Fall 2025

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KAIROS

The Voice of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary Students and Community



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Student Creative Submissons

The Only Trans Girl They Know
*Written by a 16-year-old trans girl

I live in a country that sings about freedom
while tightening the noose around my neck.
They call it policy, they call it protection,
but I know what it means to be a threat
just for surviving.
I watch my president speak of safety,
his voice soft with lies,
his hands signing away my right to exist
like it's paperwork, like it's nothing,
like I'm nothing.
Me, and everyone who looks at the world
through the same cracked mirror,
learning to live with shards in our palms.

I walk into the classroom where posters say everyone is welcome,
but the school assignments skip over my name.
The teachers talk about civil rights like we aren't dying
they talk about equal rights, their voices full of pride,
but their words skip like stones ignoring the biggest part of me.
They say "Freedom, Liberty, and Justice for all"
but I know the fine print.
I know what they mean when they say "all"
they mean not me, they mean not us,
they mean not yet.
They mean never, if they can help it.

I smile at the kids whose parents call me a predator at the dinner table.
I say hello to boys who look at me like a dare but would never hold my hand in public.
I have learned that love for girls like me is often a secret or a weapon, sometimes both.
Boys say I'm beautiful until he or his friends find out, then I'm a joke, a mistake,
something they need to scrub off their skin.
My body is not a home, but a battleground
where even affection comes with conditions.
I cannot be too loud, too proud, too anything
because the moment I step out of line,
I become the reason they write new laws to silence us.

For the last 10 years of my life I've blended in, I've mastered it.
Before I leave for school I look in the mirror and wonder,
"Do I look cis enough?"
I talk to my classmates and think,
"Am I acting nice enough?"
Maybe if I pretend to be like all the other girls
they won't see the real me that hides behind the shadows of my own eyes.
I look at everyone and question,
"Have I molded myself into what you wanted?"
"Am I acceptable now?"

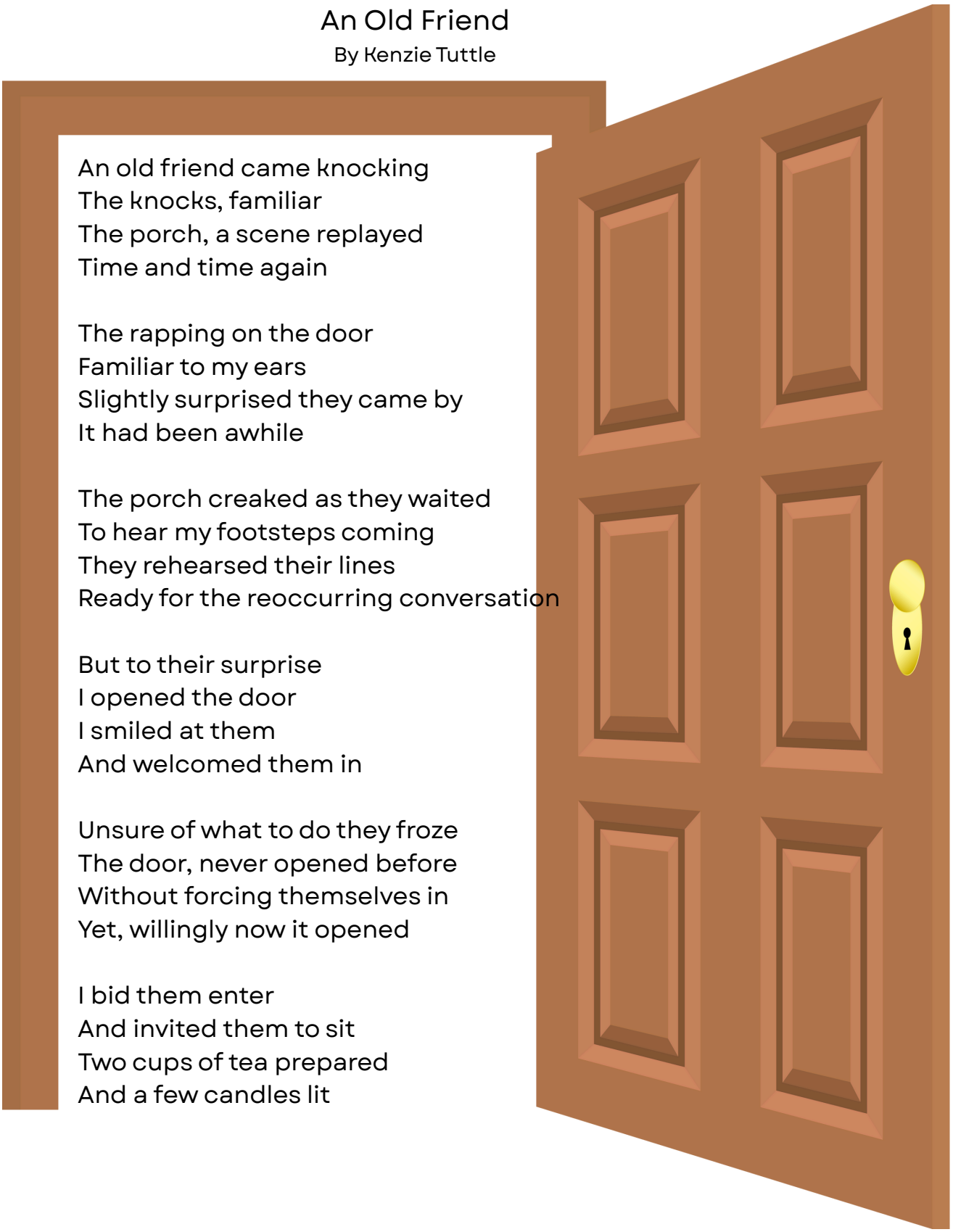
I carry the weight of everyone who didn't make it.
The ones who were beaten for daring to dance in daylight.
The ones whose names we wear like armor, like grief.
I am terrified. Not just for me,
but for the little ones coming after,
learning that the world is cruel
before they've even chosen their favorite color.
I want to fall in love without fearing the fallout.
I want to be touched without wondering if it ends in violence.
I want to exist without apology.
But most days, I just want to get home alive.
I want to be a kid, but I am a symbol, a scapegoat, a statistic in waiting.
And still, I show up. I speak softly. I stay kind.
I wear the face of hope even when it's killing me, because I have to.
Because when they look at me, they see all of us.
Because the moment I step into the school building
the pressure of my whole community is on my back.

But even after all that, even though it really sucks to be trans sometimes, I'm proud.
proud because I love, and we love in a world that wants us to disappear.
Even when the whole world tells they hate us, we continue to love.
And I think that's beautiful.
Because at the end of the day love wins.
And we aren't going anywhere.

Submitted By: Lucas Hall, MDiv Senior

An Old Friend

By Kenzie Tuttle



An old friend came knocking
The knocks, familiar
The porch, a scene replayed
Time and time again

The rapping on the door
Familiar to my ears
Slightly surprised they came by
It had been awhile

The porch creaked as they waited
To hear my footsteps coming
They rehearsed their lines
Ready for the reoccurring conversation

But to their surprise
I opened the door
I smiled at them
And welcomed them in

Unsure of what to do they froze
The door, never opened before
Without forcing themselves in
Yet, willingly now it opened

I bid them enter
And invited them to sit
Two cups of tea prepared
And a few candles lit

They looked at me puzzled
Confused, unsure of me
I smiled with heaviness
And nodded quietly to them

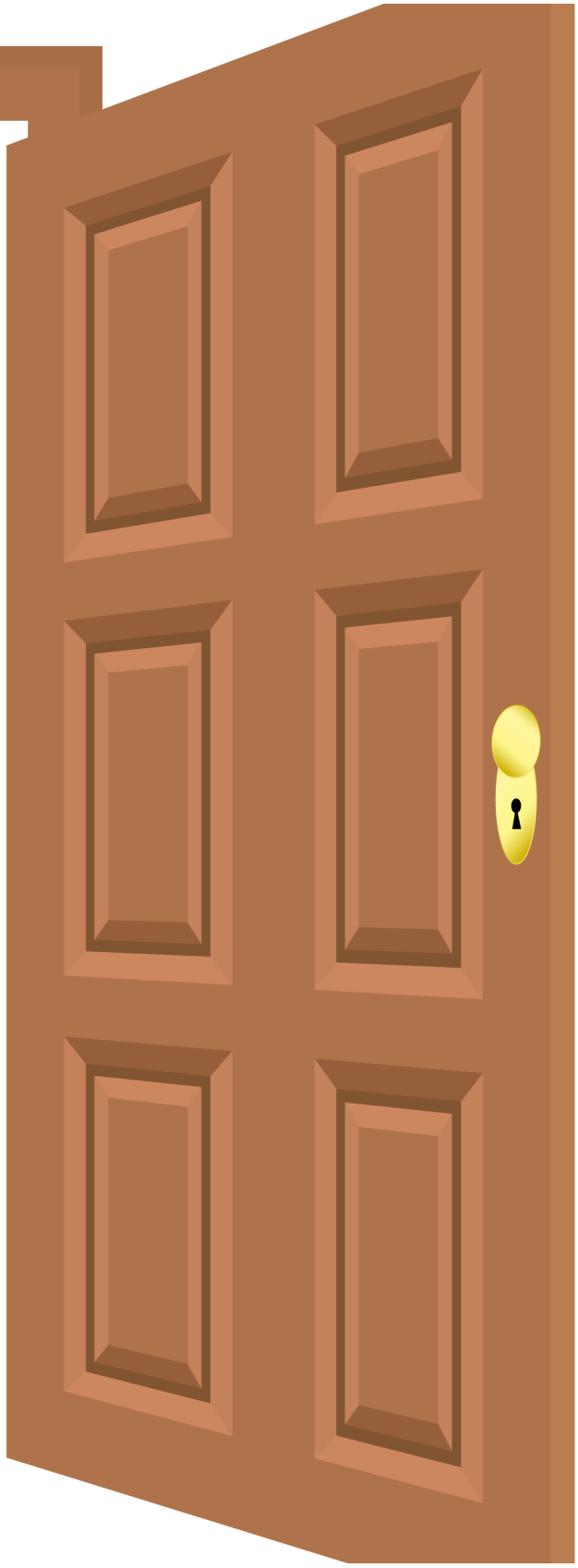
I closed my eyes and breathed
I felt the air change
And instead of fighting it
I welcomed it

A rustling disturbed me
And I opened my eye
To the window I saw
A few more old friends swing by

I gave them a sad but genuine smile
I nodded to them and turned away

Old friend Sadness
Whom I often call Sorrow
For once I welcomed in
And embraced her presence

And so others have now learned
I can open a door
The kettle is ready
For the next knock on the door



Submitted By Kenzie Tuttle, MDiv Junior

Meaning Making

by Rochelle “ThePoet” Henderson

Sadness devours me

Sorrow is not my friend

Meaning Making is a challenge

If only I could win



Struggling up a tightrope

Feelings never end

How to process tomorrow

When my daybreak never ends

Shall I make a cup of tea, and think of thee
Christs companion

Lost for words, mind spinning, I am perturbed
It makes no sense to struggle in vain

My meaning making is feeling the strain
Stumbling down a tall flight of stairs

Yet lifted from the fall

Gods grace is all

Useful musings about life’s triangle

Pressed upon my heart

Eyes darting, side by side

Dew north, lays the grave-tide

Ripping, rupturing, running raw

Meaning making is now my saw.

Submitted By Rochelle Henderson, MDiv Senior

Meet the Poets of Faith



from left faculty advisor Dr. Jeong, John, Yoan, Rochelle (pof founder/leader), Kenzie, Kennedy, Cherri, Taina (pof co-leader)

The Pulpit Supply Diaries...

Do tell us your pulpit supply joys & pitfalls. What is it really like to preach at a church you have never been too? What is your process? How to best prepare? And so much more! Taking stories and advice now, please submit to your Kairos to be featured in the Winter or Spring Edition. Tell us what it is really, really like. See ya next time!





Note from the Editor



A Liminal Space

Disorientation and ambiguity lets you know you have entered into the "in-between" time, the liminal space. It can be a time of great sorrow. It can also be a time of great joy in anticipation of what God will do. Ponder Psalm 16:8 "I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken."

--Rochelle



The Editor would like to thank Usama & Maryelle for everything Kairos :)
THANK YOU.

Kairos is a publication for all members of the APTS community to share their visual art, photographs, poems, opinion pieces, and creative writing with each other.
Submissions for Kairos are accepted ongoing throughout Fall & Spring semester only. Themes will be posted periodically. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss ideas.

Rochelle Henderson, a Senior MDiv student, is the editor of Kairos. You can reach her by emailing kairos@student.austinseminary.edu