth it
My will has drifted ashore
So do the dishes
Scroll on your phone
Answer the emails
I'm sure it's not as important
Nothing is as important.
But there is a voice that begs to be let out to play
Because I used to talk a lot
I don't anymore
I won't anymore

Anonymous



A Beautiful Day:

Because she could not see the color of the sky
She was unsure why
It was a beautiful day
That's what she heard everyone say
But she was alone
Only looked at her phone
Everyone ran
Laughed
Played
But she stayed
She stayed in the darkness of her room
Not looking at the flowers in bloom
She felt alone because she was alone
She chose to be alone
The blame was on everyone else
But she couldn't look herself
In the mirror
Because of the fear
What she saw was a demon in there
Sucking away all her air
And it said:
"You're not good enough"
"Stupid"
"Ugly"
"Self Centered"
It told her what she thought was true
And it made her feel so blue
But if she were to look at the color of the sky
She would know why
Any day can be beautiful
Anyone can be beautiful
Everyone *is* beautiful

Stella Seufert

A new feeling,
falling in love,
and receiving it back.
The love for the secrets we hold,
the secret of us.

A feeling of betrayal
being stabbed with a salt-covered knife
not only losing this love,
but being replaced by him.

Longing for my love of summer
and one last wave to crash,
all while being swept away
by my painful love of sport.

Closing up what I love most,
not knowing if I'll ever see it shine again.

Understanding the love of feeling hope,
but experiencing the pain of losing it
all over again.

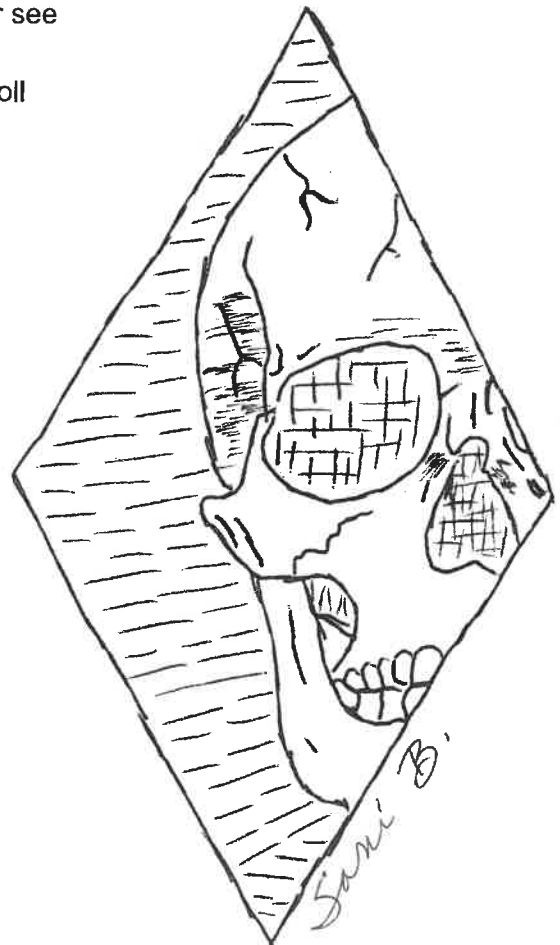
Saying farewell
to my love for a year
that caused me preeminent pain,
unsure of what the future holds,
but knowing love with sneak into it,
no matter how defeated I feel.

Chloe Horan

What happens in a Coffin?

The feeling of being put underground
Cold dirt piling up onto the wood
The Thump it makes
Thump
Thump
The people walking over your grave, not giving a care
Decomposing
The worms, biting the wood and entering the coffin
The worms and insects nibbling at your sour flesh
Crawling inside into your liver or stomach
The beetles chomping at your eyes
The pus leaking from formerly living organs
Hair falling out
Thump
Thump
More people walking
The flowers placed at your grave, that you will never see
Their red color, the color your flesh once was
Your blackened flesh, months of decay taking their toll
The fangs
Thump
Thump
Crunch
The fangs rise and grasp ahold of your casket
The fangs that rip you down to Hell
The fangs of no return
The shredded remains of wood
Thump
Thump
Gone.

Lilliana Holmes





Anna
B.

Writing

Stories in my head
Form in ink, turn legible,
Then obtain their life

Lillian Williams

Haikus

The thought is not to
Rhyme, but to dispense stories,
In five, seven, five

Lillian Williams

Grandpains

I can't help but get jealous
of when someone says they are
visiting,
having dinner with,
being picked up by,
celebrating a birthday,
with their grandparents.

Their joy with their grandparents
is a freshly sharpened knife
to my already bleeding heart,
cause all I have left
is grandpains,
to go along with the four missing pieces
to my puzzle.

I can't even mourn perfection,
for it was far from it.
One gone before I was born.
A Happy light gone far too soon.
A woman who's story is full of lies.
The strongest man broken to his weakest.

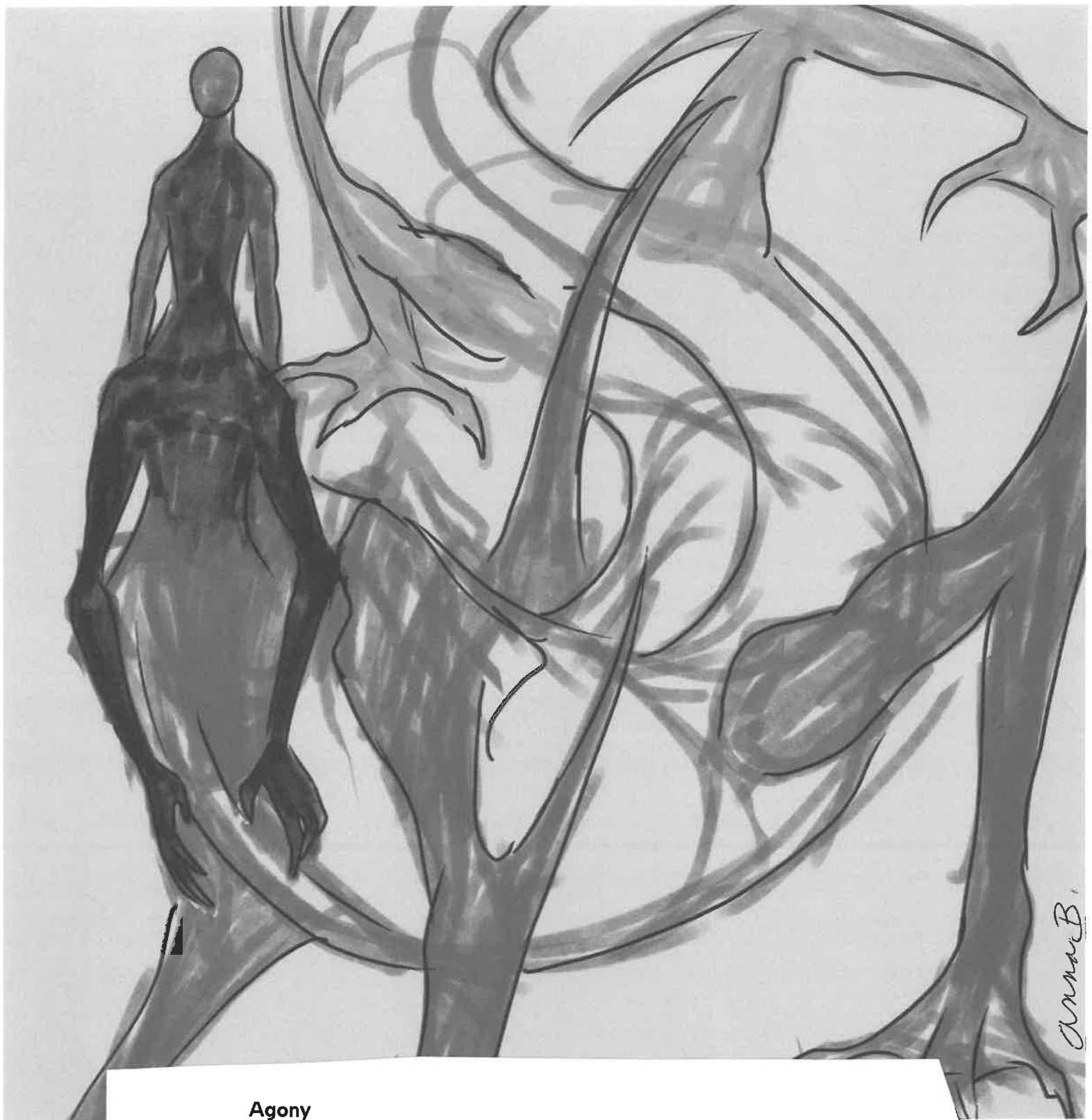
But I'll throw on a smile
and say "that's nice"
when your grandparents get brought up,
but on the inside there is no smile,
and what I really mean is
"why can't that be me"
because all that ever brings up for me
is grandpains.

Chloe Horan

The wicked white witch

A gummy land,
A full-fledged plan
In bands of gummy bears
They prowl
My home now far
Far from gum
Boats and potions to find the home
Now parts of gum and herbal supplies
Candy canes, and snow caps
My bowl will boil
pop pop pop
There it goes
In howls and bones
Pop pop pop
Boiling and boiling
Till the bowl goes boom.
Gram crackers crunch
The frosting falls
The gum creatures turn
Oh my heart burns
My now gummy body oozes
Frosting drips out of me,
The gram cracker house now down
My boiling bowl
Maybe now I'll go back
To my green land.

Eloise Cornell



Agony

Struggle was a sad soul so starved that he swallowed up light like smoke—

Coughing and choking, then scraping his claws at his throat.

Hands over his ears and two eyes full of tears,

It was seventeen years till he broke.

Father, Father, Son, & Daughter

By Maeve Willow Maguire

"And so we should care for each other, strive for unity, and encourage one another just as the Bible instructs us to do," Pastor Josh always had an incredible way of speaking. He was bold, honest, and down to earth. That's why my father and I went to church every Thursday. My father and I were sitting in the third row towards the front, his arm around my shoulder. We weren't always this close. We used to bicker and argue a lot when I was a preteen. It was when we started going to church together that our relationship bloomed. I was snapped out of my train of thought when I noticed something. Right in front of us in the second row was another father that had his own arm wrapped around his son. I couldn't believe it. Sure, it could have been a coincidence, but it felt like more. I had stopped believing in coincidences a while ago. Everything felt intended now that I began to learn how God worked. The father and son sitting in front of me felt like a parallel to my own life. I felt like I was seeing a younger version of my father and me and it stirred a feeling of warmth in my body. "I love you so much, buddy," The other father smiled before kissing his son on the forehead. I looked up at my own father. "I love you so much, dad" I said, looking up at my father before kissing him on the cheek. Parallels. They were everywhere once you started noticing them.

Things I Should Have Been Grateful For In Middle School.

My mother, for not bashing my insecurities over my head.
My mother, for buying shirts two sizes too big for me.
My music, for keeping me sane.
My headphones.
My father, for practically forcing laughter out of my throat.
My father, for being a steady presence in the storm.
My cat, for purring on my chest.
My cat's fur.
My birthdays and the holidays, for receiving notebooks.
My birthdays, for the money; for more notebooks.
My imagination, for letting me write.
My writing.

Savannah Eldredge

TOE TICKLER



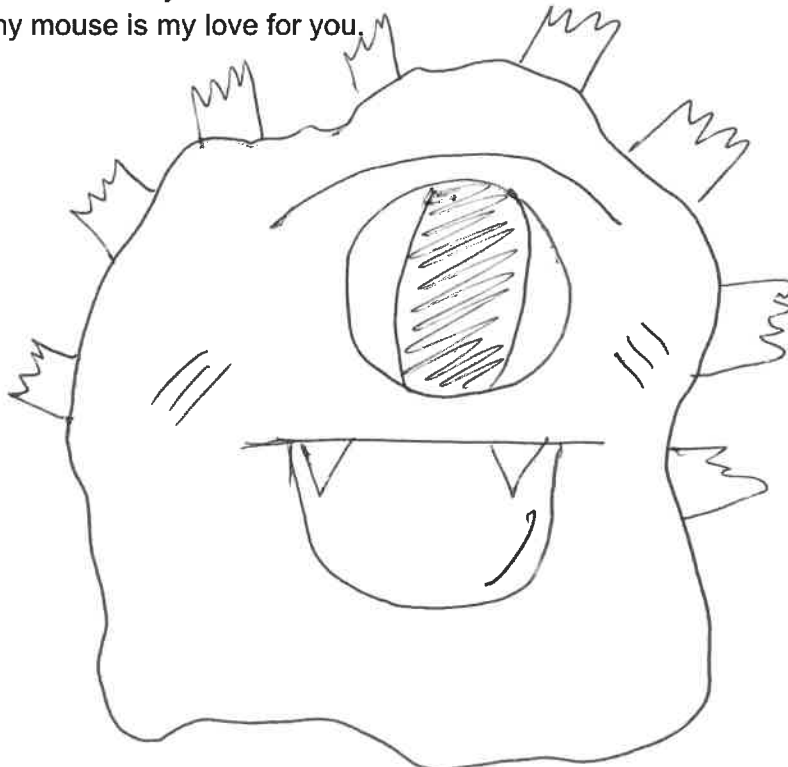
If you don't go to bed with slippers
you will get a visit from the toe tickler,
you won't know till it's too late
so make sure not to make this
mistake.

- Bella & Bailey

I am the toe tickler!

I am the toe tickler, I'm worse than the grinch
I am your worst nightmare, I'm a little witch.
I come out from under your bed
I take off your socks and tickle your toes.
I come out after Christmas and tickle the old
I Am the toe tickler, I'm worse than krampus
I take off your bed sheets when you're baking
I'll take off one sock and then the other
I've tickled your toes since you were younger.
I Am definitely your worst nightmare.
I Am the toe tickler, short but mighty
I've tickled your toes since you were in onesies
For the last time, I am the toe tickler!
My favorite color's pink
I like when you go to bed with the sheets untucked
"I am the toe tickler" I will tickle your toes
I live in a pink house with a mouse
I'll come at night when you're in your slumber.
You may wonder why I like my pink house with that mouse.
Or why I "such a monster" likes the color pink.
Well.. I'm not just a monster who tickles your toes
I'm the monster that tickles them because you didn't pay me.
You didn't give me the love that I need,
that's why my house will always be pink.
The hearts in my house are my love toes
and the love for my mouse is my love for you.

Bailey Forrest



A Seed, The Rain, The Sun, The Love Flower Blooms (April 28th)

I love when it rains
The smell of it brings back memories
The sound of it are calming
The Look of it is beautiful
Seems like you like it too
Your always outside when its raining
With your umbrella
And your favorite rain jacket
Enjoying the sound of the rain

I love when it's sunny
The warmth feeling on your body
The look of it is just beautiful
The look of you is beautiful
... no
The sun is stunning
Seems like you like it too
Your always outside when its sunny
With your shoes
And your yellow and blue dress
Enjoying the warm feeling on your face.

I love when spring blooms
The flowers are pretty
The smell of the flower are calming
Your pretty
...no
Seems like you like it too
Outside watering your plants



Smelling the roses, and tulips.
With your favorite straw hat

I don't like it when it rains, or sunny, or the flowers
I'm allergic to flowers, I'm scared of the rain, the sun always blinds me.
It's because you always in it, you always apart of it
You are the sun in the rain
You are the shades in the sun
You are the one flower that shines brighter than the other flowers.
I like you
No
I love you, I love you like how you made me love everything else.
And I thank you, but you will never know....

Kyra Howard



GreatNess comes with Gratitude

To be great you know where you came from
Not where you are now
Not what the money makes you now
Come on, give mom and dad a bow
What about the work they have done?
What about if they up and left, what would've been done?
They made you great
Don't forget to thank them before it's too late
Times up
Now my Rhymes are up
I was grateful for where I was born
Now in my city the crime is up
Walking through the streets all the dimes are down
Thinking, damn this dime could change a man's life
Giving a homeless guy anything makes him feel like he has a crown
Be Greatful.

Liam Flood

That's My Sister:

That life I could've lived
If I were just a little older
That life we could've lived
If you were just a little younger
We could've played together
Fought together
Grown together

Would I have come to your room in the night
To talk about my troubles?
Would you have come to my room in the morning
To get ready together?
Would we be best friends?
Would we hate each other?

That life I could've lived
If I had a sister
I have a sister
A grown up sister
A grown apart sister
A sister that I don't know
A sister that I want to know
A sister that doesn't know
How much I miss her
My sister.
If we were closer in age
How might that change
The story of us?

I remember your jump-rope competitions
Going to Disney World to see you compete

Looking at you with awe
That's my sister
I remember your cardboard cutout of Bernie Sanders
Making fun of it on election night
Running with my friends
Hoping you'll run with me
You won't, you want to watch alone
That's my sister

I remember looking into the pantry one day
Seeing a box a cocoa puffs
Their not organic or low sugar
Only one person could've gotten them
That's my sister

I remember watching Harry Potter with you
I was too young
But it was your favorite and you wanted to show me
That's my sister

I remember wanting to be with you
Coming to your room
Being told to leave
You were "watching a rated 'R' movie"
That's my sister

I remember you got into Georgetown
I remember you packing your stuff
I remember the empty basement
The quiet house
The empty driveway

I remember missing you
I still miss you
I miss the life I imagined for us
I miss skateboarding at sunrise
I miss Covid jigsaw puzzles
I miss you

Stella Seufert

About a dance I shared with Josephine

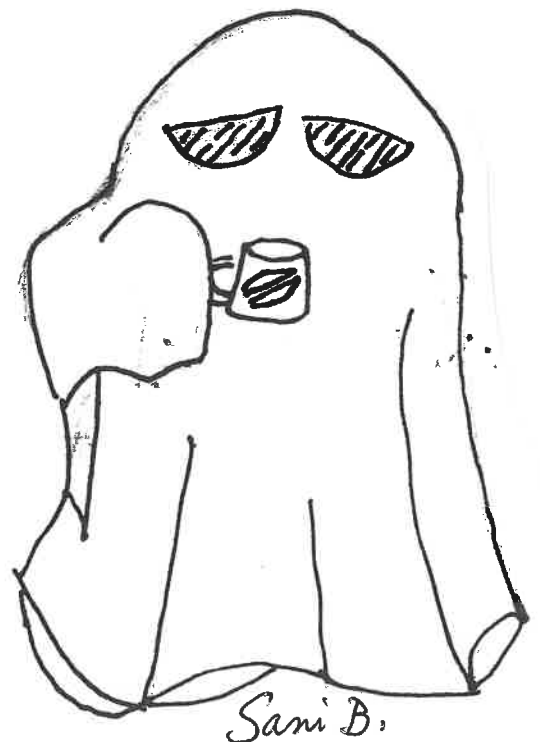
Josephine was a Goddess whose love was sweet music,
Like the melody sung by a songbird set free,
She would be at the beach at the breaking of dawn,
Calmly clapping in tune with the crashing of the sea.

On the first of December we ran through the frostbitten forests of Cape Cod both beaming with glee,
Then she suddenly stopped and settled there under the barren bark and branches of the white oak tree,
And began bringing verses from heaven to the earth,
Calling chaos and harmony down on one knee.

Josephine was the muse of the melody made,
By the seasons of life and the earth as it changed,
And here she was happy for a fleeting moment,
When we were in love and I was in chains.

Then I fled from her life one warm evening in springtime,
Just as the fog settled over the sea,
As the teary-eyed woman in the window was watching,
As if she were dreaming of dancing with me.

Jude McMahon



Desire

What is love?"

The man cried out
But there was no one to respond,
Other than the rain.
He kneeled on the ground,
Staring up at the moon.
As its tears fell upon his face,
The rain soothed his mourning
But couldn't give a single answer.



Love is complex,
The rain explained,
I cannot give you a definition for something so intricate.

"So then why must it be so complex? Why must it be so hard to understand?"

The man prodded
But the only one to respond
Was the moon.
It watched as he begged the world
For some kind of answer.
The moon felt pity for the man,
And tried to console him.
Don't worry, child,
The moon eased,
Love takes pity on no one.



"So how do I love without this pain? Is it possible?"

The man questioned
And the one to respond
Was the earth.



Every singing bird, warm breeze, and skipping stone
Knew exactly what the man needed

To please his woe.
The earth responded to his cries
With the sweet sound
Of love.



*Love is desire, which is something that few can please,
The earth reassured,
But desire leads you to where you need to be.
So follow love, and life will be kind to you.*

Lillian Williams



Love



What is love?

Love can be something that can be comprehended in so many ways.
Whether it's for a person, pet, music, food or tv show
Whatever it is, it's something that brings most people the same feeling
Happiness and Peace

But it's one of those things that doesn't just have one definition

Love is an infinite thing

It's just the sense of a strong feeling

You never "fall out" of love with something— you just start to have a stronger feeling of love
for another thing

Because when you come back to it after a while, the love you had for it the first time
will just get stronger again

But forever the question will remain

What is love?



Abbey Crownshaw



~~83~~ The Catcher ~~the Eye~~

I'd
down gloves right in my hand and all I could feel I
ought to sock the guy in the jaw or something - break
his goddam jaw. God, I wouldn't have thought to do
it. I'd just stand there, trying to look tough. What I
ought to do is say something very cutting and
snotty, to rile him up, instead of socking him in the
jaw. Anyway if I did say something very cutting and
snotty, he'd probably get up and come over to me and
say, "Listen, Caulfield, are you calling me a crook?"
Then, instead of saying, "You're goddam right I am,
you dirty crooked bastard!" all I probably would've
said would be, "All I know is my goddam gloves were
in your goddam galoshes." Right away then, the guy
would know I wasn't going to take a sock
at him, and he probably wouldn't say, "Listen, I've
got this straight. Are you calling me a thief?" Then I
probably would've said, "Nobody's calling anybody a
thief. All I know is my gloves were in your goddam
galoshes." It could go on like that for hours. Finally,
though, I'd leave his room without even taking a sock
at him. I'd probably go down to the cap and make a
cigar out of it and watch myself getting tough in the mirror.
Anyway, that's what I'm thinking about. I'm
back at it. It's no fun to be yellow. Maybe I'm
not all yellow. I think maybe I'm just
partly yellow and partly the type that gives
much of a damn if they lose their gloves. One of my
troubles is, I never seem to be able to do some
thing - it used to drive me crazy when I was a
kid. I've spent days looking for something they
lost. I never seem to have anything that I've lost. I'd
care too much. Maybe that's why I'm partly yellow.
It's no damn wonder I'm partly yellow. What you should
be is not yellow at all. If you're supposed to sock some
body in the jaw, you should feel like doing it, you
should do it. I'm just no good at it though. I'd rather
push a guy out of a window than hit him out of a window.

Zoey MacBride

Holden Caulfield

Listen a second.
I have
a
have
R
Only I broke it on the
way home.
Gimme the pieces.
I'm saving them.

Zoey MacBride

Journaling is For Those Stuck in the 1800s

Those who move on from what matters too quickly
Shunning that book
back onto a shelf
with a collection of dust
that can only be rivaled by my worries.

Those who fixate on the past
Never wanting to lose the moment
Never able to fully move on from what others have forgotten
Just when you think it's gone
you are submerged by it yet again.

Those who appear to have it all figured out
except the only thing free about them
is the handwriting inside the sacred booklet
where perfection makes a fool of itself.

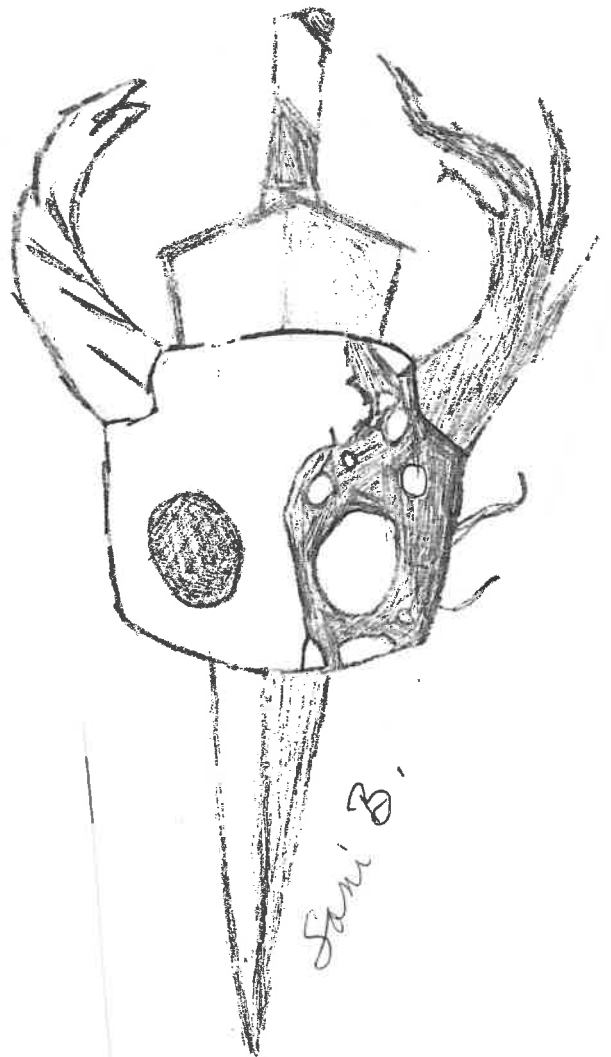
Those who are literal.
Those who are imaginative.
Those who wish for what they lack.
Those who are one Jenga piece away from crumbling.
Those like me.

Chloe Horan

Change

I scowl at the blinding light,
Each time the sunrise takes the night,
For what am I in the sunshine,
That I cannot be when stripped of sight?

Jude Hutchings-McMahon





Anna B.

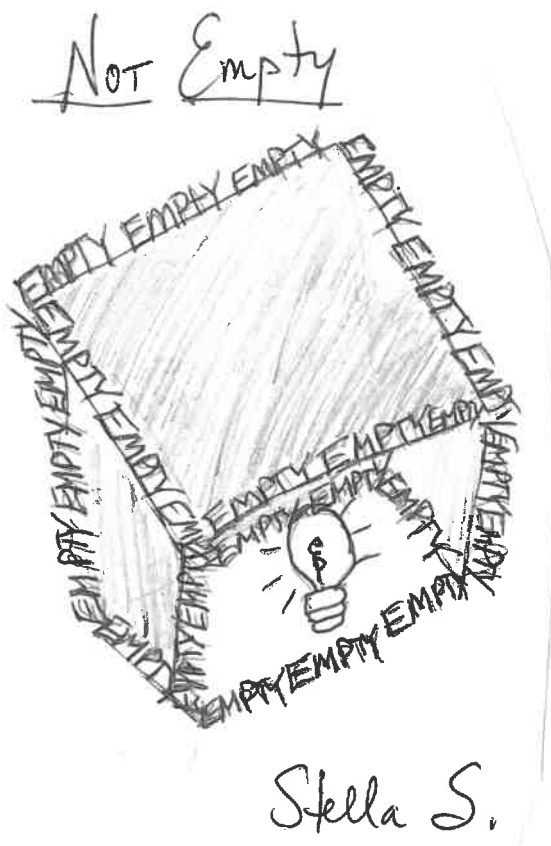
Bracelets

"Y'know what? Screw you!" Kennedy yelled before flipping a chair and being escorted out of the classroom. I didn't react. This had happened so many times before with both her and other students. That's just part of going to a special education school. Besides, it's not like I was any better. I purposely triggered her, and I didn't get in trouble for it. I let out a heavy sigh before putting on my headphones and continuing my work. I couldn't help but reflect on me and Kennedy's relationship though. We were polar opposites. I was battling OCD and undiagnosed autism while she had her own struggles with ADHD. Her ADHD made her hyper, impulsive, and, worst of all, loud. I couldn't handle the noise. Hell, I couldn't even handle someone talking at a normal volume without it feeling like someone was screaming in my ear. So someone rocking back and forth in their chair while yelling and laughing made me want to die. Then again, I was told multiple times that I was responsible for my behavior, which was true. It was my job to tolerate noise. The world didn't revolve around me.

It was the next day. It was free time, and I was at my desk making Rextace bracelets. That's what I always did during my free time. It relaxed me and kept me from picking at my skin. Suddenly, the door clicked open, and Kennedy walked in. She looked solemn. She walked over to my desk before handing me a card. "I'm sorry," she said softly. I opened the card. It was nicely decorated, and the words were surprisingly sincere. "It's fine," I replied before turning my attention back to the bracelet I was making. Kennedy didn't leave, though. She stood there for a few moments before speaking up. "...What are you doing?" She asked cautiously. I was confused. What was she doing? Was this some kind of trick? "I'm making Rextace bracelets." I replied bluntly, still suspicious. "Oh, are those like friendship bracelets?" Kennedy asked, perking up a little. "I suppose they could be," I replied. There was a noticeable silence between us before she spoke up again. "Can I...Can I sit with you?" Kennedy asked awkwardly. I paused, thinking for a bit before replying. "Sure," I said quietly, still on edge. Kennedy smiled before pulling up a chair. She seemed quite interested in my bracelets, so I helped her make one. I helped her pick out some colors, started the bracelet for her, and explained how to braid it. We both braided our bracelets in silence before Kennedy spoke up. "I'm sorry that I'm so annoying," she said bluntly, leaving me shocked. I felt a pang of guilt rush through me, but before I could speak up, she added to her sentence. "I know I can be loud, and I know I can be disruptive. It's not fair to you and the other students. I would stop, but I honestly don't feel like I'm in control of my body. I constantly feel jittery, and so much adrenaline is rushing through my body that I need some way to get it out. Dr. Turley is trying to find me new meds, as nothing seems to be working. Please, don't be mad at me." Kennedy rambled as she tried not to cry. I immediately felt horrible. Who was I to

judge her? I was annoying myself. I was rigid, entitled, demanding, particular, and obsessive. The other kids probably found me just as annoying as I found Kennedy. "You're not annoying. Honestly, we're in the same boat," I replied. "You think so?" She asked. "I do." Silence surrounded us as we turned our attention back to the bracelets. They were coming around well, and I really liked the colors I chose. "Do you think we're ever going to get out of here?" Kennedy asked abruptly. "Get out of this school?" I asked for confirmation. "Yeah, get out of a SPED school." I thought about it for a second before replying. "I know I am. I haven't worked this hard just to go to a special education high school. I'm going back to a public school," I said firmly, my voice full of determination. Kennedy nodded before speaking up again. "Do you think I'll get out of a SPED school?" Kennedy asked. "Of course," I replied immediately. Even though I didn't like Kennedy that much, I had faith in her. I didn't want her to be stuck in a secluded classroom. I didn't want anyone to. We finished our bracelets, and Kennedy came up with an idea. "Hey! Do you want to trade bracelets?" "Sure." I shrugged before exchanging bracelets with her. She slid it on her wrist before looking up at me again. "Hey Maeve." "Yeah?" "Are we friends?" I smiled. "Of course."

Maeve Maguire



Shopping List To Make Me

Health

Ginger hair

Sapphire eyes

Tall legs

Paint splattered freckles

Arms that yearn for hugs

(Must be too scared to get them)

Wits

Good grades

Wise words

Eager servant

Not quite brave

An awfully heavy brain

(At least A+ pounds, any less would be catastrophic)

Creativity

Good artist

Better speaker

Magnificent writer

Caution of vulnerability

Talent that never rots

(Make sure to hide pride, they can't know she pretends to be boastful)

Extra

A name

A smile

A laugh

Many personalities

Tiny bit of weird

(But don't be too sparing, she needs a bit of flare)

Lily Williams



Safe Place?

A place to sit

A place to stay

A place to throw

your safety far away

We are trained in that drill

To run, to hide, or to fight

And to hide our fright out of sight

Stella Seufert

There once was a young boy who loved Christmas. It was his favorite holiday for so long. His life was comfortable, easy and he was a boy who kept to himself. Christmas was his favorite because of the gifts he would receive as a young boy. As he grew older, he wanted to start being more of a giver. He gave to everyone around him: family, friends, friends' friends, everyone was getting gifts. After the global pandemic, this man was very upset and lonely. He lived from being around others and communicating and having good laughs. Now he sits at home, does his work at home, goes and visits friends from a distance with a mask covering their facial expressions. Life wasn't what he wanted. But he had a plan for this. All of his friends have been feeling the same way about being alone. He wanted to throw the biggest Christmas party ever. He wanted everyone there and he meant it. He even said when writing that he doesn't care if we all get sick because next Christmas may not be promised. Excited and ready for his big party, he worked his tail off for months. He saved up so much money to spoil everyone. He even cleaned out his chimney and filled all the gifts in the chimney. He did it all for his friends and family. It was a tough time as he just lost his grandmother after a long fight with sickness right before Christmas. He had all of her gifts ready too. He was sad but still wanted to make the best of the time. Christmas eve arrived. He is now all done with working and is ready to hang out with a friend. This is one of his closest friends who also wanted to hang out, knowing how much time and effort he had put into this. All of his friends and family that he had sent invitations to were there. He walks in and they all scream, "HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVE!" He was always known for giving everything, even after he lost someone close. He was beyond grateful for the night, and the next day he would spend with Friends, Family and Friends of friends.

Liam Flood

Emerging Face

A simple word among the sea.
A simple sentence among the waves.
A simple conversation among the river.
A simple debate among a puddle.
Two blank faces converse with each other.
Two blank faces gain visibility.
Shade, texture, and personality.
Two unknown people talk to another.
Soon they are given names, ideals, dreams, hopes, and aspirations.
Soon divided among humanity's nations.
To come back soon after dreams are achieved.
Families, family trees, free of self-doubt and shackled possibilities.
Soon these names, Arlen and David, expand their ideals for a public message.
INVOKE, IDENTIFY, INSPIRE.
Soon the message goes through the grapewire.
Years, decades pass,
Arlen and David grow old.
A simple debate among a puddle.
A simple conversation among the river.
A simple sentence among the waves.
A simple word among the sea.
Arlen and David grow old, and pass away.
Trees rot into the ground, flowers wither away.
But Arlen and Dave's legacy would not be wasted.
For two blank faces.
No name, no personality, no texture.
Spread mankind's ideals in public lectures.
For the lantern of life for them has faded.
A simmering spark signals the end of their days.
But mankind's lantern sparked on that timely day.
For 2 unnamed faces, brought the sun to humanity, willing to stay.

Davion Dawkins

"The girl who stole my heart"

by: Anonymous

A girl with the kindest soul,
Has managed to steal my heart.
No one holds more beauty,
None even close to her.
She always gives me butterflies-
Can't help but love her smile.

She can light a room with a smile;
Eyes that reveal the beauty in her soul.
I see her face- boom! Butterflies.
From the beauty of this girl who stole my heart.
I'd do anything for her.
Just to be in the presence of this beauty.

Her smile holds such beauty,
When I see her, I can't help but smile.
Not one will rival that of her.
So beautiful it reaches to my soul.
Her smile shines with beauty of her heart,
And makes my heart grow wings like butterflies.

All that and then her eyes give butterflies
For I can't handle such great beauty.
Even though she holds my heart.
I see her eyes- can't help but smile.
They say a window to the soul,
Yet none as beautiful as her.

Mind goes fuzzy as I think of her
The flapping wings of butterflies,
Deep within my soul.
I think of her beauty,
and all I can do is smile,
as I think about this girl who stole my heart.

Yet the source of beauty lies within her heart.
I grin at just the thought of her,
But not just eyes or smile.
Her kindness sources butterflies.
Shining from deep within is her beauty,
Which shines brightly from her soul.

Yes, her heart is the source of butterflies.
For it is her kindness from which shines her beauty;
Despite her smile, so beautiful it warms my soul.

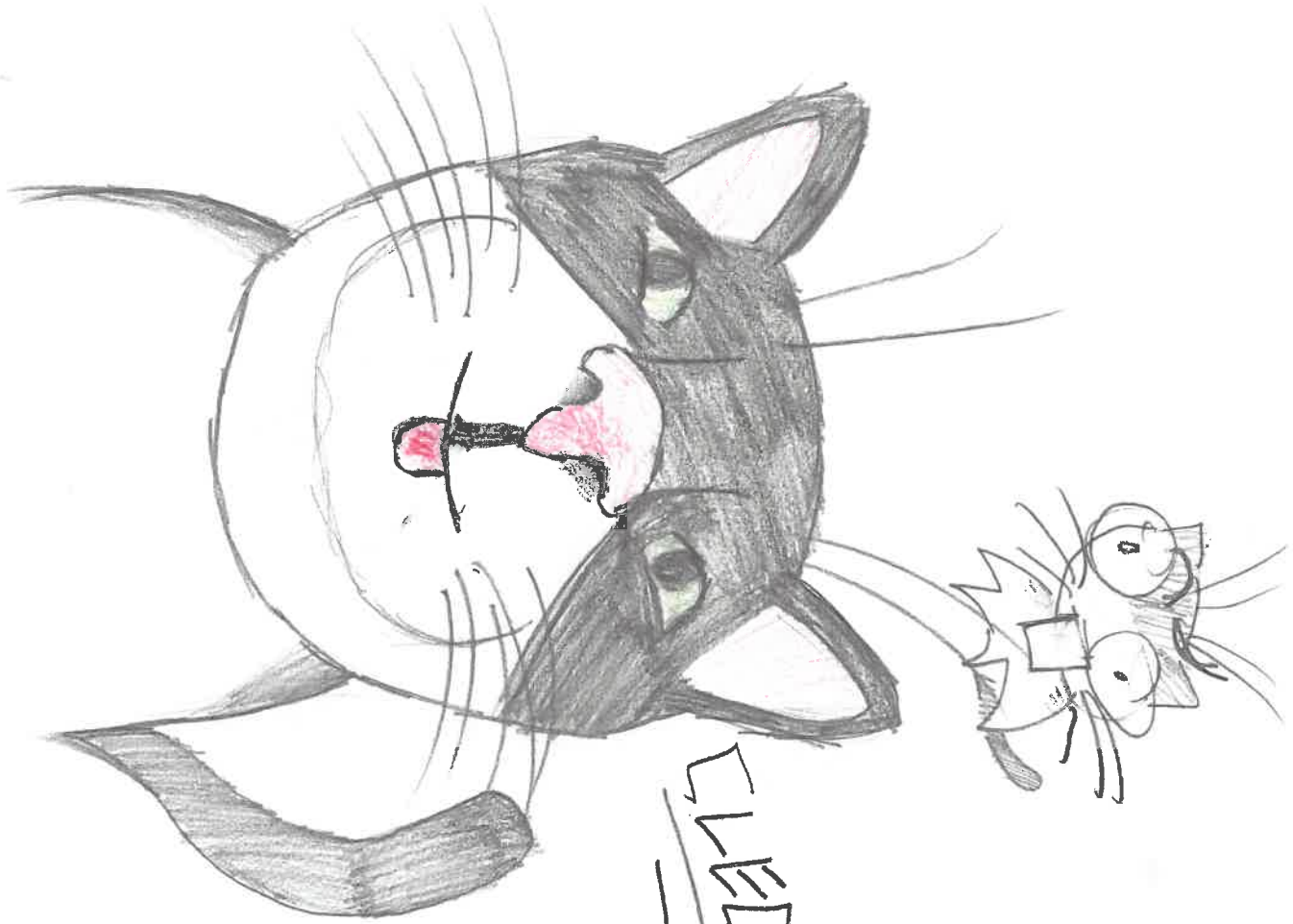
The Beach

A woman of beauty
Lies on the ground.
From her skin,
Which is finely coarse,
Her mold-green hair
Blows in the wind.
Her sapphire skirts
Whip against her body,
And enhance her grace.

Lillian Williams



Art by Carys M.



CLIO



Merlin

Bellie

What are you grateful for?

By Carys McCarty

There are so many things that people are grateful for,
But they never realize.
I think some people actually take what they're thankful for for granted.
Some people never realize what they're grateful for until it's gone.

I like to think I'm grateful for my cat.
It sounds like a cliché, I know.
I am really grateful for her, though.
For the days when I can't get out of bed,
When I feel like it's sucking me in,
I roll over onto my side.
Then, there she is.
Climbing up next to me with her big eyes.
I realize how much she's already grown, and I don't want her to grow up anymore.
I think my cat loves me as well, though I'm never truly sure.
When I think back to the moments of her lying on my chest,
Her purring sounding like an actual engine; it's so loud,
I know she loves me.
Even through all the scratches and bites, as well as her jumping up on my leg as I walk.
I'm grateful for her every day.

I'm also grateful for my dogs.
I'm closer to one, but it doesn't mean I don't love them both.
My chocolate lab, my baby girl.
I sleep with her every night.
She does take up half my bed and sleeps with her legs sprawled out everywhere.
She also has eaten so much chocolate I don't know how she's not dead yet.
I'm grateful that she's still alive.
Then there is my mastiff.
He's more of my mom's dog than mine,
But as soon as Mom leaves the house, he's my boy.
My 175-pound baby boy.
The baby boy that also threw up on my couch at 7:00 in the morning.
He squeezes his toy and also squeezes his paws, along with the beat he makes.
His tail is like a whip, though,
As soon as he gets excited, you have to take cover.
I'm grateful that he hasn't trampled someone yet, and for him, of course.

I didn't have to fantasize

I didn't have to pretend
because it was real
I didn't have to create wonderland
because our connection was truly blooming
I didn't have to imagine you as something you're not
because you were giving me all I could ever hope for.

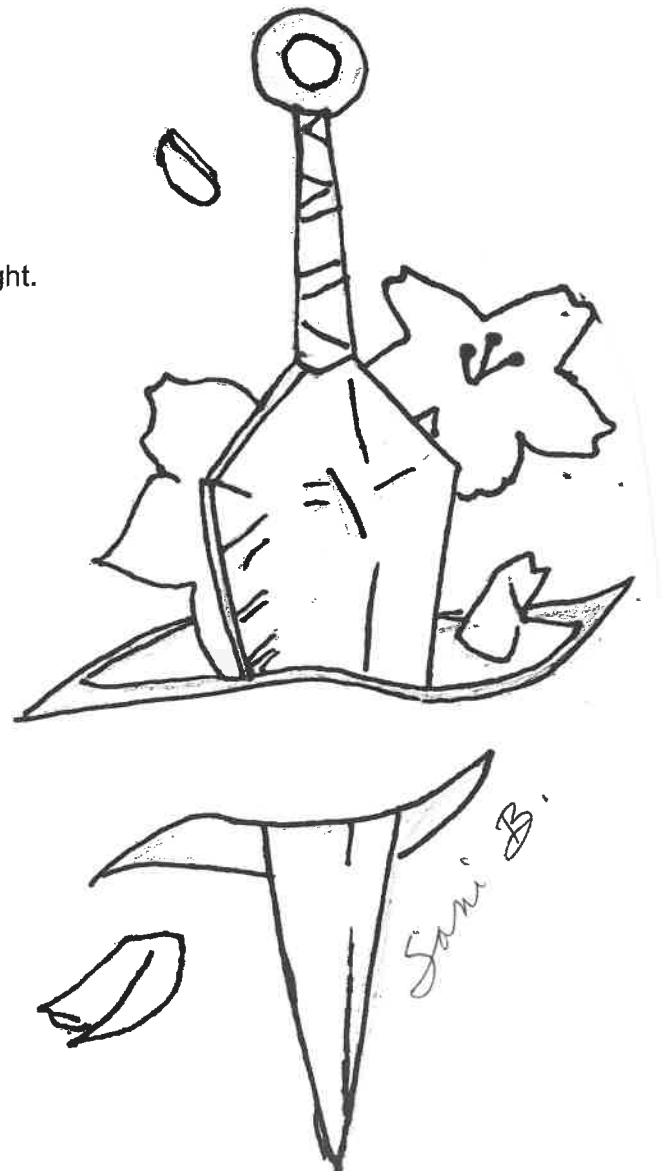
But now all I'm left to do is pretend.
The existence of us only exists in a make believe dreamscape.
Now all I do is imagine your existence in my world.
The hope of us has been taken away.

I think of you often
more than I would like to admit
My friends think I'm over you
But I still grasp onto the 'what ifs'
as if my life depends on it.

I'm starting to think I forced fantasy into reality.
We were more than friends.
right?
That night when I walked over you smiled softly at my sight.
right?
You didn't just respond to be a nice person.
right?
You didn't pick her over me.
right?
But you did.
right?

Usually I fantasize eagerly
But I thought I wouldn't have to with you
But it turns out I might have been doing that all along
And now I'm forced to fantasize
Until I get to test my fate with you again.

Chloe Horan



Imagine this:

A little man, very little, little tiny like a thumbtack

Building a home.

Very difficult to imagine I suppose, because what man is that small?

Regardless, there was this little man.

He traveled through the woods, through the treacherous world to reach this place.

This little, tiny clearing, very large for a thumbtack man.

And this little man worked day and night, dragging the wood, the frame, the base of his home.

Then he made it his own.

The decorated door, the tree, the wreath.

The new family home.

So he finished his home and returned to his house.

Yet again, traveling through the treacherous world and the woods to return.

And found his family.

Now his family was very little, little tiny, all small like thumbtacks.

And while his newly built home was his, it was perfect for him, they did not agree.

The house where he did not feel at home was indeed the home of his family.

And where his joy was far away their joy was there.

So he never returned.

He never saw his home during the day, only during the night in his dreams.

And while its memory faded away, a new resident approached his home.

A little dog found his place, a little tiny dog, smaller than a thumbtack.

And the house was happy to be a home once more.

-Emma Eldredge



I remember my grandmother's kitchen as if it were yesterday, with a large window on the right side that let in light and illuminated the entire room with the warmth and brightness of the sun. Every time my mother went to help my grandmother clean the house, we would play in the soap bubbles scattered on the floor like carefree children.

What would be, in fact, a perfect and safe environment for childhood? There are different conceptions about this, but love is part of all of them. When you are with the person you love, any place becomes a home more easily. Sometimes, my grandmother would bring out a glass of iced sweet tea, the condensation dripping down the sides and pooling into a ring on the side table. The first sip was always a burst of cold, sugary comfort, followed by a lemony tang that tingled on my tongue. The clink of ice cubes was a familiar, soothing sound, like a melody that played only in this special place.

At dusk, feeling the cold, humid breeze of the afternoon dew next to special people, I would sink into the rocking chairs as if that were the best place in the world, and it was! The carefree look, the noise of the chickens and ducks walking around the backyard of the land in the middle of the earth, looking for the water source behind the wooden hut that my grandfather built to store his tools, which had always been the mess room.

Running to the gate on a Monday afternoon coming back from school, I loved seeing my mother waiting for me with an afternoon coffee ready to warm me up.

The world beyond the screen seemed distant and silent, as if wrapped in cotton wool, while inside that refuge, everything seemed safe, peaceful, and filled with a soft light. Sauntering through the woods in front of the house at dawn so as not to make noise and leaving the house to watch the sunrise with cousins and siblings, a treasure hunt for good things and memories to collect, drinking warm milk and eating fresh bread from that morning to start the week off right, the smell of the sea, the salt water and the sun, this makes me feel alive.

Alice Vitor

Dysfunctional • By Jason Elhilow

“Ugly!”

“Where’s the effort?”

“Shameful for the neighborhood!”

Dysfunctional.

Yet inside a force of four stood strong.

Encased in blankets as they stared

At newspaper wrapping,

Their wood stove set ablaze.

Decades-old fixtures and ruby red gutters

And handmade wreaths

Projecting to the sky

While enveloping them with love.

The neighbors may have extravagance,

But they have exuberance,

Making do with gumdrops

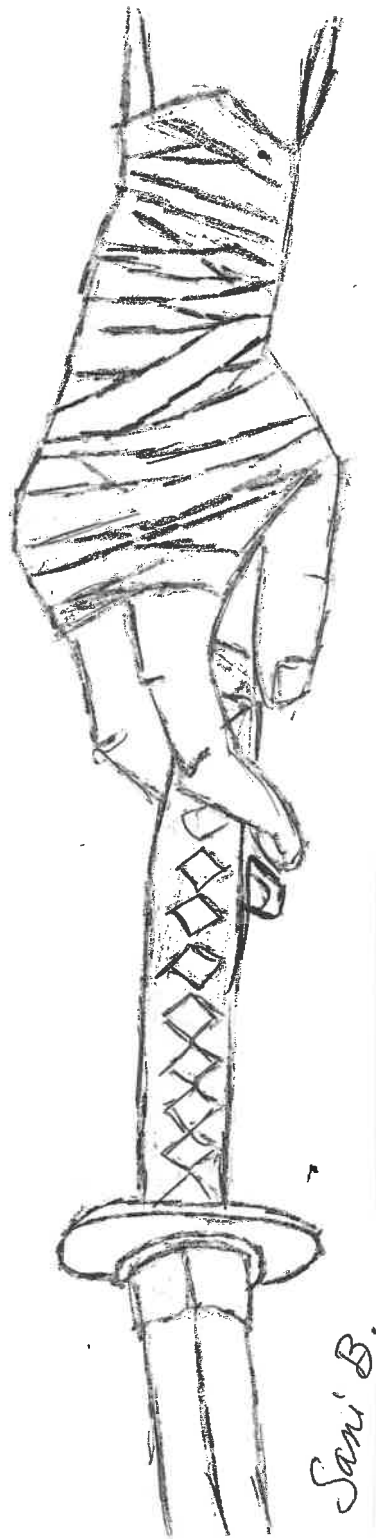
And a speckled roof of every hue.

For what is a home but the hearts within,

Beating as one, imperfectly whole?

Dysfunction is just another word

For a family with an untamed soul.

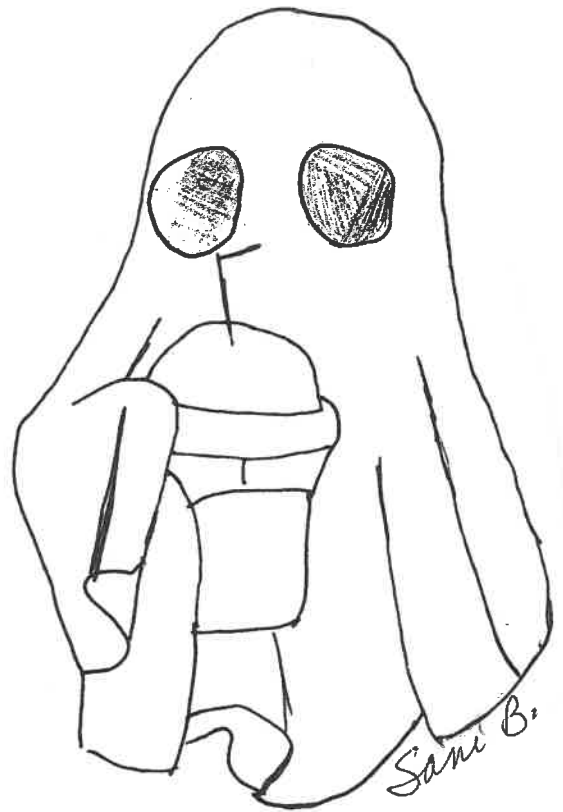


The Sleeping City

A soundless walk, the city sleeps.
But nightwalkers chatter silently,
With no purpose.
The clash of silverware is faint, as people dine in the dark.
Souls are few and far between,
Interrupted only by the quiet whistle of the wind.
Those who walk are never alone,
Whether through the heat of another,
Or the soul of a loved one;
No one is alone on this quiet night,
In the sleeping city.

-Savannah Eldredge

Based off the painting Cafe Terrace at Night by Van Gogh.



Favoritism to Me as a Fourteen Year Old Girl

The cat rubbing against everyone's legs
Scooter, munching away in the sun, doing nothing to deserve so much love
Worn down lures sitting patiently
Thin, blue-tinted line waiting to cast out of the eyes
Chocolate covered strawberries
The sun
My lightly toasted skin
Popping freckles
The boat, swaying over waves
The shiny pieces of hair that gained a new color to mimic the sun
Juicy mangos
The most perfect, circular scoop of ice cream in a waffle cone
Our boat going fast, nearly the speed of light, and the waves spraying up and over the sides
Until someone falls out
Then we go get them
But it's still fun,
When they laugh a lot
Summer,
My favorite season.

Lilliana Holmes

"Dragged in by the Rope"

By Corinne Pina

Dragged in by the Rope
Of an addictive Soul
It wraps around my arms and legs-
And drags me to Her call.

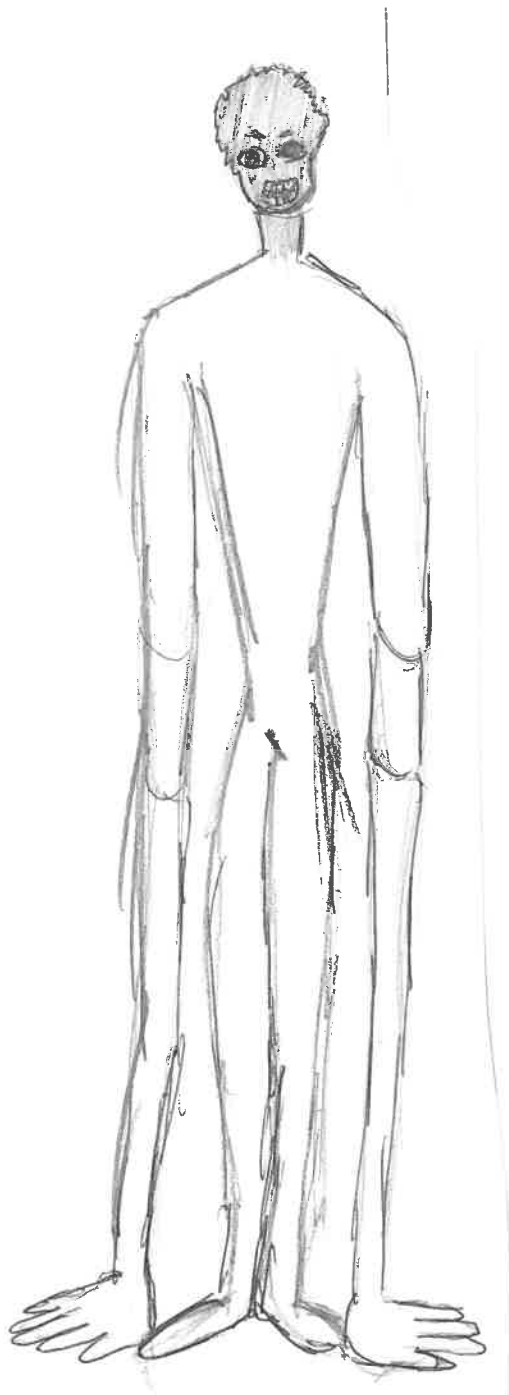
I'd like to say I kicked and screamed
Or dragged and thrashed -alas-
The Rope pulled tight- I did not fight,
She lured me in at last.

She lured me in with ease, and then
Our Friendship blossomed true,
And what I didn't know right then,
Was Chaos would ensue.

The kindest Poison of them all
Sunk Her claws into me-
And held me in a warm embrace
With dreamlike quality.

I grew accustomed to the warmth
And kindness of Her wrath,
But soon enough, She pulled away-
And I was free at last.

But freedom doesn't reap
If the freed find no relief.
She dragged me into loving Her,
And dropped me in a heap.



Carly + Sophia

There once was an old man
Who only ever ran
He never got tired
Even when he was fired
And only ever said "I can"

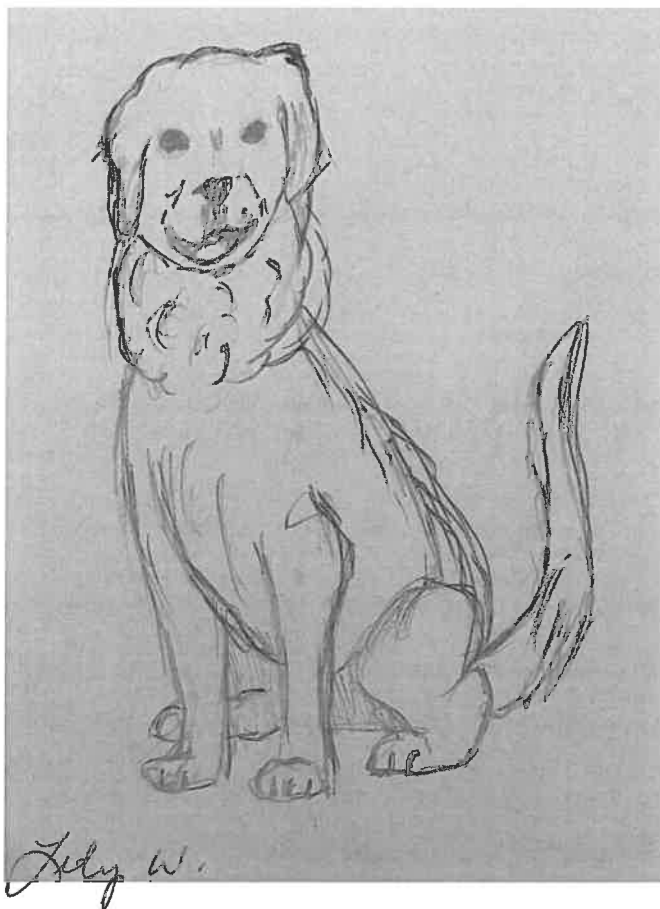
Stella Seufert

Dogs

We call you cute,
Funny,
Crazy,
And weird,
But I wonder how you
Want to be seen?

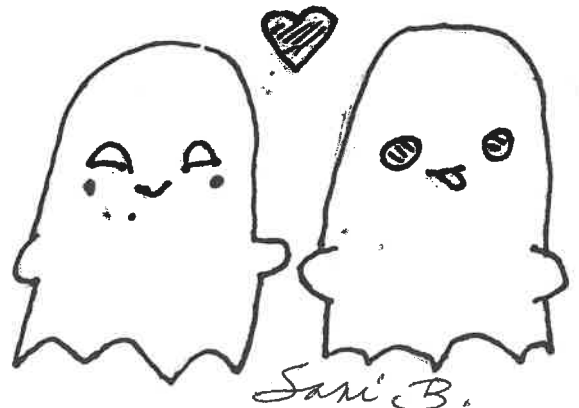
Do you wish to be feared,
Or worshiped,
Or despised?
Or maybe
You just want to be
Loved.

Lillian Williams



"5 Places to Find Butterflies" By C

- I. In the wild,
if you're lucky,
in their natural habitat.
- II. In your garden,
if you're lucky,
because they're pollinators
- III. In the butterfly garden,
you don't need to get lucky,
Because they're always there.
- IV. On my hand,
if I'm lucky,
maybe it'll land.
- V. In my stomach
because I'm so lucky,
to have you in my life.



The Story of Scary Berry!!:

This story, is very scary, some might say

THE scariest (dun) (dun) (dun) . .

As I was sitting in my house, walking my pet fish

I see a package packaging on my doorstep.

I walked to the door and opened it

To my surprise

It was a package, containing the note

“There is a scary berry inside!!!!!!”

After I took the package inside

Good kitty said:

“Opening of the package do not”

To his surprise

I opened the package

And to my surprise

And to my misunderstanding

And to my horror

And to my discombobulation

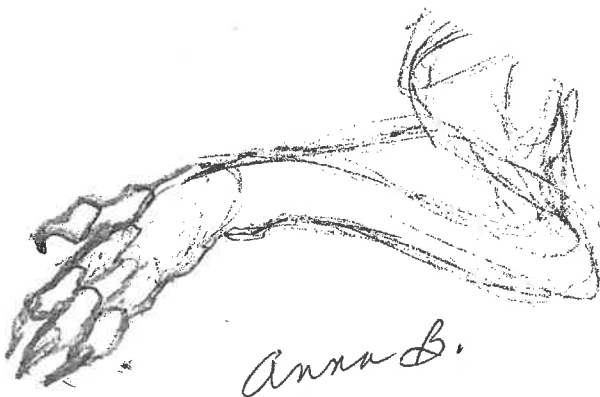
There was not a scary berry inside,

But an EVIL, SCARY, **BEARy** in the box

It proceeded to scare all over me , and it was truly the Skeleton-shocking experience

Very scary.

Davion Dawkins



Botanophobia (Warning sensitive content)

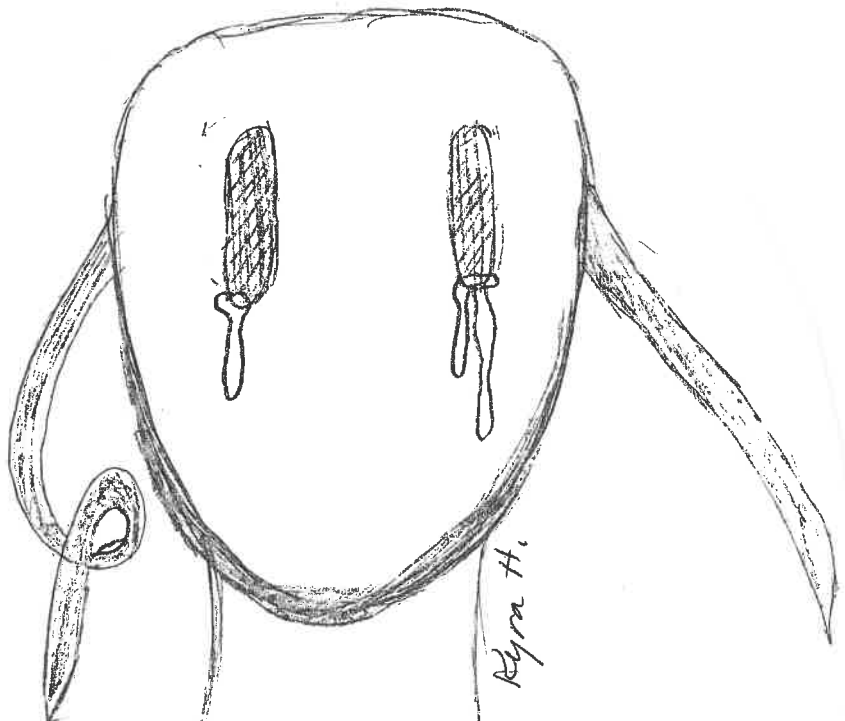
My father went outside one day
I used to love nature
I'd play in it all the time
Smelling all the plants
Until my father fell down a steep hole
The vines tried to catch him
But they just killed him instead
I watched him
Struggle
Trying to breathe
He then just stopped
I look around
All plants can kill you
Just like my father
I'll never go out again

Kyra Howard

Cacophobia

The fear of ugliness
Makeup
More
Foundation
Concealer
Powder
Anything
...
They stare into the mirror
...
"It's not enough.."
Tears come down her eyes
Running her mascara
A mask slowly places upon her face
"No one must see.."

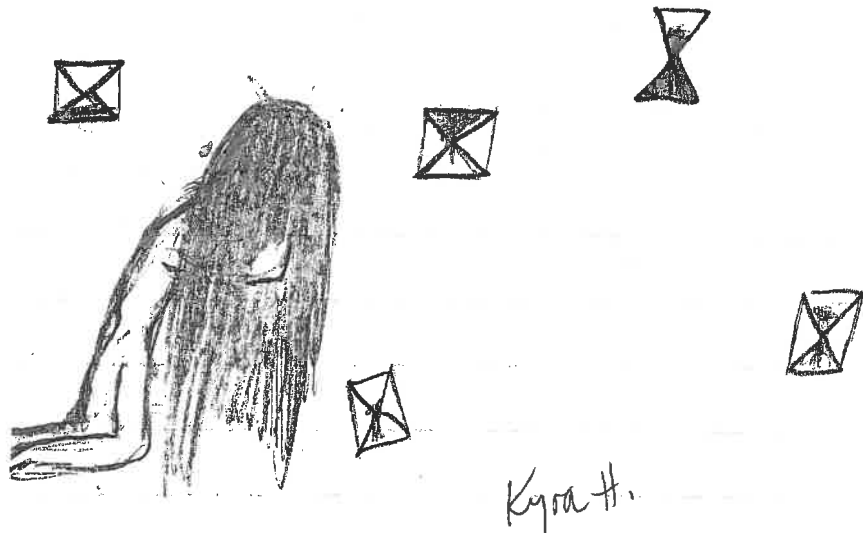
Kyra Howard



Chronophobia

The term for chronophobia is
The fear of time passing by
It's also an anxiety disorder
I found out that I have it
On January 29th, 2018
I was sick, extremely
I missed school
I rested
I never got better that day
There was another sickness within me
One lingering stronger and stronger
I didn't know what it was a first
I felt though I needed to move
But I felt weak
I've always felt every second counts lately
I can't waste time
I can't just sit here and let time pass by

Kyra Howard



Anthrophobia

I never liked flowers
People would always give me flowers
I would hit them away
Burn the flowers
I'm afraid of them
Not the way they look
They are pretty
But they have messages on them
And
...
They still proceed to put them on my grave
I guess I really am dead...
I hate flowers
They scare me...

Kyra Howard



Atychiphobia

The fear of failing
The teacher walking around
Papers in her hand
The students having multiple expressions
The heart beats faster
My head starts spinning
My breathing becomes faster
I begin to overthink
"What if I failed?"
"What if I failed in life?"
"I failed my friends..."
"My family."
The teacher slowly walks over
Placing the paper on my desk
However
It's upside down
Tear star coming out my eyes
I flip the paper over
The whole world stops
What just happened...

Kyra Howard



Astrophobia

How does it not scare you
The world is huge?!
It's endless...
And your standing on a small particle
It just keeps going
Endless...
It's scary
Don't get me wrong
It's indeed beautiful
But what's out there?
It's overwhelming..

Kyra Howard

Hemophobia (Warning Sensitive Content)

I was just walking home
Around the corner
I saw it
A blood trail
Leading to a body
Splattered on the floor
Next to a tall building
Oh, god, oh god
She looked young
So young
Like a teenager
Her shoes having markings
Her face unrecognizable
Oh god...
I'll never forget that day
Blood scares me
I don't know what it'll lead to...
God, I wish I could have helped her

988 suicide hotline

Kyra Howard

Glossophobia

His body is stiff
But his legs
They are shaking a lot
Nobody is realising
He stands there
Smiling
Smiling through his fear
His voice
Shaking
Stuttering
Mumbling
And everybody is just laughing
His fear is speaking...
Speaking in public...

Kyra Howard



Meanwhile, In the Theater...

Curtains drawn open, lights gleaming brightly, and stage empty. It was showtime! As fast as a freight train, I bolted for my costumes and props, all necessary for the show. One mistake, and my reputation would be a thing of the past, faster than it takes for lightning to strike an unknowing tree that will soon shrivel and die, melting into a static pool of ash. These thoughts haunt me. I consider the plausibility of failure, and the potential that I may be booed off stage, that the roses in the crowd will rot at the stench of my performance. That I may never want to experience the stage again. But, as the sweat drips from my hands as a product of the adrenaline, one sense lingers at the back of my mind. A sense of peace. Knowing that my dream would at last become a reality. Knowing that I was finally wanted for something I was good at. Knowing that the star struck lights would shine upon me, creating constellations of dreams and realities. I soon heard my director yell "places", the magic word that notified us that the show was upon us. While the fear of failure lingered gloomily, another, more positive, thought struck me, as a declaration of gleam and revival. I was ready...

Marek Puntty

Marek P.

The boundless Universe

Endless, interesting, we are so small...

Distant glowing stars

Sitting in the grass by the windmill, pointing out constellations

A flaming ball called the sun

Warmth during the day, open sunny rooms, clear days with no clouds, let's go do something!

The diverse environments of the earth

Animals of all kinds, documentaries, curiosity, wish I could see them, wonderful that they exist, still exist

The deep and vast depths of the ocean

Cold and dark, invigorating, coming up to laughter and an open palm, sitting on the docks

The beaches that surround them

Sand falling through my fingers, waves on the sand, sun and towels and fun and calm

Our planet's lush forests

Holding up branches, forts and imaginary villages, laughter, my sister, carvings in the trees

The animals above

A purple bush, birds, butterflies, bees, nests with eggs, pigeons on the wire

The animals within

Dogs on the couch, a cat's acceptance, neon fish lighting up my room, forever friends

The animals under

Worms in the rain, moles and mice, rabbit burrows, holding them, saving them, watching them grow

Anna Borzilleri

Ethan Rosecrans



Something like a Howl

I watch as two adults, bloodied by their verbal violence, lose their tempers to the demons of the hell that they have sworn themselves to.

I watch as their imaginary daggers strike each other in the back like insults.

As they lose each other to what isn't... peace?

Or maybe it is, a new norm of bloodless violence, from the creation of phony words, meanings unknown to me, with a desire or intention to inflict personal pain on the enemy.

My ears pick up this verbal pain as it resonates with me, like gunshots.

These gunshots will create a ceasefire, one adult will win, the other will retreat, and another battle will commence, once more ending in a ceasefire.

Peace will come with that ceasefire... Temporary peace.

The ceasefire is yet to come, and I can hear the blood splattering on the floor...

Dad is calm, collected, but mom...

Like the Nazis, she's gaining ground, and I can feel her spears puncturing dad's skin, as the blood drips to the floor... drip, drip, drip

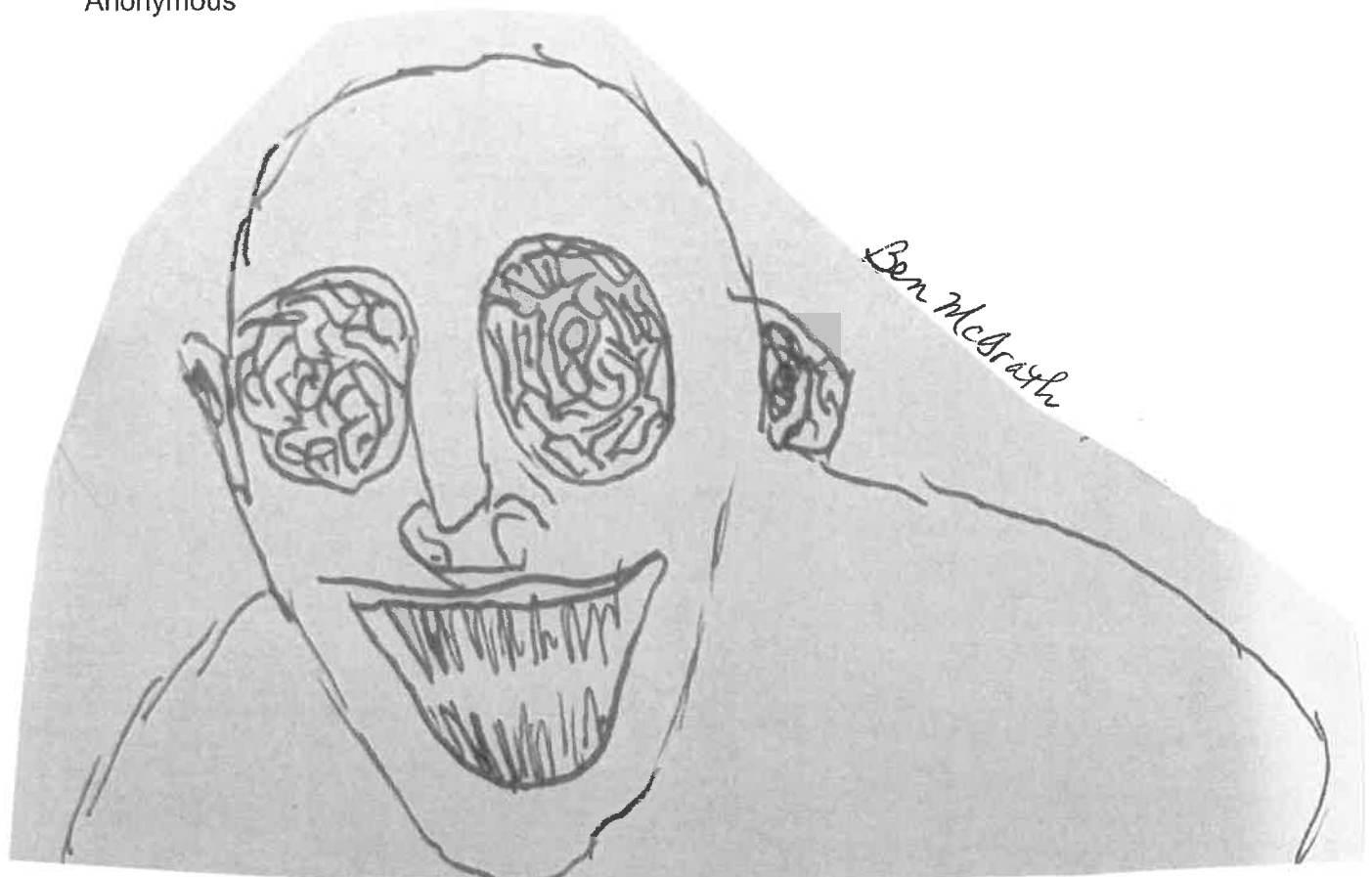
He stands his ground, and retreats... firing a round of arrows that pierce mom's flesh...

He stares, so does she, he retreats, she stays... She won, but at what cost

His shadow casts a long iron curtain, a veil over the battle... A haunting reminder of the horrors of the battlefield

He returns hours later, walking down the long corridor of the bedroom hall, knocking on my mother's quarters... she doesn't speak, he doesn't speak... not until round two.

Anonymous



Sea Turtles

Tiny titles
Tiny faces framed
Tidal waves blowing
The pretty seafoam
Up onto the sand
To rest at once

And now, it is time. It is the season.

It is their time to continue the new generation of sea turtles
And so they come ashore. The gorgeous sea turtles, with their shells
So effort lessly gorgeous and intricate, like miniature mosaics that belong to fine galleries
Their shells are slick with sea salt and water that has been polished by the sun for decades
They are going to lay their eggs. They are ready for the season. It's time for new generation.
Their flippers flap against the now soggy sand, hoping to make progress up the beach.
They dig a hole with their back feet, using their claws to push the sand, and they begin to lay
Now, it's time to settle the sand. Again using the back flippers, they cover the eggs with sand.
Once the eggs are completely covered, they begin the journey back, returning to the sea.
Now, they continue with their life and eat whatever they please, like jelly fish

These sea turtles are large and mature enough that predators
Are less of a risk. For the babies, however, this is not the case.

The babies have more predators now than they ever will have

The risk of birds, sharks, and even large fish is something

The predators, they will have for a large portion of their childhood. Until adulthood.
Until finally once they are big enough to survive and have one predator: fear of the sharks.

One day, they will return to the exact same beach to lay their own eggs

Now These amazing creatures bless our lives here
t a k e Each day in the summertime y e a r

By visiting us here
On Cape Cod
Annually
Yay
!

Lilliana Holmes



Anna B.

My Dearest

Oh, my dearest mother.
So strong and smart,
Kind and clumsy.
The way I grow into your face and hair,
The way our bodies look alike.
The way you were taken too soon.

Our career choices so similar,
Quite literally the same.
I follow close in your footsteps,
Reminding my father of us as I grow.
The scents of latex and hospital filling my nose
In our last moments, which I took for granted.
The way I could never wish for anything more than a final hug.

I'm sorry I was too scared to say goodbye.
I'm sorry I chickened out.
I didn't want to see you in that hurt, vegetative state.
I thought you wouldn't go.
I thought you'd stay forever.
To me, it seemed impossible.
A little six year old could never see her mother leave.
Not the one who is her biggest fan.
Not the one who loves her more than anything else.
Not the one who won't realize how much she misses her mom, until it's far too late.

Your thick, dark italian hair
Just like your mother's.
Your dark brown eyes,
Passed on to my brother,
Like the most gorgeous hazelnut.
Your cooking, so fantastic and comforting,
That I took for granted.
The way you would hug me when I was sick,
Or hurt,
Or sad.
I'm sorry I never missed you sooner.
I'm sorry you had to go.
And I'm sorry I forgot your voice.

Anonymous

Dear [Redacted],

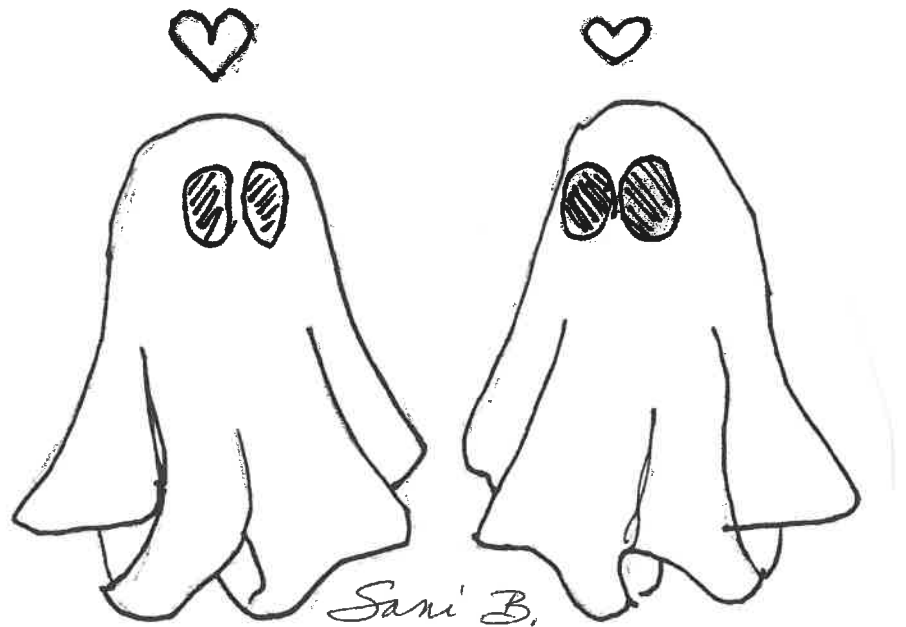
What would I do without you?
For I was in the sky falling,
But for you, I flew.
Though the task seemed daunting.

You're someone I never knew I needed
until you landed in my life,
and all that sadness depleted,
much like all the strife.

And somehow, not surprisingly,
You've grown to be so important to me.

The air is sweeter when you're around.
The sun, the stars, the moon grow brighter.
Your voice, simply my favorite sound,
I hear, I see, I touch you, and my heart feels lighter.

By C



I am grateful for the 17 years I've lived so far.

I am grateful for the friends I've made since coming to America

I am grateful for my teachers so far in school all great after all.

I am grateful for my parent and how they helped guide me to the right path.

I am grateful for Alejandro and Mckenna my two great friends in school right now.

I am grateful to Ms Doyle for always giving the class a good life.

I am grateful to Mr Oldach who helped me find my new path in computer science

I am grateful to my brother who always keeps on smiling my face and chilling with me.

I am grateful to my old friend in Jamaica for making me a better person.

I am grateful to my good online friend who plays games with me and talks to me all the time.

I am thankful to my Family for the great Christmas parties we would have.

I am thankful to my Aunt for always giving us good food when we stop by.

I am thankful to my Older Cousin who deals with all my teasing and teases back.

I am thankful for my sister and how great she is to me even if we didn't grow up together

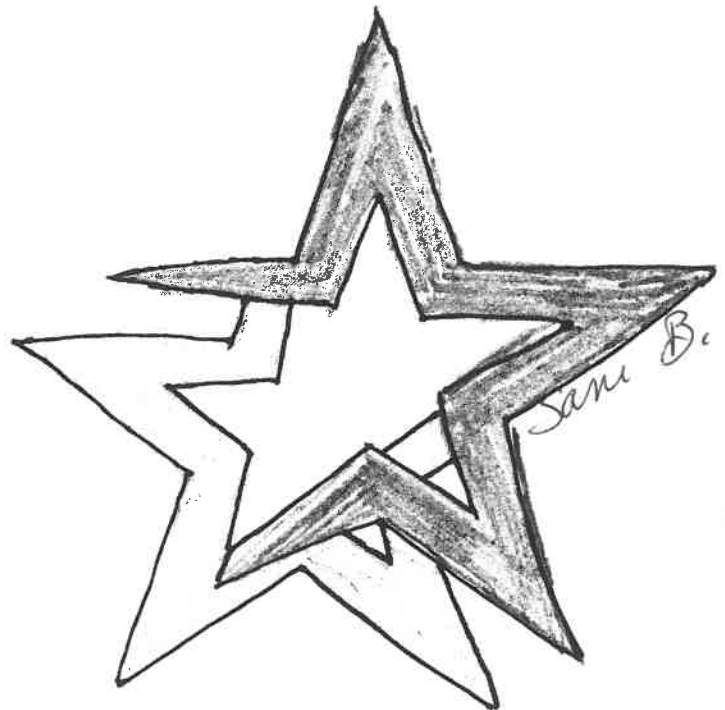
I appreciate my laptop and the games I have played as they taught me patience and hard work.

Finally, I appreciate everything and everyone who has been in my life so far.

Who cared for me or even hated me for pushing me to excel at my current level.]

Thank you for making me better I appreciate this life.

Amaud Pryce



All of it:

These halls are filled

The laughter, the sobs

And the mask of a smile

Stella Seufert

"You know the big Astor house? It's so rich that they've never heard a mouse-"

"Lies! No matter the wealth, everyone experiences those shrill cries," my friend let off a shiver. "I ask, how would *you* know this, Oscar? The Astors don't go to your church, although they have a perfectly functioning car."

"They've never heard a mouse, it's true! Have I not told the news to you?" I leaned towards him, and he wrinkled his nose.

"News?"

"Quite the news! Yes, yes, news, indeed! Well, a bit more of a tale that shall amuse.

"I was offered by the Astors a great deal of money to become their private pastor. I know, it's quite a strange request, but my curiosity and greed overcame me. And when I arrived, it was clear their home was quite a show! A chef here, a nanny there! So much activity, you could barely think! The amount of servants and chandeliers made their wealth clear. But soon I wonder, 'Why would they need a pastor if they don't wish to go to church? Then they showed me the most phenomenal thing, dear Sawyer! You won't believe me when I tell you! Ghosts! Real ones, and quite a few!'"

"Ghosts? My friend, these are not good boasts," Sawyer sneered while he leaned back in his small wooden chair.

"Have faith, my friend! They weren't like Casper or something like that, yes they were fascinating! No matter what you think, this story is most definitely not at its end.

"It was in their living room, and oh, how beautiful it was! A stone fireplace with a huge christmas tree nearby, couches fit for royalty, oh! You would never suspect the nearby doom." My friend's eyebrows raised in interest.

"You have heard of the Nutcracker, correct?" Sawyer nodded slowly. "Well this house had many! Big and tall, yes, one of them was nearly my size! To accompany them, they said they had put up mouse soldiers as well, but recently, they disappeared, and the Astors began to hear strange sounds throughout the house. They insisted that these mouse soldiers had been possessed, and that I should partake in an exorcism! Hah! Yes, this is when the Astors lost my respect.

"Yet there I was, in the attic, being told to face the mouse king. At first, I was suspicious, but then I was faced with the craziest thing! A three foot tall rat king toy, facing me with a sword. Of course, I had no idea how to do an exorcism, so what I did was simple. I took a bat from a nearby box, and hit it hard in the face!"

"You hit the possessed rat doll in the face?" My friend rolled his eyes. "And what, did you travel to space?"

"No, silly!" I nudged Sawyer. "It flew out the window, though! Then it fell in the snow far below, with its head fallen off!"

"So this was your Christmas Eve, eh?"

"Yes! And I would trade it for Christmas dinner any day!"

by Lily Williams

Thank you, but who are you?

Thank you for the months in my life even if only a few more
Thank you for what I survived
Thank you for my doctor, too
Thank you for my body even when it's bruised
Thank you for my friends and family for all of the memories along the way
And also all my medicine that keeps me on my feet
Thank you for only one machine that squeezes till it's done
Thank you for my parents who guide me
Thank you for your hand to hold
Thank you for my lungs
Thank you for success and all you've done
Thank you to my nurses who helped me stay strong
Thank you for all you do even when I'm wrong.

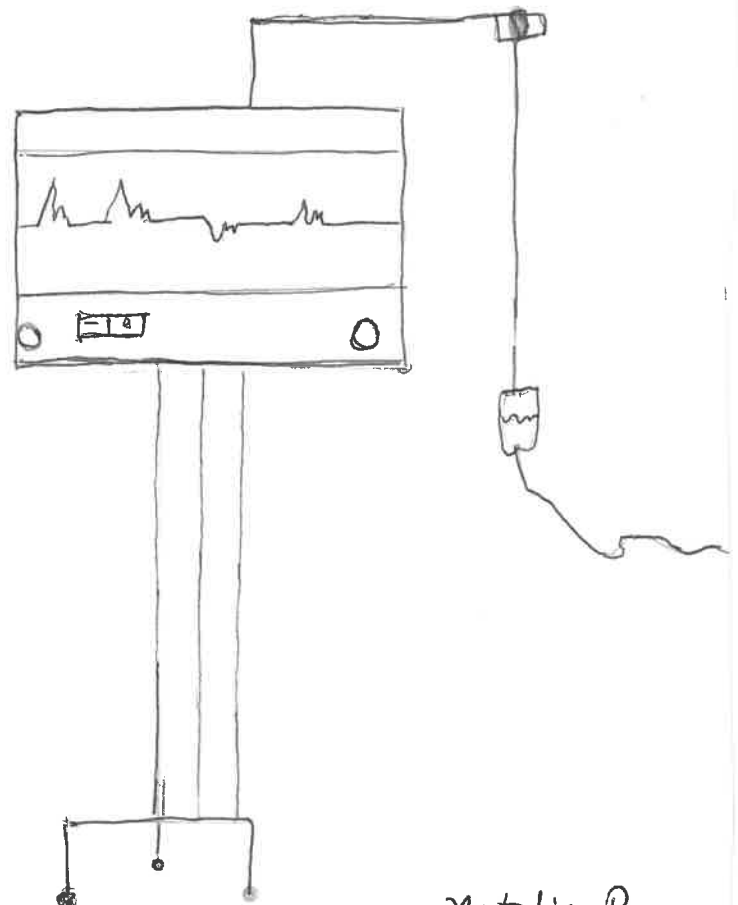
I only have one question and it is who are you?
You hurt and healed me, but I guess that's just what you do.

Bailey Forrest

Standing Love

I don't wanna sleep
Don't wanna dream
If i'm not with you, in the morning
When I arise.
Within sickness, ailment, and all
Here i'll stand
Proud, with you in hand.
Wind will push the trees,
But not me;
Because here i stand,
Feet in the sand,
With you.

-Savannah Eldredge



Natalia R.

Thankful • Jason Elhilow & Caroline Vitolo

In the fight to keep me humble,
I look toward why I'm grateful.
In the fight to keep me straight,
I pray to see what is there in front of me.

I've got a family, one that wraps me
With love.
Thankful for the wall they've provided,
And the structure for me to rise above.

Speaking of structure, I've got a home.
Not just a *house*, a home.
Where great comfort and immense gratitude
Reign supreme.

To my friends, I am oh so indebted.
Their kindness, their patience,
Their understanding
Trumping my bitter ego.

Then there's the more superficial things:
The sci-fi films that make my mind roar,

And music,
The pop bops that fill me with joy.

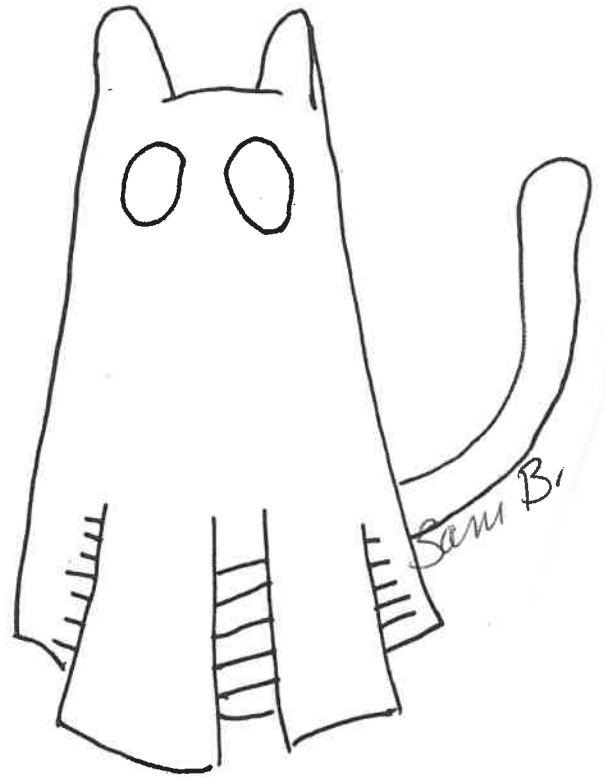
Food's good too.
Warm apple cider
With caramel sauce.
Yum!

But most of all,
I am grateful for my community;
For those who have lifted me up when I'm down,
And know what I can become.



Sadness

Early Morning Wakeups
Getting bullied at school
The word "No"
Homework
Rainy days when I can't go outside
When I'm alone and I just want to cry
Betrayal
Politics
When no one likes my Instagram post
Watching a plane crash on the news
A movie when a dog dies
Mondays
Burnt toast
One bowling pin away from a strike
Being home sick when my friends are having fun
Rain in the summer
Cold showers
Sunburns
A "perfect" photo
When my dog is too tired to play with me
The color blue
Death
And the Dying



How the Circus Came to an End

Marek Puntý

There once was a Nation of serpents and sheep,
Which was given a choice between power and peace.
Some time passed since then, but the choice came again..
Their leader then took to the paper and pen,
To say that the fool had been made of his men,
To slay that cruel liar that lay in his bed,
That sits on his shoulder and speaks in his head.
Our world went up in flames before his was torn down,
His eyes saw no peace yet his head was held proud,
For so many tall tales had been told to the crowd,
That his lips were stained red with the paint of a clown.
Jude Hutchings-McMahon

A Call for Peace
By Stella Seufert
Winning poem, High School category
Cape Cod Veterans for Peace Annual Poetry Contest

It's time for peace
The thing of which we know the least
But no, you aren't biased
And you really do care
Yes you care
You care about yourself
And you put others' feelings on the shelf
While you focus on your reputation
And ignore what's going on in our nation
And you say "Black Lives Matter!"
But you don't really care
And the thing I cannot bear
Is the hypocrisy
In our so-called democracy
And you say you're Pro-Life
Which sounds so kind
But whose life are you for?
The girl terrified to her core
Or those little cells and nothing more
Yes, it's time for peace
Before more are deceased
It's time to see
The people we need to be
Time to truly feel
That all really are equal
We need to stop the hate
And clean the slate
Of the bigotry
And gain the ability
To see
The people we need to be
Let's join together
And change our ways for the better
It is time to find the calm
And stop with all the bombs
Let us be kind
So then we can find
The people we need to be
Because it's past time for peace

What's on the Broken Game Shelf?

Battleship, that we all have a love-hate relationship with.

Connect-4, I always hated it when I was younger because she and my brother would play without me.

Clue, we only got it because it's a really good movie.

Yahtzee, where I got beginner's luck on the guest room bed with her.

Jenga, I hate loud noises, so pretty much never played.

Candy Land, I'm always green.

Scrabble, she was an English teacher, so she always beats me.

Checkers, got it for Christmas a few years ago, but it's still in the wrapping.

Dominos, her favorite.

Five Crowns, my brother's old friend Brij gave it to us when we lived in Vermont.

Star Wars Uno, it's the thought that counts.

Spot it, I think the last time we played that was...?

Hang-man (broken), my love for it never ended though.

Chess, I taught everyone how to play.

Bananagrams, our favorite.

Charades, I used to ask to play it every time, but I don't really care about it anymore.

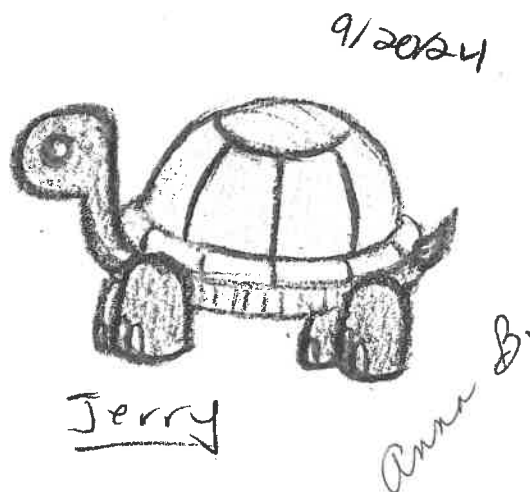
A painting of a cranberry bog, I made it at an art fair with my mom, hers is much better.

A painting of bubbles, I made at least twenty of these during Covid.

A weird orange painting, I made it when I was five, nobody knows what I was thinking when I made it.

A plastic goat, it makes noise, well, used to, I threw it at my brother and the head came off.

Anonymous



Peace Starts With Us

Davion Dawkins

World Peace.

A tantalizing thought, one so simple yet so far.

A world split in 7, each with different norms.

Yet one thing that unites us all is rage.

In a single world that encapsulates life.

We can tear each other to shreds at a moment's notice.

Haiti, Ukraine, Gaza.

Lives innocently lost, consumed and in danger by wolverines, covered in political blood.

Red and Blue, the colors of America, plaster our minds with bias residue.

Instead of uniting to stop tragedy, bias consumes us.

Who's right?

Who's wrong?

Guns ablaze, words pierce hearts, venom covers the Earth like thick smoke.

The venom comes from US, man itself.

Mankind causes violence to it, with its gluttonous greed and need for power

In a world split so many ways, peace is an infinite constant.

Free of charge, free of stress, it gives you riches to be kind.

Instead of charred bodies being put in the mind of soldiers,

Thoughts of delicacy and blossoming words fill their minds.

In a world where peace is small and hate overarches,

Politics being devil's advocate,

Peace will always be the winner.

No matter how long or how centered it is, peace always wins in the end.

But only if we start it first.

Peace starts with US.

No machine can replicate kindness.

Natural and delicious, firing shots that warm the heart instead of killing it.

World Peace will only start when WE start.

Peace starts with US.

Closure:

We were the best of friends
For so long
But now, what we had is gone
And you just stood by
Just stood by and let our friendship die
But you didn't *just* let it die
You didn't *just* watch this burn to the ground
No, you lit the match
And you let me try with everything I had
You let me fill the buckets
You watched me get the hose
But these flames were too hot
And although I tried
You're the reason this died
I really tried
I tried so hard
But you just had better cards
And when I had two you had four
And you just walked out the door
Walked away from everything we had

Even when you were done
And you had your fun
I was still there
You left me under the stairs
But you were in the front of my line
Always on my mind
Someone brought up May
And everyone knew what I would say
"That's *her* birthday!"

And though you've turned off the radio
I'm still stuck on this station
I had my own fruitless mission
That did not match your ambition
But that's okay
I wouldn't force you to stay
You got it your way



I hope you're glad
I swear i'm not mad
I hope you're not feeling blue
I hope all your dreams come true
I hope you know I'd only ever wish the best for you

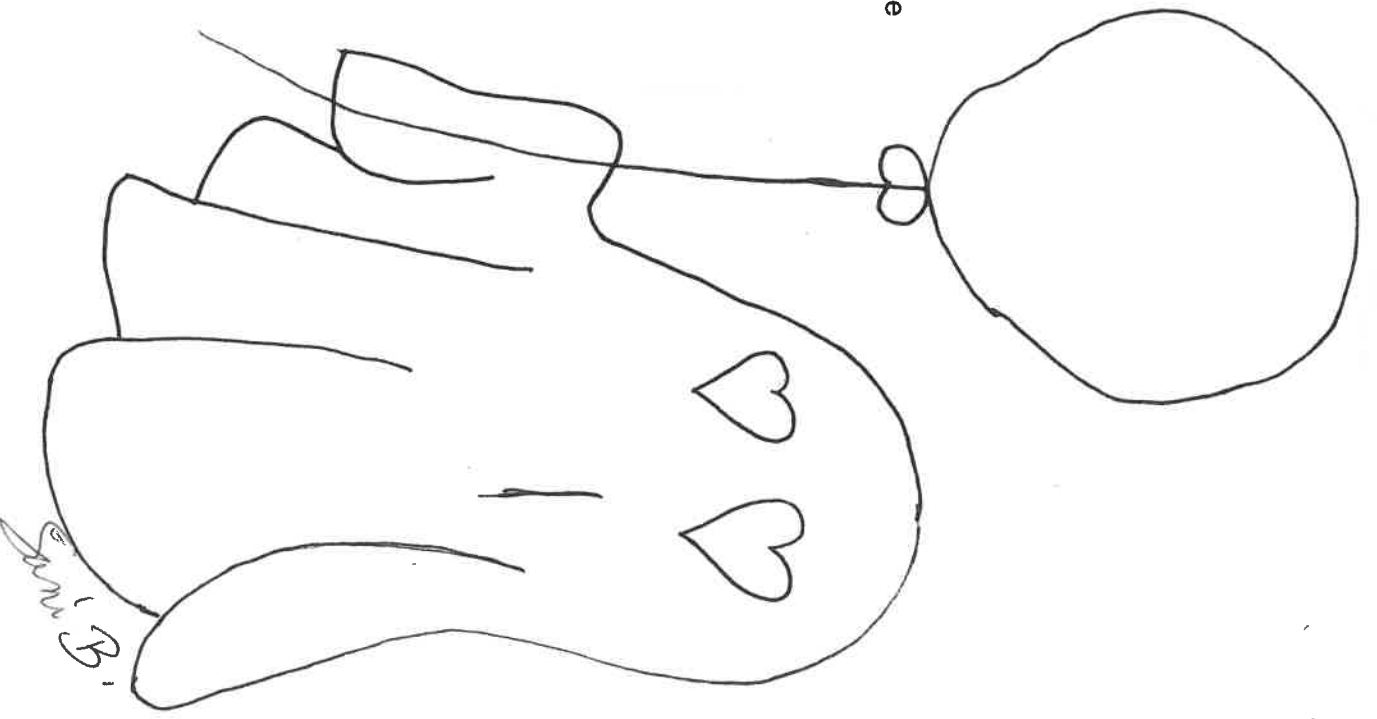
Here we are
At least I know were still looking at the same stars
I just wish my grief could be ours
So we ran out of time
And you are not forever mine
And I'm not yours
You've shut and locked all our doors
But I'll look for that window
Where maybe,
Another
Will show

Stella Seufert

Small Things Equal Big Joy

I'm grateful for the smaller things
Everyone knows about the bigger things
Everyone is grateful for them
But just think about the tiny moments
Those tiny joys
I'm grateful for the warm cups of hot chocolate they give at church
I'm grateful for the sleepy cozy feeling you get when you are tired and comfortable
I'm grateful for silence
I'm grateful for the feeling of excitement when you are having a bad day
I'm grateful for the joy of fresh snow when the world is a winter wonderland
I'm grateful for good hair days
I'm grateful for jolly Christmas songs that lift my mood
I'm grateful for the smell of a cozy candle and for its kind light
I'm grateful for strangers
I'm grateful for the feeling of checking things off a To-Do list
I'm grateful for the exhaustion after a good run or work out
I'm grateful for morning birds
I'm grateful for the sound of my shoes on a quiet sidewalk
I'm grateful for the gentle cold breeze on a hot summer day
I'm grateful for challenges
I'm grateful for the peace of watching clouds float across the sky
I'm grateful for the way my sport can distract me from a bad day
I'm grateful for crunchy leaves
I'm grateful for the sound of rain on a roof
And for the feeling of finishing homework
Most of all I am grateful for Jesus because he is the one that gave me all of this
There's a million things to be grateful for but just being grateful is a gift

Sofia Duguay



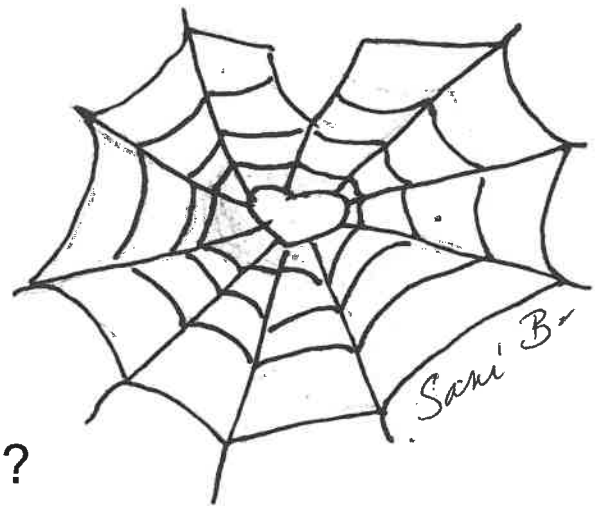
Interior Monologue by Stella Seufert

Inspired by Heart Like A Truck-Lainey Wilson:

Savannah	16 year old girl	Caucasian	Louisiana	Big dreams
Bi	Kind	Ditzy/Clumsy	Good at math and art	
Not popular or outcast	Long curly hair	Listens while draws	Morning person	

I hum absently as *Heart Like a Truck* plays, and I continue to sketch. The familiar rhythmic drumming in my ears gives me a kind of peace. This is my favorite drawing song, no, it's just my favorite song. Lainey Wilson is just so talented; I wish I had a voice like her. Ok keep drawing. I'm almost done and this assignment is due in two days. I need to focus, ok. I got a heart like a truck. It's been drug through the mud. Runs on dreams and gasoline...oh shoot, I need to fill up my car; I'm almost out of gas, and I was planning on driving to the beach tomorrow morning to watch the sunrise. Ok, this is the last class of the day so I can get gas on the way home. Ok, keep drawing. Who is this kid next to me? Why is his elbow touching me? Ever heard of personal space? Focus on the drawing, Sav, just *focus*. But how can I with this kid's ARM TOUCHING ME? Oh lordy. Ok, just sing along and shift away from the kid. Shine it up, rev it up, and let it run, yeah. It gets a high rid- oh my god his foot is bouncing the table. His foot is bouncing the table, his FOOT is BOUNCING the TABLE. I can't mess this drawing up but if I move it will seem rude. Who cares? This is the final project and I just *can't* fail it! I reach in my bag for a different pencil and knock over my water bottle. Nooooooooooooo! I catch it just in time but my heart is pounding against my chest. Beating so hard I'm sure the annoying kid next to me can see it, or hear it. No, there's no way he can hear it over his weird death metal playing in his ears, but I can hear it through his headphones. Everything about this kid is getting on my nerves.

Ok just breathe. Take a deep breath, Savannah, good. I should return to my drawing but this kid can't stop bouncing his leg! The whole table is rattling, and there's no way I can risk messing this up with only two days left. I've spent countless hours perfecting this, and if it gets ruined by this kid's elbow or his leg I swear to god I'm gonna KIL- no, Sav. Breathe in. Deeper. Good. Okay, pack up, you can draw tomorrow at sunrise. That will be nice; just sit at a picnic table as the sun rises over the ocean and finish you're drawing. Ok, great, finally the end of the day. Just grab your stuff and get out. Oh... does this kid have eyes? He just smashed right into me. Ok, be polite and apologize. Was that a death stare? Ok, buddy, chill out a little. I made it through another art class next to the annoying-intense-dude who always listens to death metal. Nicely done, Savannah.



Who do I want to be?

By Maeve Willow Maguire

Who do I want to be?
I know I want to go down history.
I don't want to be forgotten.
And be blown away like cotton.
For they say you die twice.
Once when you lay with the wild rice.
The second when your family sells your memory for half-price.
Only so many people have been remembered for centuries.
Ingrained in people's memories.
I hope you can think about this with me.
Who do I want to be?

1st Ring Of Grateful "My Body"

To be born into a world filled with challenges and tests
To be able to listen to the sounds of the wind and music
To breathe in air and tasteful smells
To see the beautiful colors and styles of the world
To walk on the earth filled with mountains and hills
To witness evolution and the structures of nature
To live, to listen, to walk, to breathe, to blink, to see, to speak, to write

Kyra Howard

2nd Ring of Grateful "My People"

My Mom to talk to about anything, my drama, my feelings, my rollercoasters. To have much in common, to listen to her and to talk with her.

Thank you

My Dad to hang with and be my weird, crazy self. To have much in common, to laugh, to cry, as we watch movies and shows.

Thank you

My Grandmother to teach on how to love, to care, to listen, to be myself. To have much in common, to loving each other, to caring about each other.

Thank you

P.S I miss you

My Uncles to show me many. One shows the tasteful cooking of culinary. Another shows the inside and outs of technology. The last shows the colors and styles of arts of the world. To have much in common to include such things in my life.

Thank you

My sister to love with. To not see all the times, however teaches me the heart grows fonder of distance. You can still love even if from different places. To have much in common, to love each other from distance.

Thank you

My brothers to care with. To talk to about my habits and hobbies. To hold their hand with them, even though we are older. One an artist to talk to and be creative with. The other to show me, and exploring on adventures. To not be afraid. To have much in common, of caring about our hobbies and habits.

Thank you

To talk with, to hang with, to teach with, to show with, to love with, to care with.

Thank you Sincerely,

Kyra Howard

3rd Ring of Grateful "Myself"

Those Lessons and Gratefulness have shaped me.
It has sparked my inspiration, my creativity to use in today's world
I am grateful to have the creative mindset
The music to listen to and to create inspires me
I am grateful to have musical ears to listen with
Though I struggle with reading, I still continue with my eyes to learn
I am grateful to be able to read others' stories
Cooking is a big hobby for me— to be able to use art and eat it too
I am grateful to have the skills to cook
Art can be in many styles like fashion, wearing art
I am grateful to be able to be a fashionista

I am grateful to be who I am and still develop to this day.

Kyra Howard

4th Ring of Grateful "World"

Not even to develop to this day, but the World

Nature is beautiful
Just like the tide and sea

The ocean waves
With the bays

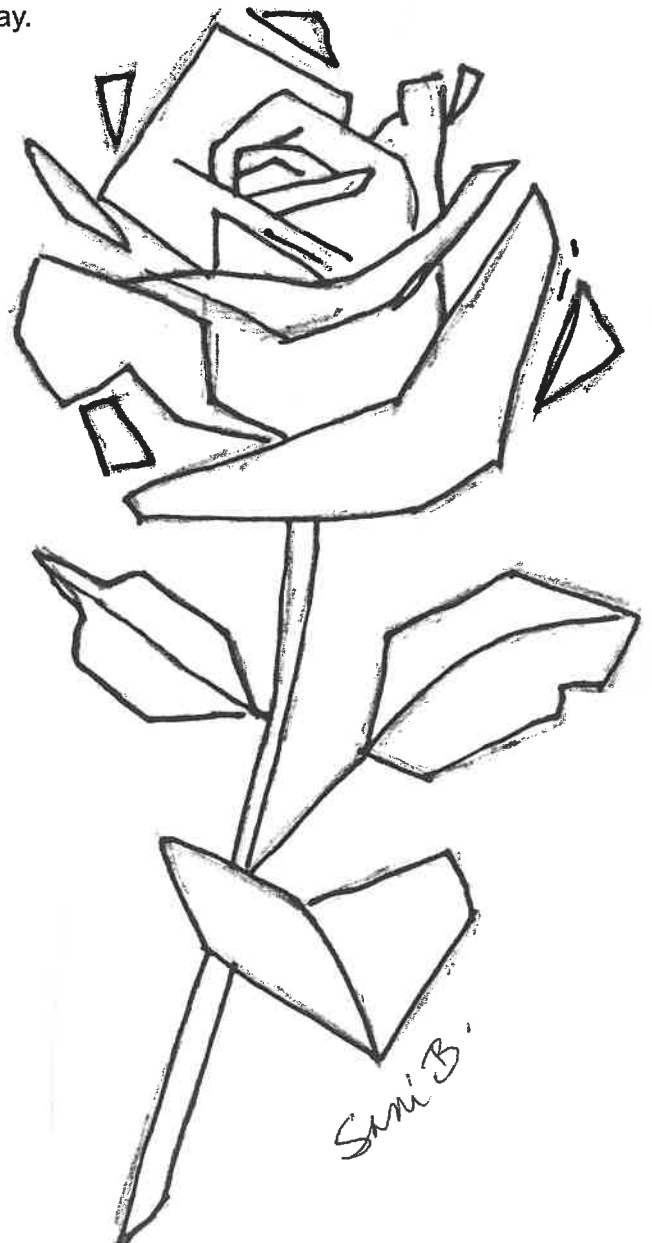
The sky cries
With tears of rain

After the tears
The sky appears

The stars bloom
The stars shine
The moon grows
The moon binds
With the ocean, tides, and sky

I am grateful to be in a world of color and nature.

Kyra Howard



A beautiful but strange girl named Ivory lives in the little pink house in the woods; she has lived there all her life. As time passed, her parents grew old, and her siblings matured and went their own ways. But Ivory stayed home to care for her parents, as she would feel terrible leaving them. So she stayed with them to keep them company and help them. One day, while walking to the market to buy food, she came upon a handsome boy. She could not take her eyes off him and did not see the puddle she was walking towards. She fell, but the boy caught her. She was embarrassed so she hurried to the market. On the way home, she sadly did not see the boy anywhere. When she arrived home, her mother asked why she was sad, and Ivory explained. Her mother comforted her and made Ivory's favorite dessert, lava cake. Soon, it was time for bed and to say goodnight.

When Ivory woke up, she made breakfast for herself and her parents. Once everyone was done eating, it was time for Ivory to sell her cows at the market in the village. Ivory saw the boy again, and he smiled at her, so she stopped to talk to him. Sooner or later, they were having lunch together, and Ivory brought the boy home to meet her parents. She and the boy, Richard, soon started planning their wedding, but it came time for Richard to go home, and Ivory was so sad. Richard returned the next day and told Ivory that if she wanted to get married, she would have to go with him to his home, far away over the mountains. Which meant Ivory would have to leave her parents. Richard told Ivory that he was the King's son.

Ivory was sad because a prince would have to marry a princess. Ivory told Richard that he couldn't marry her because she was not a princess, but Richard said it didn't matter because she was the most beautiful girl in the world. Ivory was more in love with Richard than before. Richard told Ivory that her parents could live in the castle with them. Ivory was so happy and sad because she would miss the house she had lived in. However, since Ivory got to bring her parents with her and get married to Richard, she didn't mind.

Simona Chilikova

"A List of My Favorite Things"

by Corinne Pina

My cat.

Your smile.

Figure skating on Wednesdays.

Alice in Wonderland (the Disney version).

Your eyes.

Turtles.

Walking on a path through the woods.

The look on your face when you listen to me yap about something stupid.

The color pink.

Romantic songs.

When you get excited to tell me something.

Alice in Wonderland (the Lewis Carol version).

Gnomes.

You.

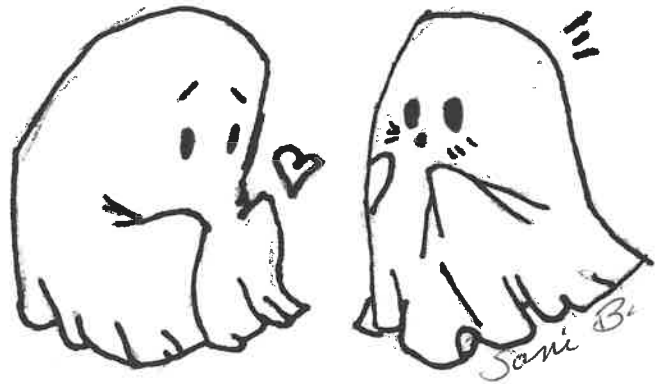
Your smile.

Your eyes.

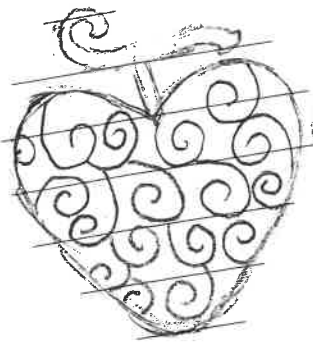
Your face.

Your voice.

You.



I want to have chocolate in Dubai



I want to have chocolate in Dubai.

I want to go to Hawaii and drink coconut water on the beach while watching the sunset.

I want to go to Jamaica and eat some beef patties.

I want to go to Paris and find love.

I want to go to New York and meet my idol.

I want to go to Texas and find the core of nature.

I want to be anywhere I can reach for my dreams.

Camoya McGregor

I live as a marshmallow man. Okay, look, I know it sounds crazy, but I am made of marshmallow. I can't go near fire because I melt, my skin droops and starts charring. That means that I have to suffer through the cold winters without fire. That also means that I have to stay inside all summer. The heat is unbearable during those months. Anytime I step outside in the summer I feel disgusted in my own skin. I feel my face melt, the marshmallow I'm made of slowly dripping to the ground. The trees around my house melt as well, but unlike me, their guts spill all over the ground. I'm lucky enough to be able to take shelter, but they can't. Anyway, I can go out in the winter. I can feel the cold snow against my skin, unlike fire, they cool me down. The chilly air goes in my mouth and out my nose. Though, when I breathe out through my mouth I can see my breath. Making a slight fog in the usual serenity of the quiet air. Winter is my favorite time of year. I love the snow, the cold, the frozen lake, the trees not melting, me not melting, everything about winter I absolutely adore. I love it so much. I can live without worrying about the fact that I could die any second. Of course, it has its downsides, but what doesn't have downsides? Of course, the cold was horrible and the fact I couldn't warm up near the fire was worse. However, there were ways to solve that. I could always bundle up in clothes, but there was a downside to that too. I can't go out to buy clothes, and also can't find any clothes that fit. Not surprisingly, finding clothes that fit a body shaped like a marshmallow, especially for winter, is extremely difficult. Nothing fits, like at all. It's annoying, really. Life goes on, nothing I can do to fix it. Suffering through the seasons is something I need to go through alone.

Carys McCarty

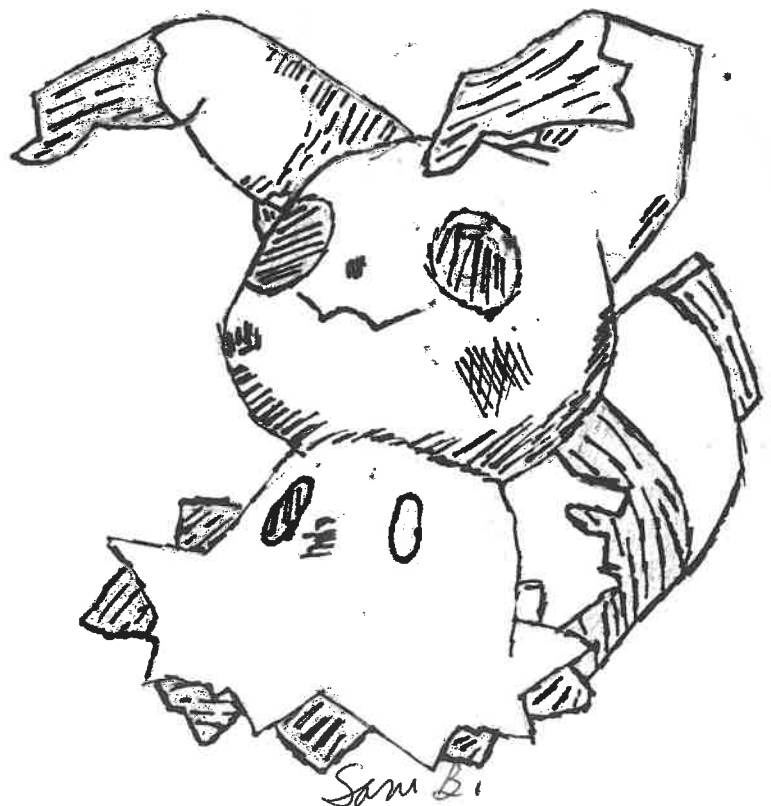
3AM

As I woke up in my bed
I realized the time that the time was
Was in fact
The dreaded 3 AM
In my horror,
I ran to the fridge for my stummy wummy
And then to my TV for my favorite 3AM feature
But I was beaten to the remote by a mysterious figure
When the figure was done shoving its face in MY food
And being such a big back fatty
It said to my horror
“I am not the 3AM feature, but the 3 AM CREATURE”
And to my sadness
The creature released its domain expansion
Stripping me of all my food until I died of whatsappdog.

Davion Dawkins

There once was a red banana
Who lived in a tiny cabana
Everyone speculated
Pointed and hated
At the banana named Hannah

-Stella Seufert



How many times have I longed for that? How many day dreams have been dreamt about this? Two happy, normal, parents who love each-other. How long has this been the dream, the wonder, the wish? Instead what I have is what I'm stuck with. My parents separated for 11 years but they have disconnected for far more. I move from house to house forming a double life. With a different house comes a different personality, a different version of me that could've been. A pawn in a parental hate has made me lose sight of what's true, what's real. Whose story is to be believed, who do I like? Which one is trying to help and which one is lying? The blazing fire that has seared through our "family" is burning down my sense of self. I see that fire behind the eyes of each parent in a burning hate, a blazing fury that only grows, and consumes the potential of peace with it.

Anonymous

Adoration

The world showers love upon me. I found you, who sent my heartbeat up into the clouds, then falling down at me. Your intuitive mind knows every way to clear the grime that resided within me. You give me an apple, explaining every way that I will love it.

How I will love its sweetness.

How I will adore its colors.

How lovely it will be for me to experience this thing you gave to me.

And that is what I love most about you. You narrate the world in onomatopoeias, making up fun words to make me smile, like magna, or supercalifragilistic. You see the world as its whole. Every ant you avoid stepping on, every bee you say sorry to after it has stung your arm, every cloud in the sky, and every drop of rain. You close your eyes to listen to the downpour and stop to smell the flowers in the forest. You giggle like a child when I stumble over words like "Mississippi".

I love how careful you are with everything. You mother the world's diversity without choosing favorites; appreciating every person's perspective, every melon on its vine, every combination of words spoken to you; every pickle in the jar. You see nothing as quintessential as the whole world is perfect to you.

That is why you are my world.

You love the world.

So you might as well have the tiniest part of it love you back, in their entirety.

Lillian Williams

Seven Months, Seven Lines

Month One.

I can't get up today, maybe I'll try again tomorrow.

Month Two.

Who am I kidding, I can do anything if I work hard enough!

Month Three.

Life is fine, actually; I can live with this.

Month Four.

What's the point of anything; we're all gonna die anyways?!

Month Five.

I'm not good enough for anybody, why stay?

Month Six.

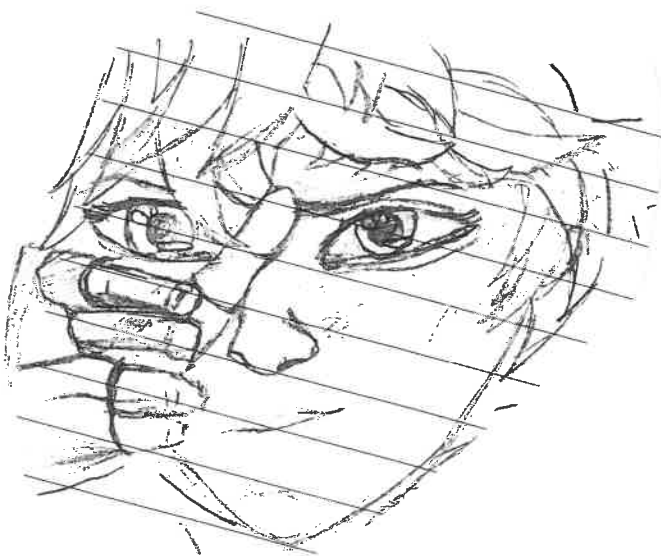
... What's going on?!

Month Seven.

I'm fine, but why is it hard to wake up?

My life, with bipolar one.

Anonymous.



When I was younger

When I was younger

I didn't have the fear

My dad wasn't the way he is now

He was more loving less angry

He had some love for me

or at least that's what I'm told

Should I believe it? Do I believe it?

Why should I? Why would I?

I can't trust that. No one can.

I don't remember those times

Not a single loving memory

Not one that lasts long enough

To hold onto to believe.

When I was younger

I didn't know the hate

I didn't know what he had done

Not until I was older, not until now.

He's not the him the little me knew

when I was younger.

Chloe Ryder

There's a place in Chatham called Sylvan Gardens. It's a flower garden between Black pond and Route 28. There was a time that I took a walk, after I had slept over my buddy's house in Chatham. Let's just say I was feeling wise, so I walked all the way to White pond. I took a boat across the pond tracked through someone's yard to get into the back of the gardens. I took my shoes off and felt the damp mulch under my feet. I could smell the hydrangeas, the fresh grass, and, in the distance, cedar. I walked all the way around the back of the trail and stood overlooking the pond. The Moss between my toes felt like a chilled blanket. In the distance I could see two swans, a couple, swimming in a smaller body of water adjacent to White pond. They seemed so perfect to me, like all the dirt that made up the ground, if poured over them, could not ever taint the milk white of the feathers.

I just stood there, for nearly an hour, just staring. It was as if I had lacked a certain stillness, and I was drinking my fill. I would be able to carry the stillness in me, like some eternal shield that protected me from all the world's wants.

That evening, filled with stillness, and a gratitude for God's art, I walked over to the cedar trees, where I planned on sleeping. The smell was intoxicating, like the sweet sweet smoke of a fire. It was as if the trees were feeding my senses, like an offering. All around me there were tropical plants that flourished in the sun, shining the greens, browns, yellows, reds, and brilliant violets under the hot August sun. I slept there in a tree, more relaxed than I think I've ever been. As I closed my eyes I could feel the pressure of the rope that tied me to the bough, could hear the croaking of frogs way down at the pond, and close to me, chirping crickets. I thought about the swans and their perfection and where I may find that ever again. The smell of cedar filled my nose, quenching my senses, and I drifted off into a deep sleep.

Ben McGrath



I was down to my last 5 dollars, and looking at this thing right here, I found me a burnt little penny, with a scratch on Lincoln's ear. This little itty bitty mini penny, was such a stroke of luck, I was now up to 5 and a cent, the world stood here awestruck. I skipped and I hopped and I laughed with joy, and saw a big machine, it was a souvenir penny press sittin' here nicely, and so I said "Oh boy!" This little bitty lucky penny, should be special, made here true. So this little itty bitty mini penny, with a scratch on Lincoln's ear, should be pressed with this press into a little bitty ladybug penny, to bring me double luck. Now I was down to my last 4 dollars and my lucky little penny pressed by a press into a little bitty ladybug to bring me double luck.

Emma Eldredge

The Kalos Regional Championship

Aedan Leahey

This is a Pokémon story, if there are phrases you don't know feel free to look them up! :)

"Aaaaand there goes Gyarados!" the announcer yelled into his mic. "What an exhilarating finish! Both contestants are now onto their final Pokémon- I wonder what Reiner has in store."

"Don't get your hopes up, kid," Reiner shouted across the course, rocky field. "This isn't over just yet!"

Reiner was a fairly young man, just 25, with bulky, confident eyes and a cocky disposition. His hair was a dishevelled bright blonde with tan highlights from the dust that had blown into it. He had on a tan colored tank top as well as thick cargo pants that cut off where his hefty work boots started. A shiver ran down Finn's back as Reiner drew Gyarados back into his Pokeball, and began to reach for Finn's final obstacle. Finn was a 17-year-old kid-prodigy in the art of Pokémon training who had been sweeping the Kalos region, collecting gym badges like baseball cards, and leaving no stone unturned. He had mid-length black hair, dishevelled and down to his shoulders, as well as a black beaded necklace tucked into his Black Flag shirt- one of his favorite bands. Finn also brought his guitar, resting across his back in its casual black case, with a small, portable amp in his back pocket. While he was known by fans as intimidating, strong, and loud, he seemed quite introverted and nervous, especially about this battle, facing the Kalos Region Champion. If he wins, *he* becomes the champion, and therefore the best Pokémon Trainer in his country.

As Reiner searched his bag, Finn's Toxtricity looked back at him with a confident smirk. Toxtricity is a bipedal Electric and Poison type, and those qualities are very clear in its purple, salamander-like skin and its bright yellow underbelly. Toxtricity also had small silver earrings, pierced on huge spikes protruding from the sides of its head. Its bright yellow energy mohawk, stretching past its neck, twitched and shocked as Toxtricity put his thumb up and stuck his tongue out. It then shifted its thumb downward as it exclaimed a powerful "Bwaaagh- hyah hyah hyah!" at its trainer in approval.

As Toxtricity turned around, Reiner's final Pokémon was introduced into battle- a particularly tall Garchomp. Garchomp is an extremely strong Ground and Dragon-type Pokémon, with a flat navy-blue and red-orange colorway, with small yellow highlights. It resembles a bipedal hammerhead shark, with sharp teeth in its mouth and an even sharper gaze. The hammerhead qualities are prevalent in appendages protruding from the sides of its head, symmetrical and resembling jet or plane engines. While its arms are skinny, it has short wings protruding out from them, as well as shiny spikes on the ends of the arms. Garchomps are notorious for shining in speed, strength, endurance, and nearly all metrics on what a powerful Pokémon looks like. Garchomp also had a large, black eye patch over its left eye, and scarring that was visible under it.

Finn's heart sank to his stomach. Ground-type moves do double the damage to both Electric *and* Poison-type Pokémon, meaning any Ground-type moves will do 4x damage to Toxtricity. Finn and Toxtricity had been through a whole lot since the both of them were children, yet this may be their toughest challenge yet.

The speakers in the stadium boomed. "A Garchomp! I knew it, Garchomp is Reiner's star Pokémon, one of the strongest Kalos has ever seen!"

Toxtricity certainly didn't waver, though. It shot out before Finn could even direct it and went for a direct attack. "Toxtricity- wait!" Finn shouted, to no avail. "Gggg-wah!-" Toxtricity used Sludge Bomb, a Poison-type move, where its user spits a huge glob of gooey, poisonous substance. While it got a direct hit on Garchomp, it was

wiped off with ease. “Garchomp- Dragon Claw.” Reiner directed. Garchomp turned to direct its own attack, which was when Toxtricity noticed the eyepatch. Garchomp, silently and effortlessly, sent a powerful jab towards Toxtricity using its claw. Toxtricity could not react in time and received another direct hit, getting knocked back a few feet, noticeably hurt.

Finn called out, “Toxtricity, you can’t win on your own, listen!” It shrugged off Finn’s plea. “Hmmf,” it went as it sent itself out for another attack. “HA-” Reiner giggled. “Your own Pokémon won’t even obey you? How’d you even make it this far, kiddo?” It began running straight towards Garchomp, “Oh, do be merciful, Garchomp, use Dragon Claw again!” This time, Toxtricity would use Garchomp’s blind spot to its advantage. As Garchomp went to hit Toxtricity, it swerved right, jumped, and used Boomburst before it could react. It reached its head back far and came back with a powerful blast of sound right by Garchomp’s head. It shook, staggered, and fell to its knees as the harmful sound waves interrupted its abilities. Toxtricity let out a taunting “Gyah-ha-ha!” in its deep, scratchy voice and backed up for distance.

The announcer began yelling into its mic in a surprised tone, astonished at Toxtricity. “Wooooaaah there! Toxtricity is on fire! He seems to be on a riding high right now after all of those battles it just won! I can’t say the same for Finn, though; his own Pokémon won’t even listen to him!” The announcer took a swig from his drink. “I wonder what’ll become of those two!”

Reiner was astonished. He whistled to Garchomp and flashed him a ring on his finger, with an odd-looking gemstone. Garchomp gave its trainer an assuring look back and removed its eyepatch, revealing a large pearl in its eye socket. It was mostly navy blue, with red highlights, and seemed ingrained in there. It looked as though it had grown in there, as if Garchomp’s body considered it natural. “I see now, even alone, your Toxtricity is a force to be reckoned with. It deserves the full force of our power!”

Reiner motioned to Garchomp and protruded his ring finger into the air. Both Reiner’s ring and Garchomp’s gemstone began to shine so brightly that they blinded the crowd momentarily. Suddenly, a large veil formed around Garchomp and encased it tightly; it seemed to harden and become spherical. Seconds later, a large claw broke through the top. It looked like the end of a large scythe, mainly red-orange in color, with navy blue highlights. The veil itself began to crack as the end of the scythe began to slowly try and break itself out of its prison, and soon enough, it did.

As the creature inside its shell hatched, the shell disintegrated into the air and blew away. The newborn monster that crept from its shell looked like Garchomp, but much scarier, and with several defining features. It had a much stronger jawline, as well as a much longer forehead, protruding outwards in the same way as its jawline. Its arms became large, long, scythe-like appendages, protruding from newly defined and angular shoulders, imposing confidence and arrogance. On top of that, sharp, intimidating rows of teeth outlined its underbelly and down to its knees. By all means, this wasn’t just a new Garchomp, but a new animal altogether.

“Behold, audience,” the announcer screamed. “Garchomp’s true form- Mega Garchomp!”

Mega evolution is a vaguely new phenomenon that’s popped up in the Kalos region in recent years, still in its infancy at the time of this fight. Both the Pokémon and its trainer must hold special evolutionary stones that contain immense energy, and a rare event is triggered by the strengthening of the bond between Pokémon and trainer. The trainer lends their partner their power through a transfer between their stones, causing an overflow of energy into a different physical form. This physical form also seems to release a new personality within the Pokémon, much of the true nature of its trainer.

Only certain Pokémon have Mega evolution forms, and Garchomp is one of them.

Without a second for Finn to even process what he was seeing, Garchomp stuck its scythes into the ground; his body then started visibly pulsating in waves from its torso into the scythes. Soon enough, the waves travelled from the scythes into the ground under the field, and the earth started to vibrate and shake, very noticeably. Finn could feel these oscillations and knew what was coming. Earthquake. A Ground-type move that deals devastating damage to all enemies nearby. He couldn't even imagine what kind of damage this would do to Toxtricity, but from a *Mega* Pokemon?...

"Toxtricity! Run as far as-" Toxtricity was way ahead of him. Still, this effort would be in vain. Quickly, the earth beneath them would go from vibrating to shaking to breaking apart and violently throwing itself every which way. Toxtricity fell between two large jagged rocks and was squished between them, inflicting huge damage before it got itself out.

Toxtricity crawled out between the rock crevices, and looked visibly defeated. Blood was gushing from its mouth onto the purple protrusions on its chest, and its pupils were empty with hopelessness. Even the huge glowing mohawk on its head was dimming to a faint hue.

"Toxtricity..." Finn trembled under his breath and stumbled towards Toxtricity just as it was towards him. Seeing his partner in such a state took him back to when they were children again, when they were both beaten, desperate, and weak. Finn's father abused him, and he'd often pick cruel and unusual punishments if he spoke back. One of these times Finn was cast out of the house on a particularly cold winter night, and there was nothing to keep him warm besides his own sweater. Toxtricity, not yet evolved and still a Toxel, appeared from the night and found Finn trembling under an old bag of trash. He bore the same empty eyes that Toxtricity now had. Toxel was only the size of a kitten and mainly purple, with a large bulb of white electricity donned on its forehead, that was starting to dim from malnourishment and the extreme cold it was freezing in. It also needed a warm place to stay for the night, so it took refuge in Finn's arms. The electric surge on its forehead reignited, and kept the both of them warm for the night as both of their shivering quickly stopped.

When the both of them woke up in the morning, Finn thanked Toxel for the night and began to meander off to his house. Suddenly he heard a faint "Gggggyaaah." that turned into a loud "Bwaaah!"- and when Finn turned around, he saw Toxel offering up a gift. A small, yellow guitar pick from the trash that they slept in. Finn's eyes lit up with a passion that he would never lose, from a feeling he had never felt before. Unconditional love. From that day on, Finn and his new partner were inseparable. They played together, learned together, lived together, and (literally) evolved together. Them and their mother escaped their father from the Galar region to the Kalos region, in search for a new purpose and outlook on life. When a neighbor told them about the gym challenge, Finn and Toxtricity thought it would be fun, but they never thought it would lead them to this point. Needless to say, their bond as Pokemon and trainer has grown immensely in the past months- it was never as strong as it was in this very battle!

"Toxtricity... Toxtricity!" Toxtricity stopped its limping as Finn dashed towards it. "Look at me man- you gotta listen to me! Look at what just happened, we have to work as a team to-" Finn stuttered and suddenly reached into his shirt and took out his necklace, with a familiar yellow guitar pick threaded through. He said as he flashed it in Toxtricity's face: "I know you remember what this means to us, don't you? We promised we'd never hurt like this ever again! I..." Finn needed a second, he was tearing up. "I don't want you to end up dead!"

Toxtricity's eyes flickered back on in shock and realization. It looked down at the necklace, and so fast it made Finn jump- Toxtricity snapped the necklace from his throat and held it for a moment, staring at it. All of those memories flooded back. Ones of pain, hardship, friendship, and most of all triumph.

With the same hand it was holding the guitar pick, Toxtricity opened its arm for a wide dap up, an offering Finn swiftly accepted. Upon their contact, a humongous explosion of electricity happened right where they stood.

“WOAAAH- my god, what’s going on?” The explosion made the announcer jump, and he knocked over his coffee on his desk. “Wha- was that Finn? Are they okay?” The surge of power continued on. “Folks we may have to invite a Pikachu in here to contain this, whatev-” The surge grew to a sudden stop, and out arose two new warriors ready for the battle of their lives.

Toxtricity was born anew. Replacing its yellow electricity mohawk were bright yellow energy liberty spikes, with bolts of electricity coursing between each one. Smaller spikes were also featured on its, now very sharp, shoulder blades as well as down its back and tail; the end of the tail forming into a huge glowing morning star that shook with excitement. Its eyes were later focused and shone with a purple glint that could make a grown man shiver. Circulating around those eyes were massive yellow eye bags, that looked a lot like ghoulish make up. Most notably, however, was its newly appointed weapon. An electric guitar made of purely electricity. It was very misshapen, and the body had the general look of a flying v. Connecting said guitar to its right cheek was a vivid yellow cable, and from inside of its mouth sprung a thick, pink tongue secreting some kind of purple, poisonous saliva dripping onto the battlefield.

While Finn never changed physically, his mental fortitude had never been as strong as today. He knew he’d let nothing get in the way of his path to victory. For this victory meant much more to him than it ever could for Reiner.

When they separated their hands, they both laughed with excitement and awe at Toxtricity’s new look, and Finn took his pick back and took his own guitar out of its case. It had a beautiful red swamp ash design and black highlights that fit Finn perfectly. He then took his amp out of his back pocket and plugged it into his guitar; the small black box looked a little out of place, but was convenient enough to bring into a Pokémon battle.

“Ha ha!” Reiner laughed from the opposite end of the field, not at him, but more for him. “Now that’s what I’m talking about kid! I want everything you’ve got- *and nothing less!*”

Reiner’s words fired the both of them up. “*Last Caress?*” Finn asked. They looked at each other, shared a synchronized nod, and got ready for action.

“*I got something to say!-*” As Finn screamed those first words out, soundwaves released from Toxtricity’s mouth that sent a thunderclap of song throughout the stadium. The power from Toxtricity’s guitar flowed through the cable into its mouth, that amplified the sound to a state where it could break solid concrete. Garchomp was even sent off its feet and fell down just off of that first guitar note. Most peculiar however, was that it sounded like Finn voice was being amplified too.

“*I killed a baby today, and it- doesn’t matter much to me- as long as it’s dead!*” As the song continued it got much quicker and the key became very fast paced, Reiner and Garchomp could barely comprehend what was happening. That was scary enough, but what was worse was that Toxtricity seemed to be approaching.

“*I got something to say!*” Finn continued. Garchomp was having a tough time staying upright, amongst the force exerting from its foe, and was having to rely on digging the sharp teeth on its knees into the ground. All the while Toxtricity was walking towards it, menacingly and dripping its gross poisonous spit from its limp tongue hanging from its mouth.

"I screwed your mother today, and it- doesn't matter much to me- as long as she spreads!" "Garchomp! Use Earthquake to break off a chunk of the battlefield, and use it to form a wall in front of yourself!" It obeyed its partner's command, and Toxtricity had to cautiously step back to prevent damage. "Hey, try and keep using it- keep it away!"

The whole crowd marvelled at Finn and Toxtricity. They'd never seen anything like it before, not just this phenomenon, but two that were so well in sync. Their fingers glided across their strings at the same time and they downpicked, at impressive speeds, at the same time too. The *exact* same time. It was uncanny and eerie, but in a spectacular and downright jawdropping way. Everyone was cheering as loud as they could, but still they were no match for the supersonic sounds blasting from this duo.

The song continued for another minute or so. *"Sweet lovely death, I'm waiting for your breath, come sweet death- one last caress!"* Toxtricity had Garchomp backed into the stadium wall, pressing it into it firmly with just the soundwaves emanating from Toxtricity. They were barely a foot away, like they fought before, but this time it was Toxtricity sitting comfortably on top. *"Sweet lovely death, I'm waiting for your breath, come sweet death..."* There's a stopping point in the song, just for five seconds. The guitar slows down to a complete stop for effect, the perfect time to strike. "GO- DRAGON CLAW!" Garchomp raised its claw above its head to strike, but as it came down Toxtricity had a surprise for him. It simply stood there, gathered a wad of saliva in its mouth, and shot a spitball right into Garchomp's *good* eye.

"GGWAAAGGH" Garchomp stifled and swiped its claw right past its target.

Finn saw that, and put some real passion into his next lyric- *"OOOOONNE LAAAST CAAAREESS!"*

The song finished moments later, it's a short one. By the end of it, Garchomp had reverted to its base form and was knocked out cold, slumped inside a large divot in the solid cement walls. Reiner had a curious look on his face. One of immense awe, but even more so, disappointment.

"Oh my god! It's over with! What an upset! What an exciting battle! What a great performance! Wha- *cough*- sorry, I'm rambling folks, but in the end, Finnegan Bryar has won the Kalos Championship Battle! Bryar is the Champion of the Kalos region!" Finn, clasping his necklace back around his neck, took a look at the crowd. They were all cheering, screaming, giggling, hooting, hollering- you name it. He'd never been praised by more than his Pokémon partner and his mother before, this was a whole new feeling. At first it felt uncomfortable, all of those eyes on him. He questioned if his shoes were untied, or if his hunchback was showing, or if his five-o-clock shadow was coming in. But then he saw his partner running towards him, with a big jagged smile and its arms wide open, and everything felt easy again.

"Gggguuaaahh!" Toxtricity let out a loud cry as it picked Finn up off his feet in a warm hug. It put him down, and they stared at each other for a moment, before they both fell down in exhaustion.

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