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By: Sam Buckler

Not so blank are you now blank page
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Mirrors
By: Colin Barry

“Here for another trip, friend?”

“No,” he replied. It’s how he always answered him at first. “Why do you still haunt me?”

“Let’s not lie to ourselves anymore. If you did not want to see me, you wouldn’t stare so long in that mirror would you?”

“I told you the last time was my last. I’m done.”

He wanted to hate that creature, which always stood behind him. It was just a hooded figure in black always standing behind him, until he caved, and took his hand.

“I know everything that’s happened so far, friend. Please come join me, we’re wasting time. Do not displace your feelings on me; I am only here to help.”

He wanted to hate that voice. A growl, if anything, but at least a sympathetic one. If a demon could show compassion, could love, might this be what it would sound like?

“There is so much I want to show you. So much you need to see. Please. Are we not friends, like you said? Why would I lie to you?”

“I just…

..I’m just sick of what I see when I go.”

“Your world is sick. I offer you light. Please take my hand. I only wish to help.”

And with that, like so many times before, he placed his hand upon the mirror that stood before him, closed his eyes and-----

Felt his feet on the cold barren wasteland that stood before him. A dismal view. Dried, worthless soil strewn as far as the eye could see. The only plant life, or life at all for that matter, was a few scattered remnants of trees with branches that looked no different than the assumed roots underneath them. The sky itself was dark and full of rows upon rows of gray clouds. They moved so rapidly, but he himself never felt any wind. They moved so much faster here. It was like a storm that would never come.

The most noticeable sights in his current view were the random mirrors that seemed to be suspended in the air. Mirrors of all shapes and sizes. Each gave a view into the Otherside, or at least another side; he was not sure how many planes existed, and perhaps the mirrors he looked through were just similar to the world he was from. Behind him stood the Otherside of his bedroom mirror. Through it he saw his own lifeless body lying on the floor. He thought about
how frightened he was the first time he saw himself in that state; cold and catatonic. His alarm clock read 12:03, and he knew it would until he returned.

“Are you ready to go, friend?” the hooded figure gargled out of his throat.

“What do you have to show me this time? Another miserable sight to make me question the existence of a Higher Authority? As to why It would allow such cruel things to happen in this world?”

“I assure you, there are Higher Powers working as we speak, but mind you they are very busy, and cannot be bothered with such trivial things as I have shown you. Would you like me to show you the Higher Powers sometime, friend?”

“I don’t think man was supposed to look into the face of God before his time. I’m pretty sure that’s written somewhere in-”

“Words on paper written by men hold no authority over you or me. But that is for another time. Now we must go. There is something I want to show you.”

“Fine. Let’s go.”

They began their march towards what sight the hooded figure deemed necessary to see. He could feel the loose earth below him through his toes as he took each step. Familiar and strangely warm.

“Tell me about the girl; how are you and her?” asked the hooded man.

“Good, I guess.”

“You guess? You doubt?”

“No. Just nothing out of the ordinary.”

“No more fighting; you trust her now?”

“Yeah.”

Silenced passed for a moment, but who can say what a moment was? Maybe in some other time, some other place, Millennia had come and gone.

“If you are so sick of your world, you could always stay here, friend. There are so many secrets to be unlocked, and so many things to see.”

“You know I can’t do that, everyone would know I was gone.”

He never knew what to make of this dark traveler. At times it seemed that he was no more than a mere, lonely child, or like a puppy that lost his favorite ball and just wanted someone to play with. Other times he wondered what all deep seated knowledge was held underneath the layers of that jet black cloak.
“Yours is a world filled with hate and wickedness; so painful but curious to watch. Why would anyone live there, when there are so many better places, friend?”

“We don’t choose.”

“I disagree.”

“It’s not that bad of a place for everyone.”

“It is for you. Look in the mirror, friend.”

What he saw was a familiar pink and red bedroom. Hers. The stuffed bears he bought her, little notes he wrote covering the floor. On the bed was something new. It was her, and a man he had never seen before.

The press of her lips, filled with such passion he had seen from her so long ago, promised to be reserved only for him, now shared with another. The arch of her back and her spine touched by fingertips that were not his own. The sight of two lovers, alone in their own world, both with equally guilt-free smiles on their faces.

It was a horror known to many, yet no language could ever convey exactly how it felt.

For a moment, he stood there, frozen. But what is really a moment anyway? For him, it lasted an eternity, civilizations came and went; empires rose and then were gone. The spark of Life had begun and flickered out for him, all in his moment; but then again, his forever could just be someone else’s blink.

“It’s not real. It can’t be.”

“Why would I lie to you? I just want to help you.”

“This has to be some twisted game for you.”

“Look at me, friend, what do I gain from lying to you?”

The dark clothed man reached to the sides of his hoods, to reveal a face perhaps never seen before,

Yet it was one seen so many times before in his own mirror, before that dark Stranger had ever even arrived.

“There are so many of us on so many worlds, friend. Your world is but one drop of water in this universal tidal wave. I can save you before the crash.” His raspy words had become that of his own familiar voice.

He himself, as he continued to stare into that mirror, felt his own humanity drain out of his body. He felt hollow; an endless void now stirred, grew, and consumed everything inside of him.

“I’m done. I don’t care what happens.”
“Do not worry, friend, she is but one life in a sea of unimaginable numbers. Stay with me and we can leave this wasteland, meet the others who made it here, and be happy. When the End of Times comes, we may still live. Trust me; there are other worlds than this.”

Silence, for another hundred thousand years.

“You rage is building so fast in you, would you like to be rid of it, friend?”

“Yes.”

“Then take these,” the cloaked being said as he tore off two strips of cloth from his robe, “…and break what you see before you.”

He took the two pieces into his hand, and wrapped them around his knuckles, took a breath, and shattered the mirror.

The picture, still visible through the shards of glass, remained still. He had no idea what effect it had on the world, but he had hoped he had ended it. If this was the one time he could play God, he would be a vengeful one.

He ran through the wasteland, shattering every mirror he could see and reach with his fists. The ones he couldn’t reach were hit with rocks he threw until they shattered like the rest.

“You have but one left, and after it is done, you must watch.”

“Show it to me.”

He turned to face the now revealed man only to find the mirror leading into his room. Had his thoughts been clear, he may have questioned the ramifications, but as of now that world offered nothing to him, and didn’t think it ever would. Without second thought, he smashed the mirror. In a piece of the now broken mirror, he spotted his alarm clock click to 12:04.

“Watch, friend.”

He witnessed his last true existence in the world he used to be part of. His mother ran upstairs after calling his name a few times to find the lifeless body of her oldest son lying on the carpeted floor. Had he retained some of his former self after seeing the horrific act, he may have felt sorrow, but now, it was pity. Pity that they didn’t know how much better true life would be on this Otherside. His mother screamed for help and for someone to call 911, although her efforts were a lost cause.

“I’m sorry life so far has been so tough for you, friend, but trust me, this will be so much better. Vicariously we get to watch from an immeasurable distance, never to feel their misery again. Follow me please, your anger will soon subside. I promise you will find another here to make you happy. If you just follow me I can get us out of this barren landscape and into the luscious green hillsides where we belong.”

Now, with no options left after abandoning the existence he had come to know, and with nothing to lose, he said after a pause:

“Then let’s go, friend, I trust you, why would you ever lie to me?”
Once upon a time, there was a handsome wolf named Ansel. Ansel didn’t have any friends. When we was a younger wolf, he used to play tricks on other members in his pack. They finally had enough and left him on his own. He desired to have a true friend. He searched the woods daily for a potential friend. One day he came upon a young girl. She was a very beautiful girl with long golden hair that was covered by a red hooded shawl.

When Ansel saw this beautiful girl, he ran up to greet her in hopes of making a friend. She was carrying a picnic basket of goodies, and he hoped they could have a picnic together.

“Greetings, young lady! My name is Ansel. Where are you off to on this beautiful spring day?” he asked the young girl.

“I’m going to see my grandmother. She is sick and I am taking her some food my mother made for her so she will feel better,” the girl replied.

“Is your grandmother’s house very far from here?” Ansel asked.

“Yes, it is over that hill over there. It’s the first house in the village.”

“I didn’t catch your name miss, what is it?”

“I like to be called Little Red Riding Hood,” the young girl replied.

“Miss Little Red Riding Hood, could I escort you to your grandmother’s house? I have no other plans and I could make sure you get there safely; there are a lot of dangerous animals in these woods.”

“Thanks for the offer, but my mother told me to travel by myself.”

Ansel was heartbroken. He wanted to make a new friend so badly, and Little Red Riding Hood seemed like she’d be a great friend. I will go ahead of Little Red Riding Hood and meet her at her Grandmother’s house as a surprise. Once she sees me helping her take care of her grandmother, then she will surely be my friend.

Ansel took a shorter path through the woods to Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother’s house and arrived before Little Red Riding Hood. Ansel knocked on Grandmother’s door.

“Who’s there?” Grandmother asked.

“It is Ansel, I’m a friend of Little Red Riding Hood,” Ansel replied.
Grandmother was old, and had bad hearing, so all she heard was “It is Little Red Riding Hood.” Grandmother got up from her chair and opened the door; to her horror she saw a wolf. Grandmother screamed as Ansel came into the house. Grandmother fell to the floor; she was experiencing a heart attack. Ansel picked her up and placed her in bed while he tried to figure out what to do to help her; he didn’t want his potential friend, Little Red Riding Hood to see Grandmother this way.

*Knock. Knock.* “Grandmother, it’s me Little Red Riding Hood.” Ansel didn’t want to freak Little Red Riding Hood out by opening the door as himself, since she wasn’t expecting him to be there and since her Grandmother was unconscious, she might get the wrong idea and think Ansel hurt her Grandmother. So Ansel put on one of Grandmother’s housecoats and a hat, sat in Grandmother’s chair with a blanket to cover himself, and told Little Red Riding Hood to come in.

Little Red Riding Hood brought her basket of goodies to Ansel, thinking he was Grandmother. “I brought you some soup to make you feel better Grandmother.”

Ansel reached out to grab the basket, Little Red Riding Hood’s eyes grew big, “Grandmother, what great arms you have!”

Ansel wanted to tell Little Red Riding Hood who he really was, but didn’t know how to do it without scaring her or without her feeling like he lied to her, so he just continued with the charade. “They let me hug you better, my dear.,” he replied as he leaned to hug her. As he leaned over Grandmother’s hat fell off.

“Grandmother, what big ears you have!”

“The better to hear your lovely voice, my dear,” Ansel said cleverly.

Little Red Riding Hood stared at Ansel; she knew something wasn’t right about her grandmother. Ansel could tell she was suspicious so he decided to tell her the truth.

“Little Red Riding Hood, I’m not your grandmother, I’m Ansel. Remember… I met you earlier in the woods.”

“What!! What have you done with Grandmother? You ate her didn’t you!” she yelled.

Ansel was angered by this accusation, when Ansel gets angry he has a difficult time controlling his actions. He grabbed Little Red Riding Hood by the arms tightly as he tried to explain what really happened. Little Red Riding Hood was frightened and passed out in Ansel’s arms. He didn’t know what to do so he laid her on her grandmother’s couch and left. Later in the day Little Red Riding Hood’s mother came looking for her when she didn’t return home. She found that Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother had been eaten up by what appeared a wolf. Ansel was blamed for the two deaths. Ansel did not harm either Little Red Riding Hood or her
grandmother; he just wanted to find a new friend, but instead he was imprisoned on charges of murder.

Just Not for Me
By: Virta Bathani

As she sits upon a pedestal,
   Elbows on her knees
   And hands under her chin.
She looks across as far as she can,
   Asking, why have I tried so hard?
   Put someone else up here.
There’s so much about me,
   That’ll always remain within.
This pedestal is just not for me.

All I Want
By: Brett Lancaster

All I want is someone to have fun with
   Someone to spend time with

All I want is someone to have fun with
   Someone to sing with
   Someone to eat out with

All I want is someone to have fun with
   Someone to hang out with
Someone to watch movies and laugh with
   Someone to joke around with

All I want is someone to have fun with
   Someone to play video games with
   Someone to talk about books with
   Someone to go to the mall with
   Someone to be best friends with

All I want is someone to have fun with.
The Transmitor
By: Mallory Howell, Marquita Martin, Sam Buckler, Kristine Kang

Characters:
Alice, 22 year old nutrition director for Belview Social Services Complex. Lonely, shy, single
Deena, 17 year old HS Jr. Outspoken, risk taker and flirt.
Don, 17 year old HS intelligent nerd. Bright, kind, quiet, studious.
Rem, Alien studying Earth’s life forms. Takes human form and name of Bird.

Scene 1: Outside in front of Belview Social Services Complex

(rem walks on from stage right, he is holding some device that beeps from time to time)

Rem: “Stardate 7534 alpha-1, I am sending this transmission in Earth speak as it is crucial I appear to the humans to be one of their kind. I have disguised my transrecorder device into the shape of one of the humans’ technologies that they refer to as a ‘Cell Phone’ so that my periodic transmissions will appear to be myself communicating with another human. This is my first entry in three Earth weeks into the Zebulon’s database as the Zebulon has been temporarily out of range circling the galaxy. I sent the Zebulon on this mission to gather data about this local system, but it is strange that the humans only have a few of their own probes out there. They must be too primitive to be exploring their own galaxy.

I have discovered in this particular colony a few exceptional beings that seem to have more authority amongst their kind than others. I will be following these individual specimens to better understand their way of life. I am also interested in interacting with them to see how quickly I can adapt to this environment. I will do this by assuming the identity of what I believe to be an appropriate human for the situation and then attempting to communicate. Currently I am disguised as one of the more aged humans because I have found a sector of the colony where many of them gather for long periods of time. The humans call the place a Belview Complex. I hope to encounter one of the humans I would like to study here.

(don enters stage left and rem immediately notices his presence)

Specimen 24 is approaching my location. I will be in contact with the Zebulon’s database within a few Earth hours to transrecord my findings. End transmission.”

(rem shuts his cell phone –like device and begins to follow don)

Scene 2: (Auditorium in Belview Social Services Complex. Don is at the podium.)

Don: Hi everyone, I will be talking about quantum mechanics today. Anyone know what it is? (Looks around to sleeping seniors) No? Well it is a set of scientific principles describing the known behavior of energy and matter that predominate at the atomic and subatomic scales. The name derives from the observation that some physical quantities such as the energy of an
electron can be changed only by set amounts, or quanta, rather than being capable of varying by any amount and so that’s why the theory is still being researched and expanded upon.

REM (under his breath): Wow

Don: Anybody have any questions?

Everyone: zZZzzZ…

(REM walks up to Don as he’s cleaning up)

REM: Hello sir.

Don: (looks up) Oh, hi. You can call me just call me Don.

REM: Oh ok Don. I just wanted to tell you that your theory on quantum physics was highly evolved

Don: Uh, thank you? Did you actually understand it?

REM: Of course, what do you think I am? A huma… I mean, I used to be a physicist back a few lunar moons, ehem, years ago.

Don: Oh, I see. I don’t know if it’s quite accurate because I’m still reading on it….

REM: No, your kind is very close. I am very surprised how developed the idea is and that you were able to explain it to others quite simply. But it is obvious you are extremely intellectual as portrayed by your size, and I find you attractive. I believe you’re a perfect specimen of the human life.

Don: Um okay. Thanks, I think. I actually have got to go to the library to prepare for tomorrow’s presentation so I guess I will see you then.

REM: Definitely.

Scene 3: Outside the Complex. REM is now dressed as a young man.

REM (to himself): Here is another one of the earthlings I have been observing. His unconventional ideals are very intriguing. He seems to be a vendor of some sort of sought after substance. Maybe if I request some I will learn more about his habits.

REM: Greetings.

Jack: Um hi. Do I know you?

REM: No, but I know of you and what you do. I would like to purchase some of what you sell.
Jack: Wow, you cops must think I’m an idiot. Would you really expect a dealer to sell in broad daylight in front of so many people? I don’t who you’re working for but you’re gonna have to tell them to try harder than this, now get lost.

REM (pulling out a wad of cash): Wait, I have sufficient funds, I thought this is what your profession was.

Jack (seeing the money reconsiders): Alright then, follow me.

REM: Where are we going?

Jack: Just around the building.

REM: Why?

Jack: How do you not get this? What you’re about to do is very illegal. We don’t want half the city watching. Now to prove you’re not a cop. Slam this.

REM: What?

Jack: Just stick the damn needle in your arm. (REM does it) Well now at least we know you’re not a cop. Now how much do you need.

REM: How much will this get me. (holding out the wad of cash again)

Jack: Here (Jack hands REM a small bag and grabs the cash in the same movement and starts to walk away).

REM (to himself): That was certainly interesting. It seems this man has to avoid authority to carry out his job. (pulling out the transmitter) I better report this to headquarters.

Deena sees REM buying drugs from a distance and is attracted to his boldness. She approaches him

Deena: “Hey, I’ve never seen you around here before. Are you new to the neighborhood?”

REM: “Yes, I guess you can say that. I’m here for business.”

Deena: “Yeah, I noticed all of that money you just pulled out. Well what’s your name?”

REM: “ummmm” (REM looks around) “BIRD”

Deena: “Bird? Well I think you’re pretty fly. You should take my number and give me a call.”
REM pulls out his phone/device and Deena steps closer in a flirtatious manner, making him uncomfortable

Dee: “HERE, LET ME DO IT.” (Deena grabs REM’s phone and starts pressing buttons... REM tries to take it from her, but is too late and she turns him into a cat. She looks around puzzled.) Bird, Bird, where did you go?

Scene 4: (inside Belview Complex)

Jack: Alice? Alice Schultz? Do you remember me, Jack, from high School?

Alice: Jack… Oh yes, Jack in chemistry class. I haven’t seen you for years. What are you doing here?

Jack: Oh, I just came to see my grandfather. He is enrolled in the Day Care Center here. Dad was supposed to pick him up, but…. Well, actually it’s a long, not too interesting story. What are you doing here?

Alice: I work here. I’m the nutrition director for the whole complex.

Jack: Wow. That’s impressive. Pretty much go where you please, eh?

Alice: (giggles) Yes, I guess I’m as responsible as anyone around here. What do you do? I see you are wearing a ponytail, now. Much more respectable. I remember the spike hairdo you used to sport.

Jack: Ah, yes. I try to look more professional. More people trust me that way. You too have a nice new hairdo. In fact, you are very attractive. Professional life seems to agree with you.

Alice: (giggles) Thank you. And what was it you say you do?

Jack: Oh, I’m still a man of many trades. Listen, Grandpa’s got a bad cold. Do you suppose you could get me a sample of a cold remedy before I go in to see him? I’d hate to contaminate a colony of elderly folk.

Alice: A cold remedy won’t take effect that quickly! You’ll just have to take him to your physician.

Jack: As if that would do any good. It takes a minimum of 2 weeks just to get an appointment. By that time he won’t need it.

Alice: Oh…. I see what you mean. It does sometimes take a while. What do you use?

Jack: Well, uh, Sudafed is pretty good.
Alice: Sudafed? It’s not one of the regulated ones, is it? I’ll run in the dispensary and see if I can find it.

Jack: Great. I’m not sure, but I think it’s one of the acceptable ones. The name is Sudafed. I’ll wait here for you.

Alice returns in a couple minutes

Alice: Is this what you want?

Jack: (very enthusiastically) That is exactly what I want.

Alice: Well, I am off duty. It was nice seeing you. (She heads toward the door)

Jack: Wait! Can I buy you a cup of coffee?

Alice: No, go see your grandfather and give him the medicine. You can see me the next time you visit.

Jack: Oh…. Well, I will see you around soon.

Alice leaves and Jack heads down the hall.

Scene 5: Parking lot of Belview Center. As Alice approaches her car, she sees someone sticking out from under it.

Alice: What are you doing? That is my car you’re under. Get out immediately!

Deena: I’m trying, but this stupid cat won’t get off my cell phone.

Alice: What? Are you drunk?

Deena: No, I was standing talking on my cell, when this cat from hell, jumped me, scratched me and knocked my cell out from my hands. Then believe it or not, it pushed my cell under the car and laid on top of it. It won’t get up.

Alice: I like cats. Let me see. (She squats and peers under the car). Yes, I see something under it. Let me try to coax it out. You go away.

Deena: Alright, but it’s my cell. Remember that.

Alice: I have my own cell for heaven’s sake. Get up. (Dee gets up and Alice stretches out.) Pretty kitty. Come here baby. I won’t hurt you. (She strokes the rumpled fur of the cat) Pretty baby. I’d love to take you home with me. Come on. (Slowly she pulls the cat out from under
the car, but it slides along on the cell. Once out, she scoops up the cat and Dee grabs the cell and runs off. Alice puts the cat in her car and drives off).

Scene 6: Alice’s living room where the cat is on the sofa and Alice is watching it.

REM: Meow. Meow (frantically louder). Meow. Me… What the hell? Where am I? What has happened? (Cat is flailing around)

Alice: D-d-d-did you j-just s-s-speak?

At that moment Rem turns into a bird.

REM: Awk. Awk. Awkward this is. Transimitor where?

Alice: Transimitor? What? (Alice is stupefied)


Alice: A girl took the cell you were laying on. She said it was hers.

At that moment Rem turns back into a human

REM: Who was she? Where was she?

Alice: I don’t know. She seemed fairly normal—except for laying under my car. At least she didn’t turn into various animals.

REM: Oh that. I am an alien from Zebulon. I came to observe humans. My cell is my only communication to my ship and planet. It isn’t a cell phone, but I made it look like one, just like I disguised myself as a human. She can’t call on it. But she can do horrible things to me by punching the wrong buttons, as you saw. And I can’t go home without it. I have to get it back.

At that moment REM becomes a cat for a couple minutes and then a human again.

REM: She is punching the buttons again. I’ve got to find her.

Alice: I have no idea who she is or where to look.

REM: I can trace where she is, but what if she turns me into something else again? You’ve got to come with me!

Alice: Me? No way. I’m going straight to bed and hope I wake up from this nightmare.

REM: You haven’t been hurt. It’s not your nightmare. It’s mine and I need help. If I turn into a cat again, you can carry me.
Alice: Oh what the hell. If I am insane, I already am. Let’s go.

(The two walk out the door)

Scene 7:

{Deena is at home and hears someone ring the door bell}

Deena: who is it?

REM: It is I, Bird

Deena swings the door open

REM: Hey, I’ve come for my…

Deena attacks REM with a hug and pulls him into the house

Deena: Bird I cant believe that you’re here. I mean, when you disappeared earlier, I thought that you dissed me. But I just knew, I could tell from the way you looked at me, that you wanted me!

REM: Actually, ma’am, I’m just here for my phone.

Deena: Ohh…. Well, it’s sitting right on my bed. But I’m sure you left it with me for a reason. I can’t believe that you found my house. Let’s not let your hard work go to waste.

Deena steps closer to kiss REM, but he moves away.

REM: let’s go into the bedroom

Deena: really? I knew you were bold, but dang. I like it!

Deena and REM walk to her bedroom; REM spots his phone on the bed

REM: I hope you don’t mind if I get a little comfortable.

Deena: oh, not at all.

REM takes off his shoes; Deena starts rubbing his back

REM: This feels really good.. Oh no!

Deena: what?
REM: I think I may have left my car doors unlocked. I have to go out and lock them. Guess I have to put my shoes back on.

Deena: NO! I’ll go and do it for you. You stay right here. Make yourself at home.

*Deena walks to the front door; REM grabs the phone/device off of her bed and climb out of the window*

Deena: bird, where did you park? There’s no car in front of the…..

*{Deena notices that Bird is gone, and her bedroom window is open}*

Scene 8: Auditorium

(REM enters as old man again)

REM: *(stands very close to Don)* Hi again Don.

Don: *(steps back)* Hi, uh, I never got your name.

REM: Oh, just call me Bird.

Don: Okay, strange name, no offense.

REM: There was no defense. *(Don looks at him strangely, taking another step back).* I enjoyed your presentation today.

Don: Thanks. Did you really understand the theory of general relativity in relation to black holes?

REM: Of course! Can’t believe it’s still a theory though. Really, you earthlin…huma…I mean, we haven’t figured that out either?

Don: *(offended, through clenched teeth)* No not yet. Have YOU figured it out?

REM: *(sighs)* Actually, yes its very simple. I’ll whisper you the secret. Step closer. *(Looks around and whispers into his ear)*

Don: *(eyes wide)* That makes so much sense! I never thought about it like that! Why haven’t you published that idea?

REM: I have all the answers to everything, including the Big Bang Theory, Atomic Theory, Dimension Theory, you name it. I even know the answers to theories that haven’t been developed yet here.

Don: *(skeptical)* Like what?
REM: (*whispers into ear*)

Don: That’s awesome! Why aren’t you presenting these conclusions to the boards of science or something? Why are you telling me?

REM: Our higher authority commanded us that we are not allowed to interfere with Earth life and just let you understand on your own while we just watch. But I can share all this with you if you come with me.

Don: What? High authority? Earth life? Watch us? Come with you? This is the first time I’m going to say this, but I’m confused.

REM: Understandably. Now don’t be alarmed. My name is REM from the planet Zebulon. I am on a mission to find an identity here on Earth, but found that it is not for me.

Don: …I don’t believe you…

REM: How else do you think I know all this? Zebulon is beyond even your understanding. Humans are underdeveloped in many ways including intelligence, you would understand. There is nothing here for me except (*bats eyes*) maybe you, but my mission is over and I am not allowed to stay here any longer.

Don: (*Considers the idea*) It would explain why you are strange…but a scientist never accepts a statement without proof so prove it.

REM: Okay. (*pushes buttons and transforms into young Bird*)

Don: (*Amazed*) I knew we couldn’t be the only life forms! Among thousands of galaxies and millions of planets! Even laws of biology and physics provides evidence to the hypothesis! You have to share…

REM: Not everyone will be as understanding as you because you are perfect. I am due to leave tomorrow but I would truly wish to take you. The brain in your belly immediately caught my attention and it was love at first sight. I have been observing you and your ways for a few days and according to your language, have fallen in love with you. I must take someone for my presentation about Earth to our “board of science” and you would exceed everyone's expectations. Would you like to come along?! I can share everything with you. You understand quickly and will fit right in.

Don: I really wish I could and learn everything but I can’t. I have my own goals here on Earth. I have a math competition next week, college applications pretty soon, and have to go to Harvard so I can share all my theories. I like to figure things out on my own anyway.
REM: I respect your decision. I didn’t think you would go because you have too much potential here. One of the very few. I have no doubt that you will succeed in anything you want to do. But who should I take?

Don: Hmm. Well I heard there’s a party today. Take someone from there, but I would suggest to just take them. Don't try to explain what you are or they might not follow. I can walk you there if you want. It’s close by.

REM: Sure.

Scene 9: At party

*(Don leaves Rem at the door and takes off)*

REM *(to himself)*: Well this is the party Don told me about. Maybe I will find a specimen to bring back to Zebulon here. I can’t go back empty handed or be disgraced. Wait there’s Jack, the young man who sold me the performance enhancing substance. Now there would be something worth taking back to Zebulon. I’m sure its intellectual stimulating powers would be welcomed by my people.

REM *(walking up to Jack)*: Hello again.

Jack: Hey, my favorite customer. So what’d you think of my stuff.

REM: It was excellent. I found its brain stimulating qualities to be most desirable.

Jack: Well I guess you could call it that.

REM: Unfortunately I have no more left. Might I purchase some more.

Jack: You’re out? There’s no way you could have used all that so quickly. No human on this planet could shoot up that much of my stuff in two days and live to tell about it.

REM: Well, Jack. Actually that’s what I wanted to talk to you about. Why don’t we go somewhere where we can talk.

*(They walk to an empty room)*

REM: Jack, I’m not human. I am a species of higher intellect from the planet Zebulon.

Jack: Ok meth addict good one. Are you having a bad trip or what?

REM: Well I didn’t really expect you to believe me. Brace yourself for what I’m about to show you. *(Using the transmitter REM changes to his cat form and back to human)*

Jack: Ok maybe I’m the one having the bad trip.
REM: No Jack, what you just saw was real. No if you’ll hear me out I have a business proposition that could benefit you greatly.

Jack: Alright I’m listening.

REM: I came to your planet on a mission from the planet Zebulon. My goal was to learn more about the human race and possibly find a human to take back with so further study could be done. But now I believe I have found something much more worthy of my time, meth. Its effects on my species seem to be very beneficial, unlike the effects it has on humans. Now, I believe if I can take some meth back to my planet and introduce it to my people properly we could have a huge market, open for the taking. Jack I want you to be my supplier.

Jack: Supply a whole planet? I would be a millionaire within the week. Alright I like where you’re going with this, but how am I supposed to get the supply to you on a whole different planet.

REM: You don’t worry about that. I’ll take care of all that. You just make sure you have the supply ready I’ll take care of the rest. Now I realize you’ll want payment. Unfortunately, I have no more of your American dollars. However, my planet is rich with the metal platinum which I understand is very valuable on this planet.

Jack: Well, it’s worth more than gold, so of course you can pay me in platinum.

REM: Very good, now I must go and start the preparations. You start cooking some meth I have a feeling we’re going to need a lot of it. By the time you get home you’ll find that your house has been transformed to a state of the art lab, totally undetectable to any authorities.

Jack: Well, it’s been a pleasure doing business with you Mr?

REM: Just call me REM. Goodbye Jack I will be contacting you soon.

Jack: Alright see you later REM.

Scene 10: (REM on stage talking into transmitter)

REM: “Stardate 7583 alpha-1, only one Earth day has passed since my last transmission, but I have concluded it is time for me to leave this planet. The humans here are less advanced than our kind for the most part although they have peculiar ways of manipulating each other to get what they desire. I have contacted one such human called “Jack” and will be transporting some of his performance enhancing substance to our planet for further study. I did a personal study of my own with the substance known on Earth as “Meth” and it boosted my intellectual and physical capabilities. This could be useful for scientists on Zebulon. If the substance is indeed useful, we will establish an interplanetary alliance with this Earthling in order to maintain our supply easily.
As for the other humans I have been studying, the one called Don has continued to impress me with his superior intelligence which is evidenced in the size of his abdomen. However, he was not interested in returning to Zebulon but would rather continue to pursue his own future. The female, Deena, has been somewhat of a predator since I have been here. She gets very territorial when she sees me and I have to devise plans just to escape her presence. Others I have encountered during my study have discovered my true identity and this makes it difficult to continue. I am therefore concluding that beginning this interplanetary “meth” alliance is one of the only benefits of visiting this planet and I will promptly return to Zebulon. End Transmission…”

Euclid

By: Bre Dunsworth

Walking down the street,
People are always on the go,
Where to? No one will know.
Walking down the street,
Sirens scream and shout,
Somewhere, a fire needs to be put out.
Walking down the street,
Pups sniff out the lot,
Trying to find that perfect spot.
Walking down the street,
City workers check the meter.
Seeing your ticket is such a defeater.
Walking down the street,
Students wearing book bags scurry,
They’ve got to get to class in a hurry!
Walking down the street,
Pedestrians cross the street
While horns continue to beep.
Walking down the street,
Squirrels leap out of the way
And birds chirp and fly and play.
Walking down the street,
There is always someone to meet
There is always something neat.
First place poetry winner in Spring 2010 Society of Apothecaries and Dreamers Contest

**Familiarity**
By: Alexis Diveney

You're so tough with your front gate rusted shut...
Foreshadow boxing the future.....
Sporting scary scars from past bouts while on the verge of a career in "sitting this one out."...

With a heart like a palace you've no space to lend or rent out again...
And it’s nobody's place to say or stay or break a window to get in that way....
And wouldn't you know it? The key isn't under the doormat long enough for anyone to replace your secret spot with a safer and faker plastic rock....

A secret everyone knows about is still something new to strangers...

And forgiveness is three syllables you refuse to clap your hands to... Who could blame you after all the biographical boyfriend bullshit you've had to read and bleed through...

So trust your blue windows to the soul as bold as a bookmark on the first and only chapter the boyfriend will ever know without becoming the amore antagonist amongst what aids the struggle in making us grow...
Harsh truths to fuel the light bulb's glow in the brain's closest closets where the skeletons go...

Live for today because yesterday doesn't want you and tomorrow might not either...

And all the while you contemplate with comrades who mentally medicate with romantic remedies and clichés of "it’s okay" and "time will make it better someday"...
And when none of this proves true, laughing through the lies is all you can do.

So a symptom of a smile may be a paper heart to sign but yours is already under glass...alone...and free...so you'll just have to sign it for me....for purposes of familiarity
“Winning Streak”
By: Sonalie Patel

Just one more day, and all will be diminished away
The torture, the anticipation, and the excitement are all I feel
I stare at the clock while my thoughts sway

My mind keeps thinking, and wondering, and thinking some more
Time will never pass, that is how it seems
Just one more day, and all will be diminished away

These thoughts are too much, my nerves are now too sore
What if I fail and all ends the gleam?
I stare at the clock while my thoughts sway

My ranting gives all my peers a bore
I feel like I am trying to balance on a balance beam
Just one more day, and all will be diminished away

But maybe there is a chance, and I will soar
I wish it were not only me but rather a team
I stare at the clock while my thoughts sway

I want to end this now and shut its door
I hope I don’t screw this up and make a scene
Just one more day, and all will be diminished away
I stare at the clock while my thoughts sway

Directions
By: Erin Frevert

You are here,
In my thoughts,
When you reach my dreams,
Take a left and continue on,
Once you reach my feelings,
Tread carefully for they are fragile,
If you make it safely past,
You should arrive at my heart,
And this is your final destination.
“Mom is in the hospital. Her tests didn’t come out as good as the doctor wants so she’s going to stay overnight,” Dad’s voice says as I listen to my voicemail.

Fear rushes through my body. Mom was diagnosed with leukemia about four years ago during my freshmen year of high school. She’s had many ups and downs with her treatments. The past four years have been hard on me; every time she is ill I fear that she might not recover. I grab my coat and I walk to the hospital; luckily it is next door to my school. I find her room and walk in to her telling the news to my sister, Sarah.

“I’m fine dear, don’t worry. The doctor just wants to monitor me overnight to make sure everything is normal; I should be home by this time tomorrow,” she tells my sister. Good. I’m glad nothing is REALLY wrong. I think as I give my mom a hug. We talk catch up about my classes, etc and I head back to school relieved that I won’t be losing my mom anytime soon.

A few days pass and mom’s health slowly goes down. Within a week she is in a coma and I find myself, alone with my dad, sister, and girlfriend surrounding my mom’s hospital bed as she slowly dies. I couldn’t believe it happened. I never thought she would give up. Didn’t I mean anything to her? She wasn’t supposed to leave me now. I need her now more than ever. I can’t wrap my mind around her absence. How would Dad and I survive on our own? Sarah’s married with a family; she can’t just take care of us too. I don’t know what to do, but I know I have to act tough for my dad. He’s hurting really bad and I don’t want to upset him more by being depressed. I can’t tell my girl friend, Julie, how upset I really am. I don’t want her to see me upset; I want her to think I’m strong enough to handle matters on my own. I don’t want my friends to feel sorry for me either and tell me they understand what I’m going through because they don’t understand. I’ll just deal with my pain on my own.

My dad gives me my mom’s old journals; she has kept a journal since she was a teenager. I begin to read them and for the first time, I truly realize how much my mother loved me. She wrote about EVERYTHING I have ever done. Her words are so loving towards me, and they make me miss her more than I ever imagined possible.

I stayed at home from school for two weeks after her death. I spent most of my time reading her journals and watching our family home videos from my childhood and our family trips. There were so many details of my life and of our family that I had forgotten. It was hard to watch the old videos, to see us as a happy, healthy family with not a care in the world. So many things have changed since then; I don’t even recognize those people in the videos. Her journals opened new insights to her life, to a woman I never truly knew.

After reading her journals and watching home movies, my father and I sat down and reminisced on the better times. He had a lot of interesting stories about her; stories about how they met, stories about her shenanigans during college, and stories from when I was younger. Spending two weeks time with my dad and sister helped me cope with the loss of my mother, but the wounds go so deep that I don’t think I’ll ever be able to fully recover; I feel like a part of me is missing.

Two weeks passed rather quickly, and before I knew it, I was back in my classes. All eyes seemed to be on me as I walked to my first class. My first class was Science, and the classroom was filled with chatter, that is, until I came in. Everyone saw me and shut right up; apparently they had heard about what happened. My teacher pulled me aside and asked if I was feeling up to lecture today. I know that what I went through was tough and that two weeks off
doesn’t seem like enough time to recover, but I just wanted everyone to treat me like they did before. Even my girlfriend was treating me differently, and I didn’t know how much more I could take. Throughout my day, friends, and people I didn’t even know, would approach me to offer their condolences. School seemed to last forever; I was watching the seconds tick by until the end of the day.

I wondered how long it would take to get my life back to normal or would it ever get back to normal? How was this going to affect my family? Could we still afford all of the things we were used to? Will my girlfriend ever think of me as she used to instead of associating me with the trauma I have suffered? I didn’t know the answer to any of these questions, but I guess I will find out eventually.

It had been six months since the loss of my mother and I was still struggling to accept this fact. At home some things were different, and took some getting used to, but nothing too terribly hard to deal with. Things at school were finally getting back to normal; only a few were still treating me different, mainly teachers. All my friends had been so helpful in getting me back to normal. I was starting to finally make plans to go out and have some fun. Luckily Julie had stood by me and we were still together and happy as could be. On occasion when I would be feeling down, I would open up my mother’s journal and read a little more. She was such a wonderful woman.

Only one year after the passing of my mother my father decided to start dating again. How would Mom feel about this? Would she want him to start dating again? I had so many concerns, but I couldn’t tell my father because I also wanted him to be happy. I finally approached my father on the subject of him dating and he tried to tell me that he and my mother had talked about it. I was determined to read her entire diary and find out.

Reading my mother’s diary brought many new things to light. She had done many things in her life that I knew nothing about. In her early twenties she was arrested for selling drugs – I never would have thought my mother would have anything to do with drugs, ever! Did my father know about this? He had to; they had been dating since they were in their teens. I wonder if they had ever split up and why and when they got back together. I had so many questions.

I hadn’t realized that I spent so much time reading my mother’s diary until Julie asked if we could spend some time together.

“I didn’t realize I was spending so much time reading this. There is just so much about her that I didn’t know.”

“I understand you want to keep her fresh in your mind, but I would like to spend some time with you. And for you to keep me fresh on your mind also.”

With that she planted a big kiss on my cheek. Oh how much I loved her! She kept me sane through everything. She was my world. I would do anything for her and I hoped she knew that. We started spending more time together and I had a fantastic date planned for her the coming Friday night. I made reservations at the most romantic restaurant in town, Ado. Then after dinner I planned to take her on a walk down by the local lake, it was so beautiful there this time of year. I just knew she would love it. I had already bought the ring I would give her and I hoped that she would accept. I know it was only a promise ring, but my promise was to pledge my love to her.

***

Today is the day; I couldn’t sleep well last night because I couldn’t stop thinking about how I’m going to propose to her. I practiced in front of the mirror, said different phrases thousand times. Going through my mother’s death, I had such a hard time adjusting but Julie was
always by side. I wanted her to be happy. As I was brushing my teeth, I looked into the mirror and started to examine my face. “Everything has to be perfect.” I told myself again and again.

I left my place early; I didn’t want to be late. Like I said to myself million times, everything had to be perfect. She sounded excited over the phone when I called her to ask out for our special date at Ado. Ado was her favorite place but since we’ve been saving money for past few months, we haven’t gone out to eat lately. We just took turns and cooked at each other’s places.

When we arrived at Ado, it was packed with people but they all seemed nice and appropriately dressed. I looked at Julie and she smiled back at me.

“Welcome to Ado; did you make a reservation?” as Julie and I walked into the door, a tall lady in a nice black dress greeted us a bright smile.

“Actually we did, earlier this week? It should be under name Hoffmann.”

“Oh, yes, but I think you only asked for a table for two, and adding you two would make four.” She seemed hesitant, “I don’t have another table, but maybe we could add two more chairs…”

“No, there must be some mistake. I made the reservation for the two of us only. No one else should be here.”

“Hoffmann, correct?” she asked.

“Yes, that is my last name.”

“Let me check with the two people we seated under that reservation.” She walked off. I followed her with my eyes. Sitting at our table was my father and his girlfriend. I would have grabbed Julie and run off, but my father looked where the woman was pointing and saw me. I could have died. Both of them came to us, leaving his girlfriend at the table.

“Son, I am so sorry. Apparently both of us made similar reservations, and the staff just thought they had repeated the same one. The manager says they could add two more chairs even though the table will be a bit crowded.”

“No, we’ll do something else.” I looked at Julie and hoped she’d understand, but she was staring open mouthed at me.

“Please, son. I would really like you and Julie to join us. This is a special occasion for us. Please come. Julie, persuade him.”

It was a special occasion for us too, but I didn’t know what to say. Julie, however, answered for us. “Certainly, Mr. Hoffmann, if it means that much to you. It is fine with us.” Julie didn’t know what I had planned. I was nearly in tears. My father was not thinking of my mother and now he was ruining my own engagement plans. But since Julie was following them back to the table, what could I do? We were given chairs and all sat down. The waiter brought champagne that my father had ordered and filled four glasses. I said, “No, you drink the champagne. We’ll order something else.”
No, let me rule this once. You and Julie should have one glass with us. This is a special occasion. I have just asked Marie to marry me and she has accepted. Marie will be your new mother.”

I was horrified. This was supposed to be my engagement dinner, not his. Julie, however, was all smiles and congratulations, and what else could I do? Well, what else could I do? I said, “Wait, don’t drink yet.” All three of them stared at me like I was crazy, but no one had sipped their wine yet.

I turned to Julie, pulled the ring box out of my pocket, showed it to her in front of all of them, and said, “Will you marry me—in four or five years when we both graduate college?”

Julie gave me the biggest smile I’ve ever seen. “Yes,” she said softly.

Dad and Marie congratulated us and then we all toasted one another with the wine. As I swallowed my first sip, I silently prayed to my Mom, hoping and believing that she too was toasting all four of us because, having read her private diary, I knew what she most wanted was for Dad and I to truly be happy.

Third Place Poetry Winner of Spring 2010 Society of Apothecaries and Dreamers Contest

**Frozen Tears**  
**By: Matthew Griffin**

Frozen tears fall from the celestial skies.  
Suffocating the life beneath,  
As the icy wind glides across the frozen grave.  
A beloved once cherished so long ago.  
Little did she know,  
That when she’d gone, I’d go.  
Kneeling, I place a black rose atop her grave.  
Shattered pieces of my heart are buried beneath her frozen tears.  
I slide my hand across her grave.  
A frozen tear lands upon my hand,  
Slowly encasing me in her sorrow.  
I won’t live to see tomorrow.  
Only her love is colder than her sorrow.
For weeks now the boy had been collecting pop bottles to recycle, mowing lawns, and working hard at his grandfather’s store, all the while saving his money. And he now finally had enough. In the boys mind all the work was more than worth it, for he would do just about anything to see his hero, the great Casey, play baseball.

The next home game finally arrived and the boy was first in line at the ticket booth. He happily handed over all his hard earned money for the ticket the lady handed him. The boy found his seat and excitedly waited for the game to begin.

Before the boy knew it, it was already the ninth inning and his beloved Mudville Nine were down two to four. The boy was a little discouraged at the way the game was turning out but he knew there was still hope. There was always hope when Casey was in the line-up. And with runners on second and third and Casey at the bat the boy’s hopes soared. This was the moment he and everyone else had been waiting for. He just knew Casey would send that ball flying over the fence, and save the day just like he always did.

After two pitches and two strikes the boy’s hope hadn’t faded at all. The next pitch didn’t stand a chance with Casey zeroing in on the ball. Casey swung and the boy could just hear the loud crack the ball and bat colliding would make in his mind. But, the crack never came, and instead all he heard was the umpire yell strike, and there stood Casey, still at home plate.
She could hear the chatter from her dressing room as she prepared for the best day of her life. Everybody outside seemed to be just as excited as she felt, speaking of her wealth to come and the many days ahead of her. She couldn’t help but smile as she beamed with happiness and slipped into her dress. Lizzy couldn’t help but notice her sister seemed to be in the same jovial mood as she, for they were nearly dressed and ready to leave the dressing room for the main hall. They were soon to be married to the men they loved.

Outside, Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy anxiously awaited the entrance of their soon to be brides. Both men held their respective brides as the highest women in their lives, loving them more than anything in the world and not knowing what they would do without them in their lives. Each man had spent some time either courting and/or persuading each respective girl to take them in good light and faith in hopes of obtaining their hands in marriage. Mr. Bingley didn’t have much of a problem with this from the start because Jane and he had both enjoyed each others’ company since they first met. Lizzy and Mr. Darcy, however, started their relationship off rather rough and both slowly began to like one another as time went on. Today was going to be the best day for both couples and there wasn’t anything that could be said to change anybody’s mind at this point. As the door began to open, both men felt like their hearts would stop and jump out of their throats until they saw their brides – then their hearts all began to race eagerly. The couples simply smiled and gaily giggled as they joined arms and began the walk down the aisle of the beautifully packed church. After the ceremony, the couples got into their own carriages and left courtyards filled with their friends and family, beginning their new lives as married couples and enjoying their ecstatic marriage.

Once Lizzy and Darcy arrived at Pemberley, they were still overcome with happiness, for they were finally able to spend the rest of their lives together, and they had both married for love – not just the securities of themselves and their families. The two spent many days strolling the courtyard and lawns around their home and spent a lot of time, just the two of them, enjoying each others’ company wherever they went. They were beginning a new life for the both of them and neither of them could predict the future that lay ahead of them.

One day when Lizzy was taking a stroll in her favorite garden near the great pond, Darcy said that he was headed into town and that he was expecting some guests later that day. He asked if Lizzy could entertain them whilst he finished his business in town and he would return to her as quickly as he could. She agreed and wished him a quick and fair trip so that he could return to her just the same as he left her. No longer had Darcy left and the dust settled from his carriage, Lizzy heard a team of horses on the gravel and went to see who was passing by. Much to her surprise, Jane was inside the carriage and couldn’t wait for the carriage to stop so that she could speak with Lizzy. They were both excited to see each other, and upon asking, Jane told Lizzy she had some wonderful news. As they entered the house, the girls spent much time talking of all the wonders they had both experienced in their new marriages and couldn’t wait to tell the other more. When they entered the afternoon drawing room, Lizzy inquired upon Jane as to what her great news was to travel all the way to Pemberley and tell her in person. Jane simply smiled sheepishly and looked at Lizzy, telling her that she and Bingley were soon to be only part
of the family – she was expecting! Shocked and excited, Lizzy jumped up to congratulate her older sister, for they had all thought she might not be able to have children at her age of marriage. As excited as Lizzy was for her sister, she was also inwardly jealous and somewhat sad because she and Darcy had been trying to expand their family as well, unfortunately without any success to this day. The girls began talking of what all they would need to do to prepare for the little one or ones that were destined to come.

Upon Darcy’s return later that night, Lizzy asked him if he had known about Jane’s good news, and he told her that he knew there was great news and that Jane was delivering it in person to them but knew not of the details. He asked Lizzy if Jane would need help preparing for her coming delivery or if Jane would be spending more time at Pemberley preparing for the pregnancy, and Lizzy replied that she really didn’t know what all plans were decided yet. Both girls knew they had some work to do but hadn’t spoken about when exactly or where. She figured she would need to go help set everything up at the Bingley estate with Jane, but didn’t know for sure. The next morning Jane went to take her leave, and just before entering the carriage, stopped Lizzy and asked her if she could come help her. Lizzy said she would do her best to make it there by the next week to help prepare for the delivery and would return to the Bingley residence when the time drew closer. With that promise, Jane climbed into the carriage and took her leave, reminding Lizzy to keep to her promise.

Later that night, Darcy and Lizzy were talking about the short-coming events and how Lizzy had promised to come to her sister’s aid whenever it would be needed or desired. Darcy said that if it would be necessary, he could always take Lizzy to the Bingley estate, and Darcy and Bingley could hunt birds and leave the girls to take care of their business – maybe even leave the house to the girls, and the men would return to Pemberley to hunt there and stay out of the women’s way. Lizzy enjoyed the idea of spending time alone with her sister and quickly set off to write Jane.

A couple of weeks went by before Lizzy heard back from her sister. When the letter finally arrived, Lizzy could hardly wait to open it and see what all had happened in the last couple weeks since their last conversation. Jane was doing fine and Bingley had been taking care of some business in an attempt to have everything ready for when the time came. They both agreed that it would probably be a good idea for the girls to spend some time to themselves in preparing everything and the men could hunt birds whilst they did so. Jane wished Lizzy could come see her upon receipt of the letter so Lizzy quickly set aside the letter and took to packing her clothes and called for Darcy from the lawn. Darcy said he would have the carriage drawn and they could leave for Bingley’s estate first thing in the morning, for it was already too late in the afternoon. Lizzy hardly sleep much of that night for she feared something was wrong with Jane with the urgency of her letter.

Upon arriving at Bingley estate, Lizzy hurried into the house to find Jane. She had no idea that there really wasn’t anything to worry about, but that Jane was just needing a female friend to speak with through all her experiences – she didn’t figure Mr. Bingley would appreciate or understand some of the issues she had gone through so far. Darcy and Bingley went out to hunt and leave the women to themselves and their own stories, gossips, and remodeling for the coming baby. This became the normal sequence of events for the next couple of weeks with the exception of coming together for meals from time to time and at night going to bed. When the women decided they had a room all ready for the baby, they decided to split their ways; Lizzy
and Darcy packed up and prepared to head back to Pemberley until Jane was nearer her due date – when Lizzy would return to give comfort to her sister during the tough times. Before they reached the mansion, however, Lizzy began to feel different. She began to feel slightly ill and tired but at the same time felt a new sense of energy like she had never known before. Thinking that maybe she was simply tired of all the work, she quickly put it off as nothing and forgot about the whole issue.

The next morning, Lizzy awoke to a dull, sickening feeling passing over her again as she had experienced the night before in the carriage. She felt very dizzy and not like herself at all. She just wanted to lie back down and go back to sleep but at the same time she felt as if she was going to be dastardly ill. When she entered the morning drawing room and approached Darcy, he noticed her outward discomfort and inquired unto her well-being, to which she replied that she didn’t feel very well. After sending for a doctor, Darcy ordered Lizzy to lie down upon the divan until the doctor arrived. She reluctantly did as he said and soon fell fast asleep into a peacefully dark dream that she felt was so real that it startled her awake, only to see the doctor peering over her lying upon the divan. Upon further investigation, the doctor informed Lizzy and Darcy that they might finally be pregnant. Startled and excited Lizzy just lay there upon the divan, not knowing what to say or to think – she was extremely happy to finally be carrying a child but at the same time she was scared. She didn’t know how to deal with a child and wondered how her being pregnant was going to affect Jane and her delivery. The doctor told Lizzy she shouldn’t be travelling too much for a while and that she should probably find a good midwife to help with the pregnancy, as well. Unsure of how to tell Jane of this new development, Lizzy sat upon writing a letter to both her father and Jane. She informed them both of how she was finally pregnant and how the doctor informed her she shouldn’t be travelling much for a while, but that maybe she should be able to travel to Jane during her time of delivery.

Days turned into weeks and weeks seemed to turn into forever before Lizzy was told she could travel to see Jane before her delivery date. Excited to finally be able to see her sister and get out of the house for a change of sight, Lizzy quickly packed – alone this time, though – and prepared to go to Jane for a few days. Upon arriving, Jane and Lizzy just looked at each other and began laughing at their current states, then sat down to exchanging stories of their pregnancies and what Lizzy could expect coming down the road. Three days later, Jane began feeling heavy contractions that continued to get faster and stronger. Lizzy called for the midwife to Jane’s room, for it seemed the baby would be coming any minute now. After the delivery, Lizzy handed the baby boy to Jane and just smiled. She was happy for Jane and knew that in a few months she, too would be experiencing the same thing; she couldn’t wait.

A couple weeks later at Pemberley, Lizzy received a letter from her father explaining that her mother and younger two unmarried sisters had begged him to come visit Lizzy, and he had finally decided to oblige them if nothing else than to stop the incessant nagging. Lizzy was excited to see her family again, but she wasn’t sure how Darcy would accept them after the way they thought of him outwardly. When she mentioned the letter to Darcy, however, he didn’t seem the slightest bit phased by the news of their coming to invade his house. Darcy gladly accepted their offer to come visit Lizzy – in fact he thought it would be great for Lizzy to have her family close during this time for Lizzy – and to quickly respond so they could come to Lizzy’s side and comfort her during this stressful time. After receiving her giddy letter, Lizzy’s
family all packed and arrived at Pemberley nearly two weeks later. The rest of Lizzy’s pregnancy went nearly the same as Jane’s except that instead of only having one main caretaker, Lizzy had her sisters, Mary and Kitty, as well as her mother to continually check on her and ask her a million questions along with preparing a room for the coming new member to the Darcy family. When the special day came to a close, Jane arrived at Pemberley to return the favor Lizzy provided her during those precious moments. However, Lizzy didn’t accept a baby boy into her arms as Jane, but rather both a boy and a girl; Lizzy had bore twins!

Since that day, Lizzy and Mr. Darcy have had 4 more children, 3 girls and 1 boy. They all live happily at Pemberley estate and still spend a lot of time shared between Pemberley, Longbourn, and the Bingleys’ estate to spend time with their cousins, aunts, and uncles. The families have all become very intertwined and close. The kids are all growing up well while Lizzy, Jane, Bingley, Darcy and the other Bennets all visit rather frequently to keep the times rolling by and entertain themselves. Mr. Bennet has passed along and Mr. Collins has allowed Mrs. Bennet, Mary Bennet, and Kitty Bennet to remain at Longbourn, even though he has ownership of the property – even though they frequent Pemberley and Bingley estates to visit the other girls. Lydia & George Wickham are mostly unheard from for they mostly stay to the north where Wickham hasn’t burnt all of his bridges and connections yet. Overall, the Darcy’s are doing very well and are living very happily with their increasing family and comfortable livings.

Family
By: Brittany Albus

From day one, there was no choice
Like it or not, they were your voice.
Bound by bonds unlike any other
Whether father, sibling, aunt or mother.

Not always perfect, but they do mean well
Sometimes we fight, and sometimes we yell.
It happens to everyone, all families included
Nobody is ideal, this is what I’ve concluded.

At times getting along is out of the question
And if I may, I will make a quick confession.
I may have been pushy, unappreciative and short,
But I really do thank them for all of their support.

I often took them for granted, and I realize now
I could be unappreciative, and I don’t know how.
I want to tell them thank you for all that they’ve done
I hope they realize that, in my heart, they’re number one.
The Four Letter Word  
By: Jenna Bailey

It’s the four letter word that says it all  
I stay up every night waiting on your call.  
You bring me smiles on my saddest day  
All my tears just seem to go away.  
When I see you coming my heart skips a beat.  
I get a tingly sensation from my head to my feet.  
For just one moment your lips could meet mine.  
It would be the most perfect kiss of all time.  
I trust you with all my heart.  
You’ve had my love from the start.  
This whole time I just wanted to say.  
I will love you each and every day.

Six Months  
By: Ashley Benain

Six months ago I made a wish,  
And that wish was you.  
If that was the only wish that ever comes true  
I’d be happy.  
The first time I laid eyes on you  
You took my breath away, and still do to this very day.  
You brighten my day in every way.  
I thank my luck stars every day to be with you.  
I thought I’d never find everything I was looking for,  
But I found all of it and more in you.
“Yes sir, I’ll have those files done by 9 tomorrow morning. Oh, not a problem. Always glad to do it for you, Mr. Palmer.” Jillian hung up the phone, and with a heavy sigh began to flip through the papers that her boss had left on her desk.

Truthfully, she was dreading reading these reports. She already had two other projects she was working on and taking on another was probably more than she could handle, but what could she do. Sacrifices had to be made to get to the top.

Jillian was thinking to herself, “If I skip lunch again and ask Carrie to feed Cocoa on her way home, I could stay late just one more night. Then I might even be able to finish early and even get a couple hours of sleep.” She actually had been doing this for weeks. Every time she met one deadline, she would always get another task that was due the next day or so.

Most people would probably classify Jillian Moore as a typical workaholic, but she instead liked to think of herself as goal oriented. If she wanted to be a chief executive at Global Corporation by 30 years old, she needed to work hard. No, work harder than hard. She needed to eat, breathe, and live her job. She hadn’t been out much since she took this job except to the park occasionally to walk her beloved black lab. The business field was a “dog eat dog” world, and if that meant giving up her social life, so be it. She was never much of a social being anyway. She was a go getter, always craving to be better at her job and move up at this company. And at 25 years old, she was doing pretty well.

The next morning, Jillian came into the office exhausted. She had just barely completed her assignment and wasn’t able to get any sleep. It took a little longer than she expected. Already having two cups of coffee, she was able to at least seem somewhat alert as she approached Mr. Palmer’s office.

“Hi Anne! I have a couple things to drop off for Mr. Palmer. Is he busy? I just wanted to explain a couple things to him about the reports.” She really didn’t have anything to clarify about them, but thought it was a good idea to have some face time. She had heard about a job opening in her department and this could be a good way to be in the running for a promotion.

“Good morning! Jillian is it? Just go right in, he’s expecting you.” Jillian straightened her suit, smoothed out her hair, and with a deep breath, she confidently knocked on his door and walked in.

“Ah, just the person I wanted to see! Come in, sit! Oh, you can just give those files to me.”

Her heart was thumping rapidly as she handed him the files. She thought, could this be about the promotion?

“I can’t help but notice that you’ve been working hard. Skipping breaks, staying late. You’ve been doing a great job around here and don’t know what I’d do without you. As you probably know, there is a convention coming up and would like you to be the candidate to represent me there. Everything would be paid for and you just have to attend a few meetings. Think about it as a mini vacation. So, the plane is actually booked for tomorrow. I know it’s very short notice, but I’ll give you the rest of the day off to pack and get ready. Don’t let me down. What do you say?

She couldn’t believe this. This stuff was for low ranked people, secretaries, servants, and not hard workers like her. He was trying to ruin her plan in becoming CEO! Was she slowing down or something? Did he think she was too tired to handle the workload? She wanted to cry.
If she left for a week, the new position would probably be taken by someone less competent than her! He could feel him staring at her. He was waiting for an answer. It probably wouldn’t help her chances at the promotion if she went against his proposal, so through her clenched jaw, she replied, “Gladly.”

Next thing she knew, she was at home flinging her business clothes into her luggage bag all the while muttering how this could be happening. Eventually after a couple hours of throwing things around, she finally accepted the fact that there was nothing she could do now that she agreed to go. She calmed down and folded up her suits to prepare for her trip, then realized, she didn’t even know where she was going! She opened up the envelope with her boarding ticket and read the destination.

She groaned. “He must be kidding? Out of all places!” The ticket read: Disneyland.

She was determined to get in and get out. Go to the meetings and get the first flight back. She even brought some files on to work on to get ahead. She would not be beaten out of the new position because she fell behind.

She stepped onto the shuttle bus. The ride to the theme park was going to be long and terrible. It was packed with loud children whose parents could not control them because they were secretly excited also. Jillian could only scorn upon them while looking for a place to sit, but in the middle of all the chaos, she spotted another woman: calm, reserved, and also in a business suit. A fairly nice one in fact. She wasn’t exactly beautiful, but she maintained herself well. She dressed appropriately and seemed to have her hair and nails done regularly. Relieved to see someone else down to earth in all this craziness, she took the seat next to her.

Luckily, she didn’t have to awkwardly start the conversation. “Here for the convention I assume?”

Maybe because she was so frustrated and wasn’t able to vent to anyone except Cocoa, she basically told this stranger her whole life story. Where she worked, how much she put into the company, her aspirations, how she ended up here, how she wasn’t going to lose her promotion because of this, even which hotel she was staying at. She spilled everything and the woman patiently listened. All Jillian was able to learn about her was that her name was Lisa, 37 years old, unmarried, and a manager at some office before the bus stopped at their destination.

“I’m so sorry I talked so much! I’m normally not like this!” Jillian yelled through the screaming children.

Lisa smiled and lipped “that’s okay, it was nice to meet you” before shaking her hand and leaving the bus. People were waiting outside at the end of the steps for Lisa and quickly directed her into the back seat of a Mercedes Benz.

Lisa must be somewhat important but Jillian didn’t think much more of it. People at her office were constantly being escorted and driven places all the time. It didn’t mean much. Jillian looked down at her itinerary and headed to her first session.

There must have been thousands upon thousands of people at the auditorium. She sat down near the front and waited for the presenter to begin. She looked at her watch. She hoped the speech was short so that she could go back and read the files she snuck onto the trip. After a few minutes, the lights dimmed and the speaker walked briskly onto the stage. Jillian recognized the expensive suit, the hair, the nails, her plain face and realized that it was Lisa! She was hosting this convention! Jillian groaned softly. She automatically regretted pouring out her soul to her. She complained and whined and vented all her problems. She couldn’t concentrate on Lisa’s speech. All she could do was go through their conversation on the bus. Did I really say
that? She probably thinks I’m not made out for the business world! She would apologize on their ride tomorrow.

As she was walking out the next morning, the receptionist called out to her, “Oh, Miss Moore! There’s a letter for you.”

Really? She thought to herself. No one except her boss knew that she was here and he would have just called her. She took the red envelope and read the elegantly written letter:

Dear Jillian Moore,

It was great meeting you yesterday. I hope you enjoyed listening to my speech and it wasn’t extremely dreary. This letter may be inappropriate due to the fact that we just met, but I wanted to give you some words of advice that I wish someone would have told me years ago. While talking yesterday, I couldn’t help but be reminded of myself 10 years ago. I will admit you are not as careful and cautious as I was and that will probably get you to be chief executive by 30 years old instead of 37. I truly like that you are ambitious and driven, but I suggest that you do not isolate yourself from the rest of the world. Don’t get me wrong. There is nothing wrong in knowing what you want and going for it, but while doing so, take time to enjoy life. You have time, I promise. Surround yourself with friends and family not just papers. Take risks at love not just stock. Basically go out and have some fun. I want to challenge you this week to look around you and “awaken” your inner child again. Ride the roller coasters, take a picture with Mickey Mouse, and just let go for a bit. Don’t stress out over the promotion. I have no doubt that you will succeed in whatever you pursue. I know it is not my place to tell you what to do, but please take this to heart. I am flying out this afternoon, but I hope to see you again sometime. I have enclosed my business card if you ever need to contact me.

Sincerely,
Lisa Kohlman

The rest of the week flew by. She actually took some time away from her computer to just walk around and enjoy the amusement park. She played like a child, carefree with no stress. On her flight back, she even thought maybe she didn’t want the promotion. She could have more time for Cocoa and her friends and even get to visit her parents during the holidays.

On Monday morning, she visited Mr. Palmer’s office to inform him about the convention. “Jillian, so glad to have you back! It’s been hectic around here without you! I read through your reports last week and they were excellent. I don’t know if you know, but there is an opening here at the office and I immediately thought you would be the perfect person for the job. What do you say to a promotion?”

She hesitated.

Why wasn’t she automatically saying yes? Wasn’t this exactly what she wanted? Even though she had been working towards this moment for endless nights for months, she couldn’t help but remember Lisa’s letter. Taking this promotion would mean 50+ hours a week, for what? Another promotion? Didn’t she just have doubts just a couple days ago on the plane? This week had been great. She had a chance to relax and had time to “stop and smell the roses.” She had been able to have a drink with her girlfriends this past weekend, call her parents to say hi, and even had some time for herself.

However, she was back to reality and pushed back these thought. She couldn’t let a trip or one person get in the way of her goal. How quickly she forgot about Disneyland, about the letter, about her social life. She accepted the offer and told herself she wouldn’t become like
Lisa. She would make time for her friends and family, she would get married, she would balance her life. Hopefully.

Second Place Poetry Winner of Spring 2010 Society of Apothecaries and Dreamers Contest

*Something Sweet*

**By: Michelle Man**

Love is…
Waking up during the wee hours of the morning to calm the upset baby
Cleaning up the colorful food collage off a “daddy’s girl” bib
Teaching their daughter to tie her shoes with a bunny rabbit bow
Playing catch in the backyard with their son during the crisp fall day
Hanging up that crayola stick-figurish drawing on the fridge as if it were the Mona Lisa
Taking them to go see grandpa and grandma back in the old country every summer
Signing them up for piano lessons, baseball teams, and tutoring to give them opportunities you never had
Sledding down the hill with him on a cold frigid day when you would really rather be inside where it is warm and dry
Learning how to deal with his sudden decision to shave off all his hair and dye his eyebrows green during middle school
Sitting in the passenger seat, clenching teeth while he learns the difference between a yellow and red light
Bringing cookies and a glass of milk to their studying high school student during finals week
Comforting her when those colleges reject her
Remembering that just a few years ago she was in diapers at her high school graduation
Sending him off to college with more socks than he would ever need
Embarrassing him at his wedding with those baby pictures
Holding that little grandchild for the first time
Spending hours on phone counseling them about what to do when that baby won’t stop crying
Tearing up when he stops and says, “Thanks mom and dad”
To Mothers and Fathers everywhere who never give up on their children and never stop loving
My mom always told me not to talk to strangers. Boy, I wish that I would have listened to her. Mother really does know best. I was walking down the sidewalk in the neighborhood, as I do every day. Mom hates for me to go out alone, but sometimes I just need to clear my head. This particular day, I realized that I had been out walking so long that it was almost dark. I was only a couple of blocks away from home though, so I thought that it was really no big deal. Mother would probably freak though, so I figured that I should speed it up. After arriving on my block, I saw a man that I’d never seen before walking his dog. He was smiling and seemed friendly, and his dog was playful and friendly as well. He stopped to pet his dog as I neared; we were going in opposite directions. Being the most avid dog lover in the world, I had to stop and pet the dog and scratch behind its ears. The guy said that his dog’s name was Anna Belle. He introduced himself as Timothy and said that he lived a block over. I told him my name, Jill, and pointed to my house down the street. He said that maybe we would see each other out walking again sometime. I agreed and hurried home. When I walked through the door, Mom was sitting in her usual spot on the couch watching an episode of America’s Most Wanted, her favorite show.

She appeared to be glued to this particularly exciting episode. Figuring she was consumed in her show, I decided to take advantage of the situation. I shut the door as quietly as possible, and tiptoed across the kitchen to the stairs. Unfortunately, her hearing was better than I had presumed. Her head whipped around to face me, frozen in the kitchen. Her usually gentle, green eyes pierced mine and sent shivers down my spine. The venomous gaze was no match for the ice cold tone in which she spoke.

“Where have you been?” she inquired. The question seemed simple enough, but the manner in which she spoke it caused my heart to soar into overdrive. Gulping down the newly-formed lump in my throat, I opened my mouth to speak.

“Out.” The simple, vague word was all I could muster. When forced to be victim to my mother’s questioning, all sense of speech was lost. Slowly rising off the couch, she became more intimidating as she loomed toward me, towering over my petite frame. Punishment was inevitable. Nothing could save me now. It was too late.

It’s not that I am incorrigible, hard-headed, or deaf to all voices but my own. In truth, I listen to and comprehend just about everything that emits from my mother’s mouth. Unfortunately though, I tend to be somewhat careless. I get caught up in delightful activities, and throw caution to the wind. In addition, it is not as if I don’t care about my mother. In fact, I love her dearly! I tend to be slightly selfish when it comes to my alone time. I love when no one interrupts.
Now standing directly in front of me, she looked more menacing than before. I tried to move, but my legs were inconveniently stuck to the floor. I willed myself to find the strength to move out of the line of fire, but my attempts were futile. Crossing her arms across her chest, she blew out an exasperated sigh that surprised me.

“Out? You just came in. It was already dark when you came in: you were late and careless as usual. But that isn’t enough? Now you want to go back out after doing no more than crossing the kitchen floor?”

I stared at her dumbly. Did I really say, “out?” I just wanted to escape up to my room. How did I get into this mess? What could I say? I couldn’t think with her staring at me. What starts with “out?” Out of reach? Out of her way? Out from under her staring eyes? I had to say something so I babbled, “Uh, I was going to say, outside just now I met a man with a dog—a really cute dog. I was surprised I never saw him before. He said he lived only one block over. Wouldn’t you think I would have noticed his dog before? You know how I love animals.”

My mother continued to stare at me as if I was dumb. Finally she spoke. “Jillian Rose Cossner, surely you know better than to talk to strangers. How often have I drilled that into you? Especially in the dark! It doesn’t matter that he had a dog. The dog was a lure. He used it to get to you.”

“Mom, he didn’t use Anna Belle to lure me. I am the one who stopped to pet the dog. Me, I stopped, not him.”

“Oh Jillian, that is the oldest trick in the book! How could you fall for it?”

“It was not a trick, Mom. All I did was pet a dog. I am home now. He can’t get me.” I started to flounce up the stairs to my room as if I was the one who was justified, but I knew my mom wasn’t done even though she went back to see the end of her show.

The next day I had to practically sneak out of the house. My mom was everywhere I went. I like to be alone, and I had to escape those judgmental eyes. Much to my surprise, I had not gone very far from home (thankfully far enough to not be seen from the house) when again I ran into Timothy and Anna Belle.

“Jillian, how nice to see you again,” he cooed. “Where are you headed to today?”

“Uh, I’m just walking. I’m surprised to see you again.”

“Oh I walk Anna Belle every morning and evening.”

“How come I’ve never seen you before?”

“Oh I guess my schedule may be a bit off.”
Schedule, I thought to myself. I have no schedule. I come and go all the time. Something is wrong here. Why not lie and claim he just moved in or something? Then I realized I must be as paranoid as my mother to think he would have to lie. But what was the situation? I was beginning to think my mom was right, and I hated when that happened.

After having such scary thoughts I decided to get away from Timothy and his dog by telling him that I was late for something and that I’d better get going. Timothy cried, “NO!” in a demanding voice and that frightened me. I was thinking that who was he to tell me to not go and what was his purpose of telling me to stay.

Then he calmly stammered, “I-I-I mean stay. We can go on a stroll around the park and play catch with Anna Belle.” At that moment I thought about what my mom said about this scary man being a creep, and sure enough, I knew Momma was right again.

I wanted to run so badly, but I knew my legs were frozen to the ground as my heart beat pumped louder and louder in my chest. “For heaven’s sake, I am only nine!” I kept thinking to myself. Timothy reached in and tried to touch the places where my bathing suit covered and that was all I needed before I started to sprint. I could hear the deafening barks from Anna Belle chase after me, and I wondered if I was even going to make it home.

“Get back here!” he thundered. “I’ll find you!” I ran faster and faster and breathed harder and harder until I couldn’t even think straight. As I turned the corner, I saw my old familiar home urging me to make it. Though my legs hurt with exertion, I forced them to go faster.

Rushing into my house with tears pouring down my cheeks, my mom grasped my face with strong hands and extreme concern. I was scared to tell her the real story because she had already forbid me from seeing Timothy, so I pretended that I had been playing outside and fell down. She didn’t seem to buy the story, but I didn’t give her time to question me any further. I needed to be alone, so I escaped to my room and locked the door.

Later that night as I was lying in bed, the events of the day prevented me from falling asleep. An uneasy, eerie feeling kept coming over my body as though Timothy were in my home, or worse in my room. I tried my hardest to get these awful thoughts out of my head, but they proved to no avail. With the covers over my head stifling my breath, I contemplated whether or not I should get out of bed and turn the lights on. “Do it!” I urged myself. “No, stay here!” my thoughts fought with torment. Counting to three, I rushed over to my bedroom door and flipped on the lights before I could convince myself not to. Illuminated from the light of my room was Timothy standing in my front lawn.

I let out a blood curdling scream, but quickly silenced myself so I wouldn’t draw attention to my room. I crept down the stairs and tiptoed across the hall to my mother’s bedroom. Trying to make as little noise as possible, I shook my mother awake and told her to be
quiet. Knowing I didn’t have much time to explain myself, I quickly told her about what happened today and said I had been lying about falling down. I finished with admitting that the man almost hurt me, and I saw him in the yard. We swiftly ran to the kitchen hand-in-hand toward the phone. But before my mom could get her hand on it, we saw red and blues lights outside our window swirling in the nighttime.

As we approached the door, an officer met us there and introduced himself as Sheriff Ryan Michaels. Explaining that one of the neighbors had witnessed the events today and reported what had happened, the policeman continued that they were taking Mr. Chester Reynolds to jail. “Chester? Who was Chester?” I thought to myself shocked. Directing the conversation to my mother, Sheriff Michaels explained that the police department had been looking for “Timothy” all day long, but other communities had been searching for him for several months now. He was a registered sex offender and traveled from town to town targeting young children and using several different aliases. I wasn’t quite sure what all of this meant, but we were gently ordered to follow him to the station, so we could fill out information about the incident.

While sitting at the police station as my mom filled out paperwork, many officers interrogated me about what happened, and I knew I had to tell the truth. They told me I was a very brave girl, and that I helped them catch a dangerous man.

The ride home was kind of awkward. I wasn’t sure if I was going to be scolded by my mom for not telling the truth or comforted for what I had endured, but it turned out, I got a little of both. Explaining to me that “Timothy” had hurt over twelve little girls, my mom choked out that many of them never got to see their mommies or daddies again after what he did to them. My mother started to cry and had to pull over as she told me that I was all she had. If anything would have happened to me, her life would not be endurable. Starting to cry too, I leaned in to hug her, and I as I held on with all my might, I wondered what it would have been like to have never made it home.

**STLCOP**
**By: Brittany Albus**

STLCOP: our new life
You must be dedicated
Hard work will pay off
Surprise  
By: Sam Buckler

The metal was cold against his fingers. He was surprised by how heavy it was and wondered if anyone noticed the slight bulge it made in his coat pocket. He had never actually owned one himself but had seen it used dozens of times before at his friend’s house. This time he would be the one using it.

It had been awkward when he went to his friend’s house to borrow it. They both knew he wasn’t any good with it. It just didn’t feel natural in his hand. He wondered if it would be easy. He’d never liked loud noises; they always made him feel uncomfortable. He really didn’t think it would bother him this time, she’d been asking for it. The persistent nagging had finally broken him; enough was enough. He was going to put an end to it tonight.

After he got off the bus and was walking the remaining two blocks to their apartment, he couldn’t stop thinking about how good it would feel to finally get her to shut up. After he rounded the corner to their apartment, he noticed that the lights were still on.

“Good,” he thought, “she’s still up; I’ll get to see the look of surprise on her face.”

Sure enough when he walked in the door she had a sort of shocked look on her face.

“Like she really hadn’t known this was coming,” he chuckled to himself.

“What are you doing with that,” his wife asked.

Wasn’t it obvious? He was finally going to hang that shelf she’d been asking him to hang for weeks. Why else would he need a hammer?

Distance  
By: BJ Byland

Distance makes the heart grow fonder,  
But distance causes arguments.  
Distance helps you realize how much you love someone  
But distance causes temptation.  
Distance helps one think  
But distance makes the heart ache.  
Distance teaches a person a lot about what they want  
But distance truly does make the heart grow fonder.
My Negative Taxis
By: Nick Farrar

Are we just following maps of love we once drew?
Come back to me; I’m still so lost in you
This endless cycle decays my soul too slow
But I can’t seem to let you go

Let’s retrace our steps and find a path
Back to youth and no regrets
If you’ve lost hope, please let me know
It seems your eyes have lost their glow

And those dead eyes won’t let you see
This empty bed is haunting me
And all the songs we used to sing
Remind of how it used to be

Well my dear, anticipation is key
And knowing how this ends will only breed misery
The things you say won’t let me sleep
And I know you won’t be coming back to me

But isn’t this the way it works?
This cycle we’ve created can’t get any worse
We sin our lives away, day by day
Then long to live the years we waste

Yet I can’t get you off my mind
This constant clockwork is wasting all my time
My visions blurred and my bones are dry
I think it’s time we said goodbye

So tell me love, am I just habit?
Am I just a fool who lives for a love not returned?
I won’t stay trapped in your indecisive melodies:
This is my negative taxis, I’m cutting myself free
Summer Thoughts
By: Malory Toebben, Stephanie Hand, Erin Frevert, Crystal Powell

The sky so bright and baby blue
The sun shining radiant yellow
Oh how I wish I was with you
Instead of feeling so mellow

I long to see your smiling face
To hear you speak to me
I wish you were at my place
Of worries we’d be free

We’d talk about old times
Laugh so hard we cry
Being here without you feels like a crime
Only three more months until July!

You’ll come home and we’ll embrace
Iraq is just too far and scary
I can’t wait to see your smiling face
I hope it won’t be too hairy

Summer has come and gone
You are needed for another tour
Your time here passed so fast
But your absence they will endure

For now you shall return in December
It is quite too far away
Those you help shall always remember
Until then I will continue to pray

The Change of Fall
By: Josie Millard

The
Change
Of Fall
Goodbye green, hello orange
Summer is ending and school is starting
Friends are leaving and leaves are changing
Flowers are dying and pumpkins are growing
Days are shorter and nights are longer
Goodbye green, hello orange
Today Ricky and I were going to the intercoastal waterway. Dad and Jim wouldn’t even realize we were gone since they spend almost every Saturday sitting on the front porch discussing politics and making cast nets. My Dad loved this part of the week. He was always fond of learning new trades, and ever since he met Jim, he has been learning to knit nets. I don’t mind it much because dad promised me that he would make me one, and since Jim is my best friend’s dad, it means more time for fun.

At half passed nine I waited downstairs for Ricky. When he finally appeared at forty passed, we knew exactly what the plan was because we had discussed it intricately right before bed. Ricky left for the garage to get the bikes as I went and distracted Dad and Jim on the front porch. As I asked them frivolous questions about fishing or cast netting, I watched behind them as Ricky expertly snuck the bikes from inside the garage to around the corner of the house. When both were secured, I told Dad and Jim that Ricky and I were off to play ball with the neighbors and left feeling like a covert G.I. on a top secret mission.

Very pleased with ourselves, Ricky and I headed down to the bay where we would follow the shore line to the intercoastal bridge, which we were forbidden to cross but determined to do so anyway. When we finally reached the bridge, it felt amazing. This was as far as we had ever gotten during a summer together. We were enthusiastic partly because we were proud of ourselves but mainly because we knew that we were technically not supposed to be here. The risk of getting away with this act was exciting, and before long, Ricky and I crossed the bridge and headed down to the waterway.

The sight was grand. Ships and fishing vessels traveled up and down the water going about their business. Barges occasionally sounded their horns as they went into distant docks. We hid our bikes under some shore side brush and carefully checked our book bags for our supplies. Amongst the treasures included things like my old cast net, some rope, a hammer Ricky had found at the ball field, and some chewing tobacco that we were saving for when we were absolutely sure no one would catch us.

We walked along the shore headed towards a cliff that blocked our view of the shore ahead. When we reached it, we realized that it jutted into the water some ways and that getting around it would require work. Taking off our shoes, we tied the laces together and strung them around our necks so we wouldn’t have to handle them as we waded through the water. Ricky went first and slowly we made our way through the murky salt water staying close to the cliff’s wall. As Ricky rounded the corner, he gasped and stopped dead in his tracks. What he spotted turned out to be the highlight of our summer.
There laying 50 yards or so off shore was the wreckage of a massive barge. It was huge spanning the length of something close to a football field. Even more quickly now we continued to wade through the water around the rocky face to reach the shore. Once we got there, we ran along the beach until we were right in front of it, watching as the waves crashed against.

“It’s only about 50 yards away. It looks like the surf is rough around it so we could probably still touch the bottom if we walked out there,” said Ricky with awed voice.

“I see a ladder; we might be able to get on deck!” I replied excitedly.

There was nothing left to discuss. Together we waded about 25 yards into the waterway realizing that we would have to swim the rest of the way.

“Get the rope out.” Ricky stated. “We will tie ourselves together. That way if one of us gets tired or something, the other can pull him to shore.”

Handing him the rope, I felt an appreciation for this thought. When Ricky started thinking about safety, you knew we were doing something he had never done before, and that was saying a lot. Securing the ends of the rope around our waists, we continued on towards the barge.

The ocean got louder as we got closer to it. Waves crashed against the metal hull and a mysterious crackling noise rose over the water to us. Finally without too much difficulty we reached the old rusty ladder that I had spotted when we were on shore.

“Careful.” Ricky warned. “Don’t cut yourself or you’ll get a nasty infection and you’ll have to get shots.”

Following Ricky, I pulled myself up onto the first wrung and carefully moved up the hull being careful not to get snagged. The barge was even bigger up close, and I couldn’t help but feeling that if we got caught doing this, we would be dead. Reaching the top, Ricky paused for a second, then slowly climbed over the lip of the rail onto the deck. I couldn’t believe it. There was absolutely no one on the barge, and yet here we were, two 13 year old Floridians who had no business being there. By looks of things, no one had probably been there in a long time. The deck was still furnished with huge anchors and chains and other rusted tools. Walking toward the bow, we realized that a huge part of the deck was gone. It had either rusted out or had been purposefully cut from the ship. We approached the edge carefully making sure not to step on any weak places in the floor and quite possible seriously injure ourselves.

Inside the massive gaping hole was the source of our mysterious crackling sounds. Like a giant witch’s cauldron, water was rushing in and out of a large crack on the underside of the vessel, and as it bubbled upward into the ship underneath us, it had an appearance of a boiling broth. Silently Ricky and I crouched looking over the edge of the deck down into the depths of the ship watching the water come in and out. This was like a great secret for just me and Ricky.
No one would ever know what we had found, and we would never tell anyone to risk other people coming to find this mystifying place.

Ricky prodded me and motioned to his wrist watch.

“If we don’t start heading back, our dads are going to start wondering where we are. If they end up going to the store and pass the ball field, they will know that we weren’t telling the truth,” Ricky said.

“But we haven’t even tried to get up to the bridge yet. There could be some really cool stuff up there.” I replied disappointed.

“I know. We will just have to come back next week. Let’s go.”

We made our way back the way we came, down the ladder to the shore, around the cliff and back to our bikes. Although it didn’t seem that long, our adventure had taken half the day and Ricky was right about getting back.

When we got home, we found our dads sitting in the same place we left them. We said hello and then headed to Ricky’s bedroom to discuss our plans for next week. There was just no way that we weren’t going to go back.

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**Life**

By: Clinton Martin

It’s one of those things that are unexpected,  
It’s something that should be cherished,  
It’s something everyone has and can be given,  
   It’s something someone can take away,  
It sometimes is hard and sometimes easy,  
It’s something most people take for granted,  
   It can be hated or loved,  
   It’s Life
Everyday  
By: Marquita Martin  

I just smile and pretend everything is okay  
Life is only getting harder  
The same problems, just a different day  

If only they could see what my eyes are trying to say  
Red and puffy, I keep them quiet behind sunglasses  
I just smile and pretend everything is okay  

Dear Diary: there’s nothing new to say  
I am impressed at how well my face can lie  
The same problems, just a different day  

I cry, scream, struggle, and pray  
Alone. They ask how I’m doing  
I just smile and pretend everything is okay  

How can I live when life gets in the way?  
There’s no reason to look forward to tomorrow  
The same problems, just a different day  

No one knows the pain inside  
Every morning, the mirror questions my strength  
I just smile and pretend everything is okay  
The same problems, just a different day  

Music  
By: Crystal Powell  

The beat gets in my head  
And I follow it away  
To place of no concerns  
A place free of worries  
And stress  
A place to clear my thoughts  
The beat ends and brings me back to reality
**Mokyoktang**  
**By: Stephanie Hong**

“I don’t care if you are coming with me or not. I am going to Mokyoktang (public bath) NOW,” Mom spat out at me while grabbing her plastic shower basket, without even the slightest glance back. These were her first words after an hour-long, icy silence. She said she wouldn’t care if I came with her or not, but her sulky, yet softened tone was telling me the opposite: “Unless you want this silence to go on longer, you’d better come.” I hastily put on my flip-flops to catch up with her.

*Mokyoktang*, strange as it may sound, is our favorite hang-out, where we spend our “mother and daughter time.” Just as Romans had their *Thermae* and modern Americans ladies their salons, Mom and I have *Mokyoktang*, a place of comfort, socialization, and wit. While relaxing in a sauna or a hot tub, Mom and I have often engaged in many refreshing conversations, discussing topics that range from the ’80s fashion trends to the current welfare system for senior citizens. Listening to my own mother passionately talking about what she knows and desires, I have often wondered if this place has a spell that strips a woman to only her essence.

However, here I was today, in the farthest corner of the unventilated sauna room, staring at mom’s face in an attempt to read any signs of reconciliation. Earlier today, she had told me that she didn’t want me to go back to the States. As I always trusted that she understood exactly where my passions lie and what my plans were, her fury came to me as rather a shock. I kept thinking of why Mom, my greatest supporter, would oppose my life-long plan. However, the answer came from somewhere else as one of the ladies in the room asked me a simple question.

“Jeeyeon, when are you leaving for the States again? Probably late in August, right?”

I shrugged my shoulders. What was I supposed to say when I was not even sure Mom would let me go? I turned to face Mom. She looked at me silently for a second, sighed, and opened her mouth,

“Yes. I really don’t want her to go, but I guess I shouldn’t stop her just because I want her to be with me.”

“I know. It must be hard. Jeeyeon, your mom looks so much happier when you are around,” the lady said.

So here was the simple answer: Mom didn’t want me to go because she would… miss me. The charm of this place had worked again, revealing mom’s true feelings. She wanted me to follow my dream, but at the same time she longed for more time for us to spend together before it is too late.
“Mom, you know I will be back for the summer after ten months,” I barely managed to say without sobbing. I wished I could tell her that I also wanted to stay with her, but I couldn’t. Just as much as I cherished spending time with Mom, I adored the time spent pursuing my education, the time spent with John Donne’s “salvation anxiety,” chromosomes, and sometimes even derivatives. Instead, I silently held Mom’s hand. From her firm grip, I knew she understood exactly what I wanted to say.

I sometimes question myself. Are the four years I spent studying abroad worth the time I could have spent with Mom? However, the truth is that family and my future are too valuable to compare. Instead, I think of the hand I held in that stuffy sauna. Then the charm of this place invigorates me again, assuring me that I won’t allow either of these aspects of my life to slip away. In a place where people refresh their bodies, I found myself not only cleansed, but also well balanced, once again.

La Morte de l’Amour
By: Zach Moser

When a relationship dies,
it first comes in disguise,
one side taken by surprise.

The love lies dead,
doesn't matter what was said,
or what's running through their heads.

Visitation is today at noon,
It can't come too soon,
as silence fills the room.

Take this time to look back,
don't think about what you lack,
but remember the facts.

The funeral is in an hour,
leaving a taste of sour,
amidst all of the flowers.

The eulogy was grand,
almost like holding her hand.
Too bad you can't make amends.

Time to lay it in the ground now,
though you don't really know how, leave it all behind, take one last bow.

Lay your pictures by the grave, it's pointless now, nothing to save. Let the emptiness a new path pave.

Morning come, mourning past and now at long last, moving on, while singing along, you'll give it a rest

“Bittersweet”  
By Lisa Kim

I get so breathless, when you call my name.  
There's strong chemistry between you and me  
I've often wondered, do you feel the same?  
One soft kiss from you is my only plea  
You wrap me up in the color of love  
You thrill me in every possible way  
You're my angel sent down from high above  
But these fantasies slip away to grey  
My heart feels so vulnerable and bleak  
Do you know how easy it's to love you  
No other human could make me this weak  
Tell me you have felt this way for me too  
I don't know if I could ever survive  
In this magical land behind your eyes
Café Twilight
By: Xing Yang

A woman’s voice spoke through the train’s intercom, indicating their short arrival. Feet began shuffling followed by mothers shouting at their children to help gather luggage. Sleepers awoke to confusion, but quickly took the hint from other passengers. Sounds of compartment doors opening and closing were mingled with the sudden livelihood of conversation. The train was alive.

Despite the muss and fuss of the passengers, Galvin stayed seated, his attention fixed to the window. The train’s light masked the outside view with his reflection. He was 22 years of age with thick, dark brown hair touching thin brows. He was handsome with a dreamer’s hazel eyes, a high nose bridge, and thin lips pressed tight in an unconcerned expression. Years of physical labor and traveling were marked by a firm body and skin darkened from hours of sun exposure.

Galvin didn’t mind the momentary obstruction to his view. He understood the world from a day-to-day basis. Today was an introduction to a harsh winter: an overcast sky that brought frigid winds on a somber day. Galvin imagined rows of barren trees lost in the blur of the train’s movement, branches that painfully reach for an open sky and a more cordial weather.

Upon the train’s arrival, passengers quickly emptied the cart. Galvin waited in the calm of momentary silence until he felt ready to follow suit. Carrying only a light pack draped over a shoulder, he walked into a blast of cold, penetrating wind. It was a day for thick coats and mittens. Standing on the train platform, Galvin took in the scene: kids were running, adults shouting to slow down; groups of young women were laughing over an inaudible comment, their notion leaving puffs of white air made apparent by the chill; a bench under shelter of an overhang was filled with men and women: some excited and others with the look of subjugation. This was a station with tracks directing trains in opposite directions.

He’s not here, thought Galvin, a hint of disappointment masked by an unconscious reassurance that things will work out in the end.

A powerful draft swept through the train platform, causing victims to secure hats and shrink into the comfort of winter outfits and nearby companions. People started boarding the train that Galvin had just left, signaling him to walk up narrow steps leading to an old sidewalk on an empty street. The street led along a hill lined with industrial red-bricked housing. Lights were visible through several windows, but the silhouettes of its residents were absent. The street lights had begun to turn on, blinking and buzzing in a struggle to stay lit.

The wind howled, casting the whisper of silence into flushed ears from the evening chill. Galvin understood and respected silence as a sailor to the sea: a force with both beauty and vengeance.

Following the broken sidewalk (littered with patches of grass) led him to the hill’s apex with the view of train tracks running north through the city. Beyond the tracks were dark backdrops of
mountains, their existence adding a deeper depth to the city’s desolation. Despite the insightful view on the hilltop, Galvin never lost sight of the lights that radiated from across the street.

Here, the rows of industrial housing ended; across the street stood a conservative yellow bricked building with a wooden door. Lights spilt from individual windows, cutting the bitterness of the evening’s dreary mood. It was a commercial residence without a sign to indicate much else. The door briefly opened, followed by the sound of the doorbell, and a stranger walking out and down the road, where he seemed to have blended into the darkness of the oncoming evening.

As Galvin stood there, the light from the building softened his stiff features and seemed to have lit a curiosity within his soul. If anything important still exists in this town, this is it, he thought. Galvin crossed the street, bracing himself for what was to come; the moment his hands had grasped the warm door knob, he let out a deep sigh and opened the door.

There were shadows cast by chandeliers, creating many dark apparitions against bronze colored walls and mahogany wooden floors. There were a total of seven tables: four against the entrance wall with three smaller ones on the adjacent wall to his left. The window against the adjacent wall was stretched along its entire length, while the windows against the entrance wall were individualized for each table. To the right was a bar counter with four stools. There were no shelves of alcohol behind the counter wall, just a door leading to another room. The rear wall had only an entrance to the restroom (as indicated by a sign above the door frame). Roses decorated lonely corners, adding a touch of class, distinction and mockery against the oncoming winter. Sounds of a piano resounded within the room, yet no piano was present; the music sounded delicate and reminded Galvin of childhood daydreams. A small wooden stand held up a chalk board with the written message:

Welcome to Café Twilight,
Please have a seat.

“Coming,” stated a preoccupied female voice from behind the counter door.

Scanning for available seats, Galvin took notice of the café patrons. There were a mixture of men, women, and children in various attire: casual for warm weather, buttoned down coats against brutal winters, soot-stained work clothes for the physical laborers. All of their faces were hidden in shadow; not the kind of ominous darkness that one would expect, but a sort of absence that seemed natural in the gothic lighting. The café was full.

Galvin had to walk around kids playing on the floor in order to reach a small table in the corner between the rear and side wall, opposite the bar counter. Not a sound stirred from the café patrons, yet he felt phantom mouths open and close in secret conversations; hats bobbed up and down in agreement to silent statements and elbows were propped on tables. It all added to a strange sensation of peace as if one were looking down on the earth from orbit; a world that seems alive yet faraway from physical grasp.
The door behind the counter opened when a woman appeared with a small tray propped on her right hand. She looked to be in her twenties, a brunette with hair falling in delicate layers to her hips. Her olive colored eyes, sharp and calculating, spotted Galvin in the midst of silent confusion among bustling patrons. As the waitress walked towards Galvin, he noticed a shapely body that swayed with each step.

“I’m Adele, the café waitress this evening,” she said, lifting a drinking glass and placing it gently on the table. Her voice was deep, but pleasant. She sat on the opposite seat, propping her tray against the chair leg. “You’re new here.”

Galvin took the glass cup, swirling the amber contents that clinked with the two large ice cubes within. Shifting his focus back at the waitress, he noticed the kids behind her were gone. Adele smiled, placing both elbows on the table and propping her chin onto delicate hands.

“Silence speaks louder than words,” she replied with a grin.

It was Galvin’s turn to smile. Taking a sip from the cup, he tasted a pleasant bitterness. "The name’s Galvin."

“Galvin, what brings you to Café Twilight?”

The door bell sounded, but Galvin didn’t pay attention beyond Adele. It wasn’t physical attraction that compelled Galvin to stare, but mere curiosity. When the silence between patron and waitress lasted a few seconds beyond comfort, Adele pushed herself back against the relief of the chair. “It’s rare to find out-of-town visitors in Café Twilight.”

“Doesn’t seem like much is going on nowadays,” replied Galvin. His glance pointed at the desolate world beyond the glass windows.

“I guess that’s so, isn’t it?” she replied, a hint of pain disappearing in the blink of an eye. “All that’s left are memories.”

“Where is everyone now?” asked Galvin.

“They left town just about the time this café opened. Had no choice, I guess.”

Images of broken sidewalks, decorated with patches of grass, were conjured in Galvin’s memory. It was a testimony of time and neglect. “How many years have you worked here?”

She laughed while tilting her head back, a lively gesture that could stir the hearts of lonely men. “I can’t answer such a personal question.”
Galvin pushed his cup towards the side. The glass was wet from condensation, revealing temporary fingerprints. Lights from the chandelier had grown dim, creating a sense of indoor twilight. About half the occupants remained. Some sat at the stools, staring into empty cups frozen in thought; others “talked” with neighbors or listened quietly to memories of old conversations.

“And why is that?” asked Galvin. “Are you afraid?”

Adele thought about it; the ends of her eyes drooped in a sort of resignation. “I guess that’s so, isn’t it?” she said, sighing as if coming to grips with a hurtful truth. “But people are weak of heart, Galvin. In the end, it’s all because we’re scared.”

“Of age?” More of a statement than a question.

“Of time,” answered Adele. “People want to think that things can be made right in due time. As long as we’re young, then we have a lifetime to work towards a peaceful end.” She stared down at the table. “You hear the clock ticking away when it’s too late. All of a sudden, life becomes limited to what you can see and do.”

“It’s always been that way. You can’t do what you aren’t capable of.”

“True,” Adele answered, her voice as soft as the ambiance of the café. “But people always want something. Galvin, haven’t you ever wanted something enough to deny your limitations?”

She paused, tapping a finger in thought. “Desire creates a dissension between reality and the soul. Some people see it right away while others live a lifetime until they realize the shallowness of their lives.”

“Kind of philosophical for a café waitress.”

This brought a smile to Adele’s lips, her eyes hinting with laughter. “Perhaps it’s because I’ve witnessed so many cases. People look back and realize that things could be done differently. How if they had been more ambitious, things would have been better. Yet there are people who are proud to say they’re happy with their lives: happily married, have grandchildren and worked to retirement.”

“But you don’t think so?”

“I wonder sometimes…”

Adele’s eyes seemed to look right through Galvin, staring off into a world far removed. “Happiness is what we call a distraction to the silence. Children, work, relationships…they all
push the silence into a corner of our minds. But it comes back, creeping into the cracks and crevices. It bears into us like claws and fangs.”

“Then we die,” replied Galvin. “Pretty morbid stuff.”

“Are you religious?” asked Adele, her eyes coming back to reality.

“No.”

“Do you have someone important in your life?”

“Sort of.”

“That’s good.” Adele lifted the neglected drinking glass and took a silent sip.

“When we move on,” she resumed, “we leave pieces of ourselves behind. As long as someone’s there to remember, that is.”

“And what if they don’t?” asked Galvin, his voice indicating that he had his own answer.

“The tree that falls with no one around.”

The sound of the piano had stopped, but it was the first time Galvin had noticed. How long has it been? he thought. Only a few patrons were left in the café, one at the bar and two at the table next to the entrance.

“Adele,” started Galvin. He saw his own reflection mirror the expression of doubt. “Are you scared of fading…away?”

They sat there for the beat of a few minutes until the only source of light came from a chandelier above their table, creating a slim pillar that cut through the darkness. The lively café was now a desolate world that slowly faded into a comforting darkness. Galvin finally understood the existence of Café Twilight. He chose to stay till the very end.

“I’m looking for someone,” said Galvin, his words sending a gentle ripple into the darkness like a rock tossed against the surface of a calm lake.

“Yes that your desire?” asked Adele.

“Yeah.” Galvin scooted back against the chair and stood.
“You know, I’m kind of lonely here by myself,” said Adele, who stayed seated. “Would you like to work in the café with me? With you here, the café will be busy again; the work’s easy, it’s comfortable here, and the waitress is cute.”

Galvin’s snicker brought a smile to Adele’s face. “Can’t. If I stay here, I might never find him. But…” there was a hint of remorse in what he was trying to ask. “I assume this café won’t be here when I come back?” He knew the answer before her reply. Adele looked up from her seat, a smile that complemented a look of farewell. There was no dejection in her eyes, just a sincere good-bye. Nice to have met you, it said.

“Don’t forget about the people you meet, and the person you are trying to find.”

Galvin walked away from the table towards the entrance that served as the exit. When he glanced back, all that remained was a table and two chairs highlighted by a dull light from the chandelier. Turning the knob and pushing the door open, a blast of frigid air welcomed its guest to empty streets in a seemingly timeless fairytale. With renewed conviction, Galvin walked towards the train station, his footsteps resounding within the growing silence and darkness of the fading backdrop.

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**Sunshine**  
**Kevin Niedbalski**

Beautifully the sun rises above the eastern horizon  
Sweetly our love keeps rising  
I look upon your face with all my heart’s desire  
In my heart burns a raging fire  
Head not what others will tell  
Simply stated as if in my arms you fell  
This lovely night will come to bare  
You and I lying on the grass and at the stars we stare  
We imagining the kingdom above  
Gentle and peaceful like the dove  
As we spend more and more time together  
I imagine stroking your smooth back with a feather  
Relinquishing a bellow of laugh and scream  
Caused by tickling the skin smooth as cream  
My love for you was grand before  
But henceforth will endure the ages ever more
Small Towns Aren’t So Bad After All
By: Malory Toebben, Sam Buckler, Kristine Kong, Mallory Howell, Marquita Martin

Jimmy was on his way to basketball practice when his cell phone began to ring. He was driving, so he really should not have answered but he did anyway. It was his girlfriend, Sue, and she was asking him what color he wanted to wear for the holiday dance. She was always asking him these silly questions and she didn’t know how to make her own decisions, but Jimmy didn’t mind because it made him feel like he was in control. He told her blue since that was his favorite color and said goodbye and continued driving to practice. It was a cold, snowy day, but it was nothing unusual for December in North Dakota. He wished that he lived in a warmer place and he wished that he went to a better school. Life was so boring in the small town he lived in and he couldn’t wait until May when he was out of that place and onto college. After about ten more minutes of driving, Jimmy finally got to the high school and walked in for practice.

When he got inside the bland, boring building, he walked to the gym which was just like the rest of the town, too small and really boring. He put on his shoes and started warming up with the other guys that were there.

“Hey Jimmy! What’s up?” said Dan the team captain, who was always too chipper for Jimmy.

“Oh not much, just waiting for graduation to get here,” Jimmy said with a monotone voice.

“Well why would you want to wish your senior year away, man? It’s supposed to be one of the best times of your life!” Dan said with a too chipper voice again.

“I don’t know. I’m just ready for a change I guess. This town is just so boring and I want to go to college where the fun really begins.”

Just as Dan was about to say something, the coach blew the whistle and they had to start practice. Jimmy was kind of glad that the conversation ended there, Dan just didn’t understand him. The team practiced for their two hours and it was time to go home. Jimmy was changing his shoes and putting his stuff together when Dan came over.

“Man, you really don’t hate it that much here, do you?” Dan asked with more of a serious voice this time.

“I just want something different. That’s all. It’s not a big deal, I’ll enjoy the rest of the year and then I’ll go on to something better. That’s all I’m saying.” Jimmy said with the intention of finishing the conversation.

“Ok, well I think that you don’t give this town the credit it deserves. It is pretty nice to live in a place where people know you and you’re important to the community. I just hope that
you don’t go off and leave us behind like it’s nothing, because I know that I won’t.” Dan said with a tone that kind of scared Jimmy, because it was so serious and honest.

Jimmy got his stuff and headed to his car. He drove home and couldn’t wait for graduation to get there.

It was May 20th and Jimmy’s senior class was graduating. He was so excited to be done with this small town life and was ready to move on to a better life. He had picked to go as far away as possible and decided on University of Florida. His parents were not very happy with him being so far away, but that’s what he wanted.

When fall rolled around, Jimmy was set to go to college and said his final goodbyes to everyone in town and was on his way. When he arrived at the school, he was amazed at how much he loved the place. It was huge and there were people everywhere. He knew that this would be the best time of his life. Classes started up and so did the parties. Jimmy was so happy that he had broken up with Sue before he left, because all of the girls there were so pretty. Jimmy started off the school year with parties every weekend.

College was great. Well, except for the few classes that got in the way. But he could put up with some of the lectures knowing that the weekends were only a few days away. He went to every event possible, not wanting to miss anything. Everyone seemed to know him, even if he didn’t know them, and he quickly became the “big man on campus.” This was the change he wanted: A big city with a lot of things to do and a bunch people to do it with. He was never bored and was so glad that he chose to come here for school. He couldn’t help but feel sorry for Dan who decided to go to a small, local college near home. He was missing out on so much!

He became good friends with his roommate, Kevin, who also occasionally partied with him. They got along well and had many things in common. They were both studying business management and both came from little towns. Coming from a farm somewhere in Missouri, he understood why Jimmy wanted to leave and his excitement in coming here.

It was Friday night and one of the fraternities was hosting a huge event. Their flyer had said this was the best party of the year and there was no way Jimmy was going to skip it. He was putting on his jacket and getting ready to leave when he noticed Kevin still at his desk.

“What are you doing? C’mon, get dressed! The busses are picking us up in a few minutes.”

“Dude, I can’t go out tonight. We got a paper due Monday and that project due next week. Did you already start yours?” asked Kevin.

Hesitantly Jimmy replied, “Uh, yeah. I’m almost done with it.”
“I need to quit procrastinating and get started on homework earlier like you do. Then I would be able to go today. You have fun and tell me how it was when you get back.”

The truth was he was beginning to fall behind in school, but he would start it tomorrow. Plus he was going home next weekend and what else did he have to do in North Dakota except to study? He would catch up on everything then.

Jimmy had a blast at the party. He met a lot of older students who introduced him to a lot of attractive girls. He was talking to a beautiful blonde when his phone rang. It was Dan from back home. “Probably wants to see how I’m doing. I’ll just talk to him later.” Jimmy thought to himself as he let it go to voicemail. But the night was crazy and he was having too much fun to remember to call him back.

Jimmy woke up the next morning in his dorm room with a terrible headache. He very slowly got up and looked around. He saw his roommate sitting at his desk with his nose shoved in a book.

Jimmy, afraid to open his mouth to wide, mumbled, “What time is it?”

Kevin looked around grinning, “Two in the afternoon. About time you woke up I wasn’t sure if you were going to pull through.”

Jimmy, trying to remember last night, asked, “How did I get here?”

Kevin, still grinning, replied, “A bunch of the frat guys had dropped you off around three in the morning. You were totally out of it.”

Jimmy just started to lay back down when Kevin remembered something.

“Oh yeah,” said Kevin, “Someone’s been trying to call you all day, but I didn’t have it in me to try to wake you up. You better call them back.”

Jimmy rolled over and grabbed his phone. On the message center he saw that he had eleven missed calls. Flipping open his phone Jimmy saw that they were all from Dan. Right then he remembered ignoring Dan’s call the night before.

“It must have been something more important than what I thought. I wonder what he wants.” Jimmy curiously wondered.

Jimmy dialed Dan’s number and pressed call. Almost immediately Dan answered.

“Jimmy?” Dan asked through the phone.

“Yeah man, I saw that you called.” Jimmy replied once again annoyed at how keen Dan was to talk to him.
“Jimmy you need to come home; there has been an emergency.” Dan said quickly. “I am not going to tell you over the phone. You just need to come home.”

At that Dan hung up the phone and despite all Jimmy’s attempts to call him back, Dan wouldn’t pick up. Jimmy tried calling home but no one answered. His parent’s usually never answered this time on Saturdays anyway because they worked but Jimmy wasn’t going to risk it. He grabbed a handful of clothes and his keys and started driving. After what seemed like forever, exit after exit, Jimmy was in his home town again.

Jimmy must have stood outside of his house for thirty minutes, frozen in fear, not sure what to expect. From Dan’s voice on the phone, Jimmy had prepared himself for the worse. Holding his breath and silently praying to every deity he’d learned about in school, Jimmy walked in the door.

“Hey, who is that?” his mother asked walking into the front room from the kitchen. Seeing Jimmy’s face, she rushed to embrace him in a hug. His dad came into the room after her and smiled. Jimmy felt his heart begin to beat again. Jimmy’s body relaxed, and he thought to himself, if mom and dad are okay, what could have possibility been the emergency Dan was talking about?

Jimmy’s mom was preparing dinner, so he went to his old room to relax and clear his mind. Jimmy was never the type to help cook and clean around the house. Being the only child, he was quite spoiled. He tried calling Dan two more times, but no one picked up. Finally, it was time to eat. Jimmy hadn’t had any home-cooked meals since he left for college, and he missed his mother’s cooking.

“Jimmy, your mother and I have some bad news!” his father announced when everyone was almost done eating. Dan was right, Jimmy thought to himself suddenly getting nervous again. “It’s about Coach Thomas; he passed away two days ago!”

Jimmy’s mind went blank, his vision got blurry, and his ears toned out the world. Coach Thomas was Jimmy’s mentor and basketball coach throughout high school. He used to live up the street, and for Jimmy’s seventh birthday, Coach Thomas bought him a basketball. Jimmy’s father was never into sports, but Coach Thomas was always there to play one-on-one with the young Jimmy. That’s where Jimmy got his passion for basketball, his self discipline, and his motivation to make it through high school without going insane from boredom. Of everyone in the town, Coach Thomas was the only person that supported Jimmy’s choice to go the University of Florida.

Jimmy just couldn’t believe that his coach, his mentor, his friend was gone.

He stayed home for the wake and funeral missing school, then stayed for the weekend.

Monday had come, and walking into class, Jimmy remembered that his paper was due for Professional Communications. Everyone was told to summit their papers to the teacher via email. After class, Jimmy decided to talk to his teacher and get an extension.
“Jimmy, I’m sorry to hear that. But as you know, I told the class about this assignment two weeks ago. So you’ve had plenty of time to complete it. I don’t accept late or make-up work, sorry.” And with that said, the professor left the room. Jimmy was shocked and hurt. How could his professor be so heartless?

The rest of Jimmy’s day went the same. None of his professors accepted late work. Jimmy was really feeling down, and when he tried to talk to his friends about Coach Thomas and his falling grades, his friends just dodged the conversation and brought up a party. Back in his dorm, Jimmy tried talking to Kevin.

“Man, when you leave home, you’re on your own man. The people here don’t care about you or your feelings. You’re just another face out of thousands. Maybe you’re used to people catering to you in North Dakota, but when you came back to Florida, you should’ve kept those tears at home. You’re here to focus on school, nothing else should matter.”

Listening to Kevin’s lecture, Jimmy suddenly felt out of place. He didn’t want to be in a big school anymore, where nobody cared about his problems or knew what he was going through. Back at home, he could go to anybody for comfort. Everybody in the town knew Coach Thomas and loved him. The teachers weren’t so heartless, and his old friends weren’t so careless.

Jimmy wasn’t mad at Kevin; Kevin was only speaking the truth and giving him tough love. But one thing was for sure: Jimmy missed his little town and wanted to go home!!

Within the next few months, Jimmy had transferred to a smaller school closer to home, and was working to get his GPA back up. The teachers at his new school encouraged professor-student relationships. The students were more focused and openly invited Jimmy into their study groups. And most importantly, Jimmy had a new, true best friend; Dan.

**Comfort**

*By: Erin Frevert*

Curling up on my soft warm bed  
On top of three fluffy pillows  
Is where I rest my head  
Shove my school books to the floor  
And slide in between the clean cotton sheets  
Hug my teddy bear to my chest  
Cuddle up to get some rest
Dinner
By: Sam Buckler

Ben woke up early, nervous but excited by what the coming day held. Today was the day Anna had agreed to have dinner with him. For a few years now Ben and Anna had been on the verge of dating but it had just never happened. Timing had never worked out for them. It seemed like something had always got in the way; either Ben had been too busy with work and school or Anna had been seeing someone else. But all this time they had been in the back of each other’s minds. Ben knew that tonight had to be perfect.

However it seemed that fate didn’t intend for anything to be perfect, or so Ben thought. When Ben turned the key to start his car nothing happened. Horrified, Ben saw that the switch to his lights was at the on position. Ben couldn’t believe it; a dead battery was going to ruin his perfect night. Ben jumped out of the car and took off sprinting to the metro station. He had thirty minutes to make it to their dinner reservations on time. If he caught the next train, he just might be able to make it on time.

After shoving his money into the ticket machine and sprinting down to the platform, he barely slipped between the closing doors of the departing train. Exhausted he slammed down into the nearest seat and closed his eyes, but immediately opened them when he heard a familiar voice. Hardly daring to believe it, he turned around and saw Anna sitting at the other end of the train car. But next to her stood two men, one of who had just pulled out a knife and proceeded to grab Anna. Ben, ready to yell out, stopped when he realized that the two men hadn’t noticed him get on the train; they thought they were alone with Anna. Grabbing the handle above the seat to get up, the handle came loose. Without thinking Ben ran over to the two men, and before they even knew Ben was there, he had hit one man over the head with the seat handle, knocking him unconscious to the floor. The other man noticing the train was coming to a stop ran to the doors as they opened and ran out into the night abandoning his partner.

Ben ran out onto the platform meaning to follow the man but he was nowhere in sight. Instead Ben ran over to the metro stop guard and told him what had happened. Ben went back to the train car where Anna, looking stunned, was leaning against the wall for support. By the time the police had finished their questions, they had missed their reservation at the restaurant. This didn’t seem to bother either of them as they walked hand in hand back to Ben’s apartment.
Don't Wait Another Day
By: Zach Moser

Don't fight the feeling
that inside you know is true.
It doesn't take much to see,
what it is we all knew.

There was a time, upon your past,
When at once, a smile was cast,
and you loved another one,
She made you happy, like the sun,
but in the end, it could not last,
She is, forever, in your past.

But refusing to believe,
you hold on to a broken dream,
One of wishes and regrets,
of unspoken happiness.

Time trots on, your heart is hardened,
unable to see the flowery garden.
Still focused on the distant stars,
too afraid to risk new scars.

While in your cowardice you let love pass,
fearing the shards of broken glass
which have before, and surely will,
leave you hurt and lying still.

But while you wait true love does not,
for nothing cooks in an empty pot,
and if you stay and let love pass,
no love will come to you, alas.
To find a perfect love is grand,
but first you must put out your hand.
Poem #3
By: Anonymous

The gentle daisy awoke from the ground
The daisy swayed through the screaming storm
Like a ballerina
As the storm came to an end, she said goodbye
The bitter cold stood alone

Bestfriend
By: Chang Lee

We used to be the best friends but not anymore
Everything we talked about our friendship is a lie
Whenever I saw you crying, my mind felt sore
When I saw you getting hurt from a guy,
I thought it would be better if I could be your boyfriend
From now, be my lady and I will hold your hand

September
By: Stephanie Hand

First day of college is full of excitement and fear
You never know who you will meet or what you will do in the school year.
    Boys and girls living next door
    A new life to begin on the fourth floor.
    A handsome guy from down the hall
knew just what to say to make me fall.
    Within three weeks we were dating
    I’m glad he didn’t keep me waiting.
Within a month we were joined at the hip
    His smile made my heart do flips.
    Best friend is what he came to be.
    But he decided he had to leave.
No one can replace him in my heart
    I hope we won’t always be apart.
RINNNNGGGG!!!!!! My whole body jumps as the school bell interrupts my daydream. It’s the end of 3rd period; lunch time. Not that I enjoy the meals here, or the buzz of chattering students having their pointless conversations, or the sight of them chewing with their mouths open as their fat, slimy tongues play jump rope with the sloppy joe from last Tuesday. Nor do I enjoy the lunch ladies voice as spit flies out of her mouth when she speaks, and the way her brownish-purple mole seems to have its own heartbeat. That is not why I look forward to lunch time; it’s HIM!

His name is Shaun, and I would be lame and call him an angel or greek god, but he is so much more. He walks past me and smiles; not that he knows who I am, he’s just a popular kid who actually notices geeks like me, even before we do something embarrassing like tripping over nothing but air. But he smiles at me; it all happens in beautiful slow motion, and before I can position my muscles to smile back… SLAM!!

Ms Pretty Bitty Shitty Rose slams her book on the table, interrupting my moment. “Hey Emma, you look different today. Maybe you should try actually looking in the mirror and choosing a different face before you come to school,” she teases as her army of followers laugh at her wack joke.

“What’s this?” Before I can grab it, she snatches my notebook and begins reading it. “Oh Taylor, this is too good!! You have a little crush. And on who, of all people??…. MY boyfriend!” I sit my head down in total humiliation. “Well, all is fair in love and war, missy. Let’s see if he likes it!”

As if this moment could get no worse, she stands on top of the lunch room table, and recites from my notebook…. “Shaun Nelson accidently brushed my arm today as we were walking down the hall. This might have been the first time we ever touched. I wonder if he would have helped me pick up my books if I had dropped them. He is the sweetest guy I know at this hell-hole of a highschool….” As she reads on, I can feel everyone in the cafeteria staring at me, their annoying laughter making the skin on my neck prickle.

Rose’s entourage fulfills their ass-kissing role, invading my space with their hot breath. Together they speak like trained robots, “Rose is so much prettier than you” and “Shaun is in love with Rose” and “Rose is the most popular girl in the school.” You know, all of the lines from teen high school drama movies. I’m able to drain them out, but Rose’s cafeteria presentation still rings my ears.

“I often daydream about Shaun taking me on a romantic date. I wonder what it would feel like to kiss him…” she continues.
“Hey Rose, won’t you just chill out!” Recognizing the voice, I raise my head from the café table and look in Shaun’s direction.

“Baby, I found your number one fan. Isn’t that cute?” she asks, smiling at me.

“No, just… shut up Rose!” she looks at him in shock as everyone’s jaws drop and the café is drowned in sudden silence. “You don’t care about anyone’s feelings. Why do you have to be such a bitch all the time?”

“But baby, I was just…” he cuts her off.

“And quit calling me Baby. We are not together anymore!” I could hear a wave of chuckles and small murmurs sweep the room. I can’t help but to smile. My cheeks are touching my ears, and this may just be better than a kiss on a yacht in the middle of the ocean under a star lit sky.

“No, we’re on a break Shaun… that doesn’t mean that we’re not together.”

“We’re not on a break Rose. I don’t want to be with you, I don’t even like you. Your personality disgusts me now.” He responds. Why have I never dreamed about this happening? My heart is beating so fast, there are butterflies in my stomach, and my feet are dancing by themselves. Maybe this is what sex feels like. I haven’t blinked in like five minutes. Eating my French fries, I continue watching the movie. Rose is speechless as her entourage stands besides her looking more dumbfounded than usual.

“So what; you’re taking her side? She’s not even cute,” Rose says after several awkwardly silent seconds.

“See, you just don’t get it! Looks aren’t everything. And for your information, I think that Emma is kinda cute.” My heart stops beating, does a cartwheel, jumps two times, and beats twice as fast. He knows my name? He thinks I’m kinda cute? Ohhh crap, this is a dream. Fudge!!

He looks at me and smiles. I pinch myself… ouch! I stab my palm with a fork under the table… double ouch! Yep, I’m definitely not dreaming.

“That is so embarrassing!” “So they’re not even together.” “He dumped her.” “He called her a bitch.” “He doesn’t even like her.” “She disgusts him.” The beautiful music of the lunch room’s chatter and laughter massages my ear.

“Shaun, you don’t really mean that,” Rose exclaims, clearly in denial. She tries to grab his hand, and he moves it.

“No really Rose, you have a problem!”
RIINNNNGGGG!! The lunch bell rings, and it’s time for 4th period. Everyone rushes out of the cafeteria, anxious to spread the gossip. Rose gives me a look of hatred that would normally pierce through my skin and cut off all blood circulation. But under these circumstances, I just smile at her. Right before I make it out of the café doors, someone taps my shoulder. “Hey Emma, I’m so sorry about that. You know, I really like what you wrote. No girl has ever said anything that sweet to me. It was kinda lame, but sweet. You should sit with me tomorrow at lunch.” Saying that, he walks away.

Six minutes later, I am standing in the same spot, staring down the same hall he disappeared from 4 minutes and 23 seconds ago. Now I really have something to look forward to at lunch tomorrow!

“Sailor’s Sail Boat”
By: Mallory Howell

The
Sail boat
Tossed back
And forth with the
Ocean waves. The sailor
Knows there is no way to make
It behave. Instead he sits with his
Head
Held high, like every sailor and they all know why. A life at sea is a tough existence.

There are few with this kind of patience. But for the sailor it’s not hard
At all. For he knows he belongs here, it is his call. The sea
Is in his blood and to leave would be his down fall.
The Boy Who Lived
*A poem based off of J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter” series*
*By: Brett Lancaster*

“The boy who lived”
Yep, that’s me
Until I was eleven
I was pretty unextraordinary
The letters came
The Dursleys cringed
Hagrid found us
And broke the door in
He told me I was a wizard
I was in complete shock
By just saying, “Alohamora”
I could crack open a lock
As I walked into Hogwarts
All I got were stares
I would have gone crazy
If Ron and Hermione weren’t there
Sometimes I wish I was normal
Without all the fame
I wish my parents were here
And Voldemort would go back from whence he came
My life is like a puzzle
Where none of the pieces fit
But with a swish and flick of my wand
An incantation I say,
Quickly my troubles seem to go away

Sometimes
*By: Stephanie Suhany*
Sometimes it’s hard to keep
our priorities straight.
Sometimes it’s hard to live
life the right way.
Sometimes the road is rough and jagged
temptations at every turn.
Sometimes I’m overwhelmed
but there’s so much I’ve yet to learn.
The Same Old Story
By: Jesse Kim

It’s been a while since I slept
But, let’s not count those little naps
All I want is straight eight hours, except
I don’t mean two four hours of naps

Dark circles down to my toes
My friend asks me what happened.
I say “stlcop...” and he goes (ohh..)
Sometimes I feel so abandoned.

Freshmen find it hard to understand
Well, they’ve got long way to go.
Once they’re here, they’ll understand
And tell others the same story I know.

This is the stlcop cycle, (not the krebs cycle)
Don’t you think bio almost got you
You might wish for another miracle.
Happens to everyone, not just you.

3 A.M.
BJ Byland

A lot gets done at 3 A.M.
The world comes into focus
Procrastination walks out the door
Chemistry makes sense
Biology is understandable
Sleep is no longer necessary
Cramming is a way of life
The world is easier at 3 A.M.
Untitled
By: Robyn Lowe

So innocent and new,
I’m having trouble discerning
what I feel
with what I want.

Is he the one?
Is this for real?

I’m falling.

Holding his hand,
butterflies [!] 
SOAR through my stomach.
My heart runs marathons.

This weightlessness
brings a euphoria
I’ve never felt before.

But wait.

We’re both so young.
Our futures are bright.

Can I commit to this?
Can I leave my heart vulnerable and defenseless?
It’s been broken before.
It’s horrible.
Painful.
Upsetting.

STOP.

Why question something so beautiful,
so magnificent.
so real?

I’ll keep these moments of bliss close to my heart and enjoy the ride this relationship has to offer.

He’s worth it.
A Raindrop
Hit my nose. So I looked
Up and realized the sun wasn't there.
I should've, I should've! What am I gonna do now?
Now it's too late to regret, I know. There's nothing I can do, I know.
But what really makes me upset is the fact that I just bought one yesterday
U m b r e l l a!
I n e d y o n u
ow!

Jesse Kim