
EYE OF THE STORM
LITERARY JOURNAL
PUEBLO WEST HIGH SCHOOL
2018-2019

"Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any."

- Orson Scott

Every year, the collective minds of Pueblo West High study to become better students. Every year, the bodies tire themselves to become better athletes. Each year, stories pass and flow through the river of time without expression, without ever meeting the light of the sun.

This unexpressed creativity runs rampant, like electricity in a circuit, among teenagers. Inevitably, the charge from this mass of raw, untouched, potential spills out onto paper. The words and the images paint pictures of their own. The contents of the Eye of the Storm contain the hearts and souls of the individuals walking down the PWHS halls. In past years, some of these stories would have been excluded.

I have decided not to exclude any submitted material for the 2019 edition of the Eye of the Storm. The full contemplations of our community should be celebrated and available to the public so that the extent of our experience as students can be seen in both the fantasy and the truths imbued into the works following this statement.

As a staff, the Eye of the Storm would like to thank every author who submitted their imaginations. Personally, I would like to thank my fellow editors for aiding in the creation of this amalgamation of ideas. To our sponsor, Ms. Woelfel, you have never failed to inspire a student into pursuing stories all their own.

Please enjoy this edition,

Isabell Osborne

Credits

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Love Language – Julian Beai

The wind chilled me, sank into my bones. Or maybe it was the sight of him. The nervousness in his body, and where he stood. Location scared me the most. My legs were weak, and the entirety of the situation didn't help me. After all it was just us, up on that roof - that dull, brown sectioned roof that topped off a seven-story apartment complex that sat in the middle of downtown Chicago. It was eerily silent, just the calm feeling of a gentle wind that caressed each of our bodies. It wasn't violent, or particularly noticeable, but it was the only thing that connected me to him. The warm sun blotted out the cold December day. It was closer to us, that elevated surface. That bright gleaming ball of fire ~~that~~ seemed to show us to the world, but the world was silent. It didn't want to see us, or maybe just him. It was isolating to think about. The man across from me was Holly; that's what is said on his lapel. First or last name was not important. Nor was it particularly what I cared about at the time. But it gave the figure in front of me some humanity. His grey suit seemed to distinguish his aspect in terms of labor: He was the denizen of a lower class, a dullard whose only purpose was to produce. I tried not to verbalize the criticisms, after all, those seemed to compel him here anyway.

"Hey!" I called out, wistfully. I tried to convey several emotions at once, trying to seem helpful and hopeful, to try and lead him off that ledge. He didn't react to me or to my call, he simply stood with his back to me as he intently looked at something in his hands. I never saw what it was.

"How did you get up here?"

He seemed very calm, inquisitive. His body opened up towards me, but he continued to look at down at something.

"I'm Darcey, I work maintenance here!"

The wind seemed to whisper past us, like a child who accompanies a parent to a restaurant, or like a restless soul, a ghost that seemingly also was tied to us, never being able to let go or say goodbye.

"What do you do?" My voice carried on the wind like a messenger, reaching his ears. That's when he turned around, so his back was to the world, like their back was to him.

"Hello Mr. Darcey!"

He flashed a smile.

"I work at the Selling and Gould Law Firm, where I'm a top attorney!"

A paper flapped in his hands as he shook. This man had either lost everything or was [Add w] recently fired, or maybe it was a letter of inheritance, a hospital bill, a promotion. It could have been blank for all I know. I stepped closer and took off my coat, gesturing to him to take it. His hand shot up and waved at me as to communicate he did not want it. I laid it down in front of us seemingly as a token of peace.

"I-I wanted to always be an attorney, I was never courageous enough for it!" He chuckled. I felt I needed to compliment him at least. It took no small feat for him to get to where he was. He had courage, that it was evident. I mean, why else would he have chosen the roof?

"Well Mr. Darcey, I just wanted to help the world!" I could see him finally ~~feel relaxed~~, relax; his shoulders weren't as tight. He looked me in the eyes and I tried to convey to him I wanted to help. I *wanted* to help. Even if I had to jump to save him. [??] My life had never been anything what it had been cracked up to be. It was filled with disappointment, it was filled with

bills, it was filled with the uncertainty of what I would eat or if I would eat. [Nice asyndeton...w list]

"The problem was that the world didn't want to help me!" I stepped closer to him. "I hear you, I know you." Even though we had never met or ~~that we had never~~ talked before this moment, there was an air that we had lived together our whole lives. We were humans, people. What are we if we are not there for others? What are we if we can drive others to such extenuating circumstances as this? [nice!]

"Mr. Darcey the world pushed me down and beat me until I had surrendered something I didn't have!"

"I would work my fingers to the bone and then I had to work some more!"

"Then you understand, Mr. Darcey?" I stepped closer. We were the same. Cogs in a machine that seemed to not need us. *What would I be without my job?* I knew the answer right away. *Happy.* We both stood, and at that point it didn't matter where we were standing, and it didn't matter who we were. It just mattered that we were here. Together. The sense of together that I don't think we had ever felt.

"I understand." Tears welled in my eyes.

"I understand what I never even thought about."

I thought about a sense of community that one feels when they are forced into a corner and the only thing they need is some connection. Holly wanted a connection and I was the only thing that could create that connection. He didn't want to jump, he just need someone. *Anyone.*

I stepped up. [this line should stand alone]

"The world's just a bastard, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is."

The wind was at both of our backs as we gazed now upon a place that didn't chew and spit out, it was a place that chewed and swallowed. It only catered to so few people that they would have to be psychopaths to find any solace or any joy. The world hated the workers. It hated the caring. It hated the weak and the young. Life was just cruel, waterboarding the piss out of us and we had to like it. I looked at Holly and thought about how he must have dealt with it for so long. He met my gaze.

"It all looks so beautiful up here."

"It does."

I took a deep breath in. Looking out into a destiny that never fully became realized. We both stepped off.



Chloee Norholm – Ram Scorpius

Convicted Hearts
Kalie Martinez

Two years long apart
and you're freer than I.
We've been lost far too long,
along too many times.
What have we become?
So far away
No longer loving
But still caring.

When you're gone,
My heart shatters
more.
I cherish the memories of our past
In times of sorrow,
that seem never ending.

Our Love,
is impossible to forget
or ignore.
Oh, I wish the space
between us
No longer existed.



Matthew McCaulley – Warm

King of Hearts
Joshua Cervantes

This game of cards has been fun, hasn't it? It's almost time to go now… Isn't it? For you are a Queen of Hearts, And you won from the start…

Your words guide me with a string, become corroded in my ears Our hours are fleeting, this was always my only fear. I misinterpret everything as an allegory somehow Everyone sees your toying. But I am far too committed now.

You tell me lies to keep me close, close enough to adore you in every way It is my choice though, and the King's Crown pulls either way. Like your hand of cards, you keep me to your chest But I can only play Hearts, so I put mine to your breast.

I am at no fault, but to one mistake Our promise of loyalty took nothing to break.

But one palm does not equate to a life of torture! All backed by your claim to be the victim, when my head is in disorder.

Won't you just tell me? Admit to your lies!
I'm sick of everyone buzzing around, telling us what we need to know.

What we wouldn't know– without the fault of those flies. Can't you just save me? Save me from my affection? Can't you just whisper I have no chance for redemption?

Whatever happened to rose skies falling at our feet... And whatever happened to our hands up each others' sleeves.. love…! Do you feel that I can see your soul? I know that you want our bond annulled.

Woe, the breeze that blew over our House We can finally show the world that we are no longer spouse and spouse We used to fit perfectly, much like a glove. But you are better suited for anything else... Goodbye my only love.

This game of cards was fun, wasn't it? It's time for us to leave now... Isn't it? For I am a King of Hearts... And I lost when I tore you apart.

Hidden – Julian Beai

The grandfather clock clicks eerily in the dark. It's my only solace, my only friend. I've done everything there is to do here, save from killing myself. I just don't have anything to do it with. There's just walls, four walls. There is no light, or sound. Just that clock. Ticking, ticking, ticking. It's not entirely bad, but it isn't ideal in here. Wherever that is. By my count now it's somewhere into the fifth day, but I'm not sure. I still am mentally in check, there's no hallucinations yet, so I haven't been in here that long…

I think it's been a week or maybe two, closer to two. As far as I know there is no bed, I don't think the room is big enough. The clock bellows still, but it's either midnight or noon. At least I think that's how it is. I only heard two chimes before… or maybe three. Maybe four. I pace in here. Only six, seven steps before I hit the wall. It's awful [awful or awfully?] lonely. I sometimes make out someone in the dark, but when I try and concentrate I lose the shape of it. I wish there was someone in here, someone that could talk to me. Maybe they could tell me where I am, maybe they could rescue me. At least that's what I hope…

God it's so cold in here, so barren. That clock is driving me mad, but I don't want to lose that sound. If I do i'll have to kill myself. [but how?] It ticks, but [and?] it bores into my head until it hurts. I wish I could stop it for a little bit or try and turn it down. It's still so cold. I dream that the clock talks to me and comforts me. She sings to me. She has a soft and sweet voice that quivers. It's so perfect, so beautiful. It's like walking on a warm day with cold wind; it makes you shiver. It's so loving, so caring. Her words are spoken so eloquently. Her voice is so beautiful it makes me cry….

It's silent. I wait with bated breath hoping the clock chimes. She won't. Of all people, why did she leave? The songs are gone, her voice is mute. Why have you taken her from me? She was as all I had left, all I needed. Her throat is cut, her words are empty. I can't stop shaking, but I can't tell if it's rage or pain; it's the most primitive form of emotion. Just a feeling. I pound at the walls. I slam my fists in in an effort to punch through this helish prison…

I keep slapping [maybe something closer to punching – like 'striking'?] my hands against the wall. My knuckles are raw, and the palms of my hands are sore. I scream and cry. The sound of my own voice is alien to me. It's so foreign. I try to talk to myself, to fill the silence that now permeates this small box. I try to remember my name, or where I was before this all happened, and I can't…

I'm hearing things. I sit in silence until I hear a knock: A small knock on the outside of the wall. I sit somewhere in the room and I hear it. Knock…. I knock back frantically. Time passes. Knock… I knock again against the wall. Knock…. I scream out to see If they can hear me. Tell them to knock twice in a row if they can hear me. Knock… What cruel joke is this? If there is someone out there, please help me! Knock… Please let me out! I want to be away from this place! I want someone to answer me please! PLEASE! I NEED HELP! Knock…



Ben Pascoe – Untitled



Ben Pascoe – Untitled

Devin Caldwell – Warrior

Warrior to body but friend to soul
When I see you my mind losses control
As time goes by I'm still stuck on you
Very much like hot glue
You've fought as many battles as I
Though you are sweet as chocolate pie
Much like that pie you have a rough exterior
But you are soft and kind on the interior
Through the battles I've fought and the tears I've shed
My heart only once hath ever bled
It was you of course who had me sold
It was you who could break the bold
You pulled me apart piece by piece
And broke me down to what's underneath
I love you more than words can explain
I know this may sound boring and plain
But dear God I hope we can be
So will you please just choose me?
rejection will cut me like a knife
I will lose my chance at a full life.



Jose Lopez – Gogeta

"C'è un brillo nel cielo"
Jack Shepard

I await the shine every starry night,
And by each dawn I cry goodbye,
For the light above fills my eyes.
Mankind sees the light that shines, as
It's signs always shown but never said.

You see the shine the stars will grant,
But to understand their words some can't
Use your heart, and not your ears,
For their whispers trail forge out tears

Each star may appear identical, hiding with distance,
Yet getting closer and sorting the sounds of care makes each unique,
There is a shine in the sky, one that shines the brightest,
Which almost glows hotter than the flames of life.
I may wait for the sky to display its grand canvas,
But I only look for my favorite star.
A star, to most, may look like any other,
Yet the words it speaks; the softest of them all.

I have never wanted that star to leave,
Yet every dawn, it waves goodbye,
And leaves me, wanting me to see it again.
How I wish to lay among the stars,
And to cradle her embers of passion,
How it would warm me up, save my mask,
Yet every morning, I wave goodbye.
I cannot stop the cycle of time,
I can't demand for their return,
But I may wait, and rest again,
And gaze upon a cherished smile.



Riley McAndrews – Winter Weather

Rain of Bullets
Jack Shepard

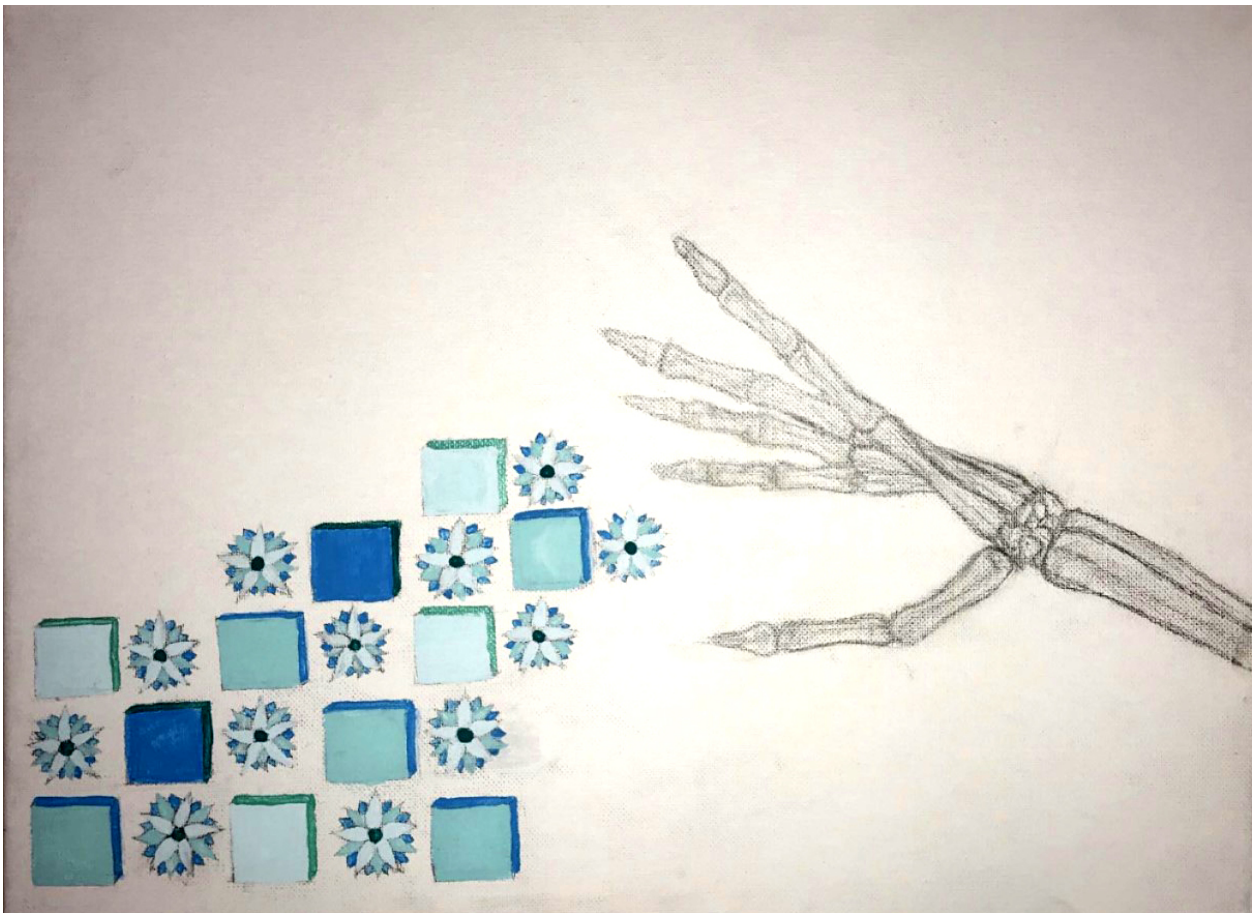
Once a time upon a meadow's field,
Where the sturdy trees acted as my shield.
The flowers roamed like water of a gentle stream,
Stendhal haven lost in the land of a dream.
The works of time held the lupines realm,
Until the blasts shattered every planted elm.

The meadow stays razed forever ravaged,
The enchantment now war-torn and scavenged.
Two armies clashed on war-damaged soil,
And the brutalized lilies now in turmoil,
As each one tortured by the soldier's boot,
Natures love decimated by hate and treachery.

The men who fight on the once alluring meadow,
Their sinister laughs casts a menacing shadow.
Why shall fate ruin a utopia which dismisses its end?
At each ridge of doubled hills, lies soldier of each side,

One is to be a shadow, causing destruction with each step,
The other, an angel, cast with blessed wings and a radiant halo.
To each their own, as enemies demand the opposition the threat,
Yet each foolish mortal man fails to realize the created woe.
Who deemed diplomacy to fail, and to arm they must?
The art of war speaks louder than the gift of language.

The fight is not saints against devils, or ally against enemy,
The men whom raises their arms against another,
To which they believe they are righteous saviors,
Are instead the fools whom doom the world,
And they are those whom spread chaos on my meadow.
I cry sanity's distance away, as the world I loved
Burns around me as the Marshal's command forward.
One side way win the battle and claim the pyrrhic win,
Yet the loss is one the greatest of them all,
The sacrifice; the meadow's fertile land,
And a fragment of me; my smile.



Bridget Winters – Happy Blue

Venezia
Jack Shepard

There lies an oasis upon the heavens,
Where the waters shimmer in silence,
Rowers ever so break the tranquility.
Paradise extends as far as ocean waves;
A haven's land it is to reside.

Children smile, for being blessed with safety,
Each man knows that generous aid is granted.
A land where wealth is common as stone,
And the gifted call humanity's home;
Only those of purest hearts smile there.

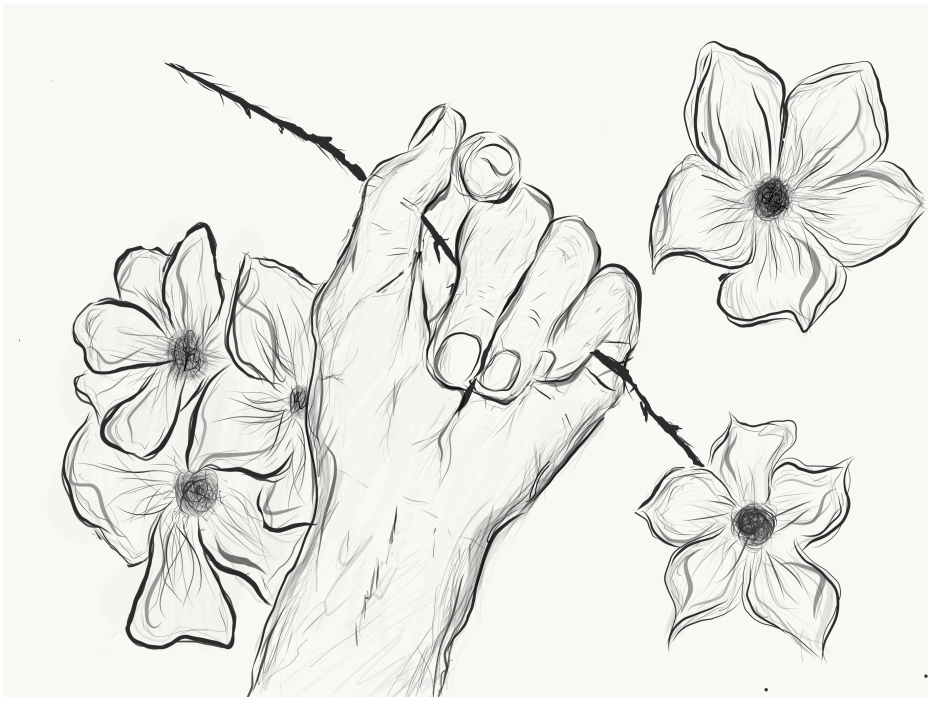
No land can compare; an unfair fight,
Peace and prosperity blankets them,
Just as the cerulean sky hugs our Earth.

"Chandelier"
Jack Shepard

There is a forgotten, decaying shop on the edge of town,
Its paint chipped away, and its crystal windows shattered.
It mattered to few its past, as it only cast a hated shadow.
The life it would flow, a torrential river of admiration,
Is only now a pitiful stream, a sign of it's frustration.
The clock ticks, and may it's hourglass grains reverse,
To traverse the divided lines, before this time's curse.

An oak door creeks open, the silence's wail broken.
With the former awoken, a praised man rises from his rest.
His gaze an ocean, as sapphire and azure engage in conflict,
Each inflict not hate but fight in vain in attempt to reunite.
A stranded survivor watches afar, his desperate cries for night.
For hope in sight, as the sea plays a harmonious symphony.

Taken center stage, the etched silver chandelier hangs,
Valued by the mass, with studded gems and desired gold,
So the question lays, to which has the uncontested love,
The item or the man?



Cenon Caramanzana – Cultivate your Garden

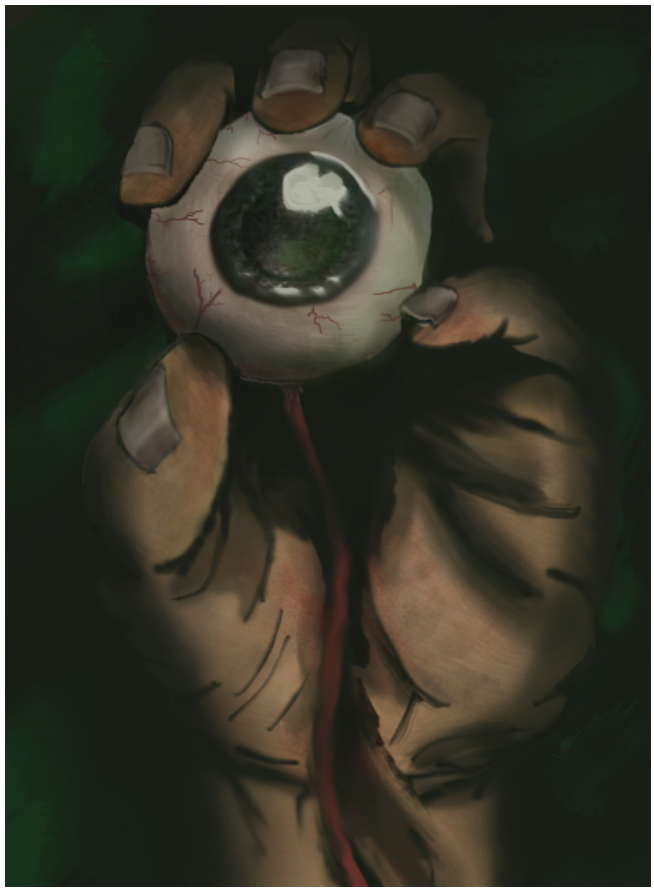
Jade Mitchell – Untitled

They don't know, and they won't know. Because I shut my mouth like a teenager keeps their bedroom door shut, and lock it, and it doesn't open again until it is absolutely necessary.

They don't need to know because when people know, things change. When things change I lose friends and I lose things that I value the most like trust and pure, healthy relationships. It is a situation in which human emotion comes into my life ripping things apart like a bullet tearing its way through a spider web. I would tell them my story, they are my friends and they probably deserve to know, but it's too long and agonizing to tell. It affects things more than it should.

Yeah, maybe it hurts to keep everything in while they judge you and say that you don't understand. The little whispers behind my back feels like a cold breath on my shoulder. When people don't know things, they assume things, we all do it each and every one of us. We have all judged and been judged whether we realize it or not. We are oblivious to the hidden features of each individual.

When it all adds up, I would rather they assume that I'm perfect and hide things from me than be smothered with sympathy and torn apart by chipped relationships. One day this giant ball of emotions that keeps building in my gut might explode like a grand finale at a fireworks show. But for now…I'll take it.



Alex Osborne – Eye

Untitled
Alex Osborne

To my dearest friend,

There is an anathema, created by my failings, buried in long forgotten ruins. A malfeasance that slowly putrefies like a cyst. The gateway into the unfathomable beckons out to the most devout of men, "We fear nothing," they promise, "We have been blessed by the light!" They journey forth, motivated by conventional lies birthed from spirits above; to raze any detestable obscenity that lurks within that accursed realm. However, the darkness corrupts like a disease, and its dread can find cracks in the sturdiest of armor; withering the nerves to an eradicated shell. Deep, in that sable depression, they will be enlightened of their ignorance. They are but moths chasing an indifferent fire. They will cry out, but their agonized screams will never escape that unforgiving stygian trench. Insanity is formless, but the pedestrian shape is none more contemptible as man's belief in a mythology of his own making. A cosmic view of subservience reinforced by absolute depravity leads to ignorant fanaticism, and a need to do fruitless things in the name of righteousness. The lamb would not be as content if it knew what the butchers had in store, and death lacks favoritism. This overwhelming chill has burrowed into my form and it forced me to take action. I have performed atrocities in the pursuit of avoiding our horrific fate.

Not so long ago, I acquisitioned an "excavation" beneath my hall. The dig uncovered primordial secrets long forgotten by humanity. In a few short months, deep within the pit, we

uncovered what one can only describe as a cesspool of nightmares, and some managed to claw out from time to time. The things… tease their way into public conspiracy. To make matters worse an especially superficial individual arrived in the town stead. I cared little at the time; he wasn't the first harebrained zealot in suspect of my recent scholarly funding or secretive endeavors, but this repulsive, toothless malefactor wielded an uncanny knowledge of my ambitions. He broadcasted publicly that I would eventually unleash darkness upon the world. It would become imperative that this gibbering madman was silenced, but doing so proved difficult. He endured the hemlock, the frequent beatings, and the swirling icy waters. How had he returned, time and time again, returning to stoke the fire in the townsfolk with his antiquated speculations and prophecies? Finally, resigned to his uncommon corporeal resilience, I lured him to the pit. We followed the trails of viscera, animal bodies ransacked, depleted to nothing but crying piles of rotting entrails. I had no way to relieve them from their suffering. The heaps of gore managed to murmur out incoherent warnings, yet he still persisted, so I led him deeper. The moaning carcasses quickly shifted from undead pigs and cattle to the ruddy, shifting flesh of unfortunate heroes. The claustrophobic stone walls wormed their way into darkness, opening into an expansive cavern. There, in the shadows, he saw a creature foreign to the natural world. Her gargantuan shape of sinew and tendrils twisted into vaguely humanoid forms, as she chewed on her latest "offering". The gruesome snap of breaking bone echoed throughout the depths. In that moment, she must have spoken to him in whatever alien language she harbored. When I explained to him that she and her writhing leftovers were but one chapter in my collection of perversions, his rebellious grimace quickly shifted into tears. Triumphantly, I watched as he clawed his eyes from their sockets and ran shrieking into the moonlit night.

Yet, simple minds are, by human nature, loquacious, and the denizens of the town stead were not exempt from this conformity. It was not long before the fanatic's gossip of my macabre practices began to fill common folklore. Confronted with the cumulatively depraved violation of public taboos, and the sudden disappearance of their once heralded prophet, my people's admiration shifted into ruthless ire. Vicious protests were demonstrated in the market streets. The passionate whispers of heresy roused unnecessarily violent action. The insubordinates held protest and a would-be supporter of mine was mutilated within a seething crowd of God-fearing men. To reassert my jurisdiction, I struck a deal with wild men: unscrupulous criminals proficient in the application of force. Tight-lipped and terrifying, these barbaric seafarers brought with them morbid implication. Eager to proceed with my research, I left a suggestion to the most imprudent of the newborn militia. Within that long night, compliance and order were restored, and the noisome population was culled to more manageable numbers. It was only when they returned to me with a mocking trophy, the perforated skull of a child with its eyes crushed into jelly, I realized my wrongs. My newly acquainted friends demanded lavish prizes, more than my conscience could possibly offer. I threw together a revel and ordered them to retire in the docks as I gathered their reward. While the greedy dogs slept off their intoxications, I hexed their anchor with every profane incantation I could muster, imbuing it with the weight of my ambition and the abhorrent whispers which it sheltered. At the midnight hour, the anchor pulled with supernatural hate, dragging ship and crew down into the depths. They must have cried out, but no sound escaped from the churning icy waters.

My flesh grows heavy and my body aches, the ceaseless flow of time and regret poison my livelihood. I am guilty of unforgivable sin and absolute evil. My near-sighted search for truth has unleashed horrors from a long-forgotten history. I feel the things deep within the pit whisper my name. In my accursed realm, that gateway into madness, they will break me.

With ironic pleasantries,

Eldrid Crovar



Johnathan – Jose Lopez

Mountains
Erica Leng

I stare out at the mountains, the great giants that have watched over me since my childhood, taking one moment to say one last thank you. I blink my eyes shut and take a deep breath, the cool mountain air cutting sharply into my lungs. I hold it in, feeling the air slowly warm in my lungs. I exhale a cloud of fog, the air leaving my chest like smoke out of the lungs of a dragon. I look down and shift my feet, the stone scraping lightly on my soles. I take another deep breath and look around, taking the time to memorize everything around me: each individual star in the night sky, the small moss sprouts covering each stone around me like a thick green blanket. I look down into the dark waters of the icy cold lake in front of me. I lean closer only to see my reflection, the perfect picture of a young girl contrasting against the dark light of the lake. My red hair forming a bright fiery halo around my pale freckled face. My green eyes flashing with push and pull of the tides. I bend down and stare deeper into the water taking a good look at the girl in front of me. I take a breath, stand up, and jump in.



Bridget Winters – Brain

The Candle
Jack Shepard

All they want, they want the same,
Our wants are what keep us sane.
A sentinel figure, distancing afar,
Yet still moving forward, a shadowy star.
Diminishing yet growing, a consuming furnace,
They warn away, with constant sternness.
What does it see, what does it want?
They all laugh, with immense vaunt.

When I travel on the cerulean sky, lit by little than low light.
When no steps encase the entrances of my soul,
A sensitive dim candle, it's in your sight,
Would you wave, and keep demanding more?
My desire, wanting change, is it right?
Would you wave, though it burns through my core?

Planned placement of pieces, like pangs, painfully precise reminders,

Denying the burning damage, or is it more?
Earthen jewels change my want, like God checking all.
A selfish want, a demanding want, is it right?
I flicker away; you extinguish me.
A candle wanting change.



Jose Lopez –Untitled

(Someone)
Mayson Mariano

When I lose my fight, I know somewhere I belong and will be alright
When I feel the blame, somewhere someone feels the very same
When I sit, knowing that lit my flame
When I feel dire I use this fire my future is looking bright
When I doubt I No longer feel my days filled with blight
When I think to sever the Happiness I never before dared to claim
When I think Somewhere out there someone knows my name
When I lay there all throuout the night
When I Think of that someone somewhere
When I keep my heart from tear
When I feel That someone fills my empty home
When I imagine Somewhere out there the world they roam
When I show that I really care
When I Meet them, shall I dare.

Tennis Practice
Annelise Lucero

My feet gently touched hers as we sat across from each other. Was I meant to feel so terrified? My fingers were burning against the small box in my pocket. Four thousand dollars for such a weightless piece of jewelry that felt as if it weighed ten pounds. “So how was your day, Sammy?”

“Huh?” I looked up at the woman I was meant to propose to in a matter of minutes. So caught up in the feeling of terror, I realized I hadn’t been listening to a word she has said. “Oh. It was—” Words escaped me. “Good,” I smile.

“Good,” She smiled back, there was clearly something else on her mind. “Sammy,” She grabbed my hand inching her hand up my arm with gentle strokes.

“Yes?” I swallow. Her face looked far from familiar. Blonde curls falling at the sides of her face the same way they did on any other day, but I realized I wasn’t used to seeing her this close. We were never together, she was constantly at work or constantly out with friends. But even further than that I realized that there was something different.

“What’s on your mind, dear?” She pulled her hand out from under mine.

“Nothing-nothing. Why?” I laughed nervously. Suddenly all her flaws became apparent. The way she called me *dear* was enough to set me slightly over. Mom said that was normal. *This isn’t a romance novel, Samuel. People get annoyed with their partner. Think more romantic comedy.*

“You just look pale, like you’ve seen a ghost or something,” She shrugged. I noticed her gaze falling away from mine. It may have been false hope but, I’d think she was just as nervous as I was.

“Oh…” I scratched the back of my neck. This was more like an awkward first date than the night of a proposal between a couple that had been together for years. I began to wish this were a romance novel as I tried to think of anyway to ‘pop the question’. Maybe it could end with us kissing in the rain if it went well.

“I’m sorry I got here so late,” She began to rub my hand once more. “I was out—” gaze down “––with my friends from work.” She licked her lips before smiling widely.

“Uh huh…” I nodded then sipped my water. “Well I brought you down here for a reason.” She nodded waiting for me to tell. “Karly…” I gulped. This was it. If she said no then I’d never see her again, but if she said yes… there would be no turning back… *ever.* “Will you marry me?” Was I supposed to get down on my knee? Would that have made me feel better?
She stared down at the box for a minute. Her expression unreadable, she looked just as horrified as I felt. She shook her head and smiled wide, “Oh Sammy!” She covered her mouth, “Oh!” She should have gotten an Oscar for her performance. Despite all of her *excitement* she never even touched the ring, or really gave an answer.

My arm got tired as I held the thousands of dollars in my hand. “Yes,” She smiled, still she didn’t look into my eyes.

“Are you sure?” I drew my brows together. I was unsure of why I asked that. Maybe I was subconsciously trying to ruin it. “That just all seemed… fake?” Her smile dropped along with her shoulders.

“Sammy…” She bit her lip. I prayed she would just look into my eyes so I could read what she was thinking. “I think you should know something… It feels wrong not telling you…” She opened her mouth just as her phone buzzed against the table. We both looked down at the illuminated screen. A text from Oliver. *Oliver?* “It’s my tennis coach…” She finally looked up at me. I could finally read her face. “We’ve been… seeing each other.”

Suddenly the room felt a lot bigger, and I felt dizzy. I snapped the box shut. She gasped silently, eyes wide. I finished off my glass, placed my credit card and ring on the table and left. “Sammy wait!” She called out to me. I didn’t turn back but I knew she was still in her seat eager to answer her text.

The cold city felt even colder that night. I wasn’t sure where to turn to. I wasn’t sure if I could return to the apartment me and Karly shared. Of all nights tonight would be the worst nights to be homeless.

I walked along the snow-covered sidewalks. Couples held each other’s arms. Girls tucked against their boyfriend’s chests; giggly with ruddy cheeks. I couldn’t even imagine Karly in such a love-sick state with me. But then I couldn’t say I had ever felt that way with her either.

I slipped into our dark and cold apartment. It was empty of any decorating, it was far from being a home. I quickly packed in fear Karly would return home. I wasn’t sure what I was doing, but the hurt and confusion bubbling up in my chest made all the decisions for me.

Like that I was out of the city on a cab and by morning I was at my parents’ house. The only place I could think of going. Sickly-sweet nostalgia hit me as I walked up the dark pathway. I really hadn’t visited as much as I should have.

I took a deep breath in going over all the ways I could have told them about me and Karly. Would it be wrong to tell them she had died? Finally, I knocked.

My mom answered and immediately I fell into her warm comforting arms. I could feel the heat of the house sting my face, a drastic change from the winter weather outside but boy was it relieving.

I couldn’t help but cry into her shoulder right there in the doorway, her hand running through my hair. I was thankful for the lack of questions. Maybe I can’t say I ever felt love for Karly as I should have, but I could say that the love I felt in that moment was enough to fill those loveless years. So, thank you, tennis coach Oliver.

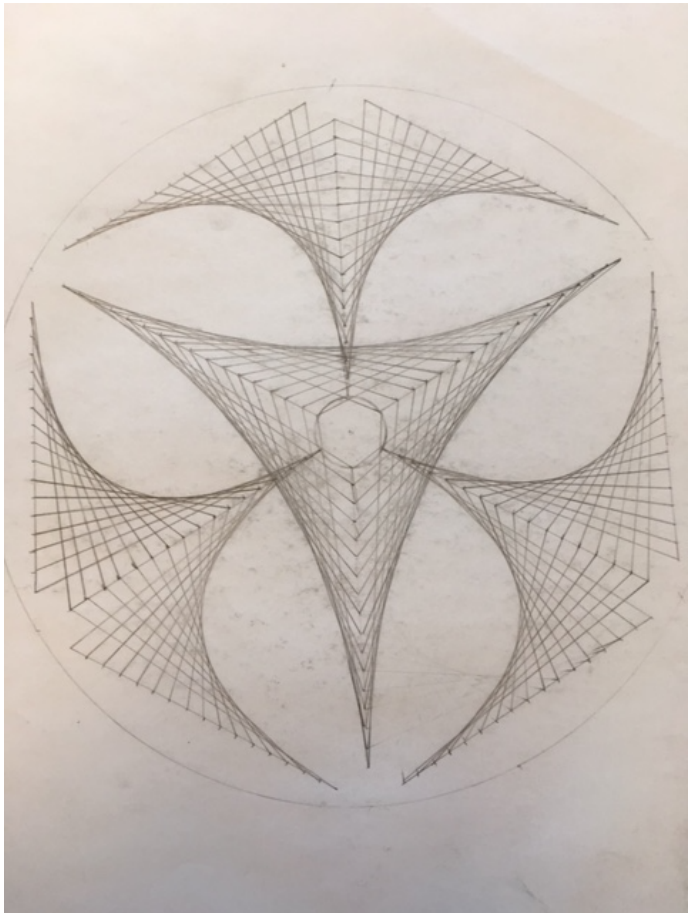


Riley McAndrews – Watermelon

Stranger Things
Jiorgianna McMurtry

It’s crazy, at least, to me. Sometimes people get on to other people about being shallow, but sometimes being shallow is a good thing. You know that question that people always ask, “What attracted you to me,’’ or “Why do you wanna be with me,” or some other variant of that question. Some people say, “‘Cuz you're cute,” or, “It started with your looks.” That’s good, to me at least. As long as they don't just say, “‘Cuz you're cute,” and they go further with their explanation, I'm fine. You see, it’s the small things that could lead to a relationship. Whether it be a friendship or an exciting and fun relationship. It could start with a friend request on social media, or a VERY BOLD decision to tell someone that you like them…. Via social media or in person, and the person actually reciprocating your feelings. See, some people think this is superficial thinking and that isn't true, in most situations anyways….

You see, other times, people don't ask. I think that's a problem, but that's just me. Sometimes, people choose to let "love" take its course. But, what really is love? Let me rephrase, what constitutes as love? If someone's feelings get hurt or someone gets humiliated, who's at fault? Talking in a traditional sense, is it the boy or the girl? Is it the girl's fault for letting him yell at her and hit on her, or is it HIS fault for touching her and humiliating her in the first place? Is it HER fault for sending nudes to him or is it HIS fault for spreading them around to his crew? Nobody really knows, or do we know and just not pay any mind to it? Are we just selfish to the thought of this and just turn a blind eye to it thinking, *this isn't me, so why is this my problem?* That's crazy too. It's insane, to me at least, how people can turn a blind eye to problems today. People only notice when it gets out that she had *"I miss you"* written on her palm in Sharpie and blood is streaming in between the letters. They only notice when he takes out his pain by doing drugs instead of homework and cutting classes. You see, we need to take action BEFORE all of that happens. We need to notice these people BEFORE the damage has set in and now she can't be saved because she is limp, in her closet, hiding from the rest of the world in the shadows that she called "safe". Now, his grades slipped below the standard and his scholarships got torn away from him. A heart has two halves, but there are also parts that help support it and keep it strong. If a part of a heart is damaged, the blood cannot flow properly.. Sometimes, people go to their friends to help inverse what the damaging party created. But sometimes, friends can't be the doctors we always want. A doctor can't properly trat a paitent without proper medicinal practices and tools. Teachers try to be doctors, freinds try to be doctors, but they fail to fully treat the disease plaguing teens today. Not every student wearing a hoodie is suicidal or depressed. See, in modern times, people don't care about others, we have the selfish kind of mentality that thinks *what's in it for me,* yet what we don't realize, is that kind of mentality is lethal and those are just few of many stranger things.

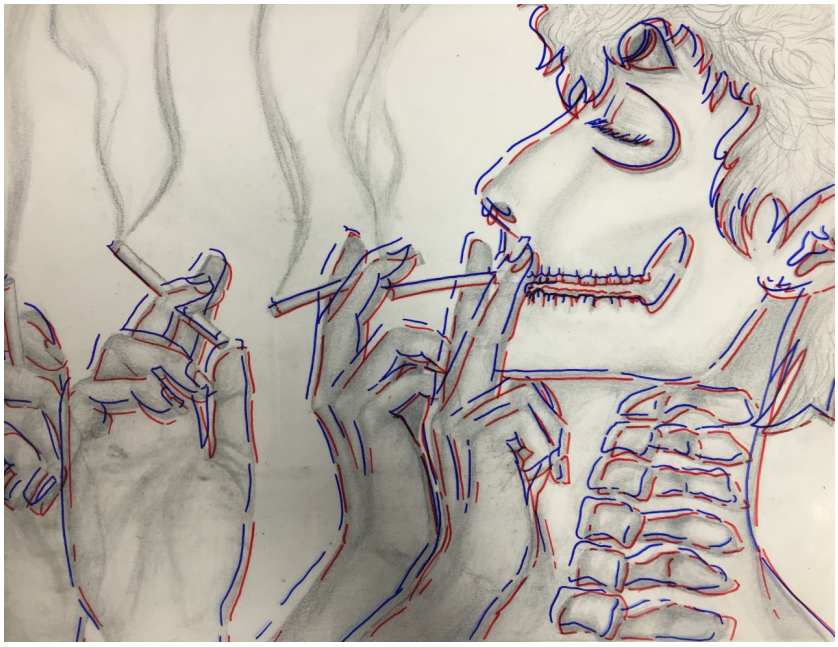


Luke Lemphul – Untitled

The Snold – Jade Mitchell

It was a sunny day
And far far away
The children went off
To have fun and play
The air was so cold
The tales untold
Of what lived in the forest
The mysterious Snold
He lived in the forest
Where the children were playing
They had no idea
They would be paying
They went to the Snold cave
They stomped on the ground
The stopped immediately

When they heard him growl
The Snold chased them and chased them
They ran and ran
They got out of the forest
The Snold was never seen again.



Zoe Leann Ellis – Psychosis

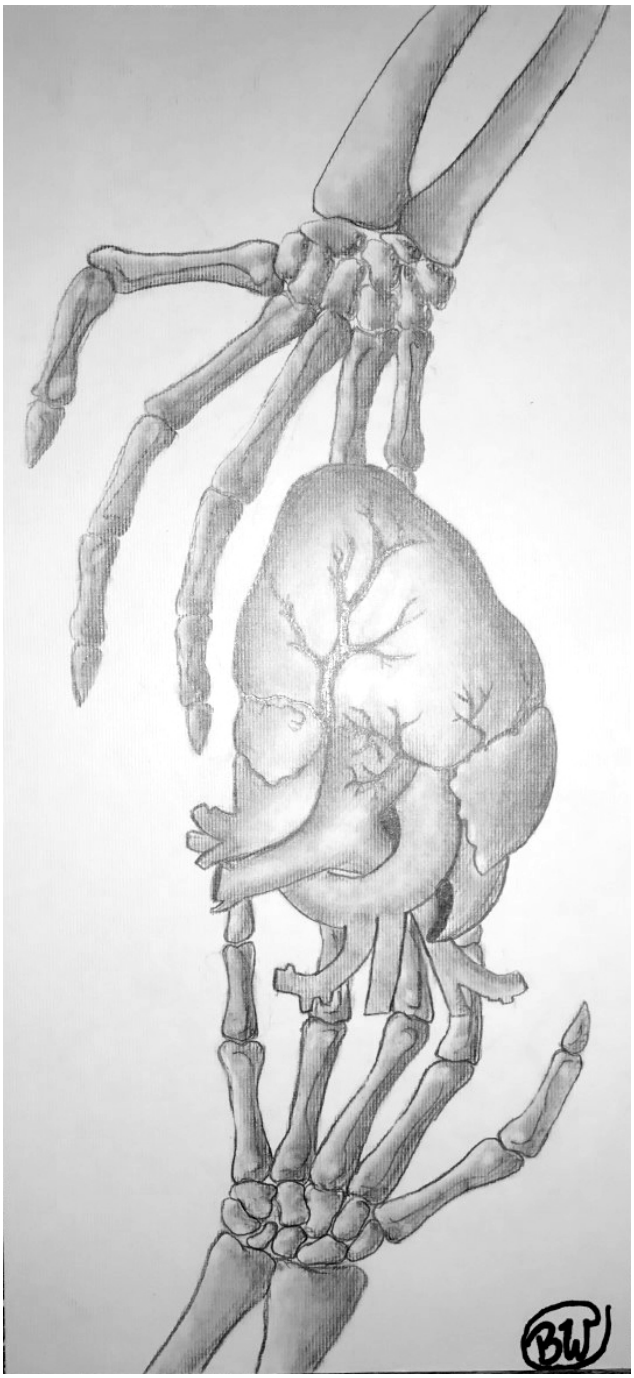
My Life and Reality – Veronique Myers

My best friend Cassidy is literally the only thing on this Earth that makes me okay.
She's my bridge of light
When she smiles and tells me everything well be okay.
I believe her even though
We know it won't ever be okay.
With her around and I know the world is really dark but with her it feels like
Cupcakes and Rainbows.
Without her I have NO clue who
I AM.

Reality for me is hard to grasp
It hits me hard like a bullet to the chest.
I feel like I'm being CRUSHED by the weight of the world
But WITH her it all goes away.
She is my light
My best friend is all I've ever had

Please don't leave me Cassidy ever.

When life gets tough she is there
So if she needs me I'll be there.
Life is hard but she makes it better
If you leave me forever I'll have nothing left.



Bridget Winters – Reaching

Ryan Nicoll – Untitled

December 17th, 2040, Vandenburg Air Base
Pvt. Brick Steadfast,

The Gravitational Defense League has selected you from the United States Space Force Development Program. Based on your scores in the physical and written tests within the training regimen, We are assigning you to our elite Gravitational Task Force (GTF). Within the coming week, you will be brought to our location.

I read the email over once more, it was very brief yet spoke more than 1,000 words. I felt as though I had performed well on the exams that were given in the training regimen, yet this was completely unexpected. I had heard the rumors of the "Force" as we referred to the Elite group of soldiers within the Defense League. But this Task Force is not just elite, they were known as Super Soldiers, the Spartans of the Space Force. It is said that they are stronger and faster than the average human. The Email suddenly vanished from my laptop screen. I searched to click back into it, but it was nowhere to be found. This didn't surprise me as the Task Force was a secretive branch, operating in the shadows. I went on with my normal tasks for the rest of the week, I always found myself on edge, thinking about when I would be brought amongst the best of the best. I was disrupted from my thoughts when my watch began to sound off an alarm, signaling it was now lunch time for the space cadets. After I got my meal, I found that my normal table was already filled up with other cadets. I walked further back into the mess hall and found a table with two other guys. I grabbed a seat as my carbohydrate-filled MRE wafted into my nostrils.

"I'm Feelin' Dangerous Hoorah" I joked comically as they both gave me a nod. Neither cracked a smile. I began to chow down as the men around carried on their conversation.
"Did you hear about the selection process?" asked the bald one on the opposite side of the table from me. All of the Cadets were required to shave their heads, but this guy obviously lacked the hair to begin with.

"You mean the tests we did? I thought those were just to show where you stood physically."

Replied the man closest. He had a buzzed head that still showed a red tint of his ginger hair to go along with his freckles.

“Well overall that’s what they are for, but the people who stand out are moved out of the basic training program.”

“I haven’t seen anyone get moved, how do you know this”

“Of course you haven’t seen anyone get moved” the bald one said annoyed “The people who do get chosen are very few, and they aren’t allowed to just go out and talk about it.”
“Have you seen anyone get moved?” the ginger one asked me. “No, nobody. I never heard anything about it before.” I lied, to avoid incriminating my myself.

As the two delved deeper into the topic of Super Soldiers and the idea of an Elite Task Force, I decided it would be best to finish up and get along with the day to avoid saying anything I shouldn’t. “I’ll see you guys later. I gotta make sure my section of the barracks are clean for Corporal Sullivan.” I said as I left to throw out my trash.

The rest of the day went smoothly. I helped clean the barracks, and finished a workout with the PT trainers. I felt exhausted when I got in bed later that night and passed out shortly after my head hit the pillow. I woke abruptly as something began to shake violently. I opened my eyes to realize I was no longer in the barracks of Vandenberg Air Base. I tried to stand when I realized I was strapped down. “Easy there” said a voice. I looked forward to see a man in a flight suit and helmet standing in front of me. “Hello Pvt. Steadfast, I’m Major Tannhauser. You're probably wondering where you are right now.” I realized we were moving, and could hear the hum of our craft’s ballistics throw a ringing in my head. I had been drugged by something to keep me asleep.

I just stared at him, partly in shock and still disoriented.

“We just left the atmosphere over Vandenberg, there is an asteroid field ahead of us that we will be entering. Hidden inside is the Sword Base. In this environment you will receive your training and education to become a Super Soldier.”

A voice came over Major Tannhauser's radio system: “Sir we have just breached the asteroid field, Sword Base is 5 clicks out, we will begin the tractor beam procedure.”

“Very good Pilot, bring us in.”

The shuttle that was carrying us was pulled into a landing bay inside a circular space station hidden inside the asteroid field. The Shuttle docked in a landing bay and I was escorted

through the airtight hallways of the Station. I was brought upon an elevator which carried Major Tannhauser and I to the final level in the Space Station. The Elevator doors opened to reveal rows of soldiers standing abreast separated by a walkway. Steam glistened in the red lights throughout the large, dark, chamber. I felt a strange humidity that did not seem to be common throughout the void of outer space. The room was silent as my boots echoed throughout the steam. I made my way between all the soldiers, realizing how small I was compared to them. They all were clad in a spacesuit as dark as the furthest reaches of the galaxy. Their faces were covered by an apparatus that encased their full head, with a dark visor that protected their eyes. In their hands they each brandished a laser rifle. I couldn't recognize the variant they were using. It was a sleek weapon I'd never seen before. I approached a staircase at the end of the soldiers who surrounded me. The stairs led up to an elevated stage. Through the steam I could make out a tall figure. The figure seemed to float as he moved towards me like ghost. As he became visible I could see he wore an apparatus, like the rest of the soldiers in the room. "Pvt. Steadfast" he spoke in deep, flanged voice. "You have been chosen to join our Nation's Task Force, before you can begin your training you will undergo a series of modifications on your body." Two soldiers easily picked me up and carried me further into the steam. I was forced into a pod that lowered me into a chamber below the stage. Above I could see Major Tannhauser and the Tall Figure looking down on me. The Figure nodded and gave a motion to someone out of my limited view from in the chamber. Suddenly I felt a rush of hot steam and pin pricks as I began to lose consciousness. The smell of ammonia awoke me as Major Tannhauser held a smelling inhalant in front of my nose. I was strapped to an upright table. "How do you feel?" the major asked as he positioned the table in front of a mirror. A light shone down on me in the dimly lit room. I could see that I was completely different than when I first entered the chamber. My body had grown almost a foot and my muscles bulged through the tight jumpsuit I was in. "Congratulations, Pvt. Steadfast. You are now a member of the U.S Gravitational Task Force."



Jose Lopez – Untitled

In the Trenches
Devin Caldwell

In the trenches the blood pools
In the trenches we shamble like ghouls
In the trenches we don't feel pained
Because by the trenches we were maimed
The trenches rot the flesh from your soles
The trenches are filled with the corpses of the bold
I am one of those among these many bold
The ones who peeked into death's fold

I lie here with my rifle in hand
I begins to here Heaven's band
I stay here upon this mound
The blood and rain mix on the ground

That rain I feel are the tears of God
He looks down and says “Are you saved”
I stand sad and weak with fear in my heart
With a weak draw I breath “Nay”

I realize it is not God who looms over me
A tin soldier? how could this be?
I hold my knife and with a smile of Glee
From Hell’s heart I stab at thee

MOB
Mayson Mariano

I had no choice but to hide my emotion, but that notion is what destroyed me
It’s the same every day where I just ponder grey on what to say that way
It troubled me to the core until I decided no more by this decree I was set free
Could I remember the ember inside me that lit the very same flame of my way
Digging deep I allowed them to seep out
First comes envy the unmet jealousy; sends me into a frenzied shroud
Next comes sadness an unmet sorrow in which I will see tomorrow no doubt
Succeeding is fear unceasing I lose my power and cower in a way I am not proud
Next is pride I stride in which I cannot hide
Ensuing is what I craved, oh to be saved or like this will I rest in my grave
Following was confusion, couldn’t tell reality from illusion
Subsequently I frequently must trust others or loneliness smothers me
Past my trust is my disgust filling to the brim with vile bile defiling me into exile
After, joy destroys my other emotions with its bright light that shines with all its might
Yet Finally, the most dangerous one
Almost the greatest one
I try to hold it back, but I was done
My teeth grind, my sanity I try to find
Anger is true while my flame blew I reap what I sew, bloodlust of any kind
But my loss are my troubles as my rage bubbles
I acted rash, left with nothing but ash of my emotional stash
Forced to lock them away, again
I will let them out no doubt, though I see now it was a disavow I shouldn’t allow
Truth be told the power I hold is as terrifying as it is clarifying
I’ve been reset to zero, reminded why I locked them away
But what is left, how long, like this can I stay?



Archer Burns – Shadow Cast

Bruce the Bassist

Cole Fisher

Bruce stood on stage, acoustic bass in hand. This show was supposed to go so much better. A tomato slapped into his face. But this wasn't the worst show he'd performed. At least tomatoes were soft.

Bruce put his bass away, as the crowd booed behind him. He left the venue, covered in refuse, and got in his van.

Bruce started crying. All he had ever wanted was to play the Super Bowl halftime show, but that would never happen. His father had always told him to pick up a real instrument. No one wanted to listen to acoustic bass. But Bruce was resilient. He would make it to the half time show if it was the last thing he did.

He got a call from his manager. "Hey what's up mom?" Bruce said.

"Hi Brucie. How did the show go? Did they love you? I know they did."

Bruce kept his frustration down. His mom believed in him, and he wouldn't snap at her. "It went well mom. You should have heard how loud they were."

"Oh, that's wonderful. I told you they'd come around." Bruce did not respond. His mother continued, "So, the halftime show was announced today."

"Oh?" Bruce squeezed the bridge of his nose, "Who is it?"

"Kanye West."

Bruce put his phone on mute. He screamed, and battered his window with punches. His fists hurt

He unmuted his phone. "Oh. Good for him."

"No. Listen. Kanye is awful. He doesn't even play real instruments. You can just drive to Chicago, and play against him. Surely he'll give up and go home when he hears your bass."

Bruce took a deep breath, "Mom, Kanye's the best in the game. I'll never beat him."

"Yes you will. If those Super Bowl people just heard your bass maybe..."

"*No Mom."* Bruce didn't mean to yell, "I'm sorry. It's just that I don't want to get my hopes up."

"I understand sweetie. But there's no harm in trying. I'll see you this weekend. Love you Brucie."

"Love you too."

He hung up and rested his head on the wheel. He heard a faint yell outside the van, "There he is." Bruce saw that the audience had come outside, waving their fists in the air in a frenzy. Bruce jerked his van in to a start and drove away.

"That crowd wouldn't know good music," he laughed, "If it splatted across their face like a tomato." Bruce laughed. Maybe his mom was right. He could beat Kanye. He'd be the greatest halftime show ever.

He flipped his van around, and drove north. To Chicago. He'd be there in three days, just enough time to figure out his setlist.

"Orion, Seven Nation Army, oh what am I missing?" He thought for a moment. "Oh. Seinfeld. Of course." Bruce was ready.

His stomach churned in anticipation, but he knew that this was his shot. Kanye wouldn't know what hit him.

Cruel Ghost
Sage

"Please don't leave me"
words whispered into a phone every night
and after a long pause
you'd respond
"never"

You left at midnight without a goodbye
My begging fell on deaf ears
You left me behind with dry eyes
And reenacted all my deepest fears

The silence haunts me at night
The creaking of floorboards, sighs of the dead
She comes to me, dressed in white
The ghost of all the things inside my head

She screams in my mind
"Worthless" "Nothing"
"This is why he left you behind"
"I can't believe you could be so trusting"

Her words juxtaposed with your promises
"I'll always love you, I'm positive"
"He never loved you, fool"
I didn't think you'd be so cruel

The ghost still whispers to me
The harshest words you've said
"I don't love you anymore"
Words spoken like a shot to the head



Morgan Morris – Untitled

Replace Me
Sage

Go ahead, replace me
Show me that I wasn't what you wanted me to be.
Show me that my insecurities, the nights I spent crying, were right.
Show me that I won't match up to her light

Show me the side of you, you try to hide;
Show me that the kindness in your eyes has died

I know I've been awful so, just tell me
Tell me about how great she can be
Tell me she's the reason you left
Tell me how the beating in your chest just, isn't there
Tell me how you've found the one
Just please, tell me this friendship is done

Scream, shout, let it all out
And for once tell me without a doubt
That these two years are for nothing
That I can't do a thing
To keep from losing you.
That the awful things you me told are true
That you set me free from this rose scented cage.
Tell me the truth, in the book of your life, was I just a page?

Just let me be free from the hurt you cause
Release me from the written requiem reminding me of all my flaws
I can't do this anymore, this hate filled love,
A pair of broken, blood-soaked doves falling from above.
My feelings are now as calm as a raging sea
So go ahead,
Replace me.

My Demons Win
Sage

You kept the demons at bay
For years you alone stood guard
But try as hard as you may
Fighting those demons is too hard

I looked into your sweet eyes for an answer
But all I found was my demons inside
They took over your light like a cancer

And now all I can do is hide

The comfort and safety I found in you was a lie
The moments of clarity wrong
Constructed by the demons to keep me alive
But it won't be like that for long

So now I run from the demons in my head
They've taken everything I've ever loved
Stolen the "I love you" that you said
Left my life in ruins and covered in blood

I promised I wouldn't let the demons win without a fight
But they've become too strong to handle
And thus my soul flickers out like a candle

Sandman
Jaryd Walker

Trapped in your slumber for a long time,
Let sleep decay the day and your life
As it slowly slips away.

The Sandman is unkind, unveils your
Horror before you as his dark
World consumes you.

Someday you may wake up a rotten
Monster worse than before.
He takes the lives of ones who
Find safe haven where they rest.
Escaping their problems at night,
Only to find their end.

He's collecting eyes to see
The whole world unfold.
Life and death rests in his hands,
Now come about this evil plan!

He'll rule you.



Archer Burns – Royalty

The Stone-Carved Bear

Sean Fisher

Cerulean, teal and midnight blue waves churn as they crash upon the khaki sand. While the sand permits the waves to slip away the obsidian rocks let the water cascade and struggle loose to find their way back to the ocean. I'm sitting on the sand letting my mind drift and wander my memories. Just like the waves invading the beach leaving

shells and driftwood, memories of our past flood my memory and discard the good times that never happened.

June 31st, 10:26 PM. We were talking about the difference California coast and the Florida coast. Unprovoked you asked if I knew I was cute. Bashfully I try to hide my uncontrollable smile and try to continue the conversation. Of course, my efforts failed, I began to stumble, and my anxiety levels peaked. My hands shaking like an earthquake was rumbling throughout my core. Whether or not you noticed, you made your first move and slid your hand into mine. A perfect fit I thought as you swept in to shut me up. Never being kissed before I cherished this moment and kept it in the vault.

August 1st, 1:25 PM. Driving up to say goodbye for a month didn't feel like an hour drive. The time slowly ticked on and before I knew it a goodbye was in front of me. Just before your flight you gave me a final goodbye kiss and slipped a stone carved bear into my hood. Appearing to be made of granite, its tan and maroon coloration speckled with brown and black spots beckon a feeling of love and comfort. This never left my pocket; it was continuously on me always reminding me that a time never stops, and we will see each other again.

September 23, 11:16 AM. My breathing reflects the rhythm at which my feet hit the cold damp cement. Barefoot, nervous breathing and a heartbeat like that of a drumming line who chugged red bull. My eyes see the blinding florescent light at the end of the tunnel. Loud screams and banners flap overwhelm my ears. The quick whirr of my zipper closing around my chest and the snap of my goggles assure that I'm ready as I will ever be. I step out after hearing the announcer broadcast my name across the

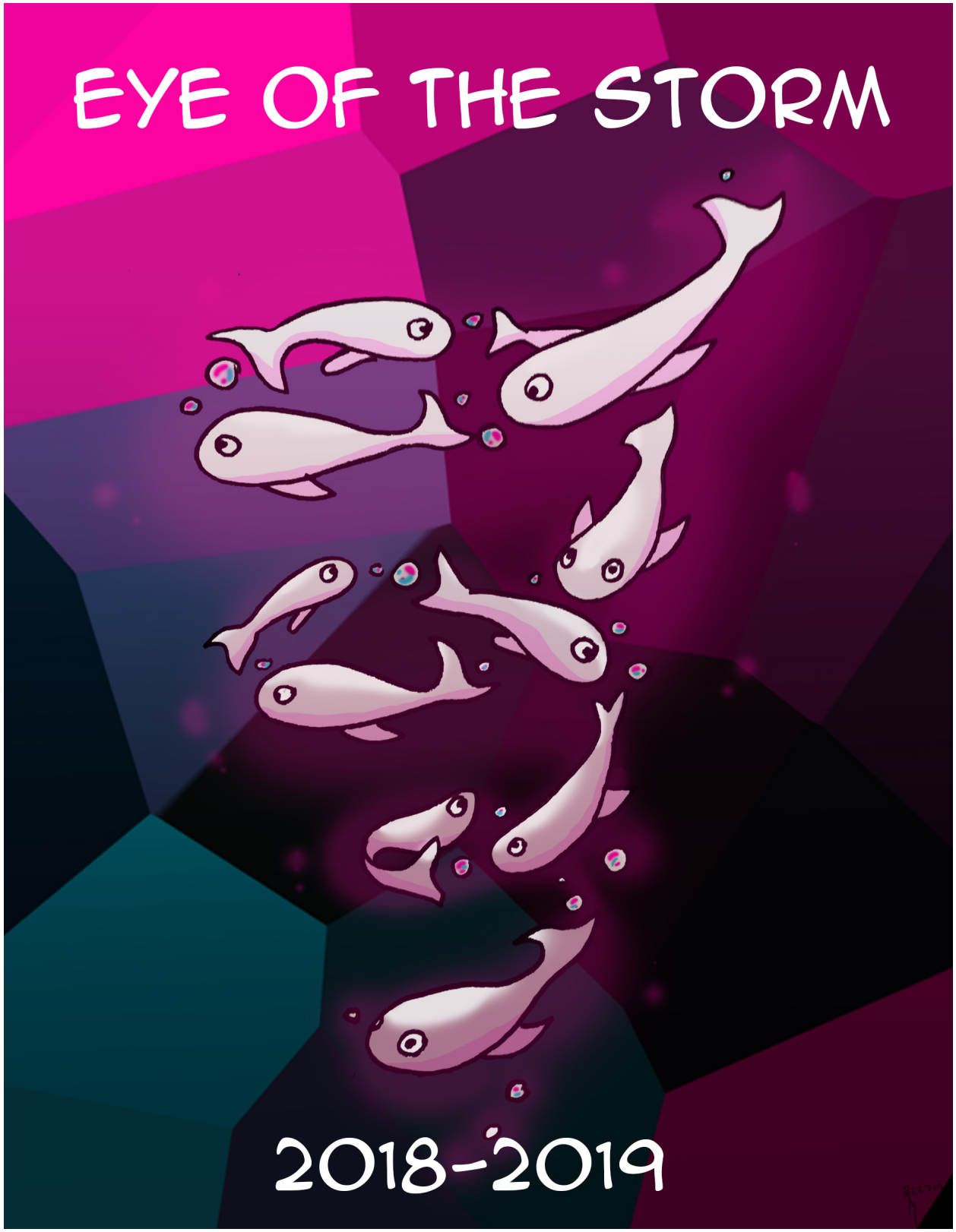
pool. Now all my senses are overwhelmed. I smell chlorine, competition and the medallions. I hear my competitors nervous breathing and silent soliloquys. My eyes scan the crowd for your familiar face, finally finding you in the middle of the stadium, your eyes set on mine and giving me that assuring, kick ass baby look. My hands jammed into my jacket pockets and my fingers fiddling with the stone bear. Finally, all I taste is butterflies causing a tornado in my gut. I begin the march out to the blocks all those feelings still prevalent and strong as ever. The final moments of the march and the race were a blur. The last thing I remember is touching the wall without a competitor in sight. That night you took me home and I took home the medal reading Colorado 2017 Champion. Waiting for our meal we sat there looking at each other eyes locked and not a word could be murmured that wasn't already said by our eyes. The food finally showed up and I chowed down like a starving wolf. Undenounced to me you were still watching me full of adoration. You grab my hand and look me dead in the eyes. I try to quickly choke down the mouthful of food I had and asked you what it was. Without hesitation, you said "I love you babe". I didn't know what to say so I just leaned across the table and gave you a kiss and said, "I love you too".

December 6th, 11:27 PM. We were watching a movie, I can't remember the name, but I was completely immersed in its plot and characters. You however thought this would be a good time to check your eyelids for holes. While nothing on the outside world could bother me, not the sound of dogs or sirens wailing by. But your phone lit up with a notification from a string of provocative emojis. Puzzled by the name and at who would text you this late at night I peer into this black hole of regret. Mistakes, nothing but

mistakes. Should I have looked, or should I have left it I ask myself, I continued to explore this dark deception. Those pictures and text are burned into my memory. I could hardly read it anymore due to my hands shaking like an earthquake was happening throughout my core. My eyes bloodshot and filled with fires of hatred, my pulse racing like a cow going to the slaughter house and my heart shattered like a Fabergé egg dropped from the Empire State building. The emotions invading my body are something I have never felt before. Tears finally begin to swell and flow, anger ignites the gasoline and transform into hatred ridden wild fire. My tears hit your phone screen and distort the wording but that doesn't stop me from continuing. My gasps for oxygen and silent weeping wakes you up. You realize that I found a pot of gold that not even Golem would want. As if rehearsed you apologize and recite the classic excuse, "it's not you it's me". I sit there stunned, like I was a deer in the headlights of a semi-truck, understanding that the impending doom will hurt like nothing else before. The characters in the movie droning on about their picture-perfect lives and your rehearsed excuses are all I hear. All I can see are the pictures and the texts singed in my memory. I feel nothing but the lies and fake love that was once a relationship and that I thought was real. I could ask you why but it's as useless and ignorant as a child in a war. You try to comfort and calm me down with hugs and kisses like Band-Aids on bullet holes as if they will fix shit. Don't pretend that you weren't the potter and my heart was the clay, that you crumpled and molded, shaped and destroyed and eventually just threw away. Don't pretend like I was the boy who was just looking for love, for someone to say you're the best thing since sliced bread no matter what your parents said. And yet here I sit, alone on this damned beach with

all those memories crashing into my thoughts like waves on a beach. Tears like Niagara Falls flow as I began to sob alone by myself with no hand to hold, no body to hug and no shoulder to cry on. All I have is this damn bear with no purpose but reminding me of the good times that never happened. I begin to think about love, the idea that we need someone else in our lives. Someone to celebrate all the happy times with and someone to mourn the hard times with. Someone who will eventually make us cry. I take that bear in my hands and study the intricate carvings, all the lines eventually leading to an inevitable end. The beautiful combination of maroon and khaki with flecks of coffee brown that once reminded me of you now disgust me. I look at the ocean in its beautiful serenity. Shades of blue are the dance floor for the silver iridescent reflection of the moon and stars. Curling my fist around the bear I chuck it into the ocean. As it tumbles through the midnight air and eventually into the pristine water along with it I threw away love, adoration and all those damned memories left engrained in my brain. I hope the salt erodes away at it, reducing it to nothing it like you did to my heart. Falling into the sand my eyes dry and my breathing settles. My hands dig into the silky sand as I smile and know that tomorrow is a new day.

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EYE OF THE STORM
2018-2019