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JAMES M. BENNETT HIGH SCHOOL

THE ANCHOR



*Everything
Beautiful*

Everything Beautiful
The Anchor
Literary Arts Magazine

James M. Bennett High School

2016-2017

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*He has made **everything beautiful** in its time.
He has also set eternity in the human heart ...*

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Advisor Note:

This is a diverse collection that speaks to a year of change, loss, grief, but also great joy for JMB. Thank you to everyone who had a hand in its creation. Many writers and artists offered pieces-- artwork from Photography Class, selections from the winners of the Young Authors and other contests, exercises from Creative Writing students, and others that we pilfered from odd assignments that sparked creativity.

Many thanks to students who contributed time editing, rereading selections, and even creating the table of contents--thanks Hassan. I will miss Tisha and Haley as they venture off to college. They have both leant a hand, a piece of prose, poetry, or artwork along with editing and design for *The Anchor* during the last three years.

Thanks also to Ben Davis who makes it possible to offer the magazine online and to Ellen Harlan who gave us a print budget for contributors and for *The Anchor* archives.

Hoping you write every day,

Joan D. Cooper

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J. Cooper

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Chernobyl

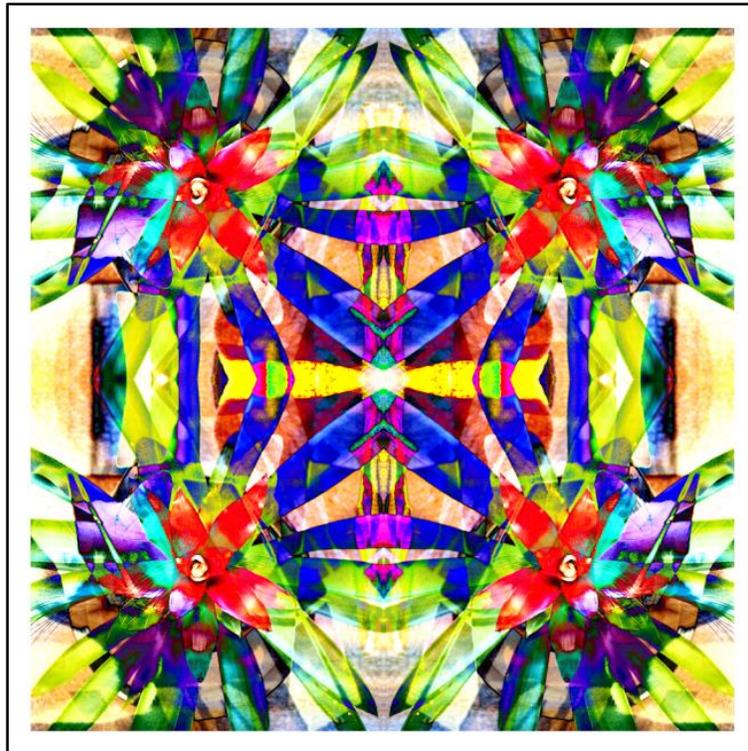
By Tisha Chakraborty

The starved crow perches with a haunting smile,
watching the children play under abandoned
windmills. He scatters the fields with ephemeral lullabies;
his are unlikely caws. He remembers—

the night of the father in a lab coat,
mother with child in flowered blouse saying goodbye.
The cool air holds disdain for life, and the
flies buzz in no direction

midnight, bells ringing
father in the control room, unshielded,
question marks in head, cross in hand
worshipping synthetic light as

he watches humanity unravel
there beneath the ashes, he cries in solace
tears mixing with dirt,
until life becomes fallout, and fallout becomes no more



Haley Nash

Outlooking

By Tisha Chakraborty

The buzz of the monitor echoes white
morning lulls. I don't know that I am only jagged
lines nearing asystole.
Suspended over the earth

In angelic arms—where were you then?
Slipping through the washed halls to see me; some storyteller you are,
reading off a clipboard. You watch the
tubes dangling in their
glassy eyes---mine or yours? Am I dunked under the ocean of
ignorance ... my vision, nonexistent?
my reverie—hands holding
question marks feigning answers
all they see of me is the lump of grey keeping me
alive

or at least living---a series of blinks and visits
a camera obscura of upside down nothings,
there I lie, comatose

Mutually Exclusive
I am, are you not?
The protostar, Mr. Prototype, cut clean and dried
Standing by the office nine o' clock, Rolex wrists
around espresso
You're no Gates, no Jobs,
no Hemingway but you try to be
this, this and more
the click of heels lingers on your bluetooth ear
Why is it, Mr. Catchphrase
that you see me downtown and smirk?
Waking up every night at jazz nights—well
if only they knew it was your hobby
When will you tell them—
how you write behind your glass door
in silver pen and chalkboard, peeping the
ins and outs of little men?
Is it that you're afraid of me?
Mr. Amour-propre, tell me so
with your sax, your pen, your bow
who you are, and who you will be.

Pink Rose

by Brandon Ennis

Upload 1:

I decided after waiting years for this moment, I'd uncover the mysteries of the Pink Rose Killer who was never found and still haunts the dreams of the people in France, like Jack the Ripper, smart and cunning, no one knows who this person looks like nor does he leave much evidence, but his calling card, the pink rose he lays upon his victims.

I never thought, I'd be this close, but I may have uncovered who the murderer is, but I'll do what most journalists won't, and I'm going to make you wait...and I'll be uploading everyday as I gain new evidence.

Upload 2:

Update on Pink Rose Killer

Years ago, a flower shop owner died, and her grandson disappeared when he was only 16 years old. He lived with her after his mother was brutally raped and murdered by his father as a last attempt of satisfaction before being arrested for previous charges of abuse. He was uncovered to have severe schizophrenia after he would do things that didn't seem to make sense and when his father was abusing the mother, the boy would go over to his grandmother's, not telling her what his father was doing out of fear of what he would do to him. Wait for tomorrow's entry for more info.

Upload 3:

Update on Pink Rose Killer

The boy's grandmother found out what was happening after the police found evidence of abuse towards his mother, he was taken into custody by his grandmother and became his legal guardian. For years, the boy had troubles in school; he was bullied by other children for not having parents and not being as "smart" as the other children. For years he fought of his urges to fight back and from the ashes came an irreversible depression that left him emotionally scarred for the rest of his life. At least that's what was suspected after years of useless therapy. Everyone was hopeless that he would emerge from it until he disappeared.

Epilogue to Pink Rose

Please, whoever reads this, tell everyone I know that I love them, and I'm sorry for everything I've ever doneeeeeee...

His head laid upon the keyboard, a pink rose in his hand, blood saturated his clothing, and smeared across the screen, and a note written by the murderer himself...

Did he deserve it? I don't know. I just hate the cravings, and as I fear that they are coming, I see nothing better than to end it. I know they'll catch me, they have me surrounded, and there's no escape. So I write this to say goodbye world, goodbye everyone, and goodbye life, for I will never see you again...

The murderer laid upon the middle floor with traces of cyanide in his mouth and a broken capsule, and there he had a pink rose laid on his own chest.



The Dream

By Cameron Shaffer

Last night I had a dream. My grandfather and I were in Ocean City on the boardwalk. We had just gotten finished eating at my favorite restaurant, Harrison's Harbor Watch. It was getting late and the darkest clouds my eyes have ever seen began to roll over the sky as the wind began to howl. We look to the beach and before us was a colossal wave hastily approaching. The both of us braced and grasped desperately to the railing. The wave slammed into us with immense force and kept us submerged for a good while. We survived the initial impact but the water receded back from which it came, faster than a strike of lightning, pulling us back with it. I was holding onto the wooden beams that connect the railing to the ground while my grandfather had lost his grip and was now holding onto me for dear life. It was extremely difficult to keep my grip, and I slipped one beam at a time until there was only one left. I feel my fingers begging to slip but if I let go the ocean will claim both of us. I closed my eyes, yelled, and gripped the beam as hard as I could until it was over and the receding water had all gone. The water was gone, but the storm raged on. Tornadoes and lightning were at war over the ocean as wind shook the seas. We worked our way to the car and drove off as more waves approached, this time in a fleet. Then I woke up.



Sharon Birch

True Justice

By Cameron Shaffer

There are two kinds of people who don't care about the law. The first kind are the criminals with no understanding of what the laws are in place for and give no regard for who these laws protect. They do not give a second thought to breaking the law and feel no empathy for the people their crimes have affected. The second type is far more dangerous. The second type doesn't care about the law because they feel that the system doesn't work. They feel that through the system the guilty do not get punished for their crimes. They don't care about the law because their morals transcend the law. They only care about what is right and they will do anything to make it right. Thinking about it mathematically, to these people, when a horrible crime is committed it is like an equation has been imbalanced. However hard the law and justice system may try to rebalance it they can never do it completely. One side is always left unbalanced because the person who committed that horrible crime will never feel the way the victims did by the law or by the system. These people take matters into their own hands to balance the equation. To make sure that both sides are equal. To make the person who made the victims a victim themselves. Only when the person who committed the crime has been put through the same pain he caused someone else, will the equation be balanced. Only then in the eyes of the second type will true justice exist. An eye for an eye as they say.



Haley Nash

Haunted Postcard

By Amari Peck

Fall

When I looked at the postcard of Spaulding High School, I knew I had to go on an adventure. The postcard seemed like it was from the 50's or 60's. I was bored that day and decided to explore our attic in search of secrets, that's where I found the postcard in a small box filled with antiques from decades past. I couldn't get the strange urge out of my mind to travel there. I have always loved haunted and abandoned places and knew Spaulding High had to fit that description. My dream had always been to visit as many haunted places in the country, and I had a strange but determined feeling to make this my first stop. I put the postcard in my back pocket and descended from the cob-webbed filled room...

Summer

School was out for the summer and most were excited for the obvious reason that summer had begun, which entailed no more responsibility. I was excited for an entirely different reason: I was going to take the possibly dangerous journey to Spaulding High school, and find out if it was as haunted as I imagined and the research had proved most definitely. I lived a few hours away from the school which was in Vermont, so I knew it would be a long journey...

July

My older sister was thankfully interested in haunted places as well, so we traveled the long journey to Spaulding High. When we arrived in Barre, Vermont, we realized the small town was abandoned. With no life around, the old town was cold and empty. Spaulding High was in the center of town and right away I saw that the school in the postcard was drastically different than the one that stood in front of me. The red brick had faded to a dull gray, the windows were shattered, and the trees were cut down. The statue right before the front doors, seemed to stare at me and invited me inside with his blank eyes. "Come on in, don't be shy." I looked up at the gray endless sky around me ...



Three Prose Poems by Alyssa Donoway

War

The world around me is on fire. The war has worn down the buildings in the city, the smog covering the sky meanwhile it fills my lungs, and the ground that used to be covered in soft plush grass now covered in black sooty ash. Walking around trying to not step on rubble, sharp shards of glass, and bodies of people that didn't get away. For it being day the sky is darker than it is at night. I am starting to see people emerge from the darkness since everything has silenced, maybe because of the smog burning our lungs.

Thunderstorms

A massive flash lights up the sky. An explosion in the sky. You feel the vibration in your bones. It starts to rain harder. The next bolt of light makes its way across the sky. Then deafening boom hits me. As I step off the porch I feel the hard rain hitting my skin. It is also windy, so it makes me cold. The wind sends a chill to my bones. The droplets are soaking my clothes.

Trees

The towering green I have to scan up to see. Looking at the raised leaves blow in the wind. Seeing birds fly into their nests which are nestled in the limbs. Watching as squirrels bounding from branch to branch. Looking down I see moss, mushrooms, and flowers galore. Still walking about this forest, you see a fawn and its mother drinking out of a lake. You go the other way not wanting to bother them. Walking around the woodland, taking in all the nature around me. Finding a cliff, I sit on the peak to take a look out at the forest ahead of me. Trees as far as I can see.



Haley Nash

Pain Caused by Sound

By Alyssa Donoway

Imitation of *Truly, Madly, Deadly* Written By Hannah Jayne

“It is too loud.”

The room is loud. Aubrey wishes the people in this room would shut up or leave, the noises are suffocating her. Sitting in this room with all the noise is going to make Aubrey’s brain implode.

“Sweetie, how are you doing?” Her aunt asked her. She gave Aubrey’s shoulders a squeeze. *She don’t really know how to answer that question. How could she answer this question? Sure I am fine I witnessed nothing awful just 48 hours ago.* Aubrey just can’t stand the quiet. Thuds and bangs reminds her of what happened. Just seeing it over and over again in her head. She can’t stop seeing it over and over again thinking about it. She just remembers the yelling, silence, and then a bang shortly followed by a thud.

“I wonder how she is doing after what happened,” someone said lowly. “I can’t believe she saw her father kill her mother then he killed himself.”

Aubrey is trying to not think about what she had witnessed. *Why did he do this? I am now alone wishing I could forget what I saw. Wishing I could change what happened. How could he have done this?* She couldn’t stop crying. She wishes these people weren’t here. She wishes she could leave the room but she is the center of attention here. The people around her are making her uncomfortable with their stares. Aubrey gets up to leave the room not being able to stand it all anymore.

Soulless Home

by Elora Kermisch

Those deep earthly eyes
A soul so pure
But hidden
Beneath the hurt and the pain
The scars are the only thing that let you know
That it was real
Holding on to anger
Letting it consume you
Is a daily fallout
Ripping you piece by piece
As you slowly fade away
You feel lost
Hopeless
And alone
Who would've thought life would turn on you?
So cold
And again so angry
You feel death is the only way
You stop
To think
The consequences could be real
So you stop
And carry on
As pain
And anger
Consume the soul
Of a wonderful man
Who once knew himself
But no longer does

No More

By Allison Warrington

He painted the kitchen blue before it happened, a light but at the same time dark, happy blue. He hung new curtains too, ones with different colors that swirled and danced together in an imperfect unison that he thought she would like. The cabinets were half empty, only cereal that had gone bad weeks ago in the pantry. He cleaned the house and pampered her with gifts. He made dinner and asked about her day first. At the old, white kitchen table, he sat and waited and picked at the flowers that hadn't been bought at the grocery store but at the farmer's market that she always wanted to stop at. He did all this, but she still knew that this was the calm before the storm. Something would happen, and he would hit her again. So she never came home to see the flowers that may have made her stay again, and she didn't see the vase fall over when he knew she wasn't coming back. But he did sit and wait till the remorse turned to anger, and the petals hit the wooden floor.



Sharon Birch

Covered in Dust

By Allison Warrington

He was in the corner of the room, sitting in a dark dust covered chair, when the man whom he barely knew approached. Thick loud footsteps on the dark wooden floor boards, even thumps like a pendulum marking the time since he had first sat, until they stopped, suddenly. It didn't faze him but did cause his eyes to momentarily lose focus from the stray blue string from where he had been fixing his attention. Anyone that knew him knew that he was quiet, but this was different, he used to be quiet because his thoughts were too much to form into words, but now he was quiet because his brain and thoughts and talent for thinking had left with her body and left with her presence. With her a part of who he had been was taken. The house was empty for years, forgotten, not even on her mind, but now he felt as if it was the only thing he had left of her. She hated the dated blue fabric of what he was sitting and hoped to dispose of it but she didn't, she couldn't, because before she could do so she forgot. Not only about the thing in the corner of her living room but about her life, she was gone before the line went flat and he still couldn't let her go. He couldn't let go because she was all he had, the only family he was gifted with but it was also the only family he wanted. He looked up at the man who was torn with age, marked with moments of laughter and focus and sadness, and in his eyes lied guilt and pity; the boy crying and defeated in the chair made him think of his son and made the emotions he carried in his eyes do a 180. It brought up feelings that had been tucked away for years to light and he decided instead of doing what was originally intended to sit on the floor and be there, he decided to do what he should've done before and sat.

'I'm sorry, for everything, for not' the man said only to be interrupted half way between because they both knew what he was going to say.

'I know' the boy said. Then the silence returned to stay, but that was okay for now, there was nothing left to be said and neither felt as if they could listen.

Hitchhiker

By Allison Warrington

I was driving, listening to the radio, the day and anger and sadness had gotten the best of me; I was in a rut, a rut of work and home and sleep and friends; my life was like clockwork and I could feel the tires spinning on the dented, scratched old car of my life. Green and darker green blobs flashed in my peripheral vision as a bright white, strobing dash came from the other side. I took a different road than usual, a back road. I wasn't going fast, I don't know if it was the depression beginning to eat inside of me, but I decided that I had nowhere to be, so who cared when I got back to my dark, empty apartment. I didn't. My vision was fading in and out of focus, as I sank deeper and deeper into thought. I saw something--a man, red shirt, blue jeans, dirty blue jeans, and a thumb pointing to the grey-blue sky. I decided I had nothing better to do.

I slowed from the already turtle speed that I was going. I rolled down the already turtle speed that I was going. I rolled down the window and asked him if he was okay. His name was Mike, and he needed a ride, to nowhere, to wherever I was going. I didn't think, I let him in. *click* the door popped open, he got in. *Click* I drove. Then the silence began, it came to stay and swallowed us whole, except for the radio.

He sang to a song on the radio, an old song, one that everyone would know the words to. I smiled at his dancing and singing. I envied him, I envied the confidence he exuded; I would never be able to ask a stranger for a ride, then get into their car and sing like nobody was watching. I would love to be that carefree.

The song was over and he began to talk about his life with a joke thrown in every once in awhile. It amazed me the way he spoke, everything in his life was sad and terrible, but he had a way of making everything seem funny. It was like he had come to terms with everything and decided not to care, not to worry about anything, not to pity himself for all the misfortunes, he had not only found a way to forgive everyone, he found a way to forgive himself. He asked me to let him out about five miles up the road. I wish I could've seen him again, but that was the last time I saw the most important man I have ever met.

The Secret

by Magdey Idriss

My father tried to teach me how to drive. The first day, he told me to watch how he drove and just copy the way he drives. I paid attention to the way he held the steering wheel, and the way he turned the car. After I watched him, I thought I could drive. I was so excited, but, honestly, I was just hyped.

On the second day, he let me drive, but I found out that I didn't know how to drive. The first thing I did was forget to unlock the hand brake. I was going 10 on the 45 mile per hour, but I was so scared to get crushed or run into anything.

And then I found out that my driving lesson was a secret. My dad was teaching me with my mom's car, but she didn't know it. My mom didn't know about all the crazy thing my dad and I were doing.

The next day my dad and I stole the car again, and I hit a big tree. We were good; no one got hurt. We were so lucky. We changed the seats and then called the police. After the officer came, he said we good. We don't have do anything with the law, so still my mom didn't know that we took her car.

We took the car to the body shop to fix the front bumper. The technician said it would take three days, and my dad said, "If you can you fix it today, I will pay you whatever you want." The technician said he couldn't fix it there.

Then my dad said, "So you can to take it to your house."

He said yeah. We went to his house and he fixed the car for us. Finally we went back home and mom asked us where we were. We said that we were at his friend's house.



Haley Nash

Spaceman

By Alex Doane

“Nights like this, Nights like this I wish I can do the impossible”- Travis Scott.
As these words repeat rapidly through my head, haunting every single thought, squeezing
through my wonderless brain. As I look at the moon, the stars, the galaxy... you.

Whisper softly as I wish you goodnight. Dreaming lightly how you'll come back and
converse with me as we lay under the moonlight. As our galaxies collide, but our minds
never seem to connect.

So educated but such unknowing whispers. Black surrounding endless color. A million miles
away but yet so close. You're a goddess with endless wonders as I am just a man with a
dream. Your beauty is so obscure as I travel planet to planet looking...

Searching through all the shadow, yearning for more ideas of you I can't seem to find.
Falling in this endless pit of darkness you call the “unknown” as my heart falls through hell,
and my hope fades away... Oh Avani...

Why did I leave you so alone and cold? Now my life ends on a low note because living is
now and forever impossible. No drink, no money, not even the grace of God can stop me
from thoughts of you. As my oxygen level lowers, and life leaves my eyes with every breath.

How could I get you back tonight... but it's too late as I sing to myself,
“I'm a man with dreams out of this world looking at yours.

I'm just a simple Spaceman...”

Spurious Happiness

By Alex J. Doane

Time 11:56 am. 72 degrees outside today is his birthday. He walks down stairs and no one is home. He looks at his phone and he has 39 happy birthday day text from his friends. He takes a seat and opens his social media and he post a picture of himself smiling, captioning the picture "*Finally 16*". He goes back upstairs and gets dressed and then he begins his day. His mom calls and says "*Happy Birthday baby! I'm at the store with your sister I'll be home in ten minutes*". After the phone call, he looks at the picture on the stand in his living room and says "*Happy Birthday Dad.*" Then he hooks his phone up to his Bluetooth speaker and plays 'Foldin Clothes' by J. Cole and begins to start folding his clothes.

At 6:13 pm, he goes hang out with his friends and he has fun and all but something felt missing. He walked away from his group of friends and sits and thinks "*Why?*" also softly saying it out loud. "*Why what?*" his friend Linda ask. He replies "*Why... is the sky so high up.?*" he replies unsure. "*That's a dumb question. You always look up at the sky? Why is that?*" Linda ask. "*the sky is beautiful and full of endless possibilities. It paints a picture using the clouds and the stars. It could show you a different world if you look closely. My dad told me that.*" He says gently. "*That's deep, but you should come back to the group*" Linda says.

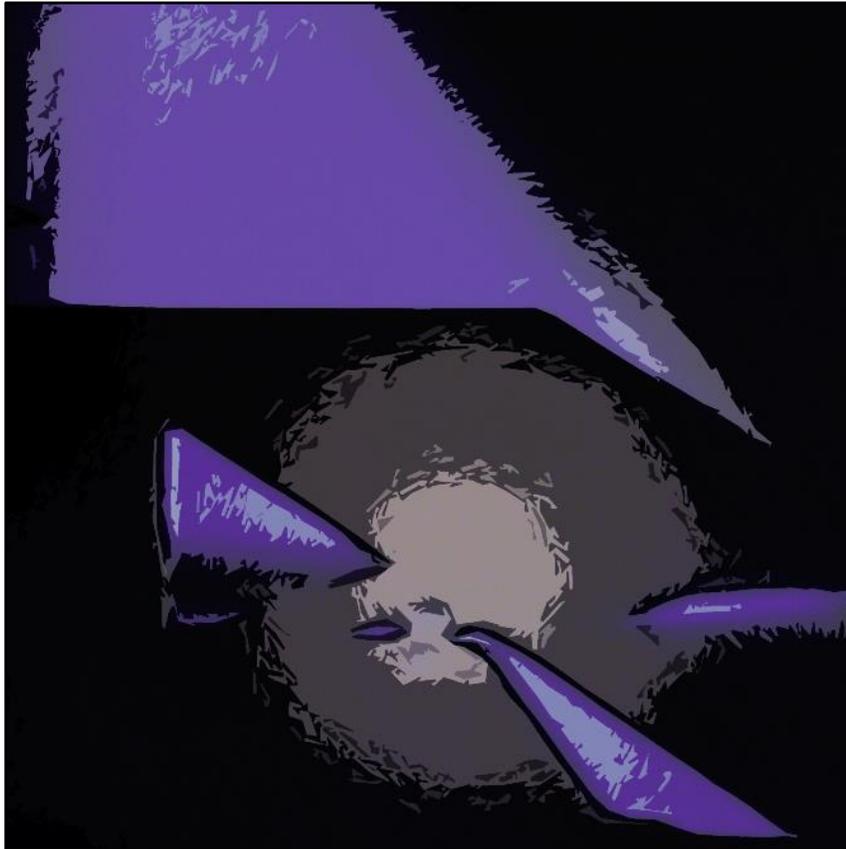
It's 8:15 pm and he makes it back home and his mom threw him a surprise birthday party of just his mother and little sister. They laugh and share stories. The boy opens some present his mom got him that morning and he loved them and he told them "*Thank you*" they light the candles on the cake and he says, "*Weren't we suppose to eat the cake before opening the presents*" His mother says "*Yeah, but I wanted you to see the present I got you.*" Then hugs him.

At 11:43 am. The boy suddenly wakes up and begins to leave his room and goes to the living room. He lights a candle and places it next to the picture of his father and begins to sing the words "*Happy Birthday to you...*" crying softly.

Household Satire

By Elizabeth Nichols

I look most forward to coming in the kitchen and looking at my list of chores I have to do for the day. I would rather do chores than hang out with my friends. I would rather do chores than be on social media. My favorite thing to do is chores. I love dusting for two hours instead of doing my homework or even taking a nap. I love bringing in the trash cans from the street on Mondays and taking out the trash daily while it's cold outside. I love unloading and reloading the dishwasher when I get home from school. I get so excited about doing my laundry on Tuesdays when I get home especially when it takes me three hours. Two to three times a week I get to walk up twenty steps of stairs and clean the litter box full of big clumps thanks to our two cats. Once every other week I get to clean the microwave with spaghetti splatters everywhere. I enjoy taking out the dog when I come home and before I go to bed to just watch for 10 minutes until she decides to do her business. I love doing chores so much I would love to share the joy with my family members.



Haley Nash

solanaceae

by Juyoung Park

there's a boy who wallows in music. who wears blooms of ink and curses like it's easy as breathing and sometimes curls his mouth into something smug that makes everyone swoon. whose eyes could swallow the world with how dark they are.

they say that he tastes like nightshade and hemlock even as they catch themselves having it, and they say that he's like fire with how he consumes himself inside and out. even if you hate how the people talk, even when you try to be impartial, when he comes to you deep into the witching hour, you can't help but think he's fallen into himself too far.

it's his habit to run himself into heady sensation without another to catch his fall, and it's your job to piece him back together from hollow eyes and the fragrance of another when he breaks into two.

at this point, you're not sure if it's obligation that moves you or something else.

(pity perhaps? empathy? who really knew.)

yet when he comes to you soaking wet, you always take him into yourself, always.

"you're too good to me," he would say hoarsely in those moments when he was lucid enough to show vulnerability, to meet your eyes with that all-consuming stare of his.

then after you pause to catch your heart from beating from out your chest, you would smile as you run your fingers through his wildly ruffled hair. some insipid comment too unremarkable to remember would fall from your lips. it was platonic at its finest. faintly bitter at its worst.

the cycle happens again. he comes to you and shivers, still too conscious of himself to cry, and you offer silent reprieve in basic touch. fingers laced. legs intertwined. arms wrapped. and every time you would breathlessly fall for that lovely expression of his, no matter how watered-down it was.

until he doesn't come anymore.

you aren't bitter about the fact that he finds someone with slim legs and a pretty smile who can comfort him in the deep night. you know all too well that he is the stuff made from ephemeral dreams and soft fantasies, and you know that he is so very easy to love.

yet when he comes to again with hollow eyes and cracked lips crying about an empty heart, you wrap him up tighter in your touch and wonder how someone could leave someone as lovely as him.

"i'm not very good at relationships it seems," he laughs as he curls up into your arms. "i'm only good at making people like me. not making them stay."

you run a hand down his back and ease your voice. “i’m not good at it either, so what does that make me?”

“honest.”

“really.”

“really really.”

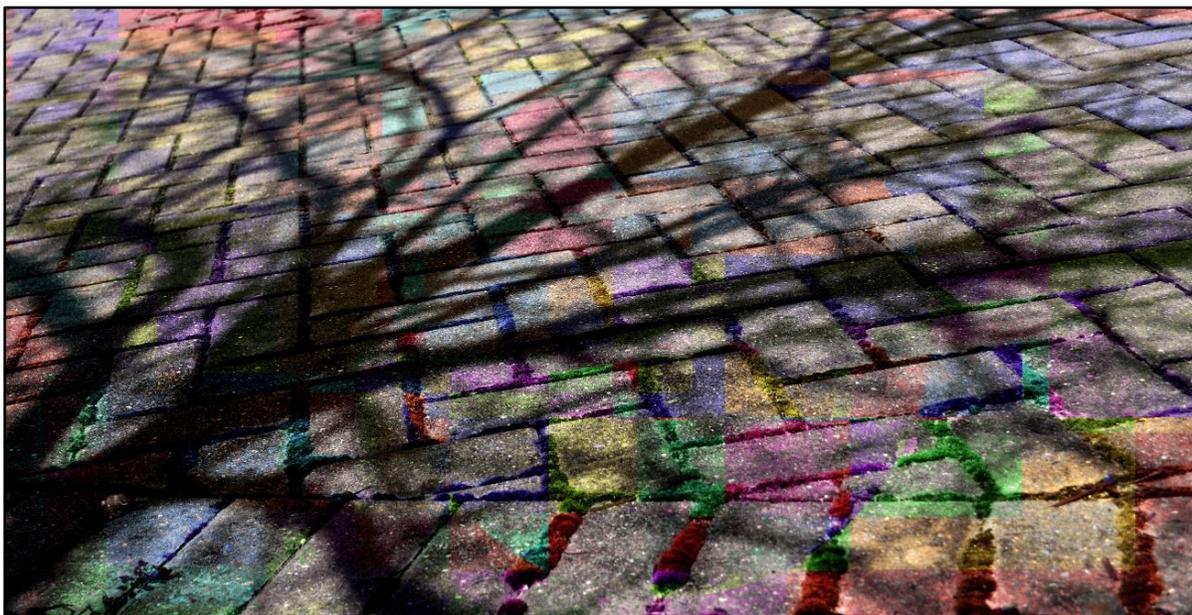
“if,” you start, your impulsive streak so similar to his taking over, “i told you that i’d stay for you, would you believe me?”

the moment he stills in your arms, you regret the words flying from your throat. you can feel him lifting his head from where it was nestled in your neck to stare at you, incredulous.

“i...i...have to go,” he stutters out, and in your dizzy haze, you feel your arms go loose.

then like a cloud of perfume, he floats away and only leaves behind the remorseful fragrance of regret.

and you feel so incredibly bitter.



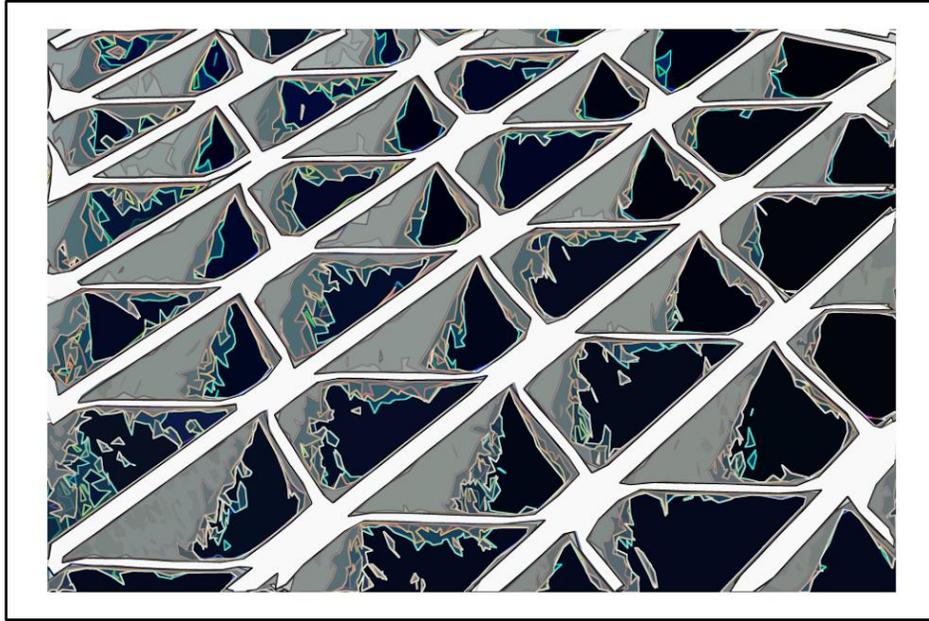
Haley Nash

Two Shadows

By Allison Warrington

I was walking down the sidewalk to a place I no longer can remember. I was nervous, I could hear my heartbeat in my ears. I was apprehensive, I looked to my feet. Bam. Behind me, I didn't want to look but my head had already decided to turn. Nothing, no one, no remnants of the earth-shattering noise that just rang through the air; nothing but a shadow, too close to my own. My neck got hot, then it was gone, only to reappear two seconds later. I turned slowly only to see my worst nightmare, the thing I had been running from; or I guess you could say the person I had been running from. I saw it, him, looked him dead in the eyes and darted. I ran till my legs hurt from exerting energy and my lungs hurt from trying to let old air out to rapidly replenish with new air. And then I kept running. In the city it's hard to run without attracting attention and I definitely know why because I must have ran into twenty or so people while maneuvering throughout the constant rush. I knew I was getting tired and my stamina was decreasing, with this I also knew I had to make a decision when to turn off this street, hoping he would lose sight of me. I turned my head slightly, enough to see behind me using my peripherals. Twenty-five feet, I ran the next block faster to gain an extra five. At the next block my legs for some unknown reason decided to turn, managing to get across the street was easy seeing as the rush hour traffic clogged the roads. But when I reached the other side I crashed into someone tremendously worse than a car.

He had a hold on me like a snake that caught its prey, and I knew I wouldn't be able to escape. So, I stopped fighting, hoping my relaxing would cause a loss of grip that allow me to escape but no such luck. A black car that presumably belonged to my capturers pulled



Haley Nash

down the side street and stopped directly in front of us, the man moved me and practically threw me in the car, almost slamming my foot in the door. I sat on the seat, knowing that it was over, and I would have to comply with their every wish because my life was now at their mercy. My capturer circled the car, looking at all angles of the street to make sure no one had seen the events that had just unfolded. When he suspected nothing, he opened the door, slid in discretely and closed the door. As soon as the door uttered a sound that verified its closing the car began to move; fast. No one uttered a word as the car swerved aimlessly through the city streets but at the same time with purpose, soon we stopped again and the first man to chase me climbed into the car, his face laced with a knowing, sly smirk. I felt my pride slowly diminishing the more time that had passed, and I felt my hope doing the same thing. The car started moving again as soon as it had stopped, pulling back into the road and turning back onto side streets that the driver seemed to know very well. After about ten turns in various directions I, for the first time in the duration of the ride could gather where we were going.

The truck was approaching a large grey building that was made of cheap metal; it was the place where it all began. All the fighting and the beginning of the most eventful and purposeful era of my life all started between the four walls of the building that was nearly fifty feet away. The worst part was that deep inside me, in the darkest portions of my brain, I knew this is where I would also end, it was the place where my beginning would meet my inevitable end. And there was nothing I could do, I was helpless; If I had any chance, I would have to save myself and help myself, because at the end of the day I'm the only one that can.

Better Perspective

By.Daja Chester

My perspective is different from the norm
I see rainbows in the dull cloudy days
I see people for how they act
You look for outer beauty
And tease those who don't fit your standards
You see a field of dandelions
And you say out loud
Someone needs to cut those weeds down
But I see no weeds
I see a plot of land filled with wishes
Waiting to be made and set free by the breeze
My perspective my seem bright
But it is not
I see creatures scurry pass out the corner of my eye
Darkness creeps into my mind
Do they like me?
They all *hate me.*
You all hate me.
I am a worthless failure
That's what they tell me
My perspective isn't brighter you see
That is *not* what's different between us
The difference is that my perspective is
Hopeful

A Different Time

By Daja Chester

When I was younger
I played outside
The grass was green, bees were buzzing
Butterflies were fluttering
The water of the river was clear
You could peek over the bridge and see the fish
You could picnic in the grass without care
These days things are different
The waters around here
Are cloudy and murky brown
So dark you can just barely see your own reflection
The wind carries trash across the grass
The sun burns hot in places it should not
The ice melts and water rises
Beaches melt away
And animals disappear just as quickly as the trees
People have stopped caring about the world
They care more about the life of electronic devices
Inanimate objects
Cold things with no heartbeat
And sit back while the world suffers
Crumbles and falls apart around them



Haley Nash

The Dutchman's Pipe Cactus

By Daja Chester

A bud forms
And begins to grow
Yet it continues
To stay closed
As the sun dims
And disappears
On the horizon
A bit of white
Shows through
The bud slowly opens
Wide and taking in
Bright moonlight
As beautiful as can be
A few hours pass
The bud closes
Slowly back in
Onto itself
It withers away
Like it was never there
It disappears
As the sun rises
Once again



Kristi Noble

Some Love Thoughts

By Leisy Ramirez Adames

Roses are red
Violet are blue
If you don't be my valentine
I will punch you

If I couldn't walk, it would be a nightmare
I wouldn't go to places that I know I'll love to see
And if one day I wake up in the middle of the night
And could feel my legs again, it would be a miracle
But only time and life will decide what to do with me.

I've always wondered what's wrong with mirrors
Some have told me that it only reflects what you want to see
I believe that it has that bad aura that you only see what's on the outside
But if you look closely you would see that spark of light
That reflects of the goodness in you.

Words are like thoughts; they get in your head and will not leave your head unless you wanted them to. Your thoughts change words and change those who are around you. You only need to think of what you want your thoughts and words to become.

I have a *daughter* named aneeqa, and she is my best friend. I wouldn't want to lose her and wouldn't change her for the world, At beginning, I didn't like her, but maybe it's 'cause I didn't know her and because I didn't understand why she wanted to be around me so much. I'm not likeable according to some people, but each time she's around me, you get that I want to be good for her aura.

If I could not feel love, what would I be? If I couldn't see, what would I wear, and if I couldn't be myself again, who else could I be?

If love was like an animal, these days it would be extinct. You can't put love out there like a person. It not something you're supposed to hear; you feel it and not with words. It is with your heart, and then your body reacts.

Pottery Land

By Daja Chester

We are all like slabs of clay
Trying to mold ourselves
To be the best we can be
Often to be better than each other
We are competitive
We fight against those
That are molded to be
Unique
But we must stop this
We must not smush
These pieces of art to be
We must help mold them
Mold each other
Share our tools to become great
We do not have to mold ourselves
Into a single creation
We can be different
And put ourselves on display
Together
To be loved
To be respected
To be praised
Equally for our beauty
That we all created
In our unique gallery
Of pottery

Bank Robbery

By Daja Chester

It happened so quickly. The start of this mess. Lying on my belly here on the floor, I glance around and see others doing just the same. We have our hands behind our heads, fingers clasped tightly together like crossing of shoelaces. My head feels foggy. Blank. Lost. Is this real? Am I here? It doesn't feel like it. This is something you'd only find happen in an action film. The sound of a gunshot rings through the building like a firework on the fourth of July. I hate loud noises. I hate them. I hate this. The armed man just shot into the air. He's shouting warnings out now, *Don't you move or I'll shoot. When the police clear from here you'll be free to go...but don't you think for a second that I'm afraid to hurt you.* That's funny. He's worried about if we think he'll be afraid. Sure he's got a ton of police on his back but he's not the one that walked in here innocently only to be ordered down to the ground like a dog and is now being threatened with a gun. But is fear really what I'm feeling now? If so, then...fear of what? Fear of death? Fear of being shot? The pain that it would bring? No...that's not it. I don't think I feel anything now. Nothing. Empty. Lost. Then again, those are things you feel aren't they? I'm not sure. I just want to get out of here. Get on with my life. I'll keep on moving. I'll pretend that this never happened. I want to pretend. But that's wrong isn't it? This is happening. This is really happening and I'm in the moment right now. This is not the future. I can't keep thinking ahead of myself. I have to think of the now. What to do. What can I do? Can I do anything? No. I'm helpless here. Helpless in this situation. Waiting. Waiting for someone else to come save me, like a distressed damsel from a fairytale. We're all waiting for them to save us. All of us. Save us from this masked man cloaked in black, waving a gun around like a madman. Is it strange that I'm beginning to think about this man? Who was he before he came here? What drove him to do this? Is he that desperate for money that he chose to steal it? Does he want to be talked about on the news for a flicker of fame? Or is it because he is as mad as I said? I guess it doesn't really matter. Like I said, this is the present. This is now. Not the past, or the future. I need to focus.

Purgatory

By Daja Chester

The meadow was filled with bright green grass, not a patch of brown to be seen as the winter has long gone now. Bright flowers popping up in large bunches of reds, yellow, purple and white. A large lonely stump sat in the middle of it all, a long forgotten tree that had been cut down years ago. She walked over to it and climbed upon it, standing tall as she looked around. The flowers and grass swayed as a gentle breeze blew, butterflies in various colors fluttered about from flower to flower, tiny white and yellow ones, black and orange monarchs, yellow swallowtails, and a blue one that she'd never seen before. She hated it all in an instant. Her throat scratchy. A sneezing fit. All the things around her were agitators, bringing nothing but allergic reactions. She wished for a moment that the entire area would burst into flames. She'd rather be surrounded by embers and ash than pollen.



Kristi Noble

Enchanted

By McKenzie Combs

His eyes are cedar wood.
A deep and rich hue.
They draw me in,
Like soil.
They draw me out,
Like sunlight.
An endless forest,
For my personal pleasure.
His skin is smooth sepia,
Sweet to the taste,
And wrapped around my frame.
Suddenly my world was all brown,
Even my last name.
Different hues and shades
Brown like the picnic tables,
Where we sat and lifted our spirits.
Weathered brick in color,
And cracking from rainfall.
Brown like his skateboard,
Brown like the pebbles on the beach,
Brown like the bottom of pizza slices.
We ate fruit in our swimsuits.
Brown was my freedom
Life had tried to clip my wings,
But they have grown again.
Big and beautiful,
And brown.

Imitations--On William Carlos Williams

The White Candle

By. Daja Chester

So much depends
Upon
A white candle
Stick
Flickering with new life
In the darkened
hall

The Wooden Swing-Set

By Amari Peck

So much depends
Upon
A wooden swing
Set
Faded with
Age
Beside the flower
Bed

The Brick Fireplace

By Alyssa Donoway

So much depends
Upon
A brick fire
Place
Filled with gritty
Soot
Beside the brown
Cabinets

The You in Universe

By Rawan Osman

Imagine it:

the moon, the stars, and an ever expanding space.
There you are, floating like a balloon in the obsidian night sky,
idly carried wherever the wind pleases.
So vast is the universe, nothing can capture its immensity.
You are small, you know.

Like a grain of sand along the ocean floor, your insignificance is immeasurable.
You are nothing but a speck of dust in the great vacuum of space,
and, like a krill drifting through the big, black sea,
you feel the approach of something much greater than you from behind.
Fear is an imminent whale on the verge of engulfing you.
What is your place in this universe?

Open your eyes now.

You embrace the realization.
Just a grain of sand? Just a speck of dust?
Ill-fated krill...?
No, you stop seeing what is around you and begin perceiving what is within;
You are much greater.
What is the eye of Jupiter to the two lenses you behold?
What are Saturn's rings or the face of the man in the moon
to all the greatness and beauty and wonder lying within you?
Nothing compares to the mass of muscle within your head;
your brain – your mind – has elevated the virtue of all elements.

Imagine this:

you are the greatest thing in the universe.
You are you.

A Breath

By Rawan Osman

“The whole story depicted by some few lines, none other than Art, can this much define.” Kamal Jindal tells us that art is inexpressible through words; “the depth and verity of Art is beyond any word.” I find it ironic that I am now attempting to capture his art, poetry, through that very same median. Jindal was right. No matter the “anecdote,” “bathos,” or “chiasmus,” I use, no phrase conveys the essence of art. Nothing imparts the grandeur and magnificence and significance of art except – well – art itself.

“Art is a breath, to a lifeless object.”

Imagine a motionless, deathly white body lying on the ground. Behind it is the contrast of a dull and melancholy gray backdrop, void of any vibrancy. And above that silent, lifeless body is a young girl. You can’t see much of her, just her two hands holding up the chin of the still head, and her own mouth pressed against the other’s. She’s trying desperately to resuscitate the man. Her charcoal jacket and black hair blend into the dreary background; it’s hard to catch sight of her, but once you do, you can’t look away. A breath to a lifeless object. Ironically, the first time I saw this painting, “Blow,” by Xie Lie, I gasped. The shock I felt from seeing this ghostly figure and the tear jerking pang that followed when the desperate women emerged from the background took my breath away.

“Art speak out the mind, which no other can find. The whole story depicted by some few lines, none other than Art can this much define.”

What does Jindal mean by story? When does it start? Who are the characters? What is the plot, or, more importantly, what is the main conflict? Gustav Vigeland accurately encompasses the story of humans’ journey through his sculpture, “The Story of Life.” Vigeland’s plaster sculpture symbolizes “man’s journey from cradle to grave, through happiness and grief, through fantasy, hope and wishes of eternity.” This deep meaning is displayed by a circle of men, women, and children grasping onto each other for life and dependency. Of course, Vigeland’s plaster people did not speak out their minds; instead, leaders such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and our very own W.E.B. Du Bois spoke out through their own art form, speech.

“A technique full of fun.”

Some of us may enjoy drawing, while others of us become frustrated when an attempt at a portrait looks like a cartoon character or when we can never manage to color inside the lines. I love to dance, although my mother would not dare for fear of tripping over her two left feet. Nevertheless, there exists some form of art for each of us to enjoy. Artist Andrew Smith finds fun in a more kinesthetic sort of art. Through gears and wheels and Rube Goldberg machines, Smith’s art comes to life and interacts with people like a jungle gym that swings and climbs with you.

“Convey a new meaning to each eye that turn.”

They are two black heads facing each other. No, now it’s a white vase. Optical illusions capture the attention of everyone. How can art so cleverly manipulate our perception? One of the most common optical illusions is the portrait, “Old Hag, Young Woman.” What you see is dependent on your mindset and how you choose to interpret.

“Art shouts the artist’s thoughts.”

Dance is the art form that speaks most to me. When I watch a production – say, for example, the Nutcracker – I admire how an entire story can be told through twists, turns, and plies. “Break the Silence,” by Mather Dance Studio, is a remarkable example of art’s power to deliver a message. Through the heaves of the body and sharp, seemingly painful movements, the performance sheds light on the issue of domestic abuse and convinces the audience that it must stop.

“All the feelings that artist’s mind has caught.”

Stevie Wonder, Corinne Bailey Rae, Whitney Houston....the list goes on. Singers have the ability to grab your heart, mind, and soul and play them like an instrument. John Mayer’s “Dreaming with a Broken Heart” is one of those songs that get a tear out of you every time you listen. Through his lyrics and soulful voice with deep seated emotion, he is able to relate you to all of his experiences and make an audience feel the love and pain and heartache he feels himself.

“Life without Art is like Death after doom. It would be like a flower that never blooms. Life is colorful and color is art. Taking away the Art means taking our life apart. No Art means only greys and dark. Loveless; meaningless; aimless would be the life without Art.” Close your eyes. There it is - life without art. You do not see anything, but how did you feel? Now, wipe that feeling away. Capture this state of “nothing,” but there exists no such thing as words to describe it. Open your eyes now. Being in that state feels like being locked in a tight, restricted chest shut by layers locks and chains. There is no photograph, quote, or painting that captures it; it’s hard to depict, “nothing.” I wondered why Kamal Jindal capitalized art as though it was a proper noun, along with life and death. I know understand that that is because Art is Life, and Life without Art is Death. Various poems and paintings convince us why the arts matter. Take for example the W.E.B. Du Bois Honor Society coat of arts. This is a form of art, and it conveys the values of knowledge and a united world. But on a more basic level, the arts matter because art is all that stimulates the senses, and what we sense is our world. Therefore, art is our world. Without it there would be no emotion from John Mayer, no fun from Andrew Smith, no dance the express ourselves through, and no “Story of Life.” The arts matter because art is a breath to a lifeless world.

Good Parent

By Rawan Osman

Unconditional love at all troubling moments,
is one of the most essential components,
And comforting embraces that dry up somber tears,
leaving widespread smiles that are the most rewarding tokens.

Unconditional love when you are most needed,
For what most definitely cannot be left untreated;
Whether it is to soothe a skinned knee or mend a broken heart,
And numerous other things only you can make treated.

Unconditional love, even when you are agitated,
Because you know that none of their actions could be validated;
They yell and they scream, making matters only worse;
How could you possibly deal with this and not be frustrated?

But you show unconditional love that you have now made inherent,
That solves problem after problem that seem so recurrent,
Because their joy and their happiness is your greatest amusement,
And you, of all your traits, are a good parent.



Haley Nash

Love me

by Molly Forsythe



Love me for the way I talk about the things I love.
Love me for the way that I love the things I love.
Love me for the way I compose my sentences,
And for the way I mouth the words as I write them.

Love me because I can write.
Love me because I can hardly succeed in math.
Love me because I am passionate about photography,
And because I capture an innocent moment for eternity.

Love me for the way I color outside the lines.
Love me for the way I hate coloring but will do it for you.
Love me for the way I am not perfect,
And for the way my mind reminds you of rolling tides;
no one can surf a tidy current.

Love me for the times I screwed up.
Love me for the times I got it right.
Love me for the kisses I have missed,
And for the times I have kissed too much.

Love me, not because you have someone else to love.
Love me, not because there might not
be anyone else to love you back.
Love me because the thought of your life
without my imperfections makes you sick at heart for home,
And because there's no one who you'd rather love you back.

Love You

by Molly Forsythe

I love you for the way you smile.
I love you for the way you cry.
I love you for the way you can be angry,
And I love you for the way you are forgiving.
I love you because of your strengths.
I love you because of your weaknesses.
I love you because you admit to them,
And I love you because sometimes you don't.
I love you for the way you make children laugh.
I love you for the way you kiss their expanding brains with your knowledge.
I love you for the way you use your brain to get places in life,
And for the way you use it to expand my knowledge too.

I love you because of the way you get your hair cut.
I love you because you ask me what you should wear,
And whether or not you match.
I love you for the way you make me feel stupid in love.
I love you for the way you come to me for help, for the way you make me feel smart.
I love you for the way you love me,
I love you regardless of your background.
I love you regardless of your insecurities,
And because of them I find myself loving you even more; to make up for the parts of
yourself that you don't have the patience to love like you should.
I love you despite the fact that you used me.
I love you despite the fact that nothing lasts forever,
And despite the fact that we are only in high-school; only tiny teenagers in this world.
I have loved you through rain and shine.
I have loved you through many other girls of yours,
And many other boys of mine.
I will love you with the intention to help you grow.
I will love you with the intention to be someone you can count on for as long as you need.
I will love you with the intention of setting you free into the real world with my words of
confidence ringing in your ears,
And with the intention of spreading the laughter you supplied me with to all of the people
that cross my path.
I will never love you out of spite.
I will never love you out of hatred.
I will never love you out of
carelessness,
And I will never love you out of
remorse.
You are beyond my greatest dream.
You are beyond anything I would have
imagined my life to become,
And you are so much more than you
seem.
I love you for all of these things and
many, many more.
I love you for as long as my body and
situation will allow.
I love you from the moment I wake up into the moment sleep takes me over,
And I will love you for many cycles more.



Molly Forsythe

The Flowers that Died Young

by Molly Forsythe

Their stems climb into the heavens and their petals rise with them until they no longer can.
Their petals curve into their stomachs, carving into their hunger while their colors fade into
their own midnights.

Withering against their observation of Oxygen, pulling their grievances into their depths as
the water no longer surges through their veins, bringing a pulsating life to their fingertips.
Life is an embrace and we are wittingly in its hairy and paling arms as it constricts itself
around us, tighter and tighter as the days seep into years.

They smoke their cigarettes and drown their veins in alcohol,

They catch themselves in fire, lick away the flames,

They bring others in their own downfall.

Their heads swing low with lifelessness, their jaws sweep under with words unspoken.

They seldom look you in the eye, their skin's shimmer flattens out with the dullness that
darkness brings.

You let their petals writhe and die while their stems suckle on any possibility for nutrition.

You prepared them only for a fight while they were well fed and now they are suffering,
grasping at another opportunity of life.

The fire is dying along with them, smoke rising from their coming ashes.

And all the while, you are watching.

You were fickle.

You claimed a presence,

It was only but a thin presence,

And your heart was just not in it,

No, your heart just never was.

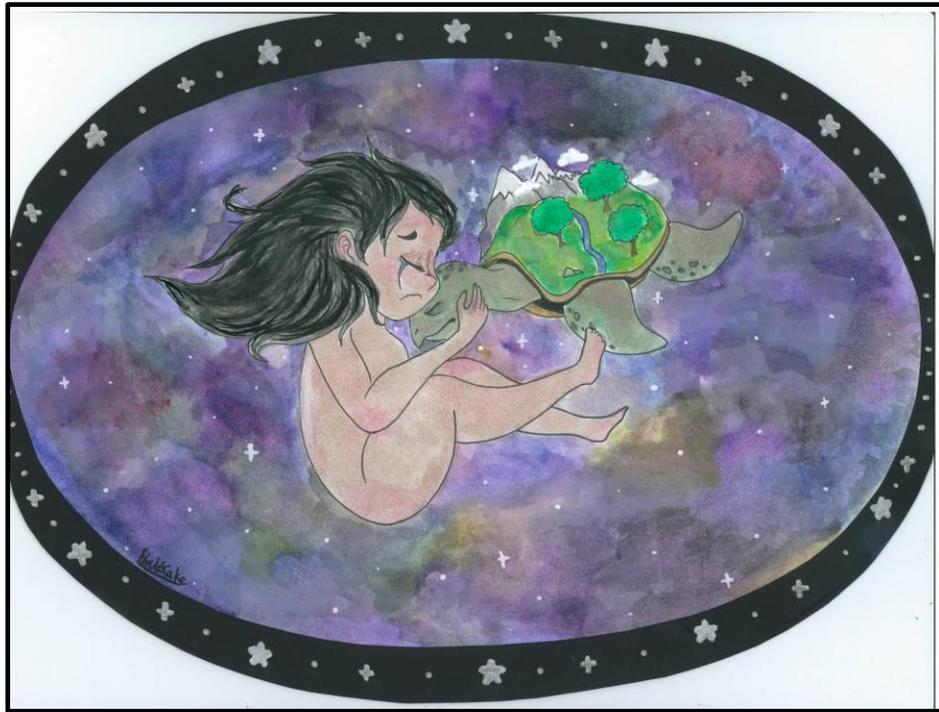


Molly Forsythe

Little Dove

By Jennica Terry

A Little Dove, who so quietly sits in its cage, trapped and revered by those who hunger for chaos. That Little Dove, a symbol of peace, unmarred by corruption, oblivious to evil, captured and left to only be looked upon as an unobtainable goal. Outside its cage, war and chaos reigned. The world has fallen into an era of Anarchy, and above it all that Little Dove sits in its small cage. No one calls upon the Little Dove for salvation. No one believes in the Little Dove. However, there was an exception. A young boy, about five years of age, found the captive Dove. He did not know anything so pure and good like this Dove, so he stared. Stared and stared and stared. He dared not to get closer. A voice shouted, breaking the boy from his trance. He turned his head to the side and yelled something back, but he kept his eyes on the Little Dove. The boy was quiet and the other voice shouted again, sounding more urgent. The boy whirled around and yelled again. Then, he started for the door and turned around one last time to look at the Dove. He lifted his hand and waved then ran out the entrance way towards where that voice came from. The Little Dove was once again left alone in the small, windowed room in its small cage...



Daja Chester

Dragonfly

By Lisa Tatum

Sunsets and flowers
A Single pond with a lonely tree
He sits and waits
He sits and watches
When will they return?
Carved their names into my lonely tree
Marking it with a heart you'll see
Nothing, Nothing, Nothing
But a lonely dragonfly
Broken at the feet
Far away from the lonely tree
No place to be



Lisa Tatum

Happy, Happy, Happy

By Lisa Tatum

When the breeze was nice
The grass was green
Not a care in the world
You were happy.
The sunset making the sky a pinkish orange
Letting you know the day was over
How were you still happy?
People shoved you down
You were still happy.
No matter the day
No matter the weather
You were happy.
But then it happened
Something broke
Something fell out of place
Day by Day
Night by Night
Second by second
You still looked happy
I could tell
I could tell you weren't happy
All I did was look at you
Once there was a girl so sweet and innocent
So happy.
Then she faded
She blew away
But she was once happy.

For Gram

By Lisa Tatum

On this day, it may be hard
We have been preparing our hearts
Our love for you has not ended
But our presence with you has
Ride of emotions
Floods of tears
We go and visit you on this day
Knowing you're helping us heal
Knowing you're watching
Knowing you're listening
Your spirit will always be near
Forever you lay in our hearts
We can see you
As you fly with the angels
Working with god to help us get
through this life
Knowing we will never get use to
this empty spot
We also know you're in peace
Pain and suffering was all you
knew
Now it has stopped
Serving your purpose here on earth
God has called you Home



Molly Forsythe

The Truth, Part 1

By Lisa Tatum

Life, Life, Death.
Choices, Choices and Options
To have them hurt you
Or you hurt them
Up and down
Back and Forth
The roller-coaster ride they call life
But the truth is no one stays at the peak
But when we plunge to the bottomless pit were weak
But tell me
Tell me the truth
Who stays at the peak of life?
Tears are water.
People are water.
We are the same
We are equal
Our blood is red no matter how it pours
Now tell me the truth
How am I different from you?
Is it because I tend to mess up more?
Maybe our outlooks are different
But how does me being different give you the right to disrespect me
Disrespect me, put me down, break me.
But when you break me don't come back and lie
Tell me the truth.
Tell me that this is life.
Tell me we are only put here to watch the world crumble
Tell me the truth
That each day we can watch ourselves die
I just want the truth
Nothing but the truth
Only the truth
Is this life even worth living anymore?
Tell me the truth.

The Truth, Part 2

By Lisa Tatum (Based on Shane Koyzcan's: To This Day)

They asked me what my pain was
I replied "it's like a thousand knives plunged into my back."
The choices life can give us
Hurt someone
Or they hurt you
Your pick.
Sometimes it's easier to hurt someone before they hurt you
The rollercoaster of life
It goes through a loop
It goes up and then falls right back down
When we stay on the down hill
We are "weak"
You never know what a person goes through
We all fall apart
We all break down
Everyone cries
Everyone bleeds
Our hearts break and our minds explode
But it's not anyone's fault when someone pops
Like balloons on a board at the carnival
Kids throwing darts at us to see who will pop
We eventually grow tired and weak
We eventually lose air
Falling to the ground
We were "weak"
I'm falling in a dark dark hole
I'm calling for help
Do you hear me?
I don't think anyone does
My screams echo
I began walking on broken glass
Every step got worse
One day I fear
I'll join that broken glass
Someone please just notice
Someone please just tell me "it's okay"
But tell it truthfully.

Hero

By Jennica Terry

The weary, battle-worn Hero had finally triumphed over his enemies. He lifted his head up towards the heavens and closed his eyes, let out a sigh then said, "I have fulfilled my purpose, now, I am not needed." The Hero opened his eyes and tilted his head down and started to walk across the gruesome, silent battlefield with his sword dragging behind him, covered and dripping with the blood of his enemies. His supposed allies seemed to see right through him as he passed them, the alive ones anyway. Their vacant, glazed eyes told him enough as they stared at various, mutilated bodies strewn across the rather large forest clearing, where the last battle took place, that was encompassed by large trees. While walking, the Hero recognized a few of the bodies, one belonging to a young beast man whose features had resembled a tiger and who was now reduced to just another body on the battlefield. The Hero thought fondly of the Beast Folk, as he was curious about them and they were the first among the many races to unite against the dark, malicious forces that had once plagued this land. The Hero turned away and continued his trek through the countless bodies and broken, bloodied weapons. The Hero spotted another recognizable body, and his heart was stabbed with grief because there, laying on the ground mouth gaped open in a silent scream, eyes wide in fear, and body contorted in an unnatural shape, was his close childhood friend whom he grew up with, trained with, and fought with until now. The Hero put his hand of his heart and knelt down beside his friend and murmured a prayer from their Southern homeland. He looked over the body and saw the simple pendant that she always wore. Even though it was simple in design and worn from continuous, it was well-crafted. The Hero reached out and undid the clasp and put the pendant in one of his pouches attached to his belt. He reached again to close the wide eyes of his fallen friend. He wanted to keep the pendant but he knew that he should take it to her family, so the Hero straightened himself, sheathed his sword then continued walking. He saw others milling about, probably to see if any of them will spot their friends, or even family, among the dead. The Hero heard a wail then sobbing, it seemed that someone found their grief. It couldn't be helped. There were always losses in a war, even after it's over. The Hero was nearing the edge of the blood-stained battleground until he passed into the forest, he didn't look back...

What the World Gains from Optimism

By Rehman Liaquit

We made unlimited mistakes in this god-gifted world of ours, but that's not in our hands because that's human nature. We can never control what life puts us through, but we can we can control us. We can never change what our life is destined to be but we can control how we react to the obstacles and the voyage god puts us through. Life does it's absolute best to teach us that the only thing we can ever control and conquer in this voyage of his is the soul that he blessed us with.

One day, I came home, went to my room, locked the door, and I started to cry. I cried so so much because the world has beaten me like Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*. Then, I woke up at midnight where apparently a huge storm came and captured the optimism, the enthusiasm, and the ebullience from my neighborhood. While everyone was terrified and was constantly praying for a nice shiny day, I saw this one little kid, dancing in the storm. Here I am so stressed with my life while this one little kid would just not care about anything and would cherish the optimistic soul god has given him. That one moment of my life made me realize what all of us human beings have become: just dreadful souls of misery. How are we so blind to ignore the soulfully perching hope and allow our minds to efface it's given optimism? We are so stressed that we allow our minds to efface its optimistic rays. I joined that kid and so did the whole neighborhood. The kids were all dancing and full of joy, and the parents would set up barbeques in this huge storm. That one little ray of optimism provided a sanctuary for us all from the storm, and brought back the optimistic hope my home lost.

Today, when I look back at that beautiful ray of my life, I now know what god was trying to portray about life to me. As Michael Jacobs said that "People Change People" is the secret of life. What you do for others and what others do for you. How you treat and affect the lives of others and how change occurs from the actions of yours and others. Optimism, and hope has to start for it to fly around the souls of our pursuit of happiness, or this small, tiny but still full of hope Earth of god. That one little soul brought back hope to my home by his one act of optimism. I want you guys all to close your eyes right now and raise your hand if you ever had a day where you lost yourself, and you gave up on that beautiful optimism of yours. I want you to raise your hand if you ever had a day where you lost hope, and your faith upon the world. Now open your eyes and look around you ladies and gentlemen! You see we are oceans of imperfection, but if we promise ourselves at this very moment of our lives to not let any storms of our lives determine the quantity of our optimism, of our hope, we will know the answer to the question "What the World Gains from Optimism."

The Green School Collection

Inspired through the Green School Initiative 2017 and sparked by Hema Bhaskaran

Human Population

Human population
Large and destructive
Growing, improving and advancing
The world population is soon to double
Synthesizing

Jake Lanza

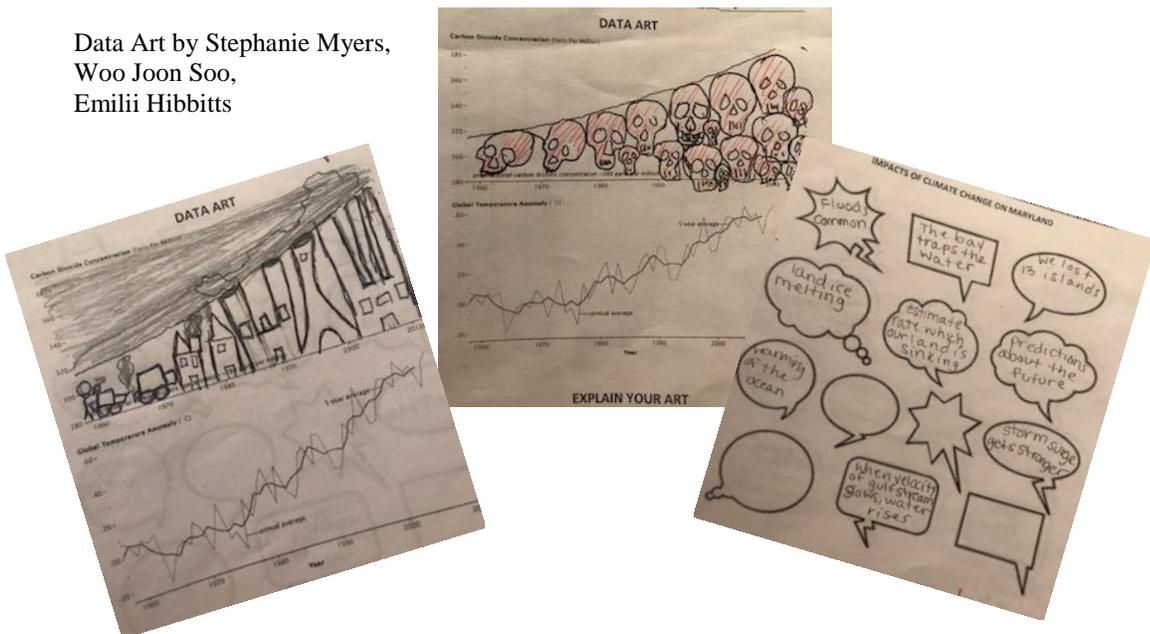
Human Population
Large Exponential
Increasing Changing Rising
8 Billion People
Demography

Maddi MacDougal

Human Population
Unstoppable, incomprehensible
Expanding, thriving, multiplying
Growing and changing every second
Colossal

Maddy Messick

Data Art by Stephanie Myers,
Woo Joon Soo,
Emilii Hibbitts



They Ain't Ready for Us

By Anthony Calamoneri

Listen at <https://soundcloud.com/user-297517568>

They night is fallin and the party's about to start
The people wanna Show
Feel the bass pounding in your heart
Playing the rock and roll

Let's get a little crazy
Come on let's pick it up
No time to be lazy to stay

They Ain't ready for us
Oh no no no no
They Ain't ready for us
Oh no no no no
Well when the sun comes down
That's when we go up
They love a good time
When we come yeah
Oh no no no no
They Ain't ready for us

Feel the sweat as you dance under the lights
They get a little wasted
If we wanna do this we gotta do this right
Cuz you can never fake it Let's get a little crazy
Come on lets pick it up
No time to be lazy to stay

They Aint ready for us
Oh no no no no
They Aint ready for us
Oh no no no no
Well when the sun comes down
That's when we go up
They love a good time
When we come yeah
Oh no no no no
They Aint ready for us



Kristi Noble

Rust

By Amari Peck

The ground was the color of rust with the expired blood of the undead. We must have killed at least ten of them, never keeping track. We were all covered in blood, safe for only a moment. Being low on supplies, especially food is extremely dangerous in this new world. I took the strongest and most trustworthy of our group to help scavenge for the miniscule amount of food left, hidden in the darkest corners of our diseased universe. We finally found a few cans of food and bottled of water for the group. “We’re certainly going to have low rations this week,” said Moe. But I couldn’t give up. There had to be a corner with light instead of darkness. We scavenged for two weeks low on sleep, energy, and hope, when we found a suspiciously abandoned warehouse, surrounded by at least twenty of the undead, waiting for our blood. It turned out to be a hard fight with a lot of bloodshed, but we found enough food and supplies for the entire group for at least two months. We cried tears of joy and finally returned to our group excited to share some good news instead of bad. If you push enough for something, you may find the light in life instead of only dark corners. And if you’re reading this... we won!

The Day My Family Fell Apart

By Kayla Price

November 3rd, 2016

It started out as a beautiful rainy day, I went to school (ugh that was definitely not the good part) then I went to dance and we did some killer work outs and started learning our recital pieces. Then I came home and it was nice I sat on the couch for a little while, like I always do and my mom and dad started arguing. This happens sometimes but it normally just dies out after. It was about the family dog for the twenty-millionth time. Sometimes I wonder why we ever got the dog but then I realize that my in a seriously better mental state. They continue to argue and they gradually get louder and louder. My twelve year old brother and I were sitting on the couch side by side as we do a lot when they fight. I know this argument is not actually about the dog, it's about some hurt that they caused each other way before the dog existed. I wonder if they would have stayed together if I wasn't conceived before they got married. Other than the arguing every so often we were a pretty good family. We all used to go to church together every Sunday and Wednesday but there was one point a couple of months ago where my dad just stopped going with us. That was one of our family events, something that we would do every week to joke around and have fun. When us kids were younger, we would egg our mom and dad on to race each other home that's the only reason why we would ride in separate cars but then after we got older and the racing stopped, my dad still rode in a separate car. Those few months when everything changed I thought my dad was cheating and I'm still not completely sure if he was or is but all I know is tonight everything changed. My parents were arguing but I didn't think this would happen the yelling got to a point where we could hear it in the living room and where my little brother and I were sitting we could see down the hallway. Then something happens, all I see is my dad charging across the hallway into my bedroom with his hands around my mom's neck. I was trying not to worry my little brother but I grab my phone quickly as my mom keeps trying to tell my dad that she is going to call the police. I dial 911 and my dad immediately backs up as he sees me hand the phone to my mom. She tries to speak calmly and before I knew it the police were at my house for the first time in my life. My dad went into the bedroom and my mom was in the kitchen getting pictures of her neck for the cops. My brother and I were still sitting on the couch stunned by what happened. My brain was overthinking everything about the situation, as my mom the police explain all of the options she has for this situation. She told the cops that she didn't want him to go to jail but because there were visible marks he had to. When he was being walked out of our home he couldn't look us in the eye. After he leaves it seems that everything goes back to normal except what we are thinking. We take our showers, go to bed, and eventually fall asleep but as we do we think about what will happen next. Will my dad stay in jail? Will my dad hate my mom? What is going to happen with the house?

The Tower

By Kayla Price

Ugh, I think. I woke up before my alarm again. Then I hear some strange noise in the kitchen, but I just figured my husband will handle it so back to sleep for me.

“Hey, wake up sleepy head,” he says.

“What? Why? What time is it?”

“I know it’s early, but I want to show you something.”

He really must want to show me something because he knows I’m not a morning person. I was determined to get a few more minutes of sleep, though, and I hear him chuckle as I roll back over.

“Haha, no seriously, Mel. Get up. Don’t make me have to pick you up and drag you out of bed,” he says jokingly.

“Just a few more minutes...” I said.

“Okay.” He says.

He proceeds to walk away but then he turns back and picks me up. I am startled, but I curl up close to his chest. He sets me down in the bathroom and tells me to get dressed. So I force myself to wake up and get myself together. After I get ready, we get in the car, and I see a few blankets he packed.

“Anthony, where are we going?” I ask.

“You’ll see.”

Wow, that could mean anything. I continue to wonder where we are going as I stare at him for a little bit. After we both wake up a little more we laugh and sing to some music at the top of our lungs. We both have morning voice still, so it sounds terrible but we don’t care. We just got married a few months ago and this is what happens. As I look over at him I wonder what great memories we will have with each other throughout the years, even though we have been best friends for a long time. But that’s such a cool thing because I finally get to say something that I’ve wanted my whole life. I married my best friend. As we get closer to the destination I get more antsy and anxious. I know I can get things out of him easily but I try to stop myself because I want it to be a surprise.

After what seems like forever we finally park somewhere, but all I see is some type of tower in the distance. He gets out of the car and goes around the other side to get me out. Then he gets the blankets out of the back as well as a woven basket. It’s still pretty dark

outside, so we use the flashlights on our phones. I follow Anthony through the forest, and I realize how happy I am that he put my hiking shoes in the bathroom for me. Then we get to this tower that I saw in the distance earlier, and he starts climbing.

“Ugh, we have to climb stairs?” I say.

“Haha, yes we do. You’ll be fine once we get to the top.”

“The top? We’re climbing all the way to the very top?”

He didn’t say anything and continues to climb. This better be a good surprise if he’s making me climb stairs. I love exercise, but stairs are the worst. I didn’t have stairs in my house as a kid so I never really got used to them. We climb in silence for fear of losing our breath too quickly. I wonder if this has been a secret hiding place he has never told me about. Maybe he’s been planning to get rid of me this whole time, maybe for some reason he decided that he didn’t want to marry the person he’s been friends with since he was fifteen. Wow, what is going through my head? Why would he be trying to get rid of me? I am definitely thinking way too much into this. I’ve been looking at my feet this whole time because I hate trying to see how many stairs I have left. Then I run out of steps.

I finally get to catch my breath as I look up to see a little nook full of blankets and pillows and lights hanging around the three walls with the last wall being a simple railing. I look to see Anthony already sitting on the blankets looking out at the dark blue sky. He waves his hand for me to join him, and I go over and sit next to him. He starts taking things out of the woven basket; fresh blueberry pancakes, yogurt with granola, fresh bacon and eggs, and some more of my favorite breakfast foods.

“Oh my gosh,” I say as I begin to cry.

“Are you ok? Did I get the wrong kind of bacon?”

“No everything is perfect...”

Tears roll down my face as I smile as big as I possibly can. He wraps his arms around me, and we stare out at the dark sky that starts to light up with beautiful light purples and pinks. I’ve always wanted to see the sunrise, but I always wake up too late. He took me up here because he knew this and wanted me to enjoy the sky light up like this. Wow, he dealt with my complaining all the way through this just to see me happy. The sky continues to light up with a burnt orange, and eventually the sun comes up fully. We eat the delicious breakfast he made for us, and we cuddle for a long time. We have fun joking and laughing with each other as we pretend that the day will never end, but it does. As we pack the car back up and head home, we sit there and I tell him how perfect the whole day was. You never know how well your marriage is going to go, and you are always scared you could split up, but it always an adventure.

Safe Conduct Pass

A Play by Myika Pitts

Inspired by Korean War Veterans Digital Memorial interviews

EXT. BACKYARD ON RAP AROUND PORCH - MIDDAY

AERIAL VIEW

It's an older man sitting on the edge of the porch flipping through a scrapbook. Few seconds later a little girl runs out covered in dried mud and sits down along with him.

LAELA (SONNYEO)

HAL-ABEOJI, what are you looking at?

The grandfather moved the book into both of their laps showing the Laela what he was looking at.

Laela taps her finger on the page excitedly as she recognizes the slip of paper.

DAVE (HAL-ABEOJI)

This is a safety conduct pass. It was how I met your grandmother.

Laela looks at Dave expectantly for more of the story.

SLIGHT ZOOM IN ON BOTH CHARACTERS

LAELA (SONNYEO)

What is it? When was it?

DAVE (HAL-ABEOJI)

Back during the Korean War, it was the USA versus Korea. During that time North Korea were issuing these passes that allowed enemy soldiers to be taken as prisoners and get patched it.

LOOKING DOWN AT THE SLIP

DAVE (HAL-ABEOJI) (CONT'D)

Your grandmother was the doctor that saved my life...

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY TENT - EVENING

CROP SHOT OF BOTH CHARACTERS WITH HAZED BACKGROUND

Grandma is cleaning the dressings on grandpa and she reads his dog tags and finds a picture inside a locket.

ZOOMS IN ON THE PICTURE OF A LITTLE BOY SMILING AT CAMERA

She flips the picture over in her hand. It reads:

Tear drops fall onto the picture and drips off onto the ground by her shoes.

TO: NURSE JAE EUN JEONG.

IF FOUND PLEASE GET TO A NURSE JAE EUN JEONG. I am sorry.

Dave places a hand on her shoulder and Jae rush it off-

JAE EON JEONG (HALMEONI)

DON'T TOUCH ME!

DAVE (HAL-ABEOJI)

HEY! Hey calm down, I just want to explain!

JAE EON JEONG (HALMEONI)

당신!

(You!)

(Starts to bang on Dave's chest)

Dave grabs Jae Eon's hands and holds them

DAVE (HAL-ABEOJI)

I'm sorry. I'm so god dang sorry!! I'm sorry!

FADES OUT:

EXT. IN FRONT OF PORCH DOOR - EVENING

PANS AROUND TO SHOW JIN EON ALSO SHOWS THAT IT'S NIGHT WITH FIREFLIES ON DISPLAY

Jin Eon comes out holding a tray with three of everything, sandwiches, drinks, and a bag of chips.

JAE EON JEONG (HALMEONI)

Why are you always so dirty! ~laughs~ We can't leave you alone for two seconds without getting down and dirty.

LAELA (SONNYEO)

I made a mud pie for you and HAL-ABEOJI! Its this (spreads arms apart to display the size) big.

JAE EON JEONG (HALMEONI)

(Oh boy) Well go get yourself cleaned up, you don't want a mudwich. (Playful raised brow) Or do you?

LAELA (SONNYEO)

Okay, Halmeoni.

LAELA JUMPS UP AND RUNS INTO THE HOUSE TRACKING MUD EVERYWHERE. JAE EON LOOKS AT DAVE WITH A FAINT SMILE ON HER FACE

DAVE (HAL-ABEOJI)

I love you, hun.

DAVE THEN LEANS OVER AND KISSES JAE EON ON THE SIDE OF HER TEMPLE.

JAE EON JEONG (HALMEONI)

I love you too ya grandpa!

(Laughs)

FADE OUT:laughter

Scholarly Reflection 2017

By Jacob Berman

In the summer of 2013, I took a trip to Israel. As I stepped off the bus it hit me... It's hot. Like 115 degrees. My deodorant failed for the second time that day, about 3 steps off the bus. I struggled under the weight of the bags of the senior girl on the trip who had simply fluttered her eyes and gotten me, the starry-eyed freshman, to carry her things. Suddenly, like a nightmare, air raid sirens shook the streets of Tel Aviv. Twenty-seven young adults, some as old as 19, became scared children as we searched frantically for a shelter. The bus had parked outside a hotel, whose door I sprinted towards, un-slowed by the 50 pounds of bags. I shook the door violently, but to no avail. Unable to get us inside, our guide yelled over the terror and the siren "Get down! Get down! The missiles will arrive any second!!" We hit the ground and covered our necks, bellies to the earth, like ants awaiting the inevitable boot. I looked to the sky in terror to see two black dots coming towards us. From the ground, three smoking spirals came streaking like guardian angels towards the sky. The Iron Dome Defense Missiles collided with the rockets in a brilliant ball of flame. The heat and the sound of the explosion hit us a few seconds after a ball of light the size of an 18-wheeler ended the nightmare.

That summer of 2013 put me close to death a few more times before I left Israel. Several close calls nearly ended a trip that was one of the best of my life. The crazy thing about being close to death is that it makes you feel so alive. It puts things into perspective. "Does what she said about my hair matter?" "Does it really matter how many seconds I cut off my mile time?" "What does really matter?"

Another thing about being that close to death is that it brings people closer together. Many of the people I met on that trip and I are still close friends even though we are states apart.

The class of 2017 has had its share of close encounters with death as well. Natalie Insley, Mr. Miles, Logan Molloy, Mr. Smith, Jack Morris, and others are missing at today's special occasion. These deaths have been a tragedy looming over our Clipper family this year. Like my experience, they ultimately brought us closer together. The concert, the bracelets, and the scholarship we put on for Natalie brought us closer than we have ever been.

These deaths taught us something: We may have a project due next week, but we have something else we must do today. Live. Live in this 3-D non-digital world around you. Smell the flowers. See all the rainbows, butterflies, and sunsets that you can. This project of life isn't a paper you can cram for the night before because, like a Portier Government outline or a Wilde essay, no one is sure when it's due. It might be tomorrow, it might be next week, it might be a month, but you don't get a choice. In the words of Mr. Portier, "This is a dictatorship, not a democracy."

These members of our community didn't choose to leave us too soon. They were chosen. To show the rest of us what it means to live. No one talks about Natalie's grades or Mr. Smith's degrees. We talk about how Natalie's smile lit up the room. How Mr. Smith was the funniest teacher we ever had. The only value to put on a person's success is how much they affect other people. How many lives they changed; how many people they moved.

So class of 2017: Now that all the outlines and essays are in and the projects are done, Go start your biggest project yet. Get out there and make a difference. You don't have to build a wall or conquer the globe. Just smile to make someone's day, laugh 'cause it's funny, and open the door for someone. Live the most beautiful life you can 'cause, if you look up from that little box of light in your lap, you'll find everything beautiful was right in front of you all along.



The Anchor 2017

Everything Beautiful