

Et Cetera

Literary Magazine



Huntington High School

2015—2016



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Huntington High School's
Literary Magazine

2015-2016

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Dear Reader,

What you hold in your hands is very special. It took many hours of hard work to create, but that is not why i find this to be so precious. This is precious because so many people have poured their very soul into the writing in this magazine. Poems and stories are the most significant expressions of emotion, and these expressions are far from easy to share.

An extreme amount of trust and bravery comes in being able to share your deepest thoughts, and I'm so honored that so many amazing writers took the plunge and trusted me and Ms. Molenko to present them right. I'm overwhelmed with the specialness of it all.

Poetry, and Et Cetera, have been my outlet for years now. It has allowed me to take my doubts and fears and rages and turn them into something beautiful instead. Et cetera has been a place to share these without ever being questioned. I loved that anyone could vent about their problems through beautiful stories and poems and never be asked to revisit what the inspiration for those stories was. We could share our problems without receiving pity or regret, but understanding and appreciation.

Visiting Et Cetera every Thursday was always such a relief, a reprieve from stressors of school life when I could be with people who understood and appreciated the power of putting pen to paper as much as I did.

I will miss them all sorely.

Not only am I proud of the work I did this year, as I broke out of my comfort zone and wrote short stories in addition to poems, I am so proud of how my constituents have improved. As editor I have the distinct pleasure of getting to read every single piece that is submitted, and in every one i could see the change from the year previous.

I hope you all continue writing, as I know I will when I leave here. I also hope that you all continue to share your writing because you never know, your words could save someone else's life. Stories can and have changed the world.

To Ms. Molenko I will say thank you for welcoming me with open arms, even though I arrived late. I have loved being part of Et Cetera more than anything, and my only regret is that I did not became part of it sooner.

I cannot wait to come back to visit next year and pick up a new copy of the magazine, and while I will be sad to see my name is absent, I will be far happier to see all the new names and all the new brilliant things they will write. It has been a privilege to serve as editor and I am so happy to see this to completion.

Sincerely,

Ann Glackin
Senior Editor of *Et Cetera*

Members

Tateana Khokhar	Lauren Feldman
Hannah Elise Morett	John Arias
Jessica Gudiel	Cynthia Martinez
Jessica Pulizzotto	Ann Glackin
Katy Dara	Ben Herbert
Jesse Stickell	Joel Parada-Aparicio
Alex Muller	
Page Montecalvo	

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- Mia Idler

What my Heart Desires

At some point in your life, someone will say to you

“What do you want in your life?”

What are you hoping to accomplish in your future?”

Most people usually have no problem answering the question, but

I’m not one of them.

Don’t get me wrong, I have a future job but it’s not what I really want to do in life.

I want to do what my heart desires.

I want to spread enough joy, so that one day in their lives all of them can say

“I’m thankful to be alive”.

I want to make it so that everyone feels like they have a purpose
and they’re *not just empty space*.

No one can be replaced, and if you’re having trouble believing that
then I can guide you in the right way.

This is my true desire

Sometimes when we’re feeling alone, we ask ourselves these questions:

“What is the *purpose of my life?*”

Is there any real *meaning?*”

And when no one is around, we start to feel sad and we start to believe that we *truly do not have any value*.

If you ever feel that way, I’m here to let you know that
*you are not a worthless human being, and
you are in fact worth it.*

If you just let me in your life, I can be your *inner doctor, and
I’ll make those bad thoughts go away.*

I’ll make all of that inner *pain fade away and in the end, you’ll be left with nothing but a bright sunny day.*

And I promise you, I’m here to *stay.*

That’s what I desire.

You see in reality, my desire is *not to only benefit me and my life;*

It’s actually me trying to help the people I care about with all of my *might.*

I’ll erase the darkness of this world, and I’ll lead you into the *light.*

So to the person who is reading this, I have a question for you:

What do *you desire?*

Jesse Stickell



- Eli Mollineaux

I

One day, we’ll sit across from one another,
In one of those shitty coffee shops you hate
Reading Sylvia Plath and listening to those lovely songs

You feel so passionately about,

And we’ll trick ourselves into thinking that

We’re okay and we always will be,

And months later, we’ll realize that moment

Was the last time we felt invincible,

And eventually

I’ll tell you I love you, and you won’t care,

And you’ll promise to call but

Will spend your nights drinking yourself to death

And falling asleep instead,

And I’m terrified

That you won’t need me anymore \

- **Alex Muller**

If Mary had a Lamb

If Mary had a little lamb, she would probably eat it on the first day.
She would mistreat it, slice, and cut it up in each and every way.
This Mary that I'm talking about had a husband and 3 kids,
And if any of them misbehaved, then they would get hit.
Jimmie, one of the kids, had a fight; came home with his clothes all ripped,
so he got hit. Mary cared more about the clothes than she did her kids.
Oh Mary, you're so selfish and cruel, your liquor no longer sanctifies
You're supposed to be the opposite of the devil, or so your name implies
Mary was a drunk and was addicted to the ale.
She split 30 days at home drunk and 30 days in jail.

(Untitled)

At the top of the stairs
Lies a dirt covered bunny rabbit,
The left ear missing,
Nub sowed shut tightly with purple thread.

At the bottom of the stairs
Lies a textbook tucked against the banister,
With a post-it note on the cover
Stating: read later.
- **Lauren Feldman**

Sound the Alarm, Judah is Burning

the steeple is on fire?
but we just washed it
down with sermons of
sacrificial saints
haunted by haints
but if you bind the
restraints
we can erase the traits
we are fated to fate by
the fates
all 3 of them
you
you and
I
-**Page Montecalvo**



- **Lauren Feldman**

Everybody at the court knew her very well.
At home, she had no friends, but found some in the cell.
Prostitution was the only way she was able to make money.
She became the laughing stock of the streets, everyone looked at her funny.
Whenever Mary was arrested, she damned Maggie to hell,
But really it was her who was living a life that she had failed.
Oh Mary, you're so selfish and cruel, your liquor no longer sanctifies
You're supposed to be the opposite of the devil, or so your name implies.
- **Nick Michelin**

Art Of Escape

If we had to be
Everything that they expected us to be
But we were lost
And had broken hearts
We need remedy to heal these scars
If so we had a way
To distract us in many ways
If lost in sea
We'll swim we'll swim
Until we find a cave
We can paint our hearts with mud and clay
If we try it will be the art of escape
And just maybe soar away
-**Rachel D. Fils-Aime**

About Beauty

Beauty is a thing with peals
That sways about the mind
Scarlet specks thrown and grown
anew-
Refusing- to be still

I'd wished to meet and tame this-
beast
The wild Rose of red
Stormy temper of pure intent
Elegance- found unsaid

One day a truthful velvet core
When lies forgo themselves
Others a rotting sprout of doubt
Where darkened seeds are found
-**Bradley Landberg**



- **Tateanna Khokar**

I'm Tired

I'm tired of overthinking
I'm tired of being paranoid
I'm tired of procrastinating
I'm tired of myself
I'm tired of being tired
I'm tired of sleeping
I'm tired of being sad
I'm tired of wanting something and not pushing my
self to get it
I'm tired of having trust issues
I'm tired of people dying
I'm tired of looking for something that doesn't exist
I'm tired of the wars
I'm tired of being a hypocrite
I'm tired of telling myself I'll change
I'm tired of changing for the worst
I'm tired of the war between my mind and heart
I'm tired of the war between yes and no
I'm tired of being quiet
I'm tired
Sleep won't help

- **Anonymous**

Life is a thing with meaning

Life is a thing with meaning-
That stands at the door-
Looking out at the new day-
To come about more.

Meaning to be successful-
Meaning to be bright-
Meaning to stand out-
Meaning to be a ray of light.

It waits to learn-
Experiencing new things-
Urging to burn-
With all the things Life brings.

-**Arelis Batista**



- **Ekaterina Koulakova**

Afraid of the Dark?

"I am not afraid of the dark, I am not afraid of the dark, I – am- not-," Claire screamed, forgetting her mantra to sheer terror as a figure jumped out at her. Claire struggled to rid herself of her attacker's grip, stomped on his foot. The figure let out a sharp cry and said "Jesus Claire! That hurt!" Claire was still gasping for breath. "Nick," she said "as soon as I stop panicking I'm going to kill you!" "Whoa, easy there Claire-bear," Nick said, carefree smile plastered to his face "it was a joke." Claire scrambled for the light switch on the wall, turned it on then tried to shoot Nick a menacing look, it didn't work, and he just laughed it off. "Okay, so it was a bad one, but you have to admit it was a little funny," said Nick. Claire did not feel amused. Her fear of the dark was a legitimate, if silly, fear. "You know, when I tell my boyfriend my very real fears I expect him to comfort me, NOT use it as an opportunity for STUPID PRANKS!" Claire stormed out of Nick's room, letting the door slam shut behind her. After taking two seconds to realize that Claire really wasn't coming back, he ran after her. "Hey! I'm sorry! I promise I won't make fun of your fears ever again, even if they are juvenile." "Whatever Nick," she said, not bothering to turn around, working furiously on her coat buttons. Nick reached out and grabbed her hand pulling her back into a hug. "Wow, you're really freaked out, huh?" Claire nodded slowly tears streaming down her face. "I'm so sorry. Claire? Do you want to- could you talk about- Why? Why are you so afraid?" "You'll think I'm crazy." Claire said, trembling. "A 21 year old girl who is afraid of dark shadows." Nick whispered, "Shhh- hey you're scaring me, let's just talk about it ok? Tell me, what happened to you?" She nodded her head, and together they walked back into his room. Claire sat down on the edge of Nick's bed and motioned to say that Nick should sit next to her. With her lip trembling, Claire began her story.

"There was this man back in New Orleans, a shadow man, but he wasn't like the others. His magic wasn't smoke and mirrors, it was real," Claire said. "It had become a tradition with my friends, we'd all go into a voodoo shop and we competed to find the most realistic hoax. Who could find the shadow man who could do more than give you the creeps? That sort of thing. It was really fun, we went into stores asking for occult things that could never exist, and giggled madly over their false wares, pointing out what cooking spice was actually contained in every 'magic vial.' Till I met *him*," Claire said, voice shaking. "He found me actually. I was walking down Charles St. when suddenly he was there, underneath the shadow of a tree. I recognized him .I'd seen him before, always in shadows, always staring at me, but until that day I'd convinced myself I'd made him up. He asked me if I was looking for a shadow man, and thinking of my game with Alexa and Gabrielle I said I was. I should have known right away, seen that something was off, his voice sent chills running down my spine, and his eyes and the inside of his mouth gleamed like metal. He told me where to find him, and just like that, he vanished, blinking out of existence like he'd never been there at all."

Nick looked surprised "Are you sure it wasn't just a trick?"

"I'm positive, Nick I never looked away from him, he just vanished, melted into the darkness."

Nick still looked unsure but said, "Did you go to meet him?"

Claire nodded her head, "I still wish I hadn't. I'll never forget his face. I'll never forget those screams. Alexa and Gabrielle came with me, and they didn't come out. He was ready for us. I had never told him any of our names, but somehow he knew. He was *angry* so *angry*. He'd wanted me to come alone he said. Back then I wasn't afraid of the dark, I was hardly afraid of anything, so I told him to shove off and that if I knew my friends weren't welcome I wouldn't have come at all. He hit me, flung me against the wall of his shop and grabbed hold of Alexa and Gabrielle. His eyes and the inside of his mouth glowed a bright red like they were on fire. Alexa and Gabrielle screamed and he seemed to absorb the sound, lips thrown open to absorb their *terror*, and then the screaming stopped and they were just *dead*. I ran, bolted out of the shop onto the street he followed me, but stopped at the edge of the house's shadow, like he was afraid of the light. He apologized, demanded I come back, said it was my own fault that I'd brought them. He told me to just come back and everything would be ok, swore he wouldn't hurt me. He said he wanted to bring me to his home. I thought I was safe outside that shadow, so I shouted at him and told him I'd never be what he asked, and he just chuckled under his breath, and vanished. He grabbed my arm from

behind and I turned to face him. His arm, which was stretched into the sunlight, while the rest of his body was in shade, was smoking. He pulled me back towards him and whispered in my ear 'Claire Carson, 16, 3 siblings, Jess 8, Haley 12, and Jonah 13. Divorced parents, lives with her mother at 12 Newberry St.' He threw me forward out of the shadow and said, 'Anywhere darkness is, I am. It doesn't matter where you go I will find you, and then you'll regret that you ever tried to run.' I ran home and kept the lights on all night. The police found Alexa and Gabrielle the next day, but the shadow man was nowhere in sight. My mom was seriously freaked out, and telling her that I'd noticed some guy watching us was enough to make my mom pack up and move. Then I came here, but I still see him everywhere, and it's not my imagination, or PTSD, or whatever else you want to call it. He's still coming for me, and he already knows where I am."

Claire shuddered visibly as she breathed out, trying to force the terrible memories and fear out along with her hot breath. For a few moments they sat in silence, Nick looking shocked, and Claire forcing herself to regain her composure. Suddenly Nick's laughter rang out, his face melting into a smile.

"I have to say Claire-bear I didn't think you had it in you, but that story- you almost had me! I know you don't like me scaring you, but come on, don't you think that was a little much? I mean- just how long did it take you to come up with a story like that?!?" Nick shook his head, "And here I am thinking you're so sweet."

Nick reached over to pull Claire into his arms, still laughing, expecting to find her with a similar goofy smile plastered to her face. There was none, Claire was silently crying.

Nick startled, "Whoa, you really think this happened?" He pushed Claire's hair behind her ear and gently touched her face, in a much softer voice he said, "Claire, it's not real. There are no monsters who hide in the dark. No one is coming for you, and even if they were I wouldn't let them take you. No one will take you away from me, ok?"

Claire shook her head, "You won't be able to stop him, he's not normal Nick. He's not human, he is real, and he is coming."

Nick grabbed her hand and looked into her eyes, in a firm voice he said, "It's not real Claire. You're acting crazy."

Claire whispered, her voice shaking with tears, "It is Nick, I swear. I swear, it is. Believe me. Please."

Suddenly, every light in the house went out. Claire screamed, and began to search frantically for her phone, any source of light.

"Nick, my phone, where is it- Nick please. Please it's him, it has to be him. I need light."

Nick reached out blindly toward her, grabbing her arm to try and calm, "Claire, come on, you're scaring me. Ok? It was probably just the fuse."

Claire didn't stop searching and shouting. Nick found her phone and handed it to her. Claire turned on the flashlight, and pointed it straight into his eyes, and then she screamed.

Her voice was frantic, "Nick! Move! He's right behind you!"

Nick whirled around, and nearly fell to his knees from the terror. Standing behind him was a man exactly as Claire had described in her story. Underneath the harsh bright light the shadow man's skin gleamed and his body smoked. Suddenly he vanished, just to reappear behind Claire.

"Miss me? It's been a long time for you hasn't it?" the shadow man whispered in her ear.

Claire whirled around and pointed her flashlight back into his face. He vanished again and appeared between Nick and her a second later.

"Now, now, Claire that's not a very nice way to greet an old friend," he said, his deep raspy voice dripping with false sincerity.

Claire focused in on him and again pointed her flashlight. He vanished and then was back again in a new spot.

"Stop that now! All you're doing is irritating me. I can stand a little light for a while. Now, stop." The shadow man stepped forward and plucked phone out of Claire's hands proving his point. He said, "I already told you, I have no intention to harm you. Now be a good girl and come along."

The shadow man grabbed her arm and began to fade out of reality, taking Claire with him.

“NO!” Nick screamed and pulled out his phone, sending his own beam of light out at the man.

The shadow man hissed in pain and dropped Claire’s arm, and focused on Nick. Claire breathed out a short lived sigh of relief, happy to still be in Nick’s room instead of wherever the man had intended to take her. She looked down, and stared in shock at the five new cuts on her arm where the man had been holding her. His grip had been way too hard, his hands way too sharp. Even though he appeared to be made of skin and sinew, there had been absolutely nothing soft and fleshy about his grip.

Claire looked up and saw the shadow man walking toward Nick. Despite the obvious pain the light was causing him, the shadow man pressed forward toward a retreating Nick. Nick let out a shout of fear as his back hit the wall and he realize he was cornered. Claire grabbed her phone and pointed it at the man. She rushed forward and grabbed Nick’s hand pulling him out of the corner and out of the room. Together they flew down the stairs Claire pointing her light forward and Nick pointing his light behind, trying to keep the shadow man at bay.

When they reached the end of the stairs Claire panted out, “Nick- the fuse- where is it?” Nick replied, “The basement, we have to turn it back on.”

Claire shook her head, “No that’s not enough, he can just disappear before it does any real harm. We have to trap him first.”

Nick nodded his head in agreement, “You’re right, but how?”

Nick flashed his light across the room as the man appeared again, he disappeared again leaving only smoke behind.

“I can’t say, he’s too close, he might hear, but we have to use me as bait. I’ve seen him flash out in less than a second, but when he was holding onto me he went slow enough that you were able to stop him. It obviously takes more work,” said Claire.

Nick grabbed her arm as she turned toward the basement, “Claire,” he said his voice grave, “If I’m going to let you do this- you have to promise me that you’re not going to throw your life away. That as soon as he’s trapped you’re going to walk away.”

Claire shook him off and absentmindedly nodded her head, “Yeah of course.”

Nick looked scared, “Claire, please, promise me.”

She looked him in the eye, but did not answer, and finally wrenched herself free of his grasp.

“The power box,” she said, “Nick please just get there.”

She ran up the stairs, away from the basement. The shadow that had been bouncing along the wall, bobbing and hiding from their lights, followed her. Nick wanted to shout, or to warn her, but he remembered what Claire had asked and with a frustrated yell ran down to the basement.

Claire scoured Nick’s room looking for something, anything that would slow him down. She had to hold him till the lights turned on. She searched under the bed and breathed a sigh of relief when her hands came into contact with rope. Careful to keep her flashlight chasing the shadow, so that the man couldn’t appear, she sat down and went to work.

Nick ran as fast as he could. He pushed his way into the crawlspace, and looked for the power box, just praying that Claire had bought enough time, that she was still there, that she wasn’t trying to give herself up. Nick heard a guttural scream of pain and his heart stopped as it took every ounce of will he had to not go running toward the voice, because the scream had been Claire’s.

Claire was cornered, her left arm stuck behind her by the bed, her only escape, covered by the shadow man. Claire held out her flashlight, keeping him back for as long as possible, Come on Nick, please, she plead in her mind. The shadow man kept coming. He was on her. He took her phone and crushed it in his metal, inhuman hand, and all light was gone. She fought not to scream, trying to keep her terror inside and deny this inhuman beast the satisfaction of feeding on her fear. He grasped her arm and began to shimmer out of existence, taking Claire with him. She screamed, and suddenly he stopped. It hadn’t worked. Claire looked down at her left wrist and smiled, he couldn’t transport her when she was bound to something



- Tateanna Khokar

as heavy as the bed. The shadow man, unaware of the cause of his failure, let out a frustrated scream and tried again and again, cursing under his breath that he needed more power.

“Why won’t it work!” he screamed, “I’ve transported convicts twice your size across a galaxy, why can’t I take YOU!”

Claire smirked, proud of her handiwork as she looked down at his hand on her arm, she stayed limp, trying to appear defeated until, suddenly, the lights flicked on. The light was far brighter than her flashlight had been, and immediately the shadowman began writhing in pain. As he hit the floor, he looked towards her, and she saw his gaze narrow on her bound wrist. He let out a scream of outrage, and began attempting to transport. Claire latched onto his arm, holding on for dear life as his artificial skin blistered and burned, peeling away to reveal hot metal. With all her strength she strived to keep him anchored, make him endure the light until he was stopped. Realizing her intention, the shadow man screamed and reached out toward the bond keeping them both anchored. With his sharp finger, metal now completely revealed he cut the bond.

Claire screamed and reached frantically toward the bed, trying to use her own hands as her anchor. The shadow man wrenched it away and held it in his own hand, renewing his attempts at teleport. This time, he was met with no more than the usual resistance and Claire let out a pitiful cry as she realized this was the end. Claire heard a shout, and looked to see Nick in the doorway running towards them. He threw his own weight onto the shadow man, and screamed as the metal burned his body. Together they held the shadowman pinned as he smoked, and burned, and writhed, and finally stopped moving.

Together they realized him, and with a shout of joy Claire and Nick fell into each other’s arms. Claire’s hair was charred and burnt, her skin blistered, but her smile was radiant. They’d won, and she no longer had any reason to be afraid of the dark.

Slowly she stood up and walked toward the empty suit of metal that had been the shadow man. She stared at it, trying to fit the puzzle pieces together, and just wishing that she could know the truth of what had happened. Why exactly had the metal man wanted her?

“Where do you think it came from?” said Nick.

"I don't know." Claire replied, "I may never know, but it's alright; it's over."

The man had talked about transporting across galaxies. He could have been from anywhere, maybe even anytime. Trying to find an answer would drive anyone mad. Claire was happy enough to know he'd come from far away, and that he wasn't coming back. It was enough to know that she and Nick were safe, the rest, if it was meant to, would become clear later.

Claire nudged the metal suit with her toe and turned to face Nick. Even as they stood there talking, the suit was slowly dematerializing. The light was washing away all the traces of the nightmare that the two of them had just endured. Claire walked toward Nick and took his hand in her own.

Smiling, she said to him, "I am not afraid of the dark."

- **Ann Glackin**

Stuck

Imagine choosing between chocolate or oreos?

You’re stuck.

Imagine choosing to be the shy or bold kid to the new person at school.

You’re stuck.

Are you ying or yang?

I don’t think you know, you’re stuck.

Choosing right or wrong, you get stuck.

That’s me between both of you two.

I’m stuck.

-**HannahElise Morett**

My Home Away from Home

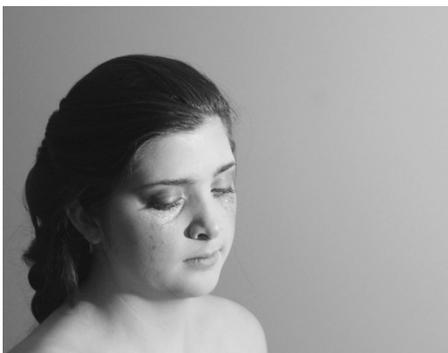
There had always been something so beautiful about Ireland. I'm always amazed by it, from the rolling dark green hills of Kerry to the cobblestone streets of Galway. Across the street from my grandfather's cottage, you can see the ruins of a castle; it's most beautiful at sunset, if you wake up early enough to see its silhouette against the paling sky. The natural sights are unbelievable. Upon seeing the Cliffs of Mohr for the first time, I remember feeling so strangely insignificant. The sheer drop of the grassy cliffs down to the crashing indigo sea is enough to leave someone in awe. For me, a trip to the Emerald Isle is more than sightseeing. Some of my favorite memories are of my time spent in Dublin. A walk down Grafton Street allows one to feel the hubbub of being in such a cultured city. The buskers fill the streets with music, giving you know choice but to throw a Euro or two into their open guitar cases. A walk down the pier of Dun Laoghaire on the other side of the city can be so peaceful. The feeling becomes one of a small seaside community instead of Ireland's capital city. I don't think there's an American equivalent to the city of Dublin, so it's nearly impossible to really explain the feeling it gives me.

Ireland has always given me a feeling of home. I feel most at home in my grandfather's home in Cork. About four years ago, I slept in the bedroom that used to be my mother's. It was a strange feeling; I was sleeping in the bed she had when she was my age. I was using her closet, her bed, her home. I found a picture of her taped inside of the closet door once, a school photo from when she was around fourteen. I could've sworn it was a picture of me. Family picture line the walls, and cover any available surfaces. Pictures of my grandparent's world travels, their seven children, and their grandchildren. From riding elephants in India to weddings to graduations, their lives are plastered through their home. It's easy to forget that I'm so far from home while I'm there. I suppose it's because you can't help but feel welcome and loved there.

My grandfather's cottage in Kerry is no exception to this feeling. I always look forward to our stay in the little town of Glenbeigh. The village, complete with a hotel, two pubs, a church, and a single convenience store may seem like the most uninteresting place in the world. But the bubbling creek behind the cottage, the rolling hills dotted with sheep, and the crashing waves of Rossbeigh beach just around the corner make Glenbeigh so beautiful. I remember walking to the beach with my cousins one day in July of last year. It was cool and windy, with showers of rain. Naturally, this did nothing to stop the Irish from getting on with their day. We sat atop the towering dunes, overlooking the crashing waves of the Atlantic Ocean. As my grandfather's Yorkie chased the horses galloping down the beach, we ate our makeshift picnic and just took everything in. The spray of the salty sea against the smell of moist peat has the power to take me back to that beach on that day in July.

I like to think that, if the weather was nicer, everyone would want to live in Ireland. (Although, I suppose the constant rain is what makes the landscape so beautiful and lush). It's always been a part of my life, so it's hard for me to comprehend how so many people have never been there before. How can someone not know the sight of the emerald hills climbing up into the horizon? How can someone not know the sound of a busker in Dublin, with a raw voice accompanied by a guitar against the rush of the city crowd? This place I call home, the little green island across the ocean with its cities and music and castles and cliffs is the most beautiful place I've ever seen. And I'm so happy that my family calls it home.

- **Katy Dara**



- **Brianne Neira**



- **Aaron Feltman**

Hully Gee

If shock to failure is a mere "hully gee,"
If in a bar you, like to spend
your day to day,
If by yourself, instead of company,
you prefer to be,
Then surely not long from now, in the
ground you will lay.

-**Jackson Kent**

Loneliness and Air

There is nothing left
It is only you and you alone who continue on
Over mountains you cannot reach
Feeling the emptiness all around
Watching your past slip away
Saying good-bye for the final time
Knowing you may never return
Wearing your sorrow upon your brow
Letting the whole world feel your pain
Expecting nothing in return
When suddenly the world reaches for you
Not ready to let you go
The grass becomes your anchor
The branches of a tree your safe haven
When you yourself are at your lowest you feel all that is
invisible
All the impossible possibilities waiting beneath your feet
In this beautiful world you are not ready to leave
Every falling leaf is important
Every flower you pass the sweetest thing you've ever seen
And for the first time you feel truly together
Only when you are completely lonely
The mountains are not a threat but a challenge
A hope
You have places to go
And you have never been more alone
But somehow you cannot care
There is something beautiful between loneliness and air.

- **Ann Glackin**

The Squirrel & the Girl

A girl with rabies was once caught in a trap one late afternoon, because she had gotten too close to her ex-boyfriend's house; where they slaughtered horses. The girl was very hungry but there was no reason she had to sneak in and steal a live horse to eat. A squirrel was walking down the street one day, after the Giants had lost against the Jets because of luck. The girl said to the squirrel "I was on my way to eat a horse, but then I got caught in this trap." Then the girl told the squirrel that if he got her out of the trap, she would cook some squirrel with horse but told him she wasn't going to cook him. The squirrel was smart enough to not get tricked so he didn't help her. The squirrel also saw that foam was coming out of the girl's mouth and he didn't want to get rabies so he ran away as fast as he could.

The squirrel quickly went to tell the authorities. When the authorities came they got the animal control to get her. They tested her for rabies, when she came out positive for rabies they put her in the pound.

The squirrel was given a Nobel Peace Prize for his brave act by Donald Trump; who was the richest squirrel, the mayor of Goatsville and was also secretly a hair stylist. The girl was put down by the Animal Department and the ex-boyfriend was eaten by his horses. After that the mayor built a tower for all the citizen squirrels of Goatsville and they all called it Trump Tower and Mr. Trump said it was HUGE. The good deserve rewards.

- **Kenny Flores**

The Art of Sandwich Making

The peanut butter and jelly sandwich; a classic throughout time. Everyone has his or her own way of making it. Perhaps you prefer bananas in the sandwich. Maybe you are one of those indecisive types who have to use both grape and strawberry jelly. Maybe you're one of those people who feel pity for the much unloved chunky peanut butter, so you put it in the sandwich instead of the creamy kind, even though you have braces and maybe eating nuts is a bad idea. Whatever is added to the mix, one thing stays the same. And that is the love between the bread.

So, in case you've been living under a rock, or maybe on your own for the first time and have no idea what you can afford for dinner, here are the instructions for making an incredible peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

For starters, you'll need some supplies. Go to the utensils drawer and pull out your handy dandy knife. This little baby is going to be your best friend for the next ten minutes. Go to wherever you keep your dinner plates and grab one of those as well.

Now for the sandwich itself. Start by choosing your bread. It can be County White, or Whole Wheat; you could have a party and choose Multi-Grain instead. Whichever suits your fancy, take out two slices and lay them side-by-side on the plate. Dig to Narnia through your fridge until you find that killer low calorie grape jelly from the café down the block. Pop it open and use the knife to spread an even amount on one slice of bread. Wipe the knife along the edge of the jar's opening to clear away any leftover goop, and then close the jar and put it back where you found it.

Next comes the peanut butter. Hopefully at this point in your life you know what kind you prefer - if you've got a nut allergy, I'd recommend the *no* type. Safety first, here in the kitchen of dreams. Take that P.B. and your old buddy, Mr. Knife, and let them do the tango across the dance floor of bread slice number two. Once that's done you can close the peanut butter and send it back from whence it came...as in, the drawer.

Now the next part is tricky, so feel free to read this more than once. Pick up both pieces of bread in opposite hands. The aforementioned toppings should be face up and your bread should be tilted in the same direction, with the curved part on top. Now, count to three and hear the crowd roar as you clap the bread together and scream like nobodies' business. Just kidding, don't scream. But hopefully you did the slapping thing, and you have achieved the goal of making a sandwich.

Lay the completed sandwich back on the plate, and... wait! Did I say completed? Whoops, I lied. You still have to cut that smug looking sandwich. Show it who's boss. Now if you still have that knife I'd recommend picking it up and slicing vertically down the middle. Feel free to go rustic and just use your hands. Whatever holds your fancy. But once that baby is cut, congratulations! You've succeeded in creating an American classic. Clap for yourself; take a bow, or two or three. The kitchen loves you and now the food of the world respects you.

- Lauren Feldman



- Tateanna Khokar

Perception

They say there's a fine line for everything...

How fine? We'll never surely know.

We make it from what I understand.

Some lines see and cross,
some more difficult. Like the line
that separates reality and imagination.

What exactly is the difference though?
Who's to say that the Silent Hill
doesn't exist?

Who's to judge that typing at a desk all day
is reality?

No one can ever tell you the difference.
Ever.

Sometimes though, I feel like we can all
visit that place where we get lost
within our thoughts for hours and just
see where it takes us.

Who's knows where you'll go.

I don't. I'm not one to judge.

- John Arias

Power of a Story

I have always been addicted to the written word and its capacity to make me feel. Loved the emotional rush that came along with turning the pages of my favorite book. How I came to love reading is a mystery to me. I cannot remember a day when I did not long to hold a story in my hands and bring new words into my heart. What spurred my desire to be a storyteller, on the other hand, is much easier to identify.

My upbringing has been far from atypical: I live in a nice neighborhood with three older siblings and two parents who love each other. I attend a normal school five days a week, make friends, lose them, and start over again. So, my upbringing has been far from atypical - in all ways but one. On holidays and many a winter weekend my ordinary upbringing becomes something extraordinary as my family of six transforms into a family of over fifty, joining together with my numerous, aunts, uncles, and first cousins.

Winter weekends with my family are spent in the Adirondacks at my Grandma's family ski home. The one hundred year old house with dozens of beds serves as a rendezvous point for family members, drawing them together from across the country. Dinner at the house is always the best part of our visits. Assembled family members will gather around one extremely long dining room table and voices will rise up in between mouthfuls of hot food to tell stories.

Listening to my family's stories is always my favorite part of each trip. They tell stories of first encounters; with love, loss, adventure, and Melissa the resident ghost. I love to listen and watch as their stories bring laughter, light, and even tears to the listener's eyes. I let the stories of love and life, happiness and loss wash over me and make me new. Sitting there around that dining room table I came to believe that words are instruments of magic. With a few carefully chosen words, almost like magic spells, a story of grievous loss can instantly be turned into a story of remembrance and joy.

My family was my first introduction to the power of a story. Without them, I may never have learned that I was not the only person to be impacted by stories. The stories shared around the dinner table and their reception taught me that words are a gift. That sending out words full of emotion, whether true or imaginary, spoken or written, is a way of sending little pieces of your soul to people who need its love the most. As I grow older and my own stories begin to join the stories of my family, I realize that I never want to stop telling stories. I never want to stop giving out pieces of my soul, because I always want to make people happy, with my words, my thoughts, and my dreams.

Whenever my family comes together, from the lips of every aunt, uncle, and cousin the word "lucky" can be heard. Throughout toasts and speeches galore my cousins and I are always quick to say how lucky we are. How lucky we are to have such a close family, lucky to have each other. Listening to story after story and waiting for my own turn to join in the toasts I have realized that I am luckier than most. My family has not only given me love and companionship, but a passion. A passion for sharing all the love I have; for sharing the words inside of me, just waiting to be heard. A passion for telling stories that no one knows besides me. A passion that finds its way into everything I do. Surrounded by my whole family, giving my own toast, telling my own story, and seeing the happiness it brings, I have never before felt so lucky.

- **Ann Glackin**



- **Erica Vasquez**

Heaven or Hell

"I love you." She says, "Of course you do!" He jokes. Not just your ordinary love, it is something of obsession. Two souls in a deep inseparable love, it grew to be a danger to both of them. Only by the release of death could the two be truly separated.

Lily brushes her long blonde hair, waiting patiently for her husband to finish his morning routine. Lily sings a small tune, but it transforms into hums as time progresses. Lily's soul was pure, and her actions always proved kind and true. The dew on the window slowly drips down, and onto the ground at last. Two stories up, a "small heaven" called home.

"Are you prepared for today's adventure?" A slim yet built figure asks, with a push of their neat raven hair. "I wouldn't call a trip to the market an adventure." Lily laughs, "Anything could be an adventure, my dear." Her husband says and kisses Lily's pale hand. "Oh, Lucifer. You're just too charming!" Lily says, Lucifer bows then offers his arm. Lily wraps her arm around his and they leave the apartment, or the "sweet little hell" as Lucifer calls it. Lucifer was kind to those who he deemed worthy, but manipulative and shady to almost all with Lily being the only exception. The couple's small house was cramped, and had no real room for a growing family.

"One day, my angel, we will have a kingdom of our own. We'll no longer struggle in a small town such as this." Lucifer would often tell his wife, although it was more of a promise to himself. No longer would they suffer, but instead to be free to love each other without the petty problems of the average life.

The market was only ten minutes away in a carriage, and Lucifer felt it was a better option for his expecting wife. Lily, a hard working woman, would much rather walk, but Lucifer strictly suggested otherwise.

When arriving at the market, Lucifer led Lily through the stores, and to the jewelry shop where the most beautiful diamonds were sold. Lucifer had a diamond necklace purchased and waiting to be worn. Lily was in awe of the necklace, it seemed it many ways to represent their love. Some diamonds shone like pearls, revealing a heavenly glow when the accessory was put across the angle's neck. "It's so elegant." Lily sighs in awe, "It's true beauty isn't the necklace itself, but the one who wears it." Lucifer whispered to Lily, pulling her into an embrace.

Together they left the store, hand in hand. They remained in the marketplace for the day, looking for things for each other. Unfortunately, this search led to a dark turn.

In the mask of night, a greedy man managed to separate Lily and Lucifer. Lily asked for a music box that sings Lucifer's favorite song, Hallelujah. The man promised Lily he would get music box in the back, if Lily came with him. The naive woman followed the man, and was not heard from for a long time. Lucifer started to worry, retracing their steps didn't cut it. Lucifer panicked and started calling for her, and his prayers of seeing her once again were soon answered.

In the dark called a soft cry, and Lucifer followed that cry. Down a grungy alley, in a crowded room, lied Lily. Her blonde hair was stained with red, and her white dress became pink. Lucifer was filled with rage, but also grief. Lily looked up to her husband and smiled. "We will meet again, my love." Lily softly assures, Lucifer held her in his arms. "Please don't say things like that, you will get better! You must!" Lucifer cried. A rattle was heard down the alley, and Lucifer's rage overcame him. Lucifer put down his wife softly as she store at death, holding on for her husband.

Lucifer located the source of rattling, a man with Lily's necklace around his wrist. "Hello good sir, may I interest you in a necklace?" He offers, Lucifer's answer was short and sweet. Lucifer stuck the man, the man stuck back. A fight in the ally started, with only one person leaving. The man pulled out a knife, still dripping with red. Lucifer took the knife, and with one last strike, ended the battle. The necklace was removed from the thrives wrist, and was returned to Lily. "I love you." She weakly whispered, caressing Lucifer's cheek. If it weren't for that man, Lily wouldn't be like this.

A chill ran down Lucifer's spine. He had killed the man who had killed his wife. Lucifer was a killer, a murderer, a soul stained black. A snapping feeling came to Lucifer's chest. The last words of his wife are "I love you" which the darkness of his heart distorted to "I love a killer."

Lucifer turned away from his wife, the last words she would ever hear were not a playful "Of course you do!" or the classic "I love you too."

No.

"You shouldn't."-

Lily was buried next to her ancestors, and the graveyard was filled with mourning souls. Lucifer's once neat hair had been pushed back and messy. Lucifer was broken. The dew in the morning was a tease, the smell of Lily's perfume on her pillow was an insult, the nursery was hallow. There was nothing left for him. Sleep overcame him, a deep sleep.

Falling...

Falling...

Falling...

WAKE UP!

Lucifer was breathing in the hot air, and pain overcame him. Where the hell was he? The answer was in the question.

A dark, eerie forest revealed itself. The sky was blood red, and a powerful storm was on its way. Wind pushed the air around, giving no relief from the intense heat. Lucifer's heart was racing, until it abruptly stopped. A taunting rattling was behind Lucifer, one that brought back the image of his dead wife. Pain. All sorts of pain. The hand that struck the thief started to burn, but externally looked normal.

The breath of the man who killed Lily, was right behind Lucifer. Quickly and swiftly, Lucifer struck the man but noticed something disturbing.

The man was half human, half devil.

Lucifer was taken back, unable to move due to the shock. "You sentenced me here, to suffer-" The devil-man muttered. "I did nothing of the sort, you killed my wife! You took her and my child's life away. You deserve this fate!" Lucifer yelled. The devil-man raised his hand to strike Lucifer, but failed to. Lucifer grabbed the Devils hand, and noticed his own hand was becoming like the devils. The shape of the necklace was burnt into the thief's hand. "You're a monster." Lucifer growled, the devil laughed "I am but a mere shadow of what you will become."

The evil laugh of the devil filled the air. Fear rushed through Lucifer's body more intense than any average chill. Collapsing onto the ground, the reality set in. The heat got more intense, the wind howled, and the storm started.

Breathe...

Feel...

Live!

The devil was gone, but a feeling of paranoia set in. Could he return? Is the devil over there? The thoughts clogged Lucifer's mind. A ray of light shined on a small meadow, which was very out of place in hell. Perhaps Lily was there, unharmed, happy and waiting for her husband to join her.

Lucifer stood up, and a snapping sound came from his joints. Was he taller? No, maybe it's just the paranoia. A few steps closer to the light Lucifer noticed his distorted steps. He must have been injured in the fall, but that wouldn't make sense from before. Lucifer pushed back his hair, and scratched his head. Strange. Lucifer never had long nails, and would surely know the proper distance between his hair and scalp.

Lucifer examined his hand, and stopped in his tracks. His hand was grey, with a subtle tone of red from the unforgiving sky above. Sharp, dark claws came from the once human's hand. Lucifer couldn't help but scream. What was happening to him?

There had to be an explanation for this. Lucifer couldn't see anything beyond the dead forests and the raging storm.

Just...

Keep...

Going...

The storm took its toll on Lucifer, after what seems like days following the light, the former human finally collapsed. The sky turned grey, and showed memories that Lucifer held close. One spot seemed to mirror him, although in his weakened state Lucifer was unable to move.

The memories quickly became twisted, dark, or lost. All but one. Lily.

Lucifer pulled himself up, but was only able to sit. Ahead of him seemed like a picture, but of what?

Crawling up to the mirror-like object, the picture showed a horrific devil.

"I am a mere shadow of what you will become." rang in Lucifer's mind. It was loud, angry and...true.

The storm stopped, and the light was revealed once again. "Lily, my love!" He called, a song came in response. Not louder than a hum, but a tune Lucifer heard many times. "Lily! It is I, Lucifer!" He called once again, a louder hum came in response.

Lucifer stood up, ignoring any pain coming from the transformation. He knew what he had to do. Lucifer raced after the light, and would imagine things in the meadow to keep motivated. Lucifer was filled with hope and love, he will see his light once again.

Lily wept in heaven, she could only watch Lucifer chase after a trick of hell. A sense of false hope, a fate she thought he didn't deserve. "Oh Lucifer!" Lily sobbed "We are doomed!" Her husband chased a light, which he will do until he snaps out of the trance of hell. Lily couldn't bear to look anymore, she played a memory instead.

"I love you!" The human Lucifer said, "Of course you do." Human Lily answered. Lily fell onto the floor.

Watching helplessly over Lucifer was Lily's "Sweet little hell" and Lucifer was doomed to chase after his "Small Heaven". - **Jess Pullizotto**

10 Red Balloons

10 red balloons
Tied to a hotdog stand;
The biggest is sold first,
Then the shiniest,
Then the reddest.

The remaining seven all look the same;
Nobody buys them.

A week passes;
The balloons have deflated.
They are thrown in the trash.

-**Lauren Feldmen**



- **Katie Giambrone**

Goodbye, Winter. Hello, Spring.

Every year around this time, huge changes begin to occur
As the Earth gets warm, there's an end to snowstorms,
And we say, "Goodbye, Winter!"

Gone are the days below freezing. Winter coats are in the past.

No more ice and no more snow – we can finally see the grass!

Although it's still a little chilly, and we never know what the weather could bring,

The ground has thawed, and we should applaud as we shout, "Hello, Spring!"

The flowers have begun blooming with their petals purple, pink, and red;

Rather than giant snow banks, flowers fill our gardens instead.

Birds are chirping, bees are buzzing, and ladybugs have returned.

Animals emerge from hibernation for the fresh air that they've earned.

People like to spend more time outside with picnic baskets in their hands

Unless of course, unfortunately, April showers disrupt their plans.

And who could forget the most important part of spring? AP exams and SATs!

Students often miss the rest of these changes because they're lost in their studies.

Everyone agrees that all this work can be a bummer,

But just remember it will get better because after spring comes summer!

- **Caitlin Knowles**

The Ring

I was given to you in late March;
It had been a cold spring day,
But the love made me warm
And it was a wonderful wedding.
I remember your smile as he slid me on your
fourth finger.
Oh how I shined on that day,
Oh how we both did at that start of your next
chapter.

I was first scratched up in late August,
When you found out where he really was on the
fourth of July.
You were angry, you cried, you yelled.
I tried to squeeze your finger –
To reassure you of his love –
But you just glared at me and ripped me from my
home on your hand,
Tossing me to the tile floor like I was nothing.

He came back in late September.
I hadn't been worn for a while
And I could barely hear from my spot in the back
of the drawer.
But he sounded so sorry,
And you sounded forgiving,
And when he left to get his things from the car
You opened the drawer and put me back on.

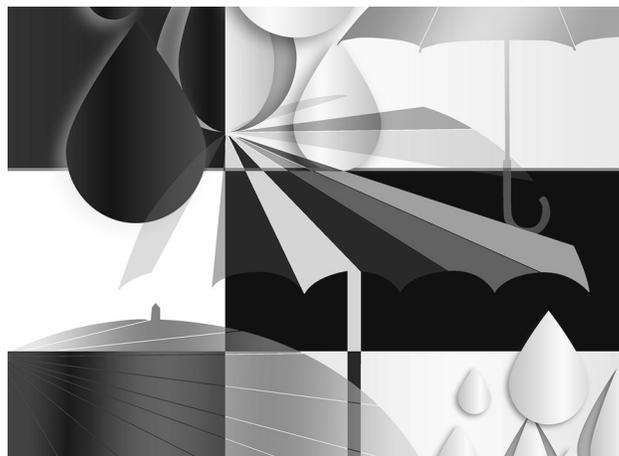
By late October
You would just stare at me for hours,
Spinning me around and around on that fourth
finger,
While he sat in the living room with his drink.
You started going to bed without him.

Then it was late December.
I was squeezed by your swollen fingers
That cradled your bloated belly.
You were pale and tired, but hopeful.
We both beamed when she kicked inside you.
He was doing better, things were looking up.

But then he forgot your anniversary in late March.
He was forgetting a lot lately.
He always smelled of drink and perfume.
Your dinner grew cold and you sat in the dark.
Exhausted;
You had been since the birth,
Which was full of complications.
The doctors weren't hopeful.
A tear slid down your cheek;
I wondered what you were thinking.
The next morning I was in the drawer again.

You didn't pick me up in late April,
He did. He was crying and screaming,
But you had slammed the door in his face long ago.
I hoped you were okay, but I didn't know.
"Don't be sad," I wanted to tell him,
"You can try again, it might be better next time."
But I was just a useless ring.
No matter how hard I tried, he couldn't hear me,
And now you never would.

- **Lauren Feldman**



- **Steve Yeh**

Shatters

You seem to be the broken
glass that's under Me.
It was perfect, but you had to shatter every-
thing.
We were fine, quite alright.
But you didn't see I was happy.
Now I'm paying for my own pain.

As anxiety opens up these doors to hell,
I'm numb, feeling dumb for trusting you.
Now my world is spinning to the point where I
can't breathe.
Do you not see what you're doing
to me?

-**Hanna-Elise Morett**

Stardust

“Hey come over here I got in the story I need to bounce off of you.”

Maddus side from leaning against the wall to look at the sprawled out figure on the bed flipping through notes of what new idea has grasped her.

“We should talk about why we are here right now.”

“Let’s skip the existential bullshit questions as I spew on about this idea I have.”

“Spew? Why did you choose – wait no never mind, we are talking about what we’re doing here.”

“Chilling, here, sit down. Listen.”

Maddus side again, pushing himself off the wall to pull over a chair by the bed. Before he even sits down the girl launches into a monologue.

“So I was thinking there seems to be a lack in new fables except for those shitty urban legends about that dude in a tux or whatever; made me think about trying my own hand at being a Grimm. They tend to be all depressing and shit so being a 21st-century teenager, that shouldn’t be a problem.”

She stopped shifting to the papers and cleared her throat, Maddus waiting expectantly eyebrows raised an indication to get on with it.

The girl picks up one of the many pages on her bed and begins to read.

There once was a bird who lived in the sky and she had the ability to hold stars. To her the stars were warm and solid, and she spent her whole life placing the them in pretty patterns in space. Each day the star bird flew among the meteors and each night the star bird slept under the shadow of the planets. But she was lonely, the only friends being the silent stars and the bird has seen the buzz of life on the blue, blue planet Earth. The hustle and movement as something she desperately wanted to experience. The bird tried to find its way down but she was so weightless that gravity could not take a hold of her.

So the star bird flew up to the moon, one of the only inhabitants in the sky, to ask for the ability to drop to Earth. The moon had always been a grumpy man, cold and tired, so when the star bird came to him with her wish, he demanded her to make him feel warm. At first the star bird did not know what to do. She flew back and forth trying to come up with an idea. Only when the bird brushed up against the warm stars did the star bird knew. The she flew all around the sky, rounding up the nearby stars and grinding the bright lights. The dust from the stars was gathered up and she instructed the moon to swallow the stardust. When the grumpy moon did he soon became comfortably warm so in return he sprinkled the bird with his own moon dust and she began to immediately fall. As the bird began to fall, she spread her wings out wide to slow her down so she didn’t miss Earth. But she was accelerating so quickly, she no longer had control. She flew straight past Earth and continued downwards, further, deeper. When she looked up the earth was just a cool marble in the sky; the moon, now filled with Star dust, just a white dot in the dark. Continued her descent still, till she could see nothing! Not the moon, not the earth, not even her precious stars. The Earth had looked so big, the bird thought, how did I miss it?

She had been falling for so long, the star bird no longer knew if she was falling or floating. The star bird thought that was it, she has found the endless pit of the universe. Until she landed.

The landing was soften by the irregular mushy substance that seem to coat the land. The star bird could see nothing but could hear the moaning of desolate creatures roaming the land and the sharp cry every now and then, tearing through the air. The worst part was everything was so cold; biting, vicious and harsh. The kind that settles in your bones and stops you from ever moving again.

Scared, but still wanting to see, the star bird held the wings together and exhaled. From living among the stars for so long, the bird had taking in enough stardust equal a thousand stars so when she blew out, stardust came from her body, into her wings and created a little globe of light.

She could now see them. They could now her.

They weren’t people. They weren’t monsters. They weren’t demons. They were just... decay.

The decay is looked like they came from the mushy ground itself; the colors black, sickly yellow, and pale, pale blue. They didn’t have set forms; some were bigger some were smaller but all shapeless and shifting. You could tell that some were maybe humans by the bones jutting out of their bloated flesh, but most looked indescribable, of forms and shapes of creatures that once lived out somewhere in the stars now frozen in this pit. And they haven’t felt warm since they been there.

Except for now, with the star bird like a little furnace exuding waves of heat from her thick feathers. The decay started to move closer towards her to absorb the heat that they are the long forgotten about.

“Weee werrre veerry collld,” they said, words jumbled and slurred past teeth-less mouths.

“Iiin thiiis hollle, iiii Ssssheel weee havvve been veerry collld. Youuu’ree sooo warmmm. Caaaan weee pleaseee havve youuur warmmmthh? Collld.”

The decay started crawling towards the star bird and latching on to its legs. The bird was bigger than them but not by too much and so many have congregated around her. She tried to flapper wings and fly, fly away, but she was They

burrowed into her flesh. They buried into her organs. They took shelter under her skin just to feel some warmth stuck; the moon dust still heavy on her feathers. And nothing stopped the decay from coming closer to the warmth. They were so very, very cold.

They nestled in her feathers. They huddled in a wings. They pressed against her face, her eyes, her mouth which has stopped her from screaming.

When the star bird fell backwards, the little like globe fell from her wings and onto the soaked grounds. It exploded on impact and start to burn the ground, fueled on the rotting matter of the land.

The scent of burning flesh filled the air as the star bird, one last time, tried to fly. But the decay within was heavy inside; weighting, holding her down. The wind from her wings only made the fire grow. When she given up hope and let her body go slack, the rest of the star dust in her body imploded and fueled the raging Holocaust to a crescendo.

Hell had become hot.

The girl had waited expectantly for response.

Maddus closed his eyes, exhaustively side, then opened them again.

“So what are we doing here in a hospital?”

The beeps of the machine filled the silence the two had created. A constant beat that barely filled the air. The girl shifted in her bed, trying not to irritate the tubes in her arm. For the first time Maddus had come into the room, she sighed.

“I did something really stupid.”

“I kinda concluded that.”

Maddus gave a weary smile, it threatens to drip off his face. He rubbed his face with his hands and looked back at the girl.

“You should’ve been taking care of yourself...”

The silence was overpowering. Pressuring.

It-

Was-

-too much for Maddus to handle, to fake normalcy when all he do was stand and smile. No when he feels as if he was the one in the metal hospital bed, trapped by the wires and tubes that fed into the constantly *fucking beeping machines-*

“I’m going to get me some coffee, do you want one?”

The girl shook her head exhaustingly, acting had also wore her out even if it was for only for a brief period of time. Maybe she was already exhausted, only now had she stopped trying to be not.

“Okay then,” Maddus awkwardly trailed off, “I’ll be back in a moment.”

He swiftly walked out the room, not looking at the girl; not letting the girl looked at him, eyes brimming with tears.

Only a few steps down the hallway did he leaned against the wall slid down to the ground, trying to hold it all in, trying to hold it together.

He could smell the scent of rot drifting from her room.

-Téa Khokhar

Addiction

Everyone has an addiction.

But when you go to that unsafe place, the hazards go off.

You just happen to be my very addiction.

You’re my meth. You give me the high of life. You come for a certain amount of time, then go like it meant nothing.

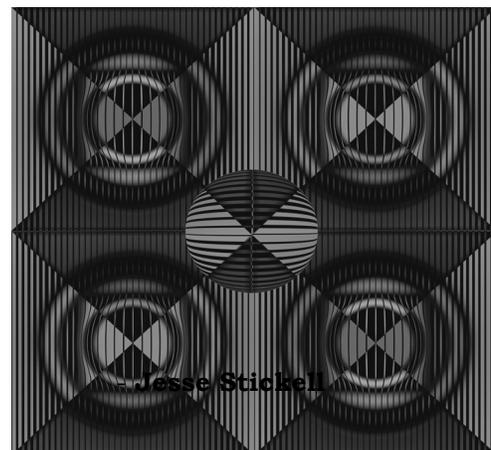
You’re my anchor.

You put me in my place, but you can also sink me with fears and fights.

You don’t know what you’re doing to me and that scares me the most.

I’m still here craving you, only because you’re just another addiction.

- Hannah-Elise Morrett



- Jesse Sticker

You Suck

I'm really bad at poems,
I was never good.
I always liked to fart around
I never understood.

Life was not a joke,
And the pranks would never end.
Life is pretty lonely,
When you feel like you don't have a friend.

I worked so hard so you would love me,
I did everything you asked.
But all I ever learned from love,
Is that I always place last.

I've known you since forever,
You've watched me bloom and grow,
But what I'll never understand,
Is how your love decides to show.

I thought you loved me in the beginning,
When it was just you and me,
But you lied to me about my family,
I wonder why that could be

You wanted me all to yourself
and hid me from the world,
You've always done that all your life,

Cut ties like they were pieces of pies.

I hate you more than anything now,
I can't believe I once looked up to you.

For whom I thought I knew
was just a liar and a shrew.

You took pride in my moments
When they weren't yours to take.
Every time I tried to trust you
It was always a mistake

You acted like I was your friend,
A lady at the bar
But what I didn't need to know
Was your sex life or your scars.

You were suppose to protect me
But you never sheltered me from the storm
Instead of being warm and dry with you
I was always cold, wet and torn

I heard your moving far away now
Thanks for letting me know
I never even wanted you here
I'm happy that you'll go.

At least I know I'm safe for now,
Because every time you're near
I always have a thing inside me
Screaming with fear.

I'm really bad at poems,
But this is how it's going to end

I hate you
I hate you
I hate you
I hate you

Why don't you love me?

-D.



- Tateanna Khokar

Everyone Asked About You

everyone asked about you
at parties
at the park
at social gatherings
I had to reply with a solemn "i don't know"
and a nervous laugh
because i really didn't
and not that it mattered or anything
you only took up 3 months, 2 days, 4 and a half hours
and 6 minutes
of my time
so why should i waste words
when i could be talking about music
or art
or politics
or religion
or love
or anything besides you
because i know when people ask about me
you reply with a hasty
"fuck that kid"
or maybe on a good day
a stifled groan
or grimace

-Page Montecalvo

A Guilty Memory

The alarms are blaring throughout the abandoned city. A thick layer of fog covers everything like a blanket on top of a child in the middle of winter. Kate has been lying on the side of the street unconscious. She starts to wake up. She notices she has bruises on her knees, hands, elbows and head.

“Holy crap, where am I? What the hell happened to me?”

She begins to meander for a bit, hoping to find any clues that might give her insight into what’s going on. Hours go by and yet she’s finds nothing. Just a church, a big old clock, and some shops. Kate starts to lose hope. Finally, she enters the only building she hasn’t checked yet - a building reading Weston High School.

“God how I miss high school.”

The fog is becoming denser by the minute and it’s getting late. The clock in the town square rings: Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! 6 PM. Kate goes inside. She catches her breath and takes a look around.

“My god what happened here?” she asks herself quietly.

A beautiful sky blue paint was peeling like an orange, giving way to the dull grey concrete. The lights were hanging down from the ceiling by one end, flickering endlessly. Puddles of water cover the floor from the water pipelines that were destroyed. The drops of water echo throughout the childless hallways. Her footsteps shatter the already broken glass from the door.

“This place looks like a war zone,” Kate whispered.

What’s only about 200 feet in length appears endless to Kate. She starts to walk and peep her head into the classrooms. They all appear to be fairly normal - straight rows of desks facing the front of the room, where there’s a wooden desk and a chalkboard behind it. The dust coats the desks in a protective shield, or so it appears. Little by little, she made her way down the hallway, inspecting every room. All but one of them. When she enters the last room, the time reads 7:06 PM. Alarms wail all across the ghost town, making birds huddle 100 feet above the ground. When Kate enters the last classroom, she sees this one is considerably different. The glass from the door isn’t in a million tiny pieces. The desks are formed in a circle with one in the middle. The middle one is soaked in blood, papers and books, as if they were weapons of murder. As Kate goes to take a closer look, she hears two footsteps. She looks up, startled, to see a child with skin whiter than paper, hair blacker than the darkest part of space.

“Who are you?” Kate asked.

“I’m you,” the child said.

The child was a female no older than thirteen; her voice demonic, her body like that of an anorexic teenager being bullied about her weight.

“What do you mean you’re me? You and I look nothing alike.”

“Oh how wrong you are... Kate,” the child said impishly.

“How do you know my name?”

No answer.

“Answer me!”

“All you humans are the same. You all want answers. You all think you’re the superior race. You’re all greedy and don’t care about any repercussions. You’re powerless here in my dimension.”

“What do you mean your dimension?” Kate asked clueless.

“You still haven’t guessed it have you? You’re not on earth anymore! You’re in a parallel dimension that would be Earth. You’re in a town called Weston Village. Now that I finally got you here, you’re not leaving for a while. You’re mine!”

“Go to hell!”

“You still don’t get it child. This IS hell! This parallel universe, this ‘Earth’ is hell!”

Kate is baffled and shoves all the desks out of the way; she charges at the child, but as she does, the little girl vanishes into thin air. Kate frantically searches for her when something strange starts to happen, the floor around her starts to crumble and fall away. The once om-

nipotent Kate is helpless and powerless against what's happening. A fiery inferno appears, filled with screams and evil laughter, and demons rises. There's no more school anymore. The village has completely disappeared.

"Why are you doing this? Why?!" Kate cries.

"You're pathetic. You're here because I want you here! Think back to your high school days. Why do you miss them so much? You said you did before, so obviously you do. Is it because you were on top? Because you were in control with your so-called friends? You made so many people feel like shit and you hurt them. You and your 'friends' judged everyone who was different from you and your stupid ways. You even assisted in Mark's death!"

Kate's heart sank to her stomach faster than the Titanic sank to the ocean floor.

"Poor little Mark. He committed suicide because you bullied him for years. Three long years Kate. From sophomore year to graduation, you tormented him. And for what? Because he was overweight? You disgust me. You left him so horrible scarred that he killed himself and blamed a lot of it on you!" As the child spoke, she grew angrier, and the angrier she got, the larger the fiery pit of hell grew. "You're no different than those mass murderers. You're just as bad as they are. Murder is murder, and I'll make you pay for it!"

The child starts to float in the air and look up as a person would during an exorcism. Winds beyond that of a hurricane are created. All of a sudden, a black shadow appears in the fire the child creates. A similar form starts to appear. An overweight man with the familiar face.

It's Mark.

"How are you Kate," Mark asks with anger in his voice.

"Mark. I'm so sorry for everything I ever did to you. Please forgive me."

"Forgive you? Why should I forgive you? You never gave me one single break throughout those years of bullying me. You never told any of your friends to stop knocking my books down in the hallway. You never stopped harassing me on Twitter or Instagram. You never thought twice about anything. Why should I even think about giving you a second chance?"

"I know and I'm sorry for everything. You have to forgive me. Please find it in your heart to forgive me."

A quick pause occurs when the child intervenes.

"Don't listen to her Mark! Think about all the harm she's caused you. She made you kill yourself!"

Mark's sentiments give way to his anger yet again and he explodes with rage. "You know what? You're right. I shouldn't forgive her. Now it's my turn to be on the other end of the scale. It's your turn to be helpless!"

Kate braced herself. She knew what was coming to her. The form of Mark starts to condense and return to shadow form. He starts to rise and hurdle towards Kate. The spirit shouts one last thing – "Revenge is mine!" His form is that of a missile and he hits Kate right in the upper left chest, where her heart is. He starts to enter her body and Kate releases screams of agony. Violently, he finishes morphing with Kate. She can't take the pain anymore and passes out.

"Finally. It is done. Mark, enjoy your new life. This is the end for both of us. Make sure you give her what she deserves. I'll see you when she dies," the child said triumphantly.

"Thank you for everything. I'll see you soon."

With that, the demonic child mystically starts to rise again and raise her arms. Everything is retrogressing back to normal again. The school starts to go back to the way it was before. The village rises once again. Everything is the way it was before, except the alarms aren't signing their songs of warning anymore. Kate, still unconscious, and the child are outside facing the school.

"You're not through yet, Kate. We still have to take you home."

With the snap of a finger, everything changes yet again. Kate and the demon are inside Kate's house. The little girl places Kate on her couch. She stares at her for a few seconds, as if she's thinking something, and disappears. A few minutes later, Kate's husband heads downstairs to begin his workday. He sees her there and wakes her up.

"Kate. Wake up baby. Kate," he said.

“Holy crap where am I?”

“Baby you’re home. You must’ve had a rough night huh?”

“Will, I had the strangest dream that I was in this abandoned town, and I saw one of my old classmates, and everything was like a war zone.”

“You always did have a powerful imagination.”

Kate looks at the clock. It reads 8:07. Kate showers and gets dressed. She then heads to the kitchen and grabs her cup of coffee as usual. Will needs to leave and says bye to Kate. They kiss and he tells her to feel better for he can tell something is wrong. She has a pounding headache and tries to shake it off, so she goes into the bathroom closet to grab an Advil.

She swallows it and starts back towards the kitchen when all of a sudden she hears something say “That won’t work Kate.”

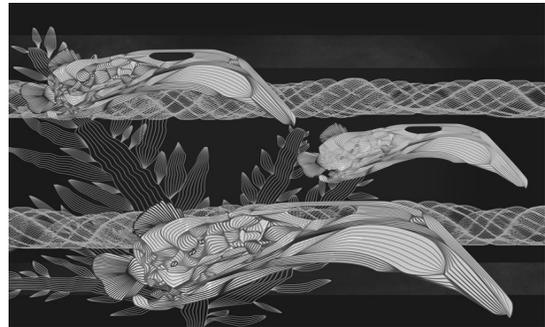
“Who said that? Will, is that you? Did you forget something?”

“Look at the mirror, Kate,” the voice said. “It’s me. I’m Mark and I’m inside you now. And I’ll be here until the day you die. Reminding you of your mistakes, your guilt, your pain. You made these choices, Kate. Now you have to live with them.”

“Thank you for everything C.M.” - **John Arias**



- Tateanna Khokar



- Tateanna Khokar



- Tateanna Khokar

The Firebird

Once upon a time, a young princess of Nimueh fled her fated future as a queen to another land. The young princess was promised to marry a foreign king. She was to leave her own land and people, whom she loved with all her heart, behind. As a princess of the land, a woman, she had no claim to the land in which she was born. Despite the law, her land called to her; the magic of Nimueh seemed to thrive and run through her veins. She could perform feats of magic no man could. The forest of elves and fairies always seemed to call out to her, pulling her, pleading her to stay. On the eve of her wedding, and imminent departure from the kingdom that she knew sung for her, she finally answered the call of the forest. The young princess gave into the pull of the magic racing in her veins and slipped out the window, leaving family, fiancé, and home far behind. When she arrived in the forest the trees whispered their welcome to her like the whistling of wind in the leaves. The forest opened its embrace to her and she stepped into it willingly. The disappointed king returned to his kingdom without a queen, and the young princess was never seen again.

A fortnight went by, and something began to change. The forest which had always been quiet to all, except those with magic in their veins, began to sing. Fairies and elves emerged, walking among humans for the first time. They sang beautiful songs about happiness, light, and the grace of the firebird. Hundreds of people flocked to the forest to see what the fairies and elves had seen. They were all overcome with awe and delight, for in the middle of the forest, at the top of a tall tree, there sat a firebird. It blazed like the sun, bringing light and banishing the night from Nimueh.

Many who looked upon the splendor and grace of the firebird came to believe it was the lost princess. The people of the land thought she had been placed under a curse. Every day they came up with new ways to break the curse, the most popular being true love's devotion. Men came from all across the nine kingdoms, bearing gifts and promises of love and devotion to the firebird. The gifts were offered with the condition that if she grant the suitors a chance to be her king and break the curse. They brought her gems and treasures. They considered every possible way to break the spell. The one thing they never considered was that the princess was not cursed at all, and that she loved her new form. That perhaps she was loath to give up her power. So day after day, they came to woo her, until one didn't.

The firebird would be a beautiful prize for any hunter, but not in Nimueh. This was an unspoken truth of the land, no one touched the firebird. This man was a foreigner and knew no better. When he saw the bird, he pulled out his bow and quiver and prepared to let his arrow fly, but before it could strike true the firebird transformed in a flash of light. Out of the light appeared the princess, whose name was Nymeria. Transformed she still kept the blaze of the firebird, seeming to all like a goddess of fire, blazing from the inside out. The man, who was a prince of a kingdom of his own, dropped to his knees in front of her glory. He begged her for mercy and Nymeria agreed, so long as he never tried to harm her or the forest again.

The prince, named Malcolm, was struck to the heart by her words and her strange beauty. The next day he returned to the forest, without his bow and quiver, bearing instead the promises of a lover. Everyday Malcolm brought the same promises as the other men, offering to take care of her kingdom and the like. Everyday, Nymeria ignored his offers. Then, everyday Malcolm would apologize and call her to talk, to be his companion. They talked for hours, and slowly Nymeria began to fall in love too. However, she continued to refuse his offer, because she could not be eternally bound to someone who didn't understand her love of the forest. Her desire to remain its protector and queen.

One day, Malcolm appeared again to Nymeria this time with a different offer. He said he had nothing to offer her but his heart and his love. He said he would be happy to serve her in the court of fae and magic. He told her he would love her as a firebird forever. Nymeria was overcome with joy, her love had given her exactly what she wanted; it was a promise that he would not try to take away her authority or her kingdom, a promise of protection.

Nymeria accepted his offer, and Malcolm became a knight of her court. As they grew closer Nymeria began to share her immortal flame with Malcolm, until they became twin firebirds and protectors of the realm. Nymeria remained queen, always grateful for the day that the

forest called and she decided to rescue herself. The princess never became mortal again and she was forever happy. Becoming a firebird was not a curse, but a blessing of freedom; Malcolm was not a restriction, but a blessing of love in her eternal life.

- **Ann Glackin**

War and Joy

War is a thing that never changes
Beasts fight over a mountain of death
The innocence in their eyes ages
The dead dance in their dreams.

Joy is like a jolt of lightning
It hops from one person to another with a joyful buzz
Always a bright show dazzling
A quick but lasting experience

-**Wilson Garay**

See You Then

They say that if you're awake at 2 AM
That you're in love or lonely.
God, I never imagined feeling both.
I went back to our beach today
It hurt.

Everything reminded me of you.
I could've sworn that your silhouette walked along the shoreline,
And I wanted to scream your name, so I could see your face again.
The waves carried your whisper, calling to me.
I talked to that stupid water for hours, hoping you'd reply.
You once made my world spin, and made the stars fall like rain
But now the world is empty.
And I'm so alone.

I've written you thousands of letters, which you'll never be able to read.
They're in a box under my bed, with pictures of you.
And everything that reminds me of you.
Memories are wonderful that way.
I carry you under my eyelids
Because you were once mine.
And whenever you're scared up there
Just know that I'm down here, and I'm yours,
Forever.

You said yourself that it didn't seem right to say goodbye.
So as I lay here,
With your name on my lips
I'm just hoping you listened.

- **Katy Dara**



- **Elyzia Mustafa**



- **Citalia Del Valle**

Cliff Side

Rual woke up and went to the mouth of the cave. He poked his head out and saw the sheer drop of the cliff. It's rocky face sprawled out in every direction, an infinite vertical plane broken up only by cracks and the occasional cave. It was in the largest of these caves that Rual and the rest of his tribe lived. The cliff offered no ledges to stand on, so the only haven the tribe had was within. It provided protection from the elements, especially the winds that could easily pluck a climber from the side of the cliff. Fresh water even dripped from the ceiling and was good to drink.

The one thing it didn't have was a steady supply of food. The only place to find anything edible was on the face of the cliff. Getting it was Rual's job. He went out every day to search for small animals that scampered up and down the stone bluff, or plants that poked out of cracks in search of sunlight. A second person usually went with him, but nobody did it regularly except for Rual. He was the only one willing to do it that often.

The youngest of the tribe would often ask Rual if he was ever afraid while climbing. "Aren't you scared you'll fall?" They would say. But Rual would always answer "Never! I trust my arms to hold on tight and the cliff to stay steady, so there's no reason to be afraid! And there's no reason that the tribe will ever go without food."

It was true, Rual almost always brought back enough food for everyone, sometimes they even had a surplus. He prided himself on this fact, and did his best to turn every one of his outings into a spectacle. Once he made the entire trip climbing with his back to the cliff for added challenge. On another he returned to the cave with the days earnings balanced on his head. The obvious challenge of no hands had not been attempted yet, but Rual never rejected the idea.

On one particular day Rual announced his newest challenge to the tribe. Today he would go to scavenge farther up from the cave than anybody had ever been... by himself! The rest of the tribe tried to reason with him, saying that there is no reason to go out farther if the old spots are still plentiful, but Rual had made up his mind. So, with a wave and a smile, Rual climbed up and up, into the fog obscured heights of the cliff side.

Rual climbed and climbed until minutes turned to hours and he had passed the highest point he had ever reached. He felt a tremble of fatigue in his arm and promptly banished the thought from his mind. No, no, he thought to himself, I can't stop here. *This feat will immortalized me with the tribe forever.* He smiles to himself through the strain, and then has a thought. *I must have some way to prove it, some token that I can bring back with me to show everyone.*

As he thought this, Rual saw a branch above him growing out of the cliff. It was similar to the ones that bore the fruit he gathered for the tribe, but instead of the small red berries he was used to, this plant had large, yellow fruit growing from it. This, Rual decided, is the thing to bring back. *A new, exotic food for the tribe to enjoy, and all thanks to me.*

But as he thought this, Rual heard the beating of wings, and saw a shadow through the fog twenty times larger than any other bird. As the figure came closer, Rual could see that it was only partially a bird. It's face was a cauldron where human and avian features had been thrown together at random, and the eyes were as wise as that of one of the village elders while retaining the cruelty of a bird of prey. It fixed these eyes on Rual as it landed on the branch he had been eyeing.

It opened its mouth and spoke with authority.

"Human," it said, "are you trying to steal fruit from our territory?"

"Steal?," Rual responded, "I don't see why you should have ownership of a piece of fruit out in the middle of nowhere. I intend on taking that fruit back to show to my tribe."

"Have you humans forgotten your fear of us, to send someone into our land? Perhaps you need to be reminded"

“You may try, but you'll find I am truly fearless.”

“Is that so? How can you be without fear when you could be knocked off of the cliff,”

“Because, my bird friend, I know my grip is good and that the cliff side is there to hold on to. With this I will never be afraid.”

“Well then, little human, I will remind you how to be afraid. Look into my eyes, and discover your fear.”

Against his better judgment Rual looked, and at first saw only the small, beady eyes of the creature. But soon, A white light shown from in the blackness, and grew until it had expanded to fill all of Rual's vision.

Rual jerked back, and suddenly the bird was gone and he was somewhere else. Rubbing his eyes to make the spots go away, Rual noticed that he didn't feel the winds that swept across the cliff. He was also confused, but thankful, to find that he wasn't falling down into the infinite abyss despite having removed both of his hands. And then he opened his eyes...

Around him was an infinite expanse of emptiness, with a blank floor barely differential from the featureless horizon. Rual tried to reach behind himself to get a grip on the cliff, and stumbled backwards when there was nothing there. In a panic, Rual made several complete 180s, but all around him was the open space. No wall to his back, no fixtures to grab onto. Rual was truly terrified.

- **Ben Herbert**

Will You Pass It On?



What will happen when my life is over? Will my death impact the hearts of the people I know or will the Earth just continue to spin? Will the moral values that I've shown to people be remembered or will it be locked away in a box? Although I'm very afraid, I do not want my acts of kindness to stop.

Take my place as their leader and lead the world into the light; Cease people's pain and end their struggles with all your might. Devote yourself to helping others because you never know when they'll admit defeat.

For the past few years of my life, I have tried to give my friends a reason to keep on living. They should not give up on life they have; this support is for everyone including the ones who do not ask for assistance. We never know who are the ones that struggle to survive are, so why not take the chance to make every life you can easier?

When my time comes, please do not cry over me because I have lived my purpose; moreover, I only want you to add on to the kindness that I have shown to the people around me. The actions that I've done are worth the time that I have on Earth. If I have touched your heart by showing you kindness, then please do not forget what I've taught you. We live in a world where this important quality is rarely located in society. Its importance had disappeared as time progressed forward into the future, but if you are able to remember then we all can move onto a brighter tomorrow. So when Death comes knocking on your door to take you away, what will you have passed on to the next generation?

-**Jesse Stickell**

The Eyes of the Murderer

The year was 1895. New York City was a bustling mess of cars, horse drawn carriages, and people trying to get about in the hot, sticky weather of the summer.

Maxwell Hannigan gazed down at the body of Mark Crawford, an older gentlemen in his late 50's, in the parlor of the Crawford's house. Hannigan was a well-dressed man in his early 30's and quite muscled, being a well-known name in the force. Copper's stood about, inspecting the crime scene as a medical examiner checked the body.

"The tongue and throat are swollen and burned. There's a strong aroma, possibly some kind of paint product," stated the coroner as he gazed at the face of the deceased, stale vomit surrounding the kisser and sitting on the floor. "Definitely cause of death. This would have bumped him off slowly and painfully."

Hannigan nodded, in a different world as he gazed around the room. He slowly circled the room, checking for anything out of the ordinary. There was no sign of a struggle: nothing was overturned or knocked over; there was no forced entry into or out of the room or house. He walked towards the wall, a single picture adorning it of a father and son. Both were staring at the camera, straight faces. What was peculiar was the eyes. Although the pictures were in black and white, the detective could make out a dramatic difference between the eyes on both men. One eye was dramatically lighter than the other.

"Coroner check his eyes."

There was a slight silence before the response of, "Both eyes appear to be different. His left eye is blue and the right is brown detective." Hannigan slowly nodded, continuing around the room.

"You can check the body yourself detective. I'm done for now. I'll be back with a body bag in a few minutes." The coroner got up and left the room, as Hannigan made his way over to the body. He crouched down looking at the clothes. He fished into the cotton jacket pocket, finding a scrap of paper with the words, 'Must contact Scott,' written upon.

"Bag O'Malley," said Hannigan lifting the paper into the sight of the other elephant ears in the room. Hannigan carefully placed the paper into the bag held out by O'Malley. He then went on searching the body. There was bruising around the neck, strange for no apparent struggle. This either meant that the murderer took the time to clean up any clues, or Crawford was familiar enough to the murderer that they could get close without a hassle.

"Any news from the neighbors about Crawford? What was he like? Any family members?"

"A gink outside said that Crawford was an alcoholic. Wife died when giving birth to his son, who should be about 24. Goes by the name of Adam Crawford."

"Anyone find him?"

"Not yet sir. Neighbors said that they hadn't seen him since last night."

"Ok Constable. Keep a look out for him."

The coroner then came in with a few other assistants, placing the body in the bag and carrying it off.

Hannigan stood in autopsy room of the clubhouse, as the coroner finished sewing the body back up.

"There was a lot of alcohol in his system, true to the word that he was an alcoholic. However it wasn't cause of death. I tested the stomach contents and it was a form of low grade varnish. That's why he suffered from gastric bleeding, causing the bruising and swelling."

"And the eyes?"

"Heterochromia. It's a hereditary genetic condition. That's why one eye was blue and one was brown."

"Alright. Thank you doctor."

At that moment, O'Malley came rushing into the room.

"Detective! It's Adam Crawford! They found him trying to get back home. We've got 'im

in custody, and he's confessed to the murder!"

Maxwell Hannigan gazed through the glass into the questioning room. Inside sat Adam Crawford. He was tall like his father, with brown hair and a slight scruff on his cheeks. Similar to his father, he had one eye blue and one eye brown.

He slowly entered the room, O'Malley trailing in behind him. Adam looked up, gaze passing back and forth between the two buttons.

"Hello Mr. Crawford," said Hannigan. "We found your father's body this morning."

"I know. I killed him."

"And why would you do that?"

Crawford lowered his gaze to the table, shutting his mouth. Hannigan realized he wouldn't be getting an answer. He moved on with his questions.

"Your father was an alcoholic, was he not?"

"Yes," Adam mumbled.

"Had you had enough? Why kill him now if he has been like this for years?"

"I don't understand these questions. My father was a drunk and a menace to me and the community. What more do you want from me?"

"Please, I'm trying to understand--"

"I despised him. I killed him. That's it."

"Then why stay with him all this time. You're 24, why not move along? Start your own life."

"I'm an only child op. Despite my feelings towards the man and his drinking habits, he was still my father. I tried to do what any good and loyal son would do, but it became too much. I am done here."

Hannigan stared at the man, who was fidgeting with his paws. He was lying. But about what? And why?

"Alright, we will be done." Hannigan stood up and opened the door. As he was about to step out, he paused and turned back around. "For now."

He turned to the constable.

"Put him in a holding cell. There's something not right here."

"Right away sir."

Hannigan looked at the piece of paper in his hand. 'Must call Scott.' Who was Scott? A john came into the room holding a folder of papers.

"We tracked down the Scott he was in contact with. Harry Scott, two floors up. The private detective. Apparently they've had some affiliations in the past."

"Great job. Thanks. Send for Scott will you?"

About 10 minutes late, Mr. Scott walked into the room.

"What can I do for ya Maxie boy? Haven't seen much of ya these past few weeks."

"Been busy." He threw the paper in front of Scott who eyed it carefully. "Do you recognize it? Written by a bird name Mark Crawford. Found him pooped this

morning in his house. Name ring any bells to you?"

Scott swallowed. "Killed ya say? Yeah I knew Mark. Poor devil. Had a bad drinking problem he did. Also with the stress of raising a boy single handed, man was unraveling."

"What relationship did you have with him? Friend, or partner and client?"

"I'm not at liberty to say old bean. Strictly business. What kind of man would I be spilling my client's private affairs?"

"He was zotzed and this note was found on his possession leading us to you. Do you want me to get a warrant? Or are we going to do this the friendly way. Either way, I win and you tell me what you know."

Scott looked down, eye brows furrowing. He bit his lip then looked back up to Hannigan.

He leaned forwards and in a hushed whisper said,

"This is for your ears only Max. No one must know it came from me. If clients found out I blabbed someone's story then I could get in loads of trouble, and have no more business. I have a family to care for ya know. Listen, he came to me searching for his son. He told me he wanted to find his son."

"But his son was always with him, all the way to the end...?"

"That's what I thought. You didn't hear it from me, but check the hospital birth records. You might find something important."

"Two birth certificates Adam, two. Who is Timothy?"

Adam looked down, running his hands through his hair.

"You didn't kill your father did you Adam. It was Timothy wasn't it?"

"Yes," he whispered. "Timothy killed my father."

"Why didn't you say anything? Why are you willing to take the jump for him?"

"My mother died giving birth to us, and my father couldn't support both of us. He gave up Timothy for adoption. Timothy went out onto the streets, living a rough life from an early age. He found me about a month ago, spotting me on the street. He followed me home, talked to me, and I found out his story. He wanted revenge on father for giving him up, making his life hell. I didn't know he had the curse on him though! He saw a life he could of had, despite the alcohol problem. He said he would of dealt with that every day rather than live on the street. I'm the one they picked. I owe him that much to try and make up for some of his pain."

He wringed his hands together, slowly playing with his fingers.

"Mr. Crawford, it was not your fault you were the one your father picked. You don't owe him so much that you have to give up your life. We'll search for your brother, but for now, you are free to go."

Adam slowly stood up looking slowly towards the door.

"Thank you Detective Hannigan, really." A smile crept across his face as he walked out of the room.

Hannigan and O'Malley stared down at the body of who appeared to be Adam Crawford. The cat had washed ashore, the body on the edge of the Hudson River.

"Due to the state the bodies been in, I would say he's been in here about 24 hours sir."

"He was only at the station two hours ago. So is this Timothy?" said O'Malley.

"Check the eyes," said Hannigan crouching beside the body. The croaker pulled upon the eyes, and staring in a foggy glance was a left eye that was blue and a right that was brown.

"Oh my god," whispered Hannigan as he stared into the eyes of the deceased. "I've been such a boob. The answer was literally staring at me the whole time.

He walked towards the wall, a single picture adorning it of a father and son. Both were staring at the camera, straight faces. What was peculiar was the eyes. Although the pictures were in black and white, the detective could make out a dramatic difference between the eyes on both men. One eye was dramatically lighter than the other.

"Coroner check his eyes."

There was a slight silence before the response of, "Both eyes appear to be different. His left eye is blue and the right is brown detective."

"Mark Crawford and his son had the same form of heterochromia! Their left eye was blue and the right was brown!"

"Sir I'm not understanding you," said O'Malley confused.

"Don't you see? It's the eyes! The eyes! The man who came to us had the opposite! His eyes were left brown and right blue. We were never talking to Adam Crawford. Adam Crawford has been in the river, killed before Mr. Crawford was. We've been talking to Timothy the whole time! The killer came to us! We had him."

Hannigan slowly slid his palm his face before grasping his chin.

"But sir, doesn't that mean that..."

"Yes O'Malley. It means exactly that. We just let the murderer walk free."

Greatness

What is Greatness?
It's something we all look for.
Deeper than the darkest abyss
Higher than the tallest drawer at age four.
It's not impossible, though.
You just need to learn how to grow.
It's not an esoteric feature everyone believes it to be
It's suddenly not such a deep and dark abyss
Or the highest drawer anymore.
It's reachable
It's doable.
You just have to try and
Become Greatness

- **John Arias**

A Star Song

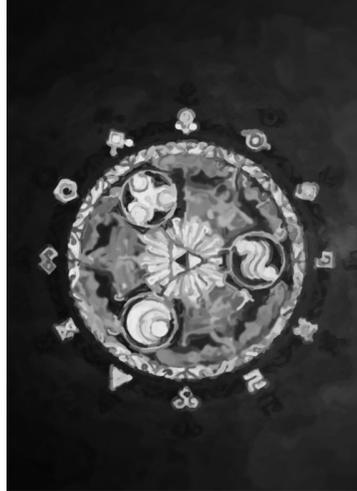
Stars are dancing through the sky
Bathing the earth in a shimmering glow
Filling the darkness
With brilliant light
First steps are taken with trepidation
Inching toward the open door
Touching one toe, pulling back

Finally
leaping
fast

Snow crunches beneath feet
Breath escapes light upon lips
Laughter of sheer amazement
Flowers sprout through the snow
As stars touch the earth below
Dancing through a field of dreams
Stepping above flowers of pure starlight
Inexplicably warmed by the cool moonlight

Suddenly the earth departs beneath feet
As the stars return to heaven
Creating a stairway of light
Becoming a constellation in the sky for one magic night

- **Ann Glackin**



- **Jesse Stickel**

746 // Decay

There's a house
Fairly small
With paint that's peeling
Off it's exterior
And a porch ceiling
That's falling apart
At it's poorly caulked seams

But the worn out chairs
Just before the front steps
Suggest that there's still
Love behind the decay
The deteriorating red and green
Fibers, give life to the rotten
Wood and the paint that's
Crumbling on the iron rails

- **Alex Muller**

Untitled #1232

my adolescent safety net is somewhat
of a problem, for you see
when i try to make more holes in it
holes disappear
choosing to speak in a riddle, or half
sentences
But not once confidently or loud
enough for my idols to hear
don't touch the car/ the interior is a
velvet veneer
and i hope you can steer
blood draining out the left and
right ear
but a road to my brain is through that
passage
so I'm passing the time reading passag-
es about
people passing
by
Am I alive?
Likely

- **Page Montecalvo**

Every Rose Has its Thorn

Once upon a time, a long time ago, March 2015, to be exact, a high school production of Disney's Beauty and The Beast was in rehearsal. Everything was going great until a week before the show, tech week, otherwise known as "hell week". It was referred to as hell week since the cast, crew and pit were forced to stay at school every night till after 10:00 pm.

On the first day of hell week, the stage crew and I were hanging up the lights on the stage. A tedious but easy job anyone can do. I pulled the rope to lower the long metal bar, which we were to hang the lights across. And then the seven of us Simon, Carli, Jacklyn, Mitchell, Andy, Leona, and myself got to work. Hanging the lights up one by one, till finally all of the lights were hung, bar is about to go up.

"Bar coming up!" yelled Jacklyn, as she started pulling up the rope, to warn everyone to move aside and watch out for the bar. But not everyone was paying attention. This one time, we learned our lesson.

BANG! The loudest crash echoed throughout the auditorium. I turn to see what had happen.

"Oh my...."

"What?"

We all turned to see the shattered glass a metal that once was a light. And underneath all the pieces was an unrecognizable bashed in skull. Where Simon breathed his last breath.

"Jacklyn what the hell did you do?"

"It wasn't my fault," she said in her defense still clinching the rope that controlled the bar. "I was just lifting it and the light fell. Someone must've forgotten to check its durability. If our school gave our drama club more money instead of putting all of the town's tax dollars towards sports I bet this never would have happened."

Within moments of this statement Sally Johnson, the student director, came flying through the stage door, her yap flying.

"What the hell was that!" she screamed, "I was going to the bathroom when..." She stopped dead in her tracks at the sight of Simon's body. "Did anyone tell our high pillow Mr. Hen yet?"

"We haven't had time yet, this literally just happened!" I exclaimed, "Besides we don't need Hen! We need a Croaker!! Andy, someone, anyone call a copper!"

Summoned by the noisy panic Mr. Hen, our director, burst through the auditorium door. As he made his way down toward the stage he saw the fear in everyone's tear-filled eyes. He finally made it to Simon's lifeless body. With a single wave of his hand he cut down all the chatter in the room, and brought a long awaited order to the room. He sent Leona and Mitchell out to grab security, to help him crab the situation.

Everything else from there on is a blur. The sirens... Flashing lights... the clean-up. Mondays have never been this bad before.

The show must go on though, so we all gathered back into the auditorium to get to work. But today's rehearsal wasn't as fun and chatty as yesterday's was. Instead we were quiet, watched, listened, did everything we were supposed to do. Rehearsal went like this for quite a long time; it was up until after dinner break. Everyone left for Chipotle except Florence Balanza, the star pupil of the drama club.

On my way out I asked her "Aren't you hungry?"

"Yeah, but I really need to get this dance down before we pick up at seven."

"If you give me some dough I can pick you up something to eat."

"No thank you, I texted my mom to pick me up something."

"Okay" interrupted Sally, "Don't forget to take a break. You don't want to wear yourself out."

"I won't" responded Florence.

"Great! We can't use you if you're tired, and I don't want to replace you this far into the production." She joked.

When I returned later, with everyone else I was stunned to pipe the trap door open, and

Florence was nowhere in sight. But I assumed nothing was wrong do to the presence of her dinner open on stage.

"Where's Florence?" asked Mitchell.

"I'm not sure, she probably went to the bathroom. can you jump on the stage and help me shut the trap? It's not safe to have it open like this someone could fall down."

"I'll grab Carli, I hate to say it but I'm weak."

"Don't worry about finding Carli," interrupted Leona "I got you Ron."

"Thanks!"

As we hopped on the stage I wondered why the trap was open in the first place. But quickly this though was pushed out of my mind when I looked down to see the stiff of Florence.

Sally noticing something was wrong jumped up on the stage past Leona. "What's ups?"

No noise was able to exit my trap. I felt numb inside from panic.

She looked down and then told me "Don't spill any of this info to Hen. If he knew another person died this week he would cancel the show, and I need this for my college resume, you understand!!"

"What are you guys talking about?" asked Leona taking her sweet time up the stairs.

I had totally forgot that she was coming to help me.

"Nothing" responded Sally as she slammed the trap door close by herself. "I just remembered there was a spill in the cafeteria can you go to the janitor closet and get some napkins to clean it up."

Leona slowly left the auditorium and I was now alone with Sally.

"There is no way this could have been an accident. Florence might be a boob but she isn't stupid enough to open the trap and then dance around it."

I let her continue.

"I think someone is trying to bump-off the cast and crew one by one. But before I sing this idea to the law I want to make sure it's true."

She began to squat down on the stage and search for clues.

"There must have been something left behind Ron. They can't just take the air twice and not leave anything. Aha! An earring! I swear this wasn't here before. My actors are bunnies, if this earring were here before break one of them would be wearing it in their foot by now. Please be a wise head and don't tell anyone about this yet, I don't want the killer getting wind of this and then take it on the heel and toe. Promise you won't say anything."

"I won't." I finally responded. "But what about Florence? We can't just leave her body under the stage. Someone will..."

"If anyone ask the stress of the show was to much for her, so she's out."

"But she has no understudy."

"Don't worry I know this show like the back of my hand. I can take over for her. All you have to worry about is not letting anyone know about our little chat Ron. I trust you can do so."

"Sure"

"Great. I'll look for more clues during school tomorrow."

And she did. At rehearsal the next day she showed me.

"A rose petal? Really? That's all you got?" I said.

"Yes. Hen set up the prop rose for the musical last Friday while you were up on the balcony setting up the lighting and sound booth. Well, this rose petal that matches THE rose was by Florence's hair downstairs. Which wouldn't be suspicious, except no one should be anywhere near that rose, and if no one should be near the rose then what is its petal doing in the basement." said Sally, proud of her detective work.

"Did you check the rose?"

"Not yet. I was waiting for you."

"Let's go."

Sally and I went to the rose and as we tried to remove the dome, to access the flower. Except it wouldn't open, someone had glued it shut.

"Is this supposed to be glued?" I asked. Hen overheard and rushed over.

"NO, IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE GLUED!" Hen exploded. He frantically rushed away with

the rose and into the prop room.

"So what now?" I asked.

"Hold on I need some time to think." Sally said defeated while walking away.

"Ok" I replied.

Hen couldn't deal with knowing what happened to Florence, and now the news about the Rose has pushed him over the edge. He worked us hard that night and made us ran through the entire show. And to our surprise it ran very smoothly under our circumstances.

After the run I went to meet Sally to continue our search for the murder. But she was to exhausted, after taking over Florence's role to talk. As she walked away on her way home, I gathered my things and headed towards the exit as well. On my way out I saw Leona.

"Leona? What are you still doing here?"

"My ride is still not here..."

"Do you want me to take you?"

"Nah, my mom is already on her way" she said while turning her head.

"Ok, see you tomorrow." I responded getting a glimpse of her ear. "Leona, when did you get your ears priced?"

"Since I was young. But I lost one of my favorite earrings yesterday."

"Ok, bye."

As I waved and walked away, I quickly texted Sally the great news. But regardless of the amount of texts I sent her I got no response. That girl sleeps like a rock.

And now, today at this very second it is Wednesday and I am headed to rehearsal. It seems so unreal. *How am I gonna tell them?* I'm on stage now. It's now or never.

"Attention everyone, please?!" *What am I doing?! I'm terrible at public speaking! I can't do this. Too late now, everyone is looking.* "Uh... On the eve of Monday, we lost Simon due to a wrongly placed light. All of you know this.... But, what most of you don't know is that our star pupil... has also passed."

Everyone gasped.

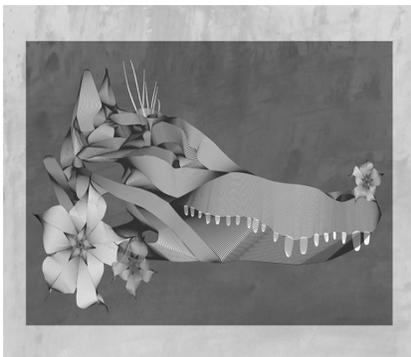
"This was on the eve of yesterday. Someone here opened the trapdoor as she was dancing on stage... She's still down there."

Gasps again.

"I know who opened the trapdoor. You see, the person that did this must have done it due to fear. They must've bumped into the rented rose prop and knocked it over. The rose fell apart and the culprit was led to believe they had broken the prop. They then decided to use some wood glue from the stage crew tool cabin to glue everything together. I think their only motive must've been that Florence and Simon saw what happened. Sally found a rose petal near Florence's hair. And the day before we found this earring by the trap door. An Earring which Leona admitted to me last night that she lost.

As I said her name her eyes widened and ran off. But she was quickly stopped by the security guard at the front desk. The mystery of the rose was now solved.

- **Roxanna Aguilar & Melissa Ingle**



- Tateanna Khokar

1123

She wept for him

Out of pity and the wish that she could do something

To rid him of his deteriorating mind

The pills he takes each morning and the liquor he washes them down with

Are clearly enough for him to get by

But he doesn't realize that he's killing her more than he's killing himself

He doesn't realize she still cares

They slowly drift apart in agony and act as though it will all be alright

But it never will be, never again.

His apathy becomes him and he is no more

- **Alex Muller**