Conjur Rings
ConjuRings

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"Fiction reveals truth that reality obscures." – Ralph Waldo Emerson
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You’re out at sea with your friend and a horrible storm comes. You lose all form of communication and you see an island far away or at least you think it is an island.

As the wind whipped the sails and the waves crashed against the hull, terror rushed through my veins. The constant beeping of the malfunctioning navigation system punctured my ears and only intensified my anxiety. All attempts to steer the boat were futile. The situation seemed hopeless. As I imagined I was very near death, I decided to try to call my family and tell them I loved them. Unfortunately, the Atlantic Ocean does not provide very good reception. Exchanging looks of despair, Lindsay and I stood at the stern inside the cabin, looking out at the black raging sea. As I imagined my watery grave, Lindsay let out a shriek of excitement. My eyes followed her finger, pointing toward a large, mysterious object obviously protruding from beneath the ocean.

The ship sailed closer, rocking and rolling with the vicious waves. While I am not a certified cartographer, I was sure this was some sort of island. Perhaps I was not doomed to spend my afterlife rotting on the ocean floor, scavenger fish eating at my flesh! The large object loomed nearer, building anticipation. Suddenly, the boat slammed into something, causing me to recoil. Gathering myself, I expected to see a vast mound of land populated with trees. Instead, I saw a very familiar shape unfolding before my eyes.

I wondered how it had arrived here, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. It seemed odd, almost surreal. This was not something that happened in reality, but was merely depicted in movies or novels to add some excitement and adventure to an otherwise vapid lifestyle. Even as it waded right in front of my eyes, taunting me, I found it difficult to believe. Evidently, so did Lindsay. Looking over my shoulder, her face mirrored mine—a mixture of shock and disbelief. My eyes returned to the foreign object, in all its beauty and ambiguity. It was as if my muscles were permanently contracted, unable to break free from the captivating resonance it portrayed.

A pirate ship, straight out of Fantasy Island or Pirates of the Caribbean. Almost as if the ship had been snatched from the depths of a fantasy, it seemed to emit a faint, iridescent glow. The hull of our boat gently scraped its side, making an eerie high-pitched noise. Illuminated by the quick flashes of lightning that shot across the sky, it appeared to be a muddy black, with some discoloration due to the bitter saltiness of the ocean water. Once pure-white sails, whole and bright, were ripped to shreds and dimmed to murky gray. There, etched on the side of the boat, faded and patchy, were the words S.S. Iniquity. The hull of the waves rocked the boat—back and forth, back and forth. The creaking of wood sounded in unison with the soft swish of the waves.

Staring absentmindedly, I was unaware that the storm had calmed. Captivated by the resonating light, I was only distracted when a glare from the newly-emerged sun glinted off of the paneling and forced me to blink in retaliation. Struck by a sudden whim, I sprinted from the cabin and up to the deck. Impulsively throwing the anchor out to steady the boat and tying it securely to the rail, I glanced over my shoulder to see Lindsay doing the same thing on the opposite side of the deck. It was on days like this I truly appreciated Lindsay as a friend. Without
even speaking a word, she knew what I was thinking, almost as if she was experienced in telepathy. The ocean was now flat and sleek, making it easy to walk toward this new ship. Walking toward the bow, I noticed the boats aligned perfectly end-to-end, making passage fairly easy. Climbing on top of the rail, I swiftly leaped from our boat and landed with a soft thud on the S.S. Iniquity. Almost instantaneously, Lindsay landed right next to me, ready for action.

While the boat appeared normal, I could not shake the uncanny feeling that radiated from the boat and seeped into my pores. Too excited to think rationally, Lindsay threw caution to the wind and began exploring this new territory. Not wanting to be left behind or thought of as a wimp, I hurriedly began searching the starboard section of the deck, opposite Lindsay.

Nothing of even remote interest harbored my attention. Despite its other-worldly aura, the boat appeared to be normal. Disappointed by the preliminary search, Lindsay and I met at the stern. Moving toward the rusted railing, I felt a panel of wood give way beneath my feet. Suddenly, I was hurtling through a tunnel of darkness. Pitch black encircled my body and cold air rushed through my lungs. I tried to scream, but was unsuccessful. Abruptly, I collided with the moist floor of what I assumed to be the cabin. Far above, I could see a faint square of light. Lindsay’s shrieks of terror sounded incredibly distant and faint. Pulling myself together, I yelled a response, announcing my safe arrival. A musty scent of mold and sea-salt filled my nostrils. I marveled at the fact that this boat was probably centuries old and had somehow managed to survive. This was one piece of history about which I was truly fascinated. A thick blanket of black shrouded my eyes, obscuring my vision and kicking my other senses into overdrive. As I ventured into the unknown, I heard a rustling come from above. Figuring it was just Lindsay trying to find a way to join me; I shrugged it off and continued into the abyss.

After it seemed like I had walked for miles, a cold chill trembled through my body, causing me to freeze, dead in my tracks. Slowly turning to face the path I had just traced, I saw nothing. Paranoid, I swiveled back around and found myself face-to-face with a chest. Despite the total and complete darkness of the scene, the chest glowed translucently. Reaching for the lock, a flash of color seized my attention. Painted in a shimmering red were the words “open at your own risk.” Unabashed by the otherwise ominous warning, I snapped the locks open with a loud clang. The chest creaked open of its own accord, revealing mounds of gold and jewels within its confines. The sheer beauty of the site rendered me speechless. Running my hands through the valuables, the cool feeling of metal burned my skin. Hastily slamming the lid shut and closing the clasps, I heaved with every ounce of strength I could muster and managed to lug the colossal chest farther back toward the stern. Discovering a secret staircase, I hauled the chest up to the deck, eager to show Lindsay my findings. Adrenaline pumping through my veins, each step constituted a great effort when dragging the chest up slick steps. With each step, the staircase brightened, indicating the closeness of the deck.

Finally, with a breath of fresh air, I reached the deck. Clutching at a stitch in my side and gasping for air, I surveyed the scene in search of my best-friend. However, she was nowhere to be found. I thought it odd that she would vanish so unexpectedly, but I decided she had returned to our boat to wait for my emergence. During my time beneath the sea, the two boats had shifted so that the bow of our boat and the stern of the S.S. Iniquity were overlapping. Either it was sheer luck or an all-too-perfect coincidence. Thinking nothing of it, I launched the chest with all of my force to the deck of our boat. Breathing heavily, I clumsily climbed over the railing and
back onto the familiar layout of our deck. For some unbeknownst reason, I felt a sudden sense of comfort and ease at being back on our boat. Unfortunately, the peculiar sensation of uneasiness still lingered in my body, eating at my mind.

Desperate for Lindsay to share the joy of this wonderful treasure, I began calling out her name. But only silence met my shouts. There was no sign of her on deck. Only the sound of my panting, the gentle pat of waves against the boat, and the creaking of the S.S. Iniquity met my ears. Assuming she was below, I once again towed the chest down a set of stairs. Upon surveying the room, there was no sign of Lindsay. Puzzled, I left the chest at the foot of the stairs and walked over to our navigation system. Somehow, our technology had miraculously begun functioning. The boat was back on course. Exhausted, I slumped down in the captain’s chair and closed my eyes, reflecting on the day’s events. What had started out as an ordinary trip ended up being an extraordinary escapade. Magnificent thoughts of gold and jewels enveloped my mind as I drifted into a doze.

Unaware of how long I had been asleep, I was awakened gruffly by a blood-curdling scream. Immediately recognizing Lindsay’s voice, I jumped to my feet and leaped up the stairs, rushing to the deck. A terrifying scene was unfolding before my very eyes. During my nap, a thick layer of dark clouds covered the sun and hovered menacingly over our boat. The deck was littered with obvious signs of a struggle. Pools of blood scattered the paneling of the deck. The masts were ripped to shreds and holes punctured the floor. In spite of the chaotic scene, the source of the scream remained a mystery. Slowly circling the deck, there was no evidence as to what had caused such a disaster. Heart pounding in my chest, I nervously inched toward the edge of the deck, afraid of what would meet my gaze.

Peering down over the edge, I found myself face-to-face with a revived pirate corpse. The monster was not human, but not ghostly either. All of the flesh had rotted off its body, leaving a pure-white skeletal frame visible underneath shards of clothing drenched in sea water. A black heart beat visibly from within its chest cavity, but no other organs existed within its skeletal structure. Its eyes, which plunged deep into the dark sockets within the skull, were blood-red with a shiny, jet-black pupil. As I gawked, it smiled a gruesome smile, incredibly intimidating even missing several teeth. I wondered how this creature survived with no skin and only one vital organ. My thoughts were cut short as reality and the severity of the situation hit me forcefully. I had to escape!

Frantic, I conjured a plan to dart down to the cabin and slam on the throttle, forcing the boat’s engine into full-speed. Nevertheless, I was rooted to the spot. My legs refused to move. It was as if every muscle in my body had been paralyzed, leaving me motionless on the deck. Every struggle and every strain was futile; her body was rigid and refused to move, despite numerous constituted efforts. Endeavoring to scream, I opened my mouth, but no sound emitted. My throat had closed. All that I managed to produce was a dry, raspy, whimper. As thoughts of terror consumed my mind, I felt a cold, hard hand grasp my wrist and begin pulling me over the edge. Stunned by the strength this creature with no muscle exhibited, I could not fight back. This was the end. Death was surely inevitable and irrevocable.

I felt my body sliding smoothly down the side of the boat, plunging head first into the depths of the sea. My mind was oddly blank and at ease during this hour of demise.
Unexpectedly soon, my head crashed into the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The bitter coldness and intense pressure of the sea enclosed my body, constricting my lungs and compressing my body. As I opened my eyes, more of these hideous immortals were swimming around me, circling their prey. Suddenly, I began plunging deeper, plummeting toward the ocean floor. The speed at which I was falling was implausible. Realizing I was too far underneath to every consider resurfacing, I wondered mildly if I would die and be left to putrefy on the ocean floor, or if I would join this massive army. My thoughts faded as I felt my body relax. Eyes closing, the sound of rushing water died away as unconsciousness seized my body. My fate was yet to be decided, but one fact was certain, this was the end.

Gloom
Kevin Niedbalski

I chased this dream of mine
I will face the gloom all alone
Oh yes I will fight
But no one hears the cries
Please if you have the time
I need help discerning the pack of lies
The secrets of mine and of another
Time spent waiting
Only God knows my worries and fears
I feel so cold from it all
As if the devil had taken my hand and was leading me to the lake of fire
Yet all along it was all my own fault
I just wish I could start over
To forget it all and begin anew
Mom’s story
Mitul Gandhi

Did I ever tell you about the time I was a little kid?, my mom asked excitedly.

Yes mom all the time, everyday, I said annoyed.

No, No this is a different story. You know when I was your age I wasn’t as good of a kid as you are. I was a little brat. I had this gang that would always get into a lot of trouble. Well one day we were just sitting in the class room doing the usual, making fun of this nerdy kid, when the principle came in to the class room.

He explained, “your teacher is going to be running a little late today. She has a meeting that is running a little late. I am going to supervise you for a while. Pull out your work books to page 80 and practice your multiplication tables.”

I was so excited. There was nothing more I hated than class and there was nothing more I loved than the old principle supervising us. He was so old he couldn’t even see me from where he was sitting. I always sat in the back with my two other close friends. So at this time me and my friends were just talking as loud as possible because the principle was so old he couldn’t hear anything either. A few minutes passed and we were all having a good time not studying. Then someone from the office came in and started whispering to the principle. It seemed like an eternity before he turned around and gave an announcement, “Your teacher will be back in a minute so I am going to leave now; just continue doing your multiplication tables.

One of my friends leaned over to me and said, “Hey, you know what would be hilarious: if someone got up and like made the teacher fall somehow. Maybe we could have someone get up to pull the chair out for the teacher and pull it too far and have her fall on her butt.”

He started laughing uncontrollably.

I wasn’t the slightest bit amused, because I had a better scheme in mind. But I had to work quickly. I got up and proceeded my way towards the teacher’s desk. I took a piece of gum out of my pocket and started chewing it. When I got to the chair the teacher sat at, I stuck that piece square in the middle of her chair. Then I turned around and started to walk back towards my seat. I stopped dead in my tracks and thought to myself. With only one piece I couldn’t even see it if she turned around. So I put another piece of gum in my mouth and started to chew. When I got back to the chair, I stuck it right next to the one I had put there before. I repeated this about 3 times until all my gum was gone from my packet. Then I quickly rushed back to my desk with a smile on my face.

My friend leaned over to ask me, “what did you do?”

I simply replied “you’ll see”

Right on cue the teacher walked in not wasting any time, she turned her attention to the classroom and started lecturing. She had her eyes glued on us and it was too perfect. She wasn’t even paying attention to anything around her besides the class. After she gave her little speech,
with her eyes still on the class, she sat down in her chair. She didn’t just sit down she just plopped down. I held my breath. I thought for sure she would notice that something was different. She didn’t even notice that there was gum on her seat. A couple minutes passed and I couldn’t help but giggle at the thought of the gum sticking to her bum. My friends still didn’t understand what I was laughing about. I still said “you will see.” My anxiously awaited moment finally came. She got up to write something on the board. I burst out laughing. As did the entire class because as she got up, the chair came with her! This was so much better than I imagined it. But then I stopped laughing immediately. She yelled my name. I gulped. I was caught.

“Great story Mom. It was great the first time you told it, and still great the millionth time you told it,” I said sarcastically.

Mother
Misty Collier

I
Am the
Mother of
A handsome
Young man. He is
The joy in my heart &
The smile upon my face.
He is mischievous at times,
But I love him none-the-less. His
Round face and bright brown eyes are
The features that melt my heart. His child-
Like innocence and free spirit, I hope they
They stick near him. That male child of mine is the
Point to my pyramid and the earth in my space. He is
The air I breathe and the bright sun upon my face. My
How I hope he never forgets me. He will surely grow up some
Day and have another woman in his life. I will have to let him go &
I will hate every second of it. But as for now, I will enjoy my sweet
Baby boy. I am earth and he is moon. I am mommy, and he is my bright sun.
Taxi
Erin Frevert, Crystal Powell, Jesse Kim, and Stephanie Hand

It was Friday night in the big city, and business was booming. Everyone had places to go and people to see, and I was the person to get them where they needed to be. My name is Merle, and I drive the finest taxicab there is in this city; it may not be the newest or the nicest looking, but it sure does have character. Anyone to get a ride from me sure is lucky. Speaking of, there are two fine females hailing me over. As I pull over, I can’t help but look them up and down. You could tell they had been out at the clubs by the way they were dressed. The tall blonde was wearing a short, silver sequined dress with red pumps, while the average height brunette was wearing a little black dress that barley covered her. Giving rides to women like this make the sight in my rearview mirror tempting.

“Where to?” I asked, as they slipped gracefully into the backseat.

“54th and Broadway and make it fast, we’re in a hurry,” stated the blonde. “So anyways” she continued, this time to her brunette friend, “I heard that Suzanne and Mark broke up because he cheated on her with his secretary.”

“Men, you can never trust them; all they think about is themselves,” the brunette replied.

“I completely agree. To tell you the truth, I never expected their relationship to last as long as it did. I’m surprised she didn’t dump him when she found out about his collection,” the blonde continued.

As the women continued, I began to think about all the stories I have heard over the years; murder, rape, suicide, drinking, drugs, sex, scandal, adultery, and fraud to name a few. I never understood why people think that when they enter a cab, they can talk about anything. Do they forget that I’m here, or are they comfortable confessing these crimes in front of a complete stranger?

Listening to the two women jabber on about their friend’s relationship was starting to bore me. I should have know that all women talk about is relationships and their feelings. Like I don’t get enough of that at home! I drop the women off at their building and continue on my way, hoping to find another, more interesting story to listen in on. The stories I will have to tell at the bar on Tuesday with the guys. The guys often tell me how envious they are off all the “action” I get. Ha Ha.

My wife often calls me several times each night I work to make sure everything is going “ok.” She doesn’t want me to get into any trouble. Really I think she is worried that I am out making friends with other women. Please, Yvette is all I can handle plus some. I do wish she wasn’t always accusing me of cheating though; I love her to death and don’t want anyone else. Oh, more people!

“Where to?” I ask as the two, who seem to be a couple, climb in.

“3rd and Atlantic please,” the man replied with the upmost politeness.

This was towards the ghetto; did I really want to go there this late at night? Guess I had to now; they were already in the car and I had started the toll. So polite and going to the ghetto seems a little odd to me, but here we go. I wonder what is on their agenda. I try to listen to their conversation, but they are so quiet I can’t hear a thing. Block after block, stoplight after stoplight and we finally reach their destination.

It was really dark, but the couple got out anyway and tipped me rather nicely. I am about to head back towards the brighter parts of the city when someone bangs on my window.
“Are you heading back to the city, Sir?” he politely asked as I was pulling down the window. This man seemed a little too drunk to talk, but what the heck, I’ve been making good money all night, might as well give another chance; who knows he might drop some extra change by accident?

“Take me to...$##@...” He mumbled. Gosh, I guess this is where my luck ends. Good thing he didn’t get into my car yet, so I still had my chance to not take him into my cab.

“Excuse me, Sir? Where can I take you?” I asked him again with little bit of frustration. I really wanted to leave this guy behind, but this guy was almost going to sleep on the street if I didn’t take him.

“I wanna....$&@#....” He wouldn’t stop talking; he must’ve really wanted to go somewhere badly. Although I couldn’t understand why he’d be so drunk if he really needed to go somewhere, plus why is this guy all alone?

As I was carrying this drunken dude into my cab, trying to be all nice and gentle, I heard his phone ringing. Oh please God! Please may this phone call to be his sober friend who’s looking for him!!

“Hello” I answered his phone.

“Hello, is that you Ned? I’ve been worried sick. You weren’t supposed to be alone the entire time you are taking that new ‘medicines.’ Where have you gone off to?”

“This ain’t your friend speaking. My name is Merle and I’m a taxi driver. Your friend hailed me, but when I asked where he wanted to go, it sounded more like he was cursing me out than giving directions. However, he is so drunk, I hated to leave him out on the street. So as I was pulling him into my cab, your call came through. Good thing, too. I didn’t know what I was going to do with him, but I just couldn’t leave him out on the street in a bad neighborhood in the shape he was in. So where do you want me to take him?”

“Oh thank God someone respectable found him. Please bring him to my apartment at 10th Avenue and Repoduct St. I will be standing out on the curb waiting for you if you’ll tell me approximately how long it will take you to reach me.”

“10th and Repoduct. About 25 minutes.”

“I’ll be outside on the curb waiting for you. And thanks again. I will make sure you are not only paid for the cab fare but receive a good tip as well.”

Maybe this was a lucky night after all. This guy’s friend is going to tip me very well.

Then, I noticed that my passenger, Ned apparently, seemed completely out of it. I pulled the taxi to the side of the road and took a good look at him; he didn’t appear to be breathing! I jumped out of the car, swung open the back door and confirmed that he was unconscious. I immediately called 911. The emergency personal told me to drive a little closer towards my destination to get out of the dangerous ghetto area that I was still in.

I drove a few miles down the road to the location I agreed to meet the ambulance. The EMTs arrived and immediately started an IV, checked his pulse and breathing. They dug through his pockets to see if they could find anything indicating what the man had consumed that his friend referred to as “medicine.” They found a zip-lock bag with all kinds of pills in it; it looked like a bag of skittles or something with the variety of colors.

“This doesn’t look good.” One of the EMTs said to the other. They both shook their heads as they loaded him into the ambulance. I took Ned’s phone and tried to call his friend to tell him about the schedule change.

“Excuse me sir,” directed one of the EMTs, “you’re going to have to come with us.”

“What, why?” I asked, confused and wondering why they could possibly need me.
"Well, you see, you were a witness to this man’s medical issue; we may need more information from you when we get to the hospital" answered the EMT.

"But I don’t even know this man. I’ve never seen him before tonight. I can’t imagine that I’ll be any help to you.” I contested, not wanting to lose out on the fares for the rest of my shift.

“I’m sorry sir, but the police are meeting us at the hospital, and they requested that I bring you to them for questioning,” explained the EMT.

I was upset at the situation but not wanting to get in any trouble I complied with the EMT. I followed the ambulance to the hospital to meet with the police. The police interrogation seemed to be rather detail oriented and lengthy; it seemed like they were digging for very specific information.

“Mr. Matke,” addressed the officer.

“Please call me Merle,” I interjected.

“Alright Merle, we’ve been at this for awhile now; it’s time that you start answering our questions truthfully and not hiding behind this story you’re telling us. Now, isn’t it true that you’ve been arrested previously?” implied the officer.

“Yes, but that was a long time ago. I don’t see how that applies here,” I responded.

“I can certainly see how the two situations are linked, can’t you?” asked the officer.

“Just because this man overdosed and died on drugs doesn’t mean that I was the person who supplied them to him!” I contested. “I paid my time and learned my lesson. I have a family now, a family that loves me! Why would I want to hurt them?”

“Because you live in a one bedroom apartment, have very little money to your name, your oldest is starting private school, and your wife if pregnant again! You clearly need the money and you know how to earn a quick buck,” he said.

It seemed that he had already made up his mind. I didn’t know how I was going to get out of this mess; there were no other witnesses to agree with my story. I tried convincing him that I didn’t do anything wrong, that I was just doing my job, but he wouldn’t listen.

Turns out that being alone and trying to save someone’s life will get you arrested for involuntary manslaughter. Since I can’t afford a good lawyer, it looks like I’m going to be spending a lot more time behind bars.

Haiku
Dan Chang

Haikus are awesome
They just don’t make any sense
Refrigerator
Why?
Virta Bathani

Why?
Why do people love?
Why do they die for another?
Love only offers grief.
In love, no amount of tyranny is ever enough.
People subjugate themselves in love,
They smile even when they’re in pain.
Why do people fill their lives with such poison?
Love is a useless problem,
And everyone refuses to admit it.
Why?

My Heart Desires
Virta Bathani

My heart desires your wonderful days to never pass.
My heart desires that you will never live without the warmth of friends.
My heart desires that your days be full of lovely conversations,
And nights full of never-ending songs.
My heart desires that you drown in life’s pleasures forever,
And continue to find this sort of happiness throughout the path of life.
Wherever you stop, wherever you go,
I hope you receive whatever you wish for.
That is what my heart desires.

The Fear of Living
Stephanie Chen

If ever thou wouldst display more feeling
Let thy beloved know thy affection
Reveal thy heart instead of concealing
Reduce and remove fear of rejection.

For time will not wait for love to ripen.
Days and weeks will pass and turn into years.
Nothing will ignite. Nothing will happen.
But out of pity the sky may shed tears.

Better to be generous with thy love
Than keep it hidden in secret places.
Look to the bright sun and stars from above.
They do not withhold their glowing faces.

Sure, thy risks unreciprocated love.
But not knowing is harder to think of.
The Fall
Erin Frevert

It was passing periods at the small-town local high school and Amber was walking with her friends from class. “I’ll catch up with you guys later; I have to stop at my locker,” she announced, separating from her friends. Amber began looking through the text books in her arms as she walked, deciding what ones to keep and what ones to put in her locker.

As Amber entered the crowded stairwell to climb to her third floor locker, she noticed that her crush, Chase, was just a few steps behind her. Amber’s mind became occupied with thoughts of her and Chase and what a great couple they would be, if only he would notice her. Before she knew it, Amber had reached the second floor and was watching to see if Chase was also going to the third floor. With her eyes and mind distracted by Chase, she wasn’t watching where she was going. Amber, lacking coordination and balance, tripped up the steps! As she was falling, Amber put her arms out to try to catch herself in order to avoid embarrassing herself any worse than she already had, especially since Chase was behind her. It was only after she caught herself did she realize that her books that she was carrying were now tumbling down the stairs, allowing the papers stuck within to flood the stairwell.

The stairwell was so crowded with students that Amber could not fight against the flow of traffic to retrieve her belongings. Instead, Amber watched, wide-eyed, as her fellow students, including Chase, picked up her papers and books and continued marching up the stairs to hand them to her. She felt horrified at the thought of tripping up the stairs and dropping all of her belongings; but what made matters worse was that it all happened in front of Chase. She felt her face heat red with embarrassment and her heart felt like it was going to pound out of her chest.

After what seemed like an eternity, Amber headed to her locker in an effort to forget what had just happened. She exchanged text books at her locker and closed the door; to her surprise, Chase was standing there with more of her stuff. Amber felt the embarrassment rush back and a lump was forming in her throat.

“I think you dropped this” Chase said.

Amber nodded her head in agreement, dumbfounded that her crush was actually talking to her and embarrassed that he had witnessed her traumatic episode.

“Don’t worry about it,” he said. “I bet nobody will remember this tomorrow. Plus, it’s not as bad as what happened to me last week.”

“Really?” Amber asked.

“Oh yeah, last week was terrible,” he continued as they walked to class together.

Inspiration
Kathleen Tran

Life’s all passion
Live for all that is happy
Make it your own
Miracle
Kristine Kang

It was December 6, 1941, a violent time where the world was at total war with each other. Tension ran high among nations, neighbors, and families. Sons, husbands, and fathers were dying for the freedom of their own country. Hundreds of battles were being fought everywhere and David was in charge of covering all of this. He was the photographer for the Daily Tribune, one of the largest and most trusted newspapers for the United States. However, it wasn’t really a dangerous job. He didn’t go places where there was any combat, but instead usually went to protected bases and interviewed generals located there. The only frightening element of his job was taking pictures of the aftermath of a fight.

David was exhausted from today’s work. He had just come back from the air force base in Sacramento and was developing his film of Lieutenant Morris. He needed to submit this to Mr. Johnson by the end of the night and he hadn’t even started on his captions yet. The war was still in full force and he had been busy this entire week flying capturing images of commanders, their armies, and the debris left behind.

He needed to get some sleep tonight because he was being sent out to the naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii extremely early in the morning. He had a conference with Admiral Dennis tomorrow; however he still needed to write his questions. No matter how tired he was, he would be there. Hadn’t skipped a meeting yet and didn’t plan to. People counted on him for his information and photos. The people had the right to know what was going on and thus he took his job very seriously. He finished his portrait and placed it on Mr. Johnson’s desk before heading home for the night. He would be able to squeeze in a couple hours of sleep.

Two hours was not enough, but he was up and ready to go. The driver was already waiting by the gate and was helping him put his luggage into the car. As soon as everything was in, they were speeding down the road. David looked down at his watch. They were running a little behind schedule, but only by about 10 minutes. “As long as we don’t come across any problems, we’ll be okay. The pilot usually waits a few minutes.” But as soon as David was thinking this, the car swerved to the left and sprung into the air as they collided with a large rock in the middle of the street.

“You alright?” asked the driver as he got out to check the damages. “Didn’t hurt the car too badly but looks like we got a flat tire. What time you need to be at the airport?”

“In 15 minutes,” mumbled David irritably.

“Don’t think we’re going to make it in time. Sorry.”

He had never been late to a meeting, let alone missed a flight. How did he get stuck with this crazy driver? Although annoyed and frustrated, he went out to help fix the tire. He drove David to the office where he had to make a few phone calls and apologize for not being able to make it. However, no one answered. It was still early. They probably hadn’t arrived at the office yet or maybe stepped out to get the ships ready for the day. He would try again later, but
completely lost track of time while preparing for the next day. He was absorbed with his work when Mr. Johnson ran out to the main floor and yelled, “we’ve been attacked!”

The Japanese navy had unexpectedly attacked Pearl Harbor, the exact place he was supposed to be right now. There had been two aerial attacks and thousands had been killed. By some miracle though, he was here, safe and alive. Never in 15 years had he missed an appointment until today when it really mattered and ultimately saved his life. He thought though that maybe he would skip a few more until the war was over.

Regrets
Mitul Gandhi

One more hour till the day is done
My first day of college is tomorrow
Oh I wish I was still young

Work is tiring and I have a son
I used to have roommates and a condo
One more hour till the day is done

It’s my 50th birthday and I can’t run
I use to walk five miles in the snow
Oh I wish I was still young

I am in a hospital bed with a tube
Where ever did the time go?
One more hour till the day is done

Beagle
Kristin Hagan

My frisky beagle
Tracks a darting brown rabbit.
The chase has begun!

The Storm
Bre Dunsworth

Lightning flashing wide
Thunder booming right left right
Scaring all below
An Unexpected Visitor
Mallory Howell

The Rockies were deadly cold this time of year. As Pete and I ascended to the summit of one of the smaller peaks, I felt like we were on a different planet perhaps. The wind blew the powdery snow in whirlwinds all around us, and the pine trees rippled and cracked. Here and there a little squirrel would appear, or a small bird would chirp perhaps searching for others of its kind. Neither Pete nor I spoke as we surveyed the landscape. To do so would have broken the harmony and the mystery of this place. Each and every step we took was muted by the soft snow that blanketed the ground. My camera dangled around my neck, and it occasionally caught my eye as it glimmered in the reflections of light off the snowy land. This piece of machinery seemed so foreign here. The world where it belonged didn’t seem to fit this one. At the top of the summit, I paused and simply allowed the beauty of this world to overtake me.

“This is where I was made to roam.” I thought. “This is what I was made for.”

A sharp noise breached the stiff sound of snow colliding with foliage and rocks, and slowly I turned to glance back down the peak. A branch had broken under the weight of some unknown mass, and through a gap in some pine branches I saw movement. Quietly I crouched closer to the ground and made out the image of a bobcat. This creature was walking parallel to the mountain through the brush, its steps confident and wise. I watched as its large padded paws landed with precision between branches and scattered debris. I reached for my camera but something told me to stop. Quietly I watched as the majestic creature disappeared again through the trees. Once again, the sound of soft snow falling and blowing about the mountainside filled my ears.

I couldn’t have asked for a more amazing moment. This place was like walking through a dream. Pete was still following the summit to its edge and had not noticed the bobcat. Just like that, it had entered our lives and was now gone. The experience seemed like a secret between me and Mother Nature who had revealed a piece of her wild splendor. No picture could have done the moment justice and as we continued across the summit, I winked to her as if leaving an old friend. Softly, I whispered, “Thanks.”

The First Snowfall
Erin Gragg

Fall turns to winter
The first snowfall looks like glitter
Among the stars and the night sky
The snowflakes slowly pass by
So peaceful to look at
What a beautiful miracle it is

14
Double Play
Mike Feller, Libby Herman, Joe Kang, Josie Millard, Ripple Patel

**Setting:** A small town just outside a large city.

**Plot:** Kelly and Charlie play together on a little league baseball team. John, a star-athlete on a big university baseball team, accepts a job to coach the kid’s baseball team. Rachel, a typical university student, babysits Jerry’s children whenever the demands of his job as athletic director are too overwhelming.

**Characters:** Kelly, age 11, is not the stereotypical schoolgirl. Short blonde hair to her chin and freckles sprinkled across her face denote a sweet personality on the outside, but on the inside she is tough. She refuses to wear the uniform dress at school, and instead, chooses to wear the boy’s khaki shorts and tennis shoes. During recess, Kelly prefers to participate in whatever sport is being offered instead of gossiping around the swings. Her skinny, boyish frame does not exactly fit in with either the girls or boys.

Jerry, age 46, is a single father that is the director of the athletic in his small town. An easy-going, buoyant man, his passion for sports is only matched by his love for his children. Always friendly and happy, Jerry is always looking for a good time.

Charlie, an awkward, 10-year-old boy who loves sports, but is not the most athletically inclined, always attempts to keep up with his older sister. Whiny and frail, his efforts to participate in any sporting event is futile as he seems to be a magnet for accidents.

John, the typical, male jock, is very pompous and selfish. He despises anything that does not benefit him and loves partying. Upon first glance, he is very handsome and in shape, his good locks are shadowed by his cocky attitude.

Rachel, a thin, pretty college student, is a role model for all children. Very responsible and caring, her main source of income is babysitting Jerry’s children. Seemingly innocent, Rachel is wise beyond her years and always optimistic.

_During a break in the baseball season, John returns home to visit old high-school friends. Knowing he has to complete 50 service hours, John searches for some local volunteer work. Unfortunately, the only two options are coaching a little-league baseball team or custodial work at the local grade school, John finds himself in a dilemma. He his torn between his hatred for children and his disgust of picking up after others, John decides to take the baseball route. Early one morning, John travels to the local recreation center to visit with the activities director, Jerry._

_Jerry (enthusiastically): Johnny boy! How is my baseball star?
Jerry reaches out to shake hands with John. John, looking at his hand, ignores the gesture.
John: Fine.
Jerry: I can see things haven’t changed much. What brings you back to town?
Jerry sits down at his desk. John takes a seat directly in front of him._
John: Well...I do live here.
Jerry (hurt): Oh. Well, what brings you to my office?
John: I got in trouble with the cops and I need to finish off a few community service hours. I saw your flyer about coaching a little league (rolls eyes) and even though I can’t stand little brats I thought it would better than scrubbing toilets.
Jerry (elated): That’s great! We were worried that we wouldn’t find anyone and the season would have to be cancelled.
John (pompous): Glad I could save the day.
Jerry: Practice starts this Saturday at 8 o’clock sharp. (hands over papers) Here is the roster and a schedule of the games. Thanks again!
John (grumbling): Great. I can hardly wait...

Jerry turns to his computer and begins typing furiously. John snatches up the papers and shuffles out of the office, looking angry. Lights dim and scene changes to Jerry’s living room. Rachel is serving Charlie and Kelly dinner in front of the television on the couch. A movie is playing softly in the background.

Rachel (setting plates down): Here you go kids! Macaroni and cheese with cut-up hot dogs. Just how you like it!
Kelly (in-between mouthfuls of food): I can’t wait to start practice tomorrow!

Jerry enters and stops to pat the kids on the head. He then walks over to the mirror to straighten his tie and check his appearance.

Jerry (looking in mirror): Don’t forget Rach, practice is tomorrow at 8 o’clock sharp. All their equipment is packed up in the garage. (moving over to the door) I’ll be back late Sunday evening.
Rachel (following Jerry to the door): Don’t you worry, Jerry. I will take great care of the kids! Have fun at your convention.
Jerry: Thanks again Rach. Call me if you have any trouble!
Rachel (laughing): You know I won’t.
Jerry (chuckling): I know. See you Sunday!
Rachel: Would you get out of here? You are going to be late!

Jerry exits the scene. Rachel locks the door behind him and turns back to the children.

Charlie (standing up hurriedly): Let’s go outside and play catch!
Kelly (following Charlie): I bet I can beat you outside!
Rachel (yelling after the kids): I’ll clean up the dishes while you two play outside. But remember, it’s already 7 o’clock, so you only have 30 minutes to play!

The kids scamper out the door to the backyard. The children put on baseball gloves and grab a ball. The kids line up and begin playing catch. Charlie is terrible at baseball and cannot catch anything.

Kelly (holding the ball high): Are you ready, Charlie?
Charlie (whining): How come you get to start with the ball?
Kelly (authoritatively): Because I am older, that’s why.
Charlie (complaining): But...you always start with the ball! I want to start!
Kelly: No. Now get ready!

Kelly throws the ball and Charlie misses the catch. He runs off-stage to chase the ball and returns with it in his glove. Charlie attempts to throw ball, but it dies about halfway to Kelly.

Kelly (walking forward): I can’t believe you didn’t catch that! It was right to you. *(retrieves the ball and takes several steps backward)*
Charlie (defiantly): No it wasn’t! It was way off.
Kelly (rolling eyes): Whatever...let’s see how hard I can throw! Stay there. I’m going to move back.
Charlie (nervous): Fine. Throw it your hardest! Let’s see what you got.
Kelly (yelling): Ready...aim...fire!

Kelly hurls the ball at Charlie. Not moving his glove fast enough, the ball nails Charlie in the middle of the forehead. He falls back to the ground and begins to whimper. Kelly runs over to him and stands over him.

Kelly (huffing): I can’t believe you didn’t catch it...again! Now we have to go inside. Thanks for the great game... 
Charlie (stumbling up and crying): My head hurts.
Kelly (looking over her shoulder): Oh get over it. Don’t be such a crybaby!

Charlie and Kelly return to the house. Kelly flops down on the couch and Charlie saunters into the kitchen whimpering. Rachel takes notice immediately of Charlie and rushes over to him.

Rachel (wrapping arms around Charlie): What happened? Did you get hit in the face again?

Charlie nods and begins sobbing harder.

Rachel (sternly yelling across the room): Kelly! You should know not to throw the ball that hard. He is younger than you and can’t catch as well!
Kelly (not looking up from the television): It’s his own fault! I threw it right to him. It wasn’t even that hard...he’s just faking it!
Rachel: Well, no more catch tonight. You go shower and get ready for bed while I take care of your brother. *(turning to Charlie)* I’ll get you some ice and we can change into pajamas and go to bed, ok?

Charlie nods as Rachel places an ice pack on his head and carries him off-stage. Kelly stomps off-stage closely behind them. The lights dim and the scene changes to baseball practice the next morning. Rachel walks in, holding hands with each of the children, who are dressed for practice. Rachel sits on the bleachers and watches the children run around the grassy field. More parents and children arrive, but still there is no sign of John. As the parents begin to get impatient, John
stumbles in 15-minutes late. He is wearing his hat low over his eyes and looks a mess. John walks directly over to Rachel and puts his arm around her.

John (leaning in to Rachel): You must be the hottest mom I have ever seen!
Rachel (shooting John a glare): Actually...I’m just babysitting. (Rachel lifts his arm off of her shoulders) Aren’t you John...the baseball star?
John (straightening up and puffing out his chest): Why, yes. Yes, I am. Thanks for noticing!
Rachel (eyeing him furtively): Uh...are you the coach?
John (leaning in): Not by choice, sweetie. To tell you the truth, I can’t stand the little brats. (whispering) I got in trouble with the cops, and now I’m stuck coaching these rugrats.
Rachel (pushing him away): Well, these little “brats” have been waiting to start practice. You are 15 minutes late and should probably start running some drills...or something.
John (yelling): Why don’t you kids start running some laps?
Kelly: How many should we run, coach?
John: Until I say stop!
Charlie (whining): Oh man! I hate running.

The kids begin running around the field in a mob.

John (turning back to Rachel): How is that for running a practice?
Rachel (skeptical): Uh...it doesn’t seem like much yet.
John (unabashed): So what are you doing later tonight?
Rachel (disgusted): Ugh...well I am still watching the kids. We were planning on grabbing a bite to eat at McDonald’s and then heading over to Swing-Around-Fun-Town for a couple rounds of miniature golf.
John (excited): Oh! I am an excellent miniature golfer. (John mimics a swing) I could show the kids a few tricks of my own.
Rachel (glaring): Um...well I was just planning on it just being me and the kids. But, I guess if you insist, you can meet us in the parking lot around 7.
John: Great! I will see you there.
Rachel: Well, I have to run a few errands before practice is over. (Rachel gets up, steps down from the bleachers, and starts walking away) I guess I will see you later tonight.
John: Sounds great sweetie! I can hardly wait.

Rachel rolls her eyes and scoffs as she quickly walks to her car. John moves over to the kids and begins running practice. The lights fade as the kids continue playing baseball. The scene changes to Swing-Around-Fun Town. Rachel, Charlie, and Kelly are standing by the car in the parking lot, waiting for John.

Rachel: How was practice today?
Charlie (moaning): It was awful! We had to run SO much I felt like my legs were going to fall off. Then we had to keep practicing over and over and over without any water breaks!
Kelly (pushing Charlie): Oh, stop whining! This type of practice is just what we need to actually win a few games this year!
Rachel (not paying attention): Great. So, what do you think of John? Do you like him?
Charlie (whining): He is mean and takes it too seriously. We are supposed to be having fun and I'm not having any fun at all!
Rachel (concerned): Yeah...I remember him from high school and he definitely was not the nicest guy around.
Kelly (enthusiastically): Actually, I think he is great. He is an awesome coach...exactly what we needed to actually win a few games this year! I even hit a home run today. Plus... (Kelly smirks at Rachel) I think he is pretty cute.
Rachel (looking up, thinking): At least someone likes him here. I guess that is good considering he invited himself to join us tonight.

The conversation is cut short by the arrival of John. He walks swiftly in, chest-out and looking cocky.

John (cocky): Are you kids ready to be schooled at some put-put golf?
Kelly (racing to the line): You're on!
Charlie (clinging to Rachel): I want to go home. Can we just go eat?
Rachel (sternly): No. We are here now and we are going to play some miniature golf before going to McDonald's.

The group walks over to get clubs and balls. They start playing the first few holes. Charlie lines up first and swings as hard as he can, but misses the ball.

John (laughing): You can't even hit a ball that's not moving? That's pretty sad, kid. (turns to Rachel and mutters) His golf skills are just as bad as his baseball skills.
Rachel (scowling): Well, he is still just a little kid and is learning how to play. I'm sure he'll get better with time.
John (sullen): Right. Maybe he just needs a few pointers. (moving over to Charlie and demonstrates) You should put one hand on top of the other, like this. Keep your feet steady and square to the ball. Now, you don't need to swing as hard as possible, just keep your hips still and move your shoulders. And remember, always keep your eye on the ball.

Charlie's knees begin trembling as John provides an example. Charlie hits the ball and it stops just a few inches short of the hole.

John (excited): See? That was a lot better! (pats Charlie on the back) Good job, kid!
Rachel (smiling): That was really sweet of you. (touches John on the shoulder)
John (grinning): Why, thank you. I guess he isn't half-bad after all.

The game progresses. Charlie saunters sadly from hole-to-hole while Kelly skips happily and shows bursts of excitement. The chemistry builds between John and Rachel as the interaction between the two becomes more flirtatious and touchy-feely.

Kelly: It's the last hole! I'm down by one stroke. I'm going to beat you John!
John: Let's make this game more interesting. If you win, I will buy you an ice cream cone. If I win, you have to buy me an ice cream cone.
Kelly: Deal! (focuses on the ball, swings carefully, and makes a hole-in-one) YES! Beat that!
John (sadly): Aw man. That is going to be pretty tough to beat! *(obviously swings too hard and knocks the ball into the water)* Well, shoot. It looks like I mis-hit that one. You win! I owe you an ice cream cone.

Kelly (jumping up and down): Woo hoo! I want two scoops, of CHOCOLATE! No...wait, fudge swirl!

Rachel (smirking): You didn’t have to do that, John. That was very nice of you.

John: Well, to tell you the truth, I didn’t really want the ice cream cone anyway.

Rachel (laughing): Well, I appreciate you giving her a boost of confidence.

The group walks over to a concession stand and gets an ice cream cone.

Rachel (timid): Do you have any plans after this?

John: Well...I was going to go to a party that one of my friends is throwing. Would you like to come? It should be a good time.

Rachel (disappointed): I still have the kids until tomorrow, and I definitely cannot bring them along. I think we are just going to head back and watch a movie.

John: If you don’t mind, I can join you guys!

Rachel: No...you don’t have to. You should go to the party and have a good time!

John: To be honest, I would much rather hang out with you guys. I’m getting pretty tired and a movie sounds like just the type of relaxing evening I need.

A little bit later into the evening all four of them are watching a movie and, Jerry walks in the door arriving earlier than expected.

Jerry (walking into the living room): Rachel! Kids! I’m home early!

Kelly (excited): Dad! Look who’s here! It’s my baseball coach.

Jerry (quite excited too): Well John my boy! How did practice go the other morning?

John (gently moving Charlie’s sleeping head off his lap, gets up to shake Jerry’s hand): It actually went all right, the kids were great, and I’m pretty sure we might have a good team this year.

Jerry (stunned at the gesture and response): Well, that’s great to hear! I hope my kids didn’t give you too much trouble.

John: Actually no, both of your kids are pretty cool. We had a good time at practice, and they have been fun to hang around with today.

Rachel (interrupting and speaking to Jerry): Earlier, the kids and I met John for a game of put-put, and we ate at McDonald’s. Kelly ended up winning, and then we just came back here to hang out.

Kelly (proud of herself): Yeah Dad, I even beat John. And since I won, he bought me an ice cream cone!

Jerry: That’s my girl, Kel! *(noticing Charlie asleep on the couch)* Well, I better get this little guy to bed, I hope to hear more of your weekend tomorrow.

Over the next couple of weeks, John continues to coach practices, Rachel and him seem to get closer, and the team is ready to have their first game.

It is Saturday of the first game, and the kids are warming up on the field.
John: Okay kids bring it on in. It’s about time to start the game. (waiting for them to get to the dugout) I just wanted to say that all of you have been so much fun to work with over these last couple of weeks. You have all improved so much, and win or lose, let’s just have some fun.

The game was truly a success. All of the kids played as a team, and they won 8-2. Charlie actually made contact with the ball, never striking out once, and Kelly managed to hit not one but two home-runs, making her the player of the game.

Jerry (walking over from the stands): You kids were absolutely amazing out there! I cannot believe how well all of you played! Tell your parents to meet us at Little Italy’s tonight at six o’clock to celebrate. The pizza is on me!

All of the kids form a mob and run, cheering, off-stage. The parents trail behind talking excitedly about the success of the game. Rachel walks over to the dugout where John is packing up the last pieces of equipment.

Rachel (punching John lightly): Good game, coach.
John (smiling): Hey, thanks. The kids did a great job today. The first game turned out to be much better than I expected!
Rachel: Well, what do you expect? They have you for a coach.
John (exiting the dugout): Well…it wasn’t all me. The kids worked hard and that really paid off. (John stops) Say, do you want to skip out on Little Italy’s and go somewhere a little more private?
Rachel (taking John’s hand): That sounds wonderful! What did you have in mind?
John (winking): Oh…I don’t know, babe. I know of a nice little restaurant down the street.
Rachel: That sounds great to me! I’m starving.

The two walk off stage, hand-in-hand. The lights dim and the curtains close.

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Untitled
Joe Kang

If you were a bird, would you fly till you couldn’t fly anymore?
If you were a car, would you drive down the road as fast as you could?
If you were able to see, would you travel the world?
If you could smell, would you take time to smell the flowers?
If you had powers, what would they be?
If you had opportunities, would you take them?
If you were me, what would you do?
The Agent
Samuel Buckler, Mallory Howell, Kristine Kang, Marquita Martin, Mallory Toebben

The police had their weapons drawn, pointed at the backs of the young men against the wall. One cop stepped forward and began to pat down the young men, searching for something. The other cop stood at the ready, should any of the offenders try to run. This is the scene that Johnny Milone and his friends saw as they walked up to the basketball court. Johnny, the self-appointed leader of the group, walked up to the cop as the others hung back. The cop hadn’t noticed him yet as he was still covering the young men. Johnny asked, “What did they do?”

The already edgy cop jumped at the sound of his voice. Annoyed by this distraction the cop yelled, “Get back, kid!” Johnny, burning with curiosity, reluctantly walked back to his friends. The others decided to come back to the court later, but Johnny hung back determined to find out what had happened. Watching through the chain link fence he saw the cop pull a small bag out of one of the young men’s pockets. This was obviously what the two cops were looking for. They handcuffed them and started to lead the young men through the gate out to their patrol car. Johnny was dying to know what the young men had done, what was in the bag, and what would happen to them now. As the cops led the offenders by, Johnny could see the cop’s shiny badges on their chests, and the guns at their sides. He realized something then. These guys knew what exactly was going on and exactly what would happen. Johnny felt a sudden desire to have that kind of knowledge and carry that kind of power. He knew right then and there that he would be a cop or work with law enforcement of some kind when he got older. This way he would always know exactly what was happening, even when others didn’t.

Ten years later:

Agent Milone arrived at headquarters at 7am sharp. This day was a very important day for Milone. It marked the start of a career in the CIA. He knew that nothing would ever be the same again. They had given him one week to basically say goodbye to his whole life. His level of security clearance hadn’t allowed him to tell his friends or family anything. Not where he was going or what he was doing. Now that he thought about it, he didn’t really know that himself. He did know that being an agent of the federal government could take him just about anywhere in the world, doing just about anything. This possibility thrilled Agent Milone as he walked to the board room for briefing on his first assignment.

As he began to walk to the briefing room, his mind was flooded with conflicting thoughts. It would be difficult to leave his life behind, yet he knew that he was apparently the only man qualified for the position. It was a great honor but at what cost? He already had barely enough time to see his wife and two year old son although they seemed to be managing his absence considerably well. His wife was a successful business woman who was also very busy. As he continued his walk down the hall, he thought about how few times he had actually seen her this year. There was no time for thoughts like this now. They served no real purpose to his mission, and reaching the briefing room, Milone pushed open the door. Two men sat at the end of the oval table, hands folded and faces focused. Milone casually took a seat a few chairs from them.

“Ok. What’s this about?” he stated.
“Well agent Milone, I trust you know why you were chosen for this position?” replied one of the men who appeared to be anxious to proceed.

“Yeah. Something about I am the best guy for the job,” Milone answered.

“That’s right, and do you know why you are the best guy for the job?”

What is this, 20 questions?” Milone replied starting to get agitated.

The federal official smirked. “No it’s not, but since you obviously don’t really understand what’s going on, let me enlighten you. As you know, your wife works for a high-end Russian Corporation that focuses on buying and selling new security software for other high-end corporations. The software is meant to protect the security clearance codes and information pertaining to financial accounts. Were you aware of this?”

Milone was confused. “I was somewhat aware of that. What does this have to do with anything?” Milone replied.

“We need you to follow your wife and get access to the security codes of her company itself. We believe that they are responsible for funding a terrorist attack in Yemen last week. If we can access the accounts, then we can see if any money was transferred to the terrorist organization.”

Milone was stunned. He couldn’t believe it.

“No, that couldn’t be right,” he replied doubtfully. “My wife has been working there for almost ten years now. She wouldn’t be a part of anything so terrible.”

“The two men were beginning to get impatient and annoyed. Look here Agent Milone, we didn’t call you here to question our facts. We have been investigating your wife’s business for a year now. We know their every crime. We just need an inside man to get solid evidence and take them down. So stop being such a pussy and get access to those accounts.”

Chills ran down Milone’s spine as the man yelled at him. Normally a tough guy, Milone had a soft spot for his wife, and betraying her made him feel uneasy.

Milone sat at the table speechless and he thought about his family.

“Come on Milone, man up. You were just willing to leave your wife and two year old son to work for us. Your marriage can’t be that perfect. This folder contains everything you need to know.”

Milone hesitantly grabbed the folder. He looked up at the two men, neither wearing a name tag.

“So what, I read this and report back to you?” he asked, his voice expressing every bit of nervousness.

“No, you read it here and leave the folder. Training starts immediately. You will learn everything about their company; from the dimensions of the room, to the name of every janitor. In three months you will go back home, well equipped of course, and access those accounts using your wife as prey. You are the only man for the job.”

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With that said, both men headed to the door.

“Wait, don’t I need to know your names?” Milone asked.

“No,” one of the men replied. “You will never see us again.”

Milone sat quietly in the room with nothing but four walls and a long table keeping him company.

He opened the tan folder.

Inside the folder was a thick packet full of pictures, numbers, and everything else included in his usual assignment folders. But there was something different about this assignment folder, because the first thing he saw when he opened it was his beautiful wife staring at him. He was caught between a rock and a hard place. He didn’t know what to do. He decided, ‘what the hell, I’ll do the job, show that this business is no big deal and be done with it.’ He went through the packet and three months later, he was at home with his beautiful wife and son.

His wife was very curious to why he was coming home and for so long, but she didn’t question it because it was like a miracle. She made him the best homecoming meal and couldn’t wait for him to walk through the front door. She even dressed Michael, their son, up in his cutest outfit. Malone got home at around 6:00 and the excitement to see one another was hard to control. They had a lovely dinner and spent the whole night in each other’s arms, just soaking up the moment. By the time morning came they both were exhausted from the long, overwhelming night, and she decided to take the day off.

Malone was happy to be home. He didn’t realize how much he had missed when he was away. Michael was saying things, he was walking around, and he missed all of this when he was at work. His neighborhood was bigger, there were new houses everywhere. But there was one thing that hadn’t changed, his wife. She was still beautiful, full of life, and as loving as she had been the day they married. This was the hardest thing he has ever had to do because he had to lie to the one person he truly loved.

The next day she went to work and he stayed home with Michael. He decided that he would surprise her with lunch, and it would be a perfect way to get into the office. So he packed up a nice lunch, got Michael ready, and headed to her office.

Although he had never visited or ever even seen the building, it looked identical to the papers he had been studying the past few months. It was a very respectable tower made entirely of windows and with the words “Standard Corporation” written largely across the top. With a heavy sigh, he muttered under his breath, “Might as well get this over with.” He walked into the vast lobby and approached a young lady at the front desk. “This must be Anne” he thought to himself and sure enough, her badge said Anne Dawson.

She looked up as he strode over to her, and with a warm smile, she asked, “Good afternoon! How can I help you?”
“Yes, I’m here to see my wife, Carolyn Milone.” He saw her eyes wander to the bag carrying their lunch and so explained, “I brought some food for her to eat during her break, if that’s okay?”

“Oh, sure that’s fine. Security will have to check it at the gate before you go upstairs. You know, part of procedure,” she said as she was typing on the computer. “Ah, yes. Mrs. Milone will be on the twelfth floor. You will enter through the glass doors at the end of the hallway. There will be another receptionist on that floor and they will direct you to her suite.”

He thanked her and headed towards the elevator. He passed through security and went up to the twelfth floor and to his surprise, his wife was already there. She ran up to hug him as soon as he walked through the glass doors.

“Anne just paged me telling me you brought me lunch! You are so sweet! It’s perfect timing too! I usually take my break now! We can eat in my office! Follow me!”

He followed her to her room and settled down while she busily cleaned her desk. When she was finally satisfied that it was suitable enough to eat on, she said quickly “Let me go get utensils and plates! I’ll be right back!”

His mood quickly changed. He loved being here with his wife, but he had to focus on why he was here. This was his chance. He hated having to do this behind her back, but she would never know and he would never have to do a mission like this again.

He waited until she closed the door behind her and listened carefully until he could no longer hear her footsteps. He quickly jumped onto her computer and searched for the security codes. Easy. He followed the procedure that he had memorized for 3 months and found it on the first try. He downloaded the information and was relieved that he was done with this.

His wife came back into the room shortly after and they started eating. He was so happy to be with her, catching up on each other’s lives, and talking about their son.

Her computer beeped indicating she got mail and she went to go check it. After a few minutes, her eyes narrowed and she quickly jumped up from her seat. It happened so fast that he didn’t know what was going on, but with a gun pointed to his head, she sternly asked, “Who do you work for?”

He was shocked and speechless. His beautiful, sweet wife was getting ready to kill him.

“What were you doing on my computer? My computer is encrypted to know when others are on it and when things are downloaded. Hand it over.”

He couldn’t do much but to simply do as she said, so he fumbled for the file in his pocket. As he pulled out the jump drive that contained the information, the picture of his wife that he got in his folder the first day of the mission also fell out.

She hesitantly dropped her gun and asked, “Where’d you get that? The only person I’ve given that picture to is Agent Lex.” She paused then cautiously asked, “Do you work for the CIA?”
He wasn’t sure if he should answer that, so he asked, “Do you?” They stared at each other and understood. They both did.

She broke down crying. I would have told you, but I thought they would kill you!”

“I understand, but if we work for the same team, why would they want me to follow you? Why didn’t they just ask you?”

“Only Agent Lex knows what I do. I’m a double agent for the Russian Standard Corporation and the US CIA. You should know that we don’t have the best communication especially between departments. Often no one in the organization knows what the other person is doing. Knowledge beyond our own small tasks is not part of the job.”

She took the rest of the day off and went home. They had a lot to learn about each other.

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**Inundation**
Libby Herman

The rain falls heavily upon the sand,
Gray clouds cover the normally blue sky,
The waves crash heavily upon the land.

Puddles indent the pure white grainy sand,
Creating deep dunes along the shore while
The rain falls heavily upon the sand.

Sea creatures clump together in a band,
Fearing humble homes will be lost nearby
The waves crash heavily upon the land.

The lightning stretches its dazzling hand,
Winds howl in agony, not a mere sigh,
The rain falls heavily upon the sand.

Leaves of swaying palm trees once stretched and fanned,
Move back and forth with the ferocious tide,
The waves crash heavily upon the land.

Bravely fighting the massive storm at hand,
Seagulls veer off course, attempting to fly.
The rain falls heavily upon the sand,
The waves crash heavily upon the land.
Runaway Rhyme
Brittney Dreier

Once upon a time
I caught a little rhyme

I set it go
but it followed

I chased it away
but it stayed

I scooped it up
but it fell

I caught it in a far away hold
but it drew near

I followed it one day
but it would lose me

When I fed it love
it became annoyed

Then it grew into a kite
and flew far out of sight...

A Lifetime
Kristin Hagan
Alifeoftimes
Strungtogether
Onacontinuousthread
Ofchoicesandchange.
Rewardingexperiences
Knottedtogetherwith
Momentsofregret.
Beautifulthreadsofhappiness
Interwovenwith
Melancholydays.
Solutionsturnproblems
Intopossibilities
Thatrestorehope.
Youcanmadeifference
Thatlastsforeverhaving
Thetimeofyourlife.

Patho
Justin Boudeman

My brain is full of
pathophysiology
is it over yet?

Money Quotes
Tony Beoletto and Adam Renner

This school is heavy
Let’s play some of that Halo
That game is fire

27
A Pirate’s Lament
Mike Feller

The sails hang limp, a hole in my ship
You’ve tried to take everything from me
But my friends I will always be free
Because my life and my love is the sea

The carefree days have ended
I am only a memory of the past
What will become of me?
Torn down are my sails and mast

Never again will I roam the water
My new life consists of rum
What’s the use of an eighty year old pirate?
I am now just a drunken bum

Wasting away on the beach
Holding my memories tight
I wish I could have one last sail
To rediscover the beauty of the sea at night

I know my life was but a fool’s dream
And as the tide washes in
I feel my life is coming to an end
As I watch the sun begin to dim

I have no regrets in my life
Even though I’m only leaving behind a few cents
And as I fade away I will not go quietly
Because I will forever sing my pirates’ lament

The sails hang limp, a hole in my ship
You’ve tried to take everything from me
But my friends I will always be free
Because my life and my love is the sea
An Overview of the Six Years at STLCOP
Matt Respicio

Year One: Study, study, study, study.
Year Two: Study, study, second year interview, study, study.
Year Three: White coat ceremony, study, study, study, study.
Year Four: Summer IPE, study, study, study, study.
Year Five: Summer IPE, study, study, study, study.
Year Six: Rotation, rotation, rotation, rotation, rotation, rotation, rotation, rotation...

Then finally arriving at Graduation and a Doctorate of Pharmacy.
In the end,
All the work, study hours, and labs are worth it...
Right?

Finals
Bre Dunsworth

ExamsQuizzesLabsFinals
Summer can’t come soon enough
So much to do, and oh so little time
Why does school have to be so rough?

I’m F
A
L
L

ING asleep...
No! No! You have to study more
Drink a Red Bull; it gives you <wings>
Geez, this chem. is such a bore

Just a few more days...days...days
These finals are really such a bummer
five more up ahead
I year down,
All I can think about is SUMMER
Luck
Crystal Powell

Edward Smith was a 24 year old tobacco farmer from Georgia. His wife, Anne Marie, helped with the farm as much as she could along with taking care of the family and all the house work. Her main responsibilities were to cook, clean and care for their 3 children. It was the beginning of World War I. Edward was worried about who would care for his family if he was called to serve in the War. At the time it was expected for the men to volunteer for the Armed Forces and not have to be drafted, but there were a few circumstances in which the men could be exempt from having to leave the country during the war. There were many jobs that needed to be done on the home front to provide all the supplies to the actives.

Edward volunteered for the service, as it was the right thing to do, but wasn’t lucky enough to be stationed on the home front. He was scheduled to ship out at the end of the month. He began preparing Anne Marie to be able to support the family while he would be away and for the chance he might not return, teaching her how take care of the farm and everything. It was a lot for Anne Marie to grasp. She had to be prepared to take care of everything, with the help of their oldest child, who was only 8 years old.

She feared that when her husband left for the forces that she wouldn’t be able to do it all. She asked around the neighborhood if any of the other children would be able to help as well. But to her dismay there was no one that would be available, all the boys were joining the war efforts and the girls were expected to help their mothers at home. Even some of the women would be able to join the forces and work in the factories to make the ammunition and other supplies they would need.

It was five days before Edward’s scheduled departure when the family discovered Anna Marie was pregnant. How terrible the timing. Now it would be much harder for Edward to face the fact that he had to leave his family; he already felt as if he was abandoning them. Was there any way that Edward could be stationed on the home front? They were unsure, but he was going to try everything he could to get to stay in the states, but still be able to help with the war efforts. Edward decided he would go talk to the commander first thing the next day.

After doing everything he could, Edward was sad to return home with no good news. For the time there was no way that Edward would be able to stay in the states, his ship was set to sail in three days and he was scheduled to be on it. Even though Anne Marie was pregnant, they needed all the men they could get, and unfortunately Edward was just one of the many men leaving his family.

It was a surprise that Anne Marie was pregnant since they had struggled so much to have the others. The doctors told the family that their youngest child would most likely be their last, but it was a miracle her being pregnant now. She was 8 weeks along the week before Edward was set to leave when she started having pains. Since it was a miracle she was pregnant, they rushed to the doctor to see what the problem was. There was a chance that Anne Marie couldn’t risk, that she would lose the child.

Edward went back to the commander after seeing the doctor in hopes that this would change the circumstances and he would be able to stay in the states for the time being. To his surprise the commander said they would try to find a way to keep him in the states, but made no promises at the time. Edward continued to prepare for leaving. The day came. He was packed and on the way to the dock alone, since Anne Marie had to rest as much as possible, when the commander stopped him and said that they had arranged a job for him in the states.
“Oh, thank you so much, Commander Jones. I really appreciate everything.”
“Just doing my job, soldier. You will be placed in the ammo factory; hours are 9 am to
11pm. See you tomorrow.”
“Yes Sir. Thanks again.”
Edward hurried home to tell Anne Marie of the news as the ship, USS Atlanta, was
sailing out of port. This was the best that he could get and he would accept it rather than leaving
completely. Edward got up and did what he could on the farm before heading to town for his
military work in the factory, boy it was a long day with many more to come.
“Attention Soldiers. Let’s get started, we have much ammo to make today and get
shipped over. Any questions let me know.”
And the work began. Several hours into the shift the Chief came in with a serious look on
his face.
“Soldiers, I have some bad news. One of our ships was been shot down with no
survivors.”
“Which ship?” Edward asked.
“USS Atlanta, soldier.”
At that Edward fell to his knees. He was supposed to be on that ship, but on his way was
stopped and reassigned to the factory. Was it a coincidence or was it a miracle? Edward was so
thankful for being alive and that his wife was pregnant and going to bring another child into this
world. He felt he was the luckiest man alive.

Love Locked Down
Marquita Martin

Heart, get ready for seclusion!
I’m sheltering you with a wall
No doors
No windows
No company!
You will not let anyone in, okay?
Your love is blind
Yet the pain so obvious
You don’t always see what’s best
No company!
You can’t get broken again
I refuse to let them hurt you
Get tough
No company!
Don’t let anyone get close
Trust me
This is for your own protection!
A Season to Remember
Misty Collier, Libby Herman, Josie Millard, Ripple Patel

It was a Thursday morning and all the students were anxiously waiting for Friday night. The Calhoun boys were having a great season, dominating most every game, and tomorrow night was the much anticipated sectional’s game. The whole town had high hopes for the team, and many were planning to travel over one hundred miles for the game. At Calhoun High School, the majority of the students already attended most of the games, but this time, they even got a fan bus okayed by the principal. This meant that almost the entire student body would be proudly going in red and blue to support the boys. Throughout the day, everyone was talking about the game and wishing the guys good luck. For the sectional’s game, the boys were excused from school on Friday and allowed to have the day to travel down state and stay for the entire weekend. Getting to stay in what was considered one of California’s finest hotels, the boys checked in and had the whole evening to do whatever they wanted before the big game. Not only did the guys from Calhoun High School stay at the hotel, but the guys from well over fifteen to twenty other teams were there as well. Therefore, all of the fans couldn’t wait until after the night of the game because that’s when the big parties got started.

On game night, just as everyone had expected, the Calhoun boys brought home yet another victory. Everyone was so excited and so happy. Now it was time to party. The other teams didn’t seem to care who won or lost; everyone was just looking for a good time. Of course someone found a way to sneak in liquor. Everyone was drinking, listening to music, and just enjoying themselves until a loud scream came from one of the upstairs rooms. Everyone stopped dead in their tracks.

Silence shrouded the room, thickening the air and weighing heavily down upon the situation. No one seemed able to move. Frozen to the floor, eyes flickered from person to person. Finally, one of the Calhoun boys, Jacob, decided to go upstairs and investigate the commotion. Dreadfully intoxicated, Jacob stumbled nervously down the hall and to the elevators. He pushed the button and anxiously awaited the arrival of an empty car. Stepping in the elevator, tremors began rumbling through Jacob’s body. The ride up one flight of stairs seemed endless; but finally, the elevator slowed and a soft, woman’s voice cooed “8th floor.” Stepping out onto the carpet, the smell of beer flowed into his nostrils.

“This can’t be good,” he thought to himself. Attempting to appear as sober as possible, Jacob carefully walked down the hall, forcing himself to see straight. Finally, he reached the ill-fated room. The large oak door towered over Jacob and the silver plate with the engraved numbers 813 glinted ominously in the light. Mustering up courage, Jacob found the strength to knock on the door. After a long moment, the door creaked open, as if of its own accord. From what was visible in the hallway, the scene looked disastrous.

Moving into the room, Jacob feared what was in store. The smell of blood filled his nostrils and sent his heart racing. Kicking over empty beer cans, Jacob fought his way through the crowd of people and to the center of the suite. In the middle of the suite a circle of onlookers
surrounded the coffee table. Pushing his way to the front, Jacob was horrified by the sight that met his eyes.

One of the best players from their rival school, Dayton, was sitting/laying on the floor with his head on the coffee table, bleeding profusely. No one was doing anything, just looking. Jacob couldn’t believe it. He managed to open his mouth and croak out, “Has anyone called for an ambulance?”

“Who the hell are you? He’s fine. Heads just bleed a lot, but he’ll easily recover. Why do you care anyhow? Hey, aren’t you from Calhoun High? Get the hell out of here.”

Jacob didn’t have to be asked twice. Rubbery as they were, his legs flew out of the room and to the elevator, which luckily hadn’t been called to another floor yet. He jumped in and pushed the button and the door closed as he watched a couple of the Dayton HS students from the room start down the hall to chase him. Not wanting them to find him, he got off on his floor, but pushed the button to send the elevator down to the first floor. Maybe that’ll fool them, he thought—if they didn’t notice it stayed longer on his floor than the rest. He ran to his room, and sat down trembling, as his friends crowded around him asking what happened.

He told them the story, and one of his sober friends said they would call hotel security to call an ambulance for him. “I don’t know,” Jacob said. “They may be right. He is one of them. They ought to know.”

“Had they been drinking too?”

“Oh, at least as much as we are, probably more. The whole hall reeks of beer.”

His friend insisted on making the call, but the hotel cop, instead of going to room 813, came to their room, 713. Andy, Jacob’s sober friend, told the cop what Jacob saw. Finally the cop agreed to investigate, but only with a solemn promise that none of the Calhoun crowd would leave—even if it meant some punishment for underage drinking. The Calhoun crowd waited and waited. At first there was some scurrying around trying to hide the alcohol, rushing off to hide it in other’s rooms. Some was poured down the toilet, but others soon stopped that. Not daring to drink to relieve the suspense, the Calhoun students sat, and sat, and, as the alcohol over took them, some started to snore. Others were annoyed, but dared not do anything to relieve their tension.

After what seemed like 10 hours, but was probably only 45 minutes, they heard a siren in the distance. Looking out the window they saw that indeed it did stop at their hotel. Another two hours, or maybe 45 minutes, later they saw someone being carried out. They continued to wait and wait and wait. By this time nearly everyone had fallen asleep.

Then a couple of the chaperons came to the room. They looked over the students and asked how they were enjoying their victory. Since so many of the students were asleep, they were worried about what they might have ingested, but found nothing. Jacob was out cold and didn’t wake up, but Andy was alert enough to ask how the rest of the schools were doing. Mr. Gravely told him that there was a lot of drinking by some schools, and he was glad it wasn’t true of Calhoun, but he seemed suspicious even as he praised them. He said that one group of
students, the kids from their own arch-rival Dayton, had an accident and seriously injured one of their top players. Andy was totally awake at the mention of that. "What happened?" he asked several times.

Surprised that someone was so concerned about details, Mr. Gravely said, "Oh someone apparently crowned him with a pitcher of beer, but the pitcher broke, and rather than a beer bath, he got a big cut. It bled badly, forehead cuts always do, but I think he will be alright. Fortunately, someone had the presence of mind to call hotel security who called an ambulance to take him to the emergency room. Some students would be too afraid of getting caught drinking, but I guess the Dayton students are an alright bunch."

Andy didn't dare dispute that. He would wait for hotel security to come back and charge them with underage drinking, but by late morning the next day, it appeared as if his worries were for naught. They never saw hotel security again.

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He Makes Me Feel
Misty Collier

I always think about him day and night
He seems to cling to me holding me close
Pictures in the spring to create that pose
That captures our love’s sweet and tender might
My smile radiant like the sun so bright
I am hypnotized in a trance. So close
To the edge of insanity. So close
To the edge of love’s cliff of stormy sights

What is this love that has me under spell
This pleasurable emotion I feel
Love from my lover who loves me so well
Chills down my spine that make me bend and kneel
What but his enchanting charm, please do tell
Me what else could make me feel what I feel

34
Jelly Donut
Xing Yang, Teresa Nadolski, Joel Henneberry
Society of Apothecaries and Dreamers

Life is like a jelly donut. It’s nice and sweet, but when you’re just about to take that sweet bite, bloop! A big roll of jelly is laying on the crotch of your newly bought jeans. This is my life, and I’m telling myself this while contemplating skipping lunch after my donut fiasco this morning.

I was waiting in line at Subway to grab a bite to eat on break. The office was starting to smell like grease. That, and my boss is a pervert.

“Honey, can you hurry your slow ass?”

“Excuse me?” Jenny asked, hands on hips, staring at the 200 pound guy in a T-shirt that was bulging to the limits.

“It’s better to have a slow ass than a big fat one like yours,” Jenny said, her face inches from the guy.

“You’ve got some fight in you, I bet you’re a freak in the bed!” said the fat guy, and Jenny winced as his spittle burst onto her glasses. Oh no. This is not happening. Not if my jelly donut stain and I have anything to say about it. But as soon as I got up to stop everything, Jenny released a well aimed punch right into the guy’s jaw. I’m no boxer, but damn that was a punch. As I reached them, he fell at my feet, knocked out cold.

Jenny saw the fear in my eyes and she said to me, after wiping her glasses clean, “Come on man, let’s get a coffee. East St. Louis is no place for a face like yours.” She took my arm and yelled over her shoulder “I quit!” as we quickly left the building. And that’s how we first met.

We ended up going on a date a few weeks later. It would be a lie if I said I wasn’t nervous. We fit together so well that I was worried about shattering the bond between us by doing something stupid. Jenny looked amazing under the soft lights coming from the street lamps. Her hair was lightly curled and left down for once, instead of in her usual work ponytail. She smiled brightly and said we should definitely go out again. Two peas in a pod.

Softball
Kristin Hagan

As I am hit into the hole, I fall into the grass.
When I am snagged, I hear the umpire yell “out.”
I was once just a cork and string;
Now I am a worldwide phenomenon.
I get beat-up and dirty.
I can sense the warm leather I might land in.
I can feel the sweat of the pitcher’s hand.
I start to fly when I hear the crack of the stick.
As I see the yellow fence;
I know I will be gone.
Interview
Mitul Gandhi

"Oh my god, I am so late for my interview. You know I have been dreaming about an opportunity like this since I was a freshman at STLCOP. It's all your fault; you should have let me go when I told you. Why do you never listen to me when I.. Hello..Hello, Damn stupid phone." Frustrated, Megan slammed her beaten down pink Motorola RAZR shut.

“One of these days I have to get a new phone; I will get one after I get this job, if I even make it on time for the interview,” she thought to herself. She glanced at the clock. “Damn 11:45, I have fifteen minutes to get to down town.” With that she stepped on the gas with the toe of her silver high heels. The orange speedometer needle slowly crept from 30 to 35 to 40. Quickly doing the math in her head, she figured out that she had 15 min till the interview started and she was about 20 minutes away. Again she pressed down on the accelerator harder and hit 50. Suddenly she saw a police car. Her heart jumped out of her chest and into her throat as she quickly hit the brakes. “Crap Crap Crap, he didn’t see me, he didn’t see me, please god, tell me he didn’t see me.” She cautiously looked through her rear view mirror to be expecting the dreaded blue and red lights. But there was nothing. No sirens no lights. “Thank you,” she whispered under her breath. Because of that close call, she only drove the speed limit but she still had to figure out a way to get to the meeting. She glanced at the clock again. 11:50. She only had ten minutes left till her dream job would be taken away from her. Just then she had a brilliant idea. She knew that there were some abandoned alleys coming up at the next light. She would just take those and at least shave five minutes off of her time. She was hesitant at first because she knew her boyfriend always told her to stay away from 3rd and 5th streets, but what was she to do. The way she saw it she only had two choices: take the straight way and be five minutes late and probably not get the job, or take the shortcut, risk a little bit but get there on time. She decided to opt for the latter and risk it. And so when she got to the light, she took a sharp right into the alley off of 4th street. As she looked around, she immediately got the feeling that she shouldn’t be there. On the right side, there was a dilapidated two story building with a broken window. A man with an eye-patch was standing outside holding a paper bag with a bottle in it talking to himself. Driving further she saw an apartment complex where the roof was on fire, and a parked car that had graffiti all over it. Seeing this horrifying scene Megan quickly rolled her windows up. She contemplated turning around and taking the long way but she saw that she was making good time. Keep pushing; there are only three more blocks left. Suddenly she heard a loud pop! She ducked because she thought it was a gun shot. Then she noticed that her car started to sink on the driver’s side. Slowly but surely her car was coming to a stop. Megan was terrified. What was she going to do. Her cell phone was dead and she was in the bad part of town. She thought for a second. She frantically looked through her front wind shield to see if she could find someone to help her. After a minute she knew she was going to have to get out of the car. She slowly crept the door open and checked her surroundings. She did not see anyone or any present danger. She realized that she was only one block away from a public street at least. So without any regard she started to run. She ran and never looked back. She ran as if someone was chasing her until she found a friendly looking mom and pop store on a busy road. “Sir, I need help; I am late for an interview and my car just broke down in that alley. Can
you please help me?” Sure said the man and may I use your telephone, I need to make a local call. So she called Judy, her interviewer, and explained the situation.

“Oh no you poor thing; if you would like, we can reschedule you for tomorrow, though it’s not certain if the spot will be open,” Judy said.

Megan relieved said, “oh that would be amazing, Thank you.” With that she quietly sat down in a chair. She decided she would never take the short way in life again.

Past, Present, Future
Matt Respicio

The past created who we are,
What we have done,
And who we used to be.

The present dictates who we are,
What we are doing,
And what the past teaches us.

The future predicts who we will be,
Talks about what we will do,
And what the past and present will reveal about us.

Therefore the key to life is:
Learn from the past,
Live in the present,
Look forward to the future.
Buonosera
Misty Collier, Bre Dunsworth, Mitul Gandhi, Kristin Hagan,

Characters:
**Thomas Ferrero,** 52, Entrepreneur (Owns a multinational company) NYK
**Janice Jordan,** 27, dental hygienist, looking for Mr. Right.
**Jenny Jones,** 27, lawyer, visiting St. Louis with her husband who is attending a seminar.
**Dan Jones,** 34, plans to start his own restaurant and is attending a seminar to gain some information on running his business
**Beth Williams,** 17, high school student, hostess at Buonosera
**Sophie Marino,** 27, owner of Buonosera
**Anne,** waitress

Setting: Buonosera, an Italian Restaurant, St. Louis

Scene 1: Janice comes in first wanting to meet Beth and see the restaurant; she comes in and has reserved a table

**Beth:** Janice, thanks for coming out tonight, Sorry we are so busy. I am going to leave you here with the menu, and I would like you to meet my boss... I'll come back with her later.

**Janice:** This is a lovely restaurant you are working at. I am so glad I reserved a table. There are so many people. I almost feel embarrassed taking a whole table, when all those people are waiting. There is no rush introducing me to your boss. I do want to meet her but I can see how busy you are. I will just sit here and browse through the menu.

**Beth:** Thanks for being so patient; your waitress will be here in just a second.

**Beth:** (walks out and returns in about five minutes)

**Beth:** Janice, I have huge favor to ask of you. There's a party of 3 that just came in, and the wait list is so long. Would you mind, some company?

**Janice:** I guess, not. What are they like?

**Beth:** They seem like pretty nice people, a husband and wife and a friend.

**Janice:** Friend?...Well sure, I could do that?

**Beth:** Thanks a lot, I owe you one.

(Beth goes off again and comes back with Thomas, Jenny, and Dan)

**Beth:** Janice, this is the group of customers I was telling you about.

**Janice:** Please sit down.

**Beth:** Here are your menus. Let me know if you need anything.

(Beth walks away)

**Jenny says to Janice:** Hi, I am Jenny Jones and this is my husband Dan.

**Thomas:** I am Thomas Ferrero.

**Janice:** Glad to meet you. I am Janice Jordan. I assume you are from out of town because of your name tags. What is this convention you are attending?

**Jenny:** Actually, we attended a "starting your own business seminar," and we have been invited to eat with the guest speaker. My husband wants to start up his own restaurant.

**Janice:** That's interesting. Tell me more about your workshop.

**Thomas:** Well, it was a workshop about starting your own business, and I talked about how I came up from having nothing to starting a multinational company.
Janice: Have I heard of any of the companies you have started?

Thomas: Probably not, I run a company which designs software for restaurants. One of my programs keeps track of all of the necessary statistics that a restaurant needs such as number of customers, cost of each ingredient, and other various expenses. Another one of my programs is a prototype right now. But we are hoping to have many restaurants all over the world implement electronic menus.

Janice: That is very impressive and you are giving advice to this young couple?

Jenny: Yeah, Thomas’s story was really inspiring.

Anne (Waitress): Hi, my name is Anne; I will be your waitress for tonight. Our specials for today are Fettuccini with Crab Alfredo, and Chicken Madeira with fresh mushrooms. Are you guys ready to order your drinks now?

Janice: I believe I will have iced tea.

Jenny: I will have a blueberry martini and so will my husband.

Thomas: Bring me a bottle of your finest Chardonnay.

Anne: Are you guys ready to order your food now, or should I wait till I bring the drinks?

Thomas: I am ready to order. The Fettuccini with Crab Alfredo sounds good to me.

Janice: I believe I’ll have that too.

Jenny: We will have the Chicken Madeira with fresh mushrooms.

Anne: Do you want an appetizer with your drinks?

Thomas: No, we’re fine, thanks.

Anne: I will go get your drink orders and some bread and butter. Would you want me to hold the meal or do you want me to bring it out as soon as it is ready?

Janice: Go ahead and bring it when it is prepared

(Waitress leaves, and Beth brings Sophie to meet Janice)

Beth: Janice, this is my boss, Sophie, the owner of this restaurant. Sophie, this is my next door neighbor Janice.

Janice: I am so glad to meet you. Beth has told me so much about you and this new restaurant. She just loves working here.

Sophie: It’s a pleasure to meet you too. I hope you enjoy your time here... Ohh..... Were you the speaker at the seminar today? Your speech was really inspiring. I am sure my restaurant could use some of the programs that you developed. Do you have a card so I can contact you?

Thomas: Yes, I was the guest speaker and I am glad that I inspired you. I do have a card and don’t hesitate to contact me anytime. By the way, I don’t know if you met Dan and Jenny? They also attended the seminar.

Sophie: Oh hi. How are you? I don’t believe we met today.

Sophie directs her attention to Janice

Sophie: Did you also attend the seminar, Janice?

Janice: Oh, No, I am a dental hygienist. I am Beth’s neighbor as you know. And she loves this job and this restaurant. She said I really should see what it is like and convinced me to come down and try it.

Sophie: Oh you brought your friends with you then.

Janice: Oh no, I have never met these people before in my life. It just so happened that I was sitting at this table by myself. I had made reservations. And Beth noticed that and she asked if these other people could join me at the table.

Sophie: So Beth, why didn’t you put them in the next available table?

Thomas: There was a long wait list. We would’ve had to wait hours for that.
Sophie: Why did you seat them before everyone in the wait list?
Thomas: I believe I can answer that. Me and my good friend Ben worked some magic.
Sophie: Ben. Who’s Ben?
Thomas: It’s just one of my good friends, like Ben, Grant, and George.
Sophie: I still don’t know what you mean.
Beth: I should go; I see someone that needs help
Sophie: Hold on. Just wait one second. I want to know what’s going on.
Thomas: Ben Franklin, on the hundred dollar bill, you do know who that is, don’t you?
Sophie: Beth, you accepted bribery to seat people. This is a prestigious establishment. Do you realize how unfair that is to your friend here and all the people in line? I can’t have someone like that working in my restaurant. You are fired!!!
(Beth starts sobbing)
Janice: Fired? you are going to fire Beth? I came here because she loves this job!
Thomas: I have been to every prestigious restaurant here and internationally and this has never been a problem. It’s just the part of the game.
Sophie: I don’t consider this a game. This is not how I run my business. I won’t put up with cheaters.
Jenny: But she seems like such a nice girl. We think you should just let her off with a warning.
Dan: Oh Jenny, be realistic. When I open my restaurant, I am not going to accept this kind of behavior.
Jenny (glares at Dan)
Beth: I am not a bad person; I don’t think I did anything wrong. If it makes any difference, I will give the money back. Here Sophie, you take it.
Sophie: It’s not about the money; it is about treating our customers fairly. You had your friend come this evening and you imposed on her. And look at all the people waiting for a table. You’ve been extremely unfair to everyone who has been waiting for a table. And worst of all you have been unfair to me. I trusted you.
Janice: But she hasn’t done anything so very wrong. I came to see her, and it gets lonely sitting by yourself at a table. I don’t mind that these people joined me. And those people waiting would not have sat with me, so they are not out. They would be waiting in the same line. Beth is such a good girl, she is an honors student, and she loves your restaurant.
Beth: I am sorry, I didn’t even think before I took the money. It will never happen again.
Jenny: We think you should just give her one more chance.
Dan: We? What’s this “we” crap? You’re always speaking on my behalf. Just because you went to law school doesn’t mean you are my attorney. I can speak for myself, thank you. I think that what she did was wrong and it should not be tolerated. I certainly would not allow it at my restaurant.
Jenny: Oh Dan, I am a lawyer, this is a first time offender, the sentence is too harsh. (Turns to Sophie) Have you had any problems with this girl before?
Sophie: She seemed to have been one of my best employees. She was always punctual, respectful, friendly and I thought trustworthy.
Jenny: See, she should be let off the hook.
Dan: So you may say. But when I open my restaurant, things are going to be run much differently.
Jenny: When one of your employees sues you, don’t expect me to defend you.
Thomas: This is ridiculous. I can’t even believe we are discussing it. I have a headache and on top of that I have no food. Maybe you should hire waitresses who are as competent as your hostess.

Janice: Well here she comes with the food now.

(Everyone is glaring at one another while she gives the food)

Waitress: Say, can I get you guys anything? Is everything OK?

Thomas: Yeah, everything is fine. (Waitress leaves)

Janice: Oh Sophie, this Crab Alfredo is delicious. Beth told me that you have such good recipes here. (She turns to Jenny) How’s your chicken?

Jenny: Ours is good too; We do love chicken.

Dan: Well the food here is good, but you still have management problems, Sophie.

Sophie: Excuse me? What do you know about management? I have been running a successful restaurant for 2 years now.

Dan: Well your dishonest hostess is still standing here, isn’t she?

Beth: I am not dishonest and I don’t know whether I am still a hostess or not.

Sophie: Well Beth, consider this your warning. So far this is the only problem I have had with you. You can keep your job. Just give Thomas back his money.

Thomas: Keep it, Beth. I do this in restaurants all the time.

Beth: No, No, it’s ok. Please take it back. I don’t want to lose my job.

Thomas (whispers to Beth): I’ll get it to you before I leave.

Sophie: Beth, get back to your station since I’m letting you keep your job. I hope you all enjoy the rest of your meal; I have to get back to my job as well.

(Beth and Sophie leave)

Janice: Wow, what an evening, I am so glad Beth was able to keep her job.

Jenny: Me too, I would have felt bad if she would have lost her job.

Dan: Well, I still think she was out of line.

Thomas: Oh people in restaurants do that all the time, Dan. Remember in my lecture, the example about the “S” project. Money gets you anything. And that little girl is going to get her hundred dollars, too.

Janice: That is very thoughtful. I wish I had heard your lecture today.

Thomas: Dental hygienist, huh? What kind of software do you use to keep your records?

Janice: I work in an office, and I’m not really sure what things the use.

Thomas: Well let me give you my card and maybe I can stop by your office and take a look tomorrow.

Janice: Oh that is a wonderful idea. I will be looking forward to seeing you at the office.

Thomas: Why wait till tomorrow? Do you want to catch a movie tonight?

Janice: Yes, that sounds like a really good idea.

Thomas: I still haven’t seen Slumdog Millionaire. Have you seen it?

Janice: No, actually I’ve wanted to see that, too.

Thomas: Great.

Thomas (Beth walks by): Let’s get out of here then. Oh Beth, can we get our bill?

Beth: Okay, I will get your waitress.

Thomas: Oh no. I’d rather you to get it.

(Beth returns with bill)

Thomas: (Glances at it and pulls out his thick wallet. He puts a wad of cash into the leather bill holder and hands a $100 to Beth): This is for service well performed.
Beth: I don’t want to lose my job, sir.
Thomas: Oh don’t be silly. Hey Sophie!
Sophie: Yes? What can I do for you?
Thomas: Sophie, Beth has provided extraordinary service this evening. This is a tip for her services, not a bribe. She is refusing to take it. Tell her it’s okay.
Sophie: I guess I can’t really disagree with that. Beth, take the money.
Beth: Are you sure? I don’t want to lose my job.
Sophie: It’s alright Beth.
(Beth and Sophie exit. Janice and Thomas get up to leave to go to movie.)
Jenny: Oh that worked out so well.
Dan: So well for who? I have not learned anything this entire day that will help me with my restaurant. The only thing I have learned is that this whole system is corrupt. And to think I was going to buy some software from that guy.
Jenny: Even if he is so corrupt, it still wouldn’t affect the quality of his software.
Dan: Well, I’m still not going to buy anything from him. Stop taking his side. You don’t even know him.
Jenny: I’m merely being logical. We should just drop it.
Dan: See, that’s your problem. It’s always “we, we, we.” I don’t think “we” should. Each of us should make our own decisions.
Jenny: Oh Dan, each of us married the other so that “we” could spend the rest of our lives together.
Dan: I just get tired of you always making decisions for me. I don’t even like blueberry martinis and especially mushrooms.
Jenny: Why didn’t you speak up before this?
Dan: I didn’t want to hurt your feelings.
Jenny: My feelings wouldn’t be hurt over blueberries and mushrooms. You’re going to own your own restaurant. The next time we go out, you can order for both of us.

Me
Heather Ellis

I look in the mirror
But who do I see?
   Me.
But who is she?
Organic
SunHye Min

Why am I taking this organic class?
I do not want to study every day.
I am just crossing my fingers to pass.
No one ever knows who is going to stay.

What is Nucleophilic substitution?
No one can prove this happens in real life.
All we have is Dr. B’s solution.
Every test result is scary as a knife.

Dr. B senses we are horrified.
But no mercy is given on the tests.
The chemical reaction’s glorified.
Sigh; there is not any room to take rests.

Could you be easy on us, Dr. B?
I am ready to build a Christmas tree.

The second date
Mitul Gandhi

Trees are swaying in the sun
I see a kite fly through the sky
In the sun I will sit here and lie
I cannot wait to go and run
All I want to do is have fun
I see a beautiful magpie
It made me want to cry
I hope the day is never done

The brightest thing in my life is the sun
I feel as though I can fly
I feel as though I have won
I feel as though I could die
I am meeting her here at one
I know she thinks I’m a swell guy
The Veteran
Joe Kang

“What are you doing? Get your friends off my lawn along with your pig skinned ball,” scolded Bud. The veteran always wondered why kids insisted on playing on his territory. Privacy is warranted in the U.S. or did he fight in the war for nothing, he thought to himself as he walked back onto his porch with his cold Bud light. The veteran’s real name was James although because of his habitual routine of drinking Bud lights every evening, it wasn’t surprising his friends would call him Bud. The sunset was just settling down as he took his last sips and picked up his empty cooler.

“Come inside now with your friends! It is getting late!” Mrs. Wolfson directed as she kept talking. “Consider your friends! They have school tomorrow morning unlike you. Plus you have chores to do, if you want that extra $30 you’ve been asking for”. Hank rushed in with his friends with no complaint, otherwise not only would he have been scolded by James, the veteran, but along with his mother, and that he just could not handle.

Hank woke abruptly to cursing and the shoveling of a frustrated soldier. When he looked outside, he saw Bud struggling in an attempt to dig up sand from underneath his artificial garden, trying not to ruin the foundation. Hank walked outside and approached Bud, who was apparently mumbling something…

“All these delinquents come tear up my lawn and don’t even bother to fix it. And to think, I came to all the way to Rosarito, Mexico to retire. What good does this do me if everywhere I go, there are children who can’t leave me in peace.”

“Do you need help, Bud?” asked Hank. “Do not address me as Bud, young man. You will address me as Lt. Wellington. Only my friends are allowed to call me Bud,” replied the agitated man.

Hank tried to make conversation, stating “It’s okay Lt. Wellington, I can help. My mom makes me help her shovel sand all the time away from the porch. We have to re-buffer our porch soon anyway.”

“Fine, you can help but do not damage my garden.”

Hank thought for a man who was receiving free help, he sure didn’t seem grateful.

By the end of the afternoon, Hank was dying of exhaustion. It seemed like he was there for 5 hours, but it had only been 3 hours. Hank went as far as to think it was harder than his football workout. Bud came out of the house with his bucket full of beers. He was about to leave until Bud stopped him, asking him if he wanted to sit and tossed him a beer. Hank was hesitant because he was a year underage and his mom would kill him, but Bud said it would be alright just this once. Bud handed him $40 and said to come back every week. Hank was ecstatic.

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"You mean he gave you money AND gave you a beer just for helping him?" questioned Jimmy.
"Yeah, he’s cooler than most people think," concluded Hank.

Springtime
Stephanie Hand

Purple, yellow, green
Are the colors of the spring.
Flowers sway in the warm, welcomed wind
Baseball starts back up again.
School kids count down the days until summer,
They don’t want it to be a bummer.
Picnics in the park
With the one that holds your heart.

Picture Poem
Sam Buckler

So
High up in
The sky against the
Sun and clouds
No ties
But
T
H
I
S
S
T
R
I
N
G

45
Music: “Kiss the Rain” – Yiruma
Jessie Kim

White noises that woke you up last night
Those rain drops you heard last night

May seem nothing
But they were something.

There are no patterns to it.
But that is the beauty of it.

It makes you calm down because
all you have to do is watch them and
listen to them, mindlessly.

As they wash off the dirt in this world,
They’ll wash off your worries and wonders.

Wondering
Stephanie Suhany

I’m wondering
How everything
Could end up the way
That it should be

Too much to handle
I feel held down
I gotta find a way
To turn this all around

I won’t give up
I won’t give in
I’m gonna make it through
In the end
How the Grinch Stole Christmas
Josie Millard

Though I am only twelve years old, I have lived long enough to know that Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I love everything about the holiday atmosphere - the smell of gingerbread and pine trees, the feel of the bitter cold against my cheeks, and of course, the excitement of opening gifts. Christmas even beats my birthday! But this year, things weren’t so special as they normally were.

Waking up to the sound of my dad’s voice, I knew what today was – tree hunting! Son, wake up, it’s time to go,” my dad said as he gently helped him out of his pajamas. “You and I are tree hunting today.” Michael clumsily, but anxiously, got right out of bed and put on some jeans and a shirt. I was downstairs, expecting to be asked too, but noticed that my mom only had his green coat, hat, and gloves set out for him on the kitchen countertop. Wanting to tag along, I went to the closet and began putting on my coat as well. My mom came over to me, helped me out of my coat, and asked me to stay and bake cookies with her while they went out and took care of the “men’s business.” Though I didn’t want to bake, she left me with no other option. The kitchen was already a whirlwind of baking, smelling deliciously of cinnamon and vanilla, I decided against helping my mom bake holiday cookies. Feeling completely rejected, I sauntered through the house, and tried to feel sorry for myself. Rather than staying cooped up inside, I tugged on all of my winter gear and went outside to pass some time until my dad and brother returned with the Christmas tree.

Once they arrived, my mom oohed and awed at the best Christmas tree they had chosen. Dad insisted that Michael picked it out all on his own, and of course he broadly beamed ear to ear. Immediately, I felt a pang of jealousy run through my veins because I felt left out. Michael was granted to listening to his favorite Christmas song first, as we spent countless hours hanging all kinds of Christmas lights, ornaments, and of course the star, which Michael was also allowed to put up. Feeling unloved, I asked my mom why Michael was being treated as the favorite. “Oh Jos, maybe next year Michael won’t believe in Santa anymore, and all of the magic will be lost,” she tried to reason. But that answer just wasn’t good enough for me.

As the days went by and the nights grew shorter, Christmas Eve was only one more night away. A couple days before, Michael wrote a note to Santa telling him of his wish list, letting him know he was a good boy, and finishing that he will remember to set out milk and cookies for him. On our way to grandma’s house, Mom slips the letter into the mailbox marked “For the North Pole.” Though he is worried Santa will not receive his note on time, Mom promises that he is on the “good list” and that Santa never forgets about those children. Appeased, Michael’s gaping eyes peer out the window, and he yells with excitement.

“I see him! I can see Rudolph’s nose in the sky leading the sleigh for Santa!” I roll my eyes, for I know that it is merely just a tower in the distance, but my mom peers at me sharply with a cold, hard look. Right then, I knew I would be in deep trouble if I spilled the beans about Santa Claus, but how could I stand another year with Michael being treated like royalty? I wondered if we were ever going to get to grandma’s house, as I watched the snowflakes gracefully fall from the sky. Looking like a surreal dream, the ground and tree tops reflected a white sparkle from the gaze of the moon.
Finally arriving at grandma’s house, all of the lights twinkled from inside, and we were greeted with family we had not seen in awhile. Walking inside, my senses were awakened with the smell of homemade sweet rolls, and the sound of my grandpa carving the turkey that I almost forget about my anger. The house was consumed with restless chatter, and I went with my siblings to hang out with some of our cousins. All of them are older, and they were talking about high school stuff, and things they assured us we wouldn’t understand. Michael and I walked away, and out of nowhere, I blurted that Santa Claus wasn’t real, and that Mom and Dad wanted me to tell him. Staring at me with blank eyes, I wasn’t sure if Michael was going to cry, or if he was going to die. He ran off before I could tell him not to tell Mom, but sure if, I could hear the clomping of her footsteps down the stairs.

“Josie Elizabeth! How could you!” Mom used my middle name; I knew it was never good when Mom used my middle name. I started to cry and win her over with sympathy, but she would have none of it. I was forced to go apologize to my brother and assure him I was only joking or else I really would just receive coal and smelly fish for my presents. Only increasing my tears, I ran off to find my brother. Playing by himself, he looked up with a desolate face, and I felt horrible. Not only did I ruin his magic of Christmas, but I ruined mine as well.

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**Sonnet**  
**Josie Millard**

I feel alone I miss my life of love,  
This place a new is like a damning rain.  
I wish to run away and fly like doves.  
My feelings are so lost and full of pain.

Even though my choice was made on my own will  
It haunts my world, invading most my thoughts.  
That night of shame when I beset to kill.  
The ache, the fright, the chill, the wait, the shots.

And now I sit each day alone in here.  
To wait for them to tell me when I die.  
Their footsteps stomp before they see my fear  
And that is when I said my last good-bye.

The room I go is where I find my fate  
I squeeze my eyes and hold my breath and wait
Fifth Grade
Malory Toebben

It was an ordinary school day in the beginning of November and I could not wait until Christmas break. I was in the fifth grade and I just couldn’t wait to be in middle school. I was just so tired of being known as a little kid. I wanted to be able to go out and do stuff on my own. But for now I had to stick to the grind of fifth grade. My mom was driving me to school when I saw Allison Rose on the sidewalk. I blushed almost every time I saw her because she was the prettiest girl I had ever seen. We drove by and I was dreading pulling into the parking lot because today we were doing fractions in math and I hated math, but I hated fractions the most.

My mom kissed my cheek, which always made me embarrassed, and I walked inside to my classroom. We got started with class right after the bell rang and I was just counting down the minutes until recess. After the teacher gave us our morning worksheet, she started taking attendance. She got to Allison’s name and no one said anything. I looked up and saw that her seat was empty. So I started to wonder what happened, because I just saw her walking to school a little while ago. I let it go and continued working on my morning problem; it was another math problem of course. The morning seemed like forever with all of the fraction talk, but it was finally time for recess.

My friends and I loved to play football during recess and I was always the quarterback because I knew exactly how to throw the ball just right. My team won of course and it was time to go back in and get ready for lunch. At my lunch table, I noticed that Allison was still not at school and I asked my buddy, James, if he knew where she was, and he said he heard she was skipping. That surprised me because Allison never skipped. So lunch was over and we were all headed back to our classroom when we saw the principal standing outside the door. My first thought was that somebody did something at recess, and now we all had to have a talk, but then I noticed that the principal looked very sad and that was unusual for him.

We all took our seats in the classroom and the teacher came in with the principal and the counselors. This was really starting to get weird. I was just so confused about the whole day with Allison and now this. Then the principal began to speak:

“Hi everybody, I have some very sad news that I need to share with you all. And when I give you this news I want you to know that it is okay to cry and that your teacher and the counselors are all going to be here to talk with you. This morning your classmate, Allison Rose, was walking to school like she did everyday to school. She was walking on the sidewalk like she was supposed to when a driver fell asleep at the wheel behind her. The car that he was driving hit Allison and she did not make it.”

There was a moment of silence throughout the entire room. I couldn’t believe it, and I didn’t know what to think. She was gone; the pretty Allison Rose was dead. My heart was broken. I didn’t understand how something could happen to her; she was only in fifth grade. And what if I would have told my mom to pick her up and give her a ride to school. Then she
would have still been alive. What have I done? I could have saved her. The thoughts of Allison just kept running through my head. Why did the driver fall asleep? Why hadn’t Allison been able to jump out of the way? Then I felt the tears running down my face. Why didn’t I save her?

Big Mac
Kristin Hagan

Ole Mark McGwire was a big superstar.
He played for the A’s and then for the Cards.
With arms full of muscle, and eyes sharp and keen,
He smashed baseballs with a swing that was mean.
Big Mac, Big Mac.

He played first base and was as sharp as a tack.
But at home plate, the crowd cheered for his smack.
Mac would swing the bat, and then it was done.
Look up, outfield, another home run.
Big Mac, Big Mac.

Then in the summer of 1998,
Mac and Sammy Sosa battled at the plate.
They slugged away, the home run record was at stake.
The fans went crazy, Roger’s stats they tried to break.
Big Mac, Big Mac.

History was made on the 8th of September.
That will be a day Cardinal fans will remember.
Up at the plate, Mac swings with all his might.
Homerun 62! What an awe inspiring sight!
Big Mac. Big Mac.

Busch stadium went wild, everybody cheered.
Mac was a hero that every pitcher feared.
He “saved baseball”, all the papers ranted.
“We’re number one,” Cardinal fans all chanted.
Big Mac. Big Mac.
Mac played the game he loved for several more seasons. 
Then he retired primarily for health reasons. 
Or maybe it was because he couldn’t handle. 
Rumors about steroids, baseball’s biggest scandal. 
Big Mac. Big Mac.

Seems like more than skill, made those home runs fly. 
Steroids and andro bounced those balls so high. 
“Foul” cried fans and baseball players. 
Performance enhancers are banned in the majors. 
Big Mac. Big Mac.

Oh Big Mac, you really let us down. 
No Hall of Fame for you in Cooperstown. 
Yes, we enjoyed the race, it was lots of fun. 
But sorry, Big Mac, your ball career is done. 
Sorry Mac, Big Mac.

Kwansaba
Joe Kang

Under the feet of many are more
With no light or sign of life
you would never know there were any
a family just like yours under their
People who could not afford your life
cold dark and scary you would say
They would say the same about yours
The Sign
Mitul Gandhi

Kyle was driving his 2050 Nissan Maxima down the 805. It was late and there were not many cars in the road. It was just him and his beloved Kim. Kim’s hair was blowing in the wind as the top was down. As he saw the boards San Diego 1 mile, he only had one thing on his mind. Should he ask her or not; He had been debating this for months now. Was he ready to make the ultimate commitment? He knew he loved her, but he just didn’t know how much. He felt like he needed a sign of some sort. He and his girlfriend believed in signs and destiny. Then out of nowhere a truck came on to oncoming lane. The driver had dozed off and was coming straight towards their car. Kim, seeing the truck, pointed and let out a big scream. Kyle tried to swerve, but the truck swerved the same way. Kim and Kyle simultaneously decided to hold each other’s hands with their last seconds on Earth. The truck was just 10 feet away when a weird thing happened. The CD turned on automatically and started playing their song and their favorite line. There was a blinding bright blue light and then silence.

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It was a strange place that they had landed in. Kyle and Kim both knew that they weren’t back in San Diego anymore. They both asked themselves the same question: were they dead? They looked around, and as far as the eyes could see, there were trees but not with the regular green palm trees they were used to but bright red luminescent diamond shaped leaves. They were not limp like their trees at home, but instead erect and almost floating off the branches they were attached to.

Kyle asked Kim, “Where are we?”

Kim said “I don’t know, but I don’t like the look of this place one bit.”

They started to walk through what they thought was grass. Kyle took the first step. However as he put his foot down on the ground, there was a loud crunching sound that emanated the whole area. The leaves stopped glowing and turned off. Instant darkness. Kim tried to walk but the same thing didn’t happen; instead lights would glow all around her foot when she tried to take steps.

Kim said, “I don’t understand what is going on. Wait a minute I see it again”

Kyle responded, “see what?”

“That same strange circle that we saw right off the 805 before we almost crashed.”

Kyle said, “Here grab my hand”

As soon as Kyle grasped Kim’s hand, the blue rotating portal starting to gap open and emit light. Kim and Kyle ran full speed towards the circle. As they ran, the leaves flickered on and off and the trees swayed and all sorts of lights illuminated the strange world. When they got near the portal, they dove in head first into the blinding circle. They both shut their eyes
simultaneously and clutched each other's hands harder. All of a sudden they heard the sound of their CD. Same song, same line. This was their sign.

My Morning Pattern
Jesse Kim

Fresh cup of coffee
And a protein bar,
I begin my morning

Icy cold air
Before the sunrise,
I begin my morning

People walking their dogs
Saying hi to one another
I begin my morning

Familiar view
Big 24 letters I see every day (St. Louis college of pharmacy)
I begin my morning

I grab a table
And start studying patho/P-ceutics
I begin my morning
Music
Erin Frevert

My thoughts are carried away
By the soft, light notes,
My heavy heart is lifted,
With each key stroke.

I feel happiness wash over me,
As the violins serenade,
The stresses of life have fled,
From the sounds of the violins.

I am enthralled,
In the wondrous melody,
Yet I return to reality,
As the piece ends.

List Poem
Sam Buckler

What’s under the seat of my car?
One pair of flip flops from happier times
A couple of unlabeled mix CD’s
An ice scraper that I hate using
Approximately four dollars in change
Skittles that have turned a weird color
Too many McDonald wrappers to count
A shirt that I thought I had lost
A DVD that I someone probably wants returned
Banana Tree
Bre Dunsworth

A simple gift of generosity
A little banana tree
It will later grow and flourish
This gift we got for free

The tree is very little
With only a leaf or two
It will soon grow very strong
But for now it’s still brand new

It likes heat and a little H₂O
And it definitely loves the sun
We water and watch it grow
The tree, it’s so much fun

The winter is its resting time
The growth is at a stop
If you give it too much water
You’ll maybe need a mop

But now what is happening?
The room is full of shouts
Please don’t die little tree
False alarm, a new leaf sprouts

We love to baby and pamper
The tiny tree on the sill
It will grow tall and strong
This I know it will

But now look at the little guy
Its leaf has now turned brown
This can’t be good, no not at all
We both have on a frown

Just wait one moment
Take a looky there!
Another leaf has grown
We think it knows we care

Months have passed
The banana tree now tall
Many leaves have browned
And to the ground is where they fall

But don’t give up on the little tree
New leaves have grown right back
The number of leaves has doubled now
The tree is strong, and that’s a fact

The Passing Colors
Kevin Neidbalski

As I stand outside I notice the changing hues of orange, yellow, and red
   Blowing in the gentle breeze
   The chill of the air creeps up my back
The outside world reminds me of a place time I recall
This is a life worth living, so much so that I cannot forget
   I am so astonished
I feel so numb from watching all of the beauty pass me bye
   I have waited a patient lifetime for this day to come
   Discovering all of this splendor
This is my home and I feel alright
No one seems to find me here in all of this beauty and bliss
   Oh how I blend in
There’s no more running for this restless soul
I glance up to the sky to see the sun falling behind the horizon
So I decide to decide to wait with my newfound contentment
   For the sun to rise again
Afternoon Daze
Dan Chang

It was October 24, 2009 around 4 P.M. in the boring and sweltering afternoon in my loft. I had just finished two or three dishes of homemade potato soup, maybe a dish of homemade fried rice, and about three-fourths of a pan of recently made brownies for dessert. All of those were eaten without a drop of water to help it go down. That dehydration probably contributed to my lightheaded experience, a strange event that I still remember the bizarre details of. As I was finishing up the huge meal, I was reading about acupuncture on the Internet while Kiss of the Dragon was starting on FX, channel 77. Soon I turned off and closed my laptop and just lay on the couch, content with watching some fight scenes. What ruined the movie was that the piercing sunlight from our loft’s windows was setting an annoying glare on the TV, causing me to miss what was on the screen. Too lazy to move the TV, I decided to block the glare by sitting on the coffee table in front of the TV. After about forty five minutes into the movie, the combination of my dehydration and the sun beating on my bare back for a long time started to get to me. I finally got the motivation enough to move the TV and place it on the coffee table. There was still glare, but at least I could see the screen closer. As I was watching the scene where Jet Li and Bridget Fonda’s characters are talking in the old Chinese man’s shrimp chip shop, that’s when it happened. At first, my head started having a dull thumping that was growing into a lightly pounding headache. Along with the headache, my vision started blurring a bit, and my hearing turned on and off repeatedly as I struggled to watch the movie.

A fight scene in the shrimp shop was going on, and as I was watching Jet Li fight a couple of henchmen, stab a pimp in the neck with chopsticks, and fight another martial artist, my mind was completely focused on Jet Li’s movements and strikes; nothing else mattered at that moment. Then, as if someone slapped me out of a trance, I became suddenly conscious and aware of everything other than Jet Li, even though I saw all of the imagery. It’s like I was watching the fighting, then the next thing I know, I just realized that Jet Li was fighting in a shrimp shop that was being gunned and burned down. Anyways, for the rest of the movie, I kept drifting in and out of consciousness. Each time I came back, I wondered what was going on while my head kept feeling like it was being thumped on the inside. I couldn’t keep my thoughts straight and I was confused by the whole movie, even though I had seen it around six or seven times before.

Finally, the movie ended, and I started to browse on Wikipedia through random articles, a favorite time-killing hobby of mine. Finally relenting to my thirst, I got up to walk to the kitchen to get a glass of water. Getting up, the lightheaded feeling rushed and burst in my head, causing my peripheral vision to completely blur out as I walked towards the kitchen. One strange thing that happened was that I felt like I was teleporting from place to place because I didn’t remember walking to the kitchen, just that I got there and got my glass of water. I also didn’t remember my walk back to the couch, just that I got back. My head was still pounding, and I also felt suddenly tired and sleepy. To keep myself awake, I got up and walked to the bathroom with my laptop. My teleport feeling came on again, and I never actually did anything when I got to the bathroom but sit on the toilet cover and browse some more on Wikipedia. I guess I went there on a whim.
As I was reading, my mind became completely focused on every word, yet I found myself nodding my head as I came in and out of consciousness.

After about fifteen minutes of this, I raised my head up as my consciousness came back and looked around to think, "Wow, I didn’t know I was in the bathroom. I can’t believe this." I shut off my laptop, put it down somewhere, and ran to the kitchen for another glass of water. The next thing I knew, I was running around the loft for a long time (I lost track of the time after this), drinking water nonstop, looking at myself in the bathroom mirror, and laying down on the couch watching TV again. It was never-ending teleportation. I didn’t realize or remember it until I saw him, but my roommate was sleeping in his bed the whole time. Curious and paranoid about my state of mind yet eager to share it, I yelled his name about five times to wake him up. After he woke up groggily, he sat on the couch to watch TV with me. For a long time, I was going on a nonstop rant about how I felt for the past two hours. He was completely bamboozled about what I was talking about because I was babbling the weirdest things during the rabble. We both are confused about what had happened. It was the strangest afternoon ever.

First Glance
Lee Zbichorski

There she was
The one with a perfect stature
The one with a smile that lit up the room
The one with a laugh that made you feel warm inside

There she was
Surrounded by an impenetrable wall of friends
Blocking her greatness from the rest of us
Making it necessary to twist and turn just to catch a glimpse of her

There she was
Her eyes scanning the room
Her fingers running through her hair
Her head slightly tilted on the palm of her hand

There she was
The center of your attention
Sitting across the room
With her eyes staring right back at you
A middle aged man was running down the deserted street. His footsteps echoed loudly in his ears as he tried to get farther away from the scene. That shouldn't have happened; something had gone horrifically wrong. Screams and gunshots resonated from his memory. He pushed the thought from his mind and focused on his mission.

The docks were just around the corner up ahead. He checked his watch for the time. It was three in the morning, so he was a little bit early. He carefully looked over the area to make sure he had not been followed. Suddenly a car turned down the street and he hid in the shadows behind a garbage dumpster.

He waited, his heart pounding as his fingers landed on the gun in the holster at his hip. The car started to slow and...continue ahead, the lights dissolving into the approaching evening. The wind whispered a tune in that moment of silence: a hysterical giggle. The touch of metal spread a chill that overwhelmed the fear, the anxiety, the adrenaline.

And so, the man walked from the shadows, his figure coming back to Stark Street: a lonely corner decorated with buildings that have seen better times. It was a false hope that the future would one day come together to a desirable outcome. Yet, standing on the chipped away sidewalk, he knew that this future would have to end. Today. Tonight. This very hour.

Yet these thoughts masked the approaching lights. Continuing to devour the oncoming darkness, they raced after him, outlining the figure of the vehicle of moments ago. Recognition took hold, and his fingers were at the trigger of the gun, a reflex of the past few days.

Once

Twice

The third shot was followed by the sound of an explosion. The vehicle was now a pillar of fire that reached hungrily for the sky. Yet the footsteps from behind only reinforced suspicion that everything had been a ploy to bring him to this street corner. Yet succumbing to the plot and following along for one’s own reasons lead to the same outcome. And that was all that mattered.

“You’ll die.”

The thought used to chill him to the bone. Death was the least of his worries. He turned to shoot again but fear gripped his heart and he dropped his gun on the ground with a thud. He opened his mouth to speak but he couldn’t. He was staring into the eyes of his son.

It was fourteen years ago. The speeches, the clapping, the crowds. He got a good picture with him, dressed in the blue gown. They were smiling. He wanted to hug him but he couldn’t. He looked up in pain, the veins protruding on his neck and face. He clutched his heart, and fell to the ground. Dead. He was the first of them.
The Orange Nightmare
Allison Wegryn

I was playing in my grade school’s gym during recess. My principal, Mr. B, had decided that he wanted a hot tub put into the concrete that was on the sides of the basketball court. For weeks, several men had been drilling a huge hole in the concrete. During recess that day, the volleyball I was playing with fell down the hole. I really wanted it back, so I ventured down the hole. When I got to the bottom, I was shocked at what I saw. There was a secret laboratory!! For some reason, I just knew that my principal had that installed down there and didn’t really want a hot tub. I began to search for the white and red volleyball, but couldn’t find it anywhere. Then I heard someone whispering, “Hey. Come over hear.” A cold chill ran through my body; I was petrified. The whisperings continued, and eventually I found the source—an orange jet plane! My fear changed into excitement.

“Hop in and I’ll take you for a ride,” the plane said.

“Won’t I get in trouble?” I asked.

“No one will even see you, it’ll be fine,” the orange jet replied.

After this reassurance, I hopped in and buckled the seatbelt. The orange plane began to fly out of the hole. When we reached the surface, no one even noticed us. It was as if though we were invisible! The orange plane flew around the entire gym several times, and it even took me through the cafeteria. I was having the time of my life. Just when I thought things couldn’t get much better and that this was the best recess of my life, the orange jet plane said, “I can grant you three wishes....anything you want.” Adrenaline rushed through my veins after this thrilling news. For some reason, I only ended up making one wish, and it was that all of the children playing had on mittens so that it would be more difficult for them to play basketball and volleyball. The orange jet plane quickly granted my wish, and I giggled as I watched the other kids struggle to play with the basketballs and volleyballs. Sadly, recess was about over, so I had to tell the orange jet plane to land.

When we got back down, the plane begged me not to go. I told him that I had to, or else I would be in huge trouble. The orange plane reluctantly watched me leave, and I’m sure he felt sadness. I couldn’t linger any longer, though, or else I would get a lecture from my teacher. The next day in gym, I snuck down the hole to see if the plane was there, but it wasn’t. This happened several times in a row, so eventually I just gave up.

One day I was riding in a white convertible with my Mom, Dad, sister, brother, Grandpa, Grandma, cousins, and aunt. It was a regular sized convertible, and we all crammed in and didn’t have seatbelts on. We were happily cruising down the road, listening to music, and having a good time. Suddenly, we went over a huge bump and everyone but me flew out of the car! I started crying and screaming my head off. My whole family was just ejected from the vehicle, and I was all alone! I began to hear the sound of an airplane coming towards the vehicle, but I didn’t think help could come that soon. The plane, however, landed right next to the convertible. When I looked up I saw only an bright orange object—and the source of the accident. It was my
“friend” the orange plane. He was jealous that I was riding in the white convertible, and hanging out with my family instead of him. He therefore used his magical powers to cause the accident to happen. He looked over at me, smiled, and, with a devilish look, said, “Orange you glad I’m back?”

**Unabridged Infatuation**
Libby Herman

Madly in love with a married woman,
The chef found himself in a pickle.
Each day he wrote her a love letter,
Chewing through his words carefully,
Writing with great care,
But never sent it off.
The enormous pile sat on top of his counter,
Next to the single red rose he bought for her,
Standing tall and blossoming beautifully.
Growing with each day.
She was the apple of his eye,
His other half,
The completion of his soul.
She was the napkin to his plate,
The knife to his fork.
He craved her very presence,
Longing to embrace her.
His heart filled with joy,
As thoughts of her devoured his mind,
Consuming his world.
Her sweet scent of sugar,
Constantly lingered in his nose,
Filling his senses.
How he longed to see her!
To wink at her,
To kiss her,
To be hers forever,
Would be the ultimate joy.