Toy Shop
By: Erin Frevert

This place has a long history. I’ve lived here my whole life, but my ancestors have been here for practically forever. We’ve never fit in anywhere because of how different our appearance is from the “norm.” Our short stature and pointed ears made us easy targets for snide remarks and unbearable glances. Eventually we reached our breaking point; my ancestors decided it would be best to remove themselves from the society that was so cruel and move north, as far north as possible, to the North Pole.

Once at the North Pole, my ancestors built a settlement and began making a living by building toys. They wanted to become the number one toy corporation in the world to show the people that looked down on them as children that they are not children and are capable for running such a successful corporation.

My ancestors tried their hardest to make their toy factory number one in the world; however, they were never successful. They would work their fingers to the bone 364 days a year to meet their quota, but on the day the evaluator would come, everything would be gone. This would happen year after year, and the elves were getting frustrated, so they decided to put up a security camera and have some of the top elves guard the doors to the factory.

All night, there were no disturbances, yet when the evaluator came, all of the toys were gone! The elves couldn’t figure out how all the toys had disappeared until they reviewed their security tapes. The tapes revealed a rather plump man dressed all in red being pulled in a sleigh by some sort of flying deer. He landed his sleigh on the roof of the toy factory and broke in by going down the chimney. How this fat man could fit down the chimney baffled the elves, but when he returned to the roof, he was carrying all the toys from the factory. He loaded all of the toys into his sleigh and made his getaway with his flying deer.

The elf community was upset that this man stole the toys they had worked so hard to make yet again, but they now knew how he was doing it so they could prevent it next year. The elves had been withdrawn from society for so long that they sent a few elves back into the “normal” society to do some investigating. It was then that they discovered that this fat man, who they are calling a saint, distributes presents to all of the good children of the world every year on December 24th.

The elves were furious that this man was thought to be a saint and that he had been getting away with his ploy for so many years. They were determined to become the number one toy factory and to catch this thief, although the evidence was minimal since their toys were distributed to every house in the world. Someday the world will know the truth about this holiday they call Christmas.
‘Twas the Night Before Halloween
By: Smit Patel

‘Twas the night before Halloween, when all through the road
I smelt something that might have been a toad;
The smell was getting worse as the minutes went by,
I think someone told me the smell was a lie;

The kids were scared and hid under their beds,
While visions of dead cats danced in their heads;
When out on the sidewalk there arose such a smell,
I walked from the grass to what the hell

Away to the coffin I flew like a bird,
I opened the chest and saw a creature that was so absurd,
The smell was just an ugly goblin,
I would kill it, but it would be a sin.

The Season

Of Fall

Orange and brown the colors of gold
Pumpkins and Scarecrows the sights so bold
Nights and Breeze the feel of a new atmosphere
Collecting the Abundance that tastes so sweet
The season is here; my life is complete.

By: Josie Millard

The End
By: Susan To

Our time is ending
The semester is over
Goodbye my comrades!

Haiku
By: Susan To

I want to sleep now
But I must keep studying
For this stupid test.
A Twin Sister

By: Tia Joseph

Christmas was almost here, and I could barely contain my little five year old self. At school, I was very jealous of these twins, Madeline and McKenzie; so this year for Christmas I wrote Santa a letter pleading for a twin sister. I wrote about how I had been a good girl and how I was very nice to my new baby sister who was born that year in June. I wrote about drinking all of my milk, and taking the Flintstone vitamins my Mom gave me. I also brilliantly came up with the idea of writing my letter in red and green. I was proud of myself for thinking of this, knowing Santa would undoubtedly appreciate it.

It was Christmas Eve and it was almost my bed time. My mom asked me to help her place some milk and cookies on the table for Santa. I gleamed as I helped my Mom lay the milk and cookies out. I then reminded my mom that it would be rude not to leave out some food for the reindeer, so we then proceeded to lay out some food for the reindeer outside of the house. I then excitedly went to bed, and couldn’t stop thinking of the possibility of receiving a twin sister. I thought about all the cool things we could do together. It would definitely be much easier to play with her instead of my baby sister. My excitement kept me up longer than usual, as I couldn’t resist staring out the window, wishing to see Santa’s sleigh and all of his reindeer soaring through the star lit sky. At some point, I finally did manage to fall asleep.

Before I knew it, my Mom woke me up, asking me to come and unwrap my gifts. I ran down the stairs in excitement and my eyes were immediately drawn to a tall upright rectangular box that was about my height. I began to tear off the wrapping paper, and became more and more enthralled with the idea of having an actual twin sister! Finally I had torn off all of the wrapping paper, only to see a blue eyed, blonde staring back at me. I frowned in confusion. Maybe Santa got confused with who I was. But as I thought about that, it didn’t make sense considering Santa didn’t make mistakes.

Before I could say anything, my Mom handed me a letter that the one and only Santa had written. In the letter, it stated how Santa had searched all over, near and far, for a twin sister for me. He said it was practically impossible for him to find one, so instead he decided to give me a life-size Barbie doll, which was the newest type of Barbie out. He also said that God gave me a baby sister, and that I should appreciate her, even if she was just a baby. This made me feel bad for wanting a twin sister, and I soon came to love having this life-size Barbie doll. The fact that Santa had written me a letter was the best gift of all. I had never heard of any of my friends receiving a letter from the actual Santa Clause! I then put the letter in my backpack so I could show it to all of my friends at school.

Haikus

By: Libby Herman

Vibrant colors fall,
Stretching across the clear sky,
Shattering the rain.

Music fills air,
Reaching out to every soul,
Unifying man.
A Soldier’s Confession
By: Peter Ho

I stand in my uniform
And salute the death of a friend
I remember the good times we shared
He was more like a brother than a friend.

I stand in my uniform
And hold my gun to mend
The mess made by the mistakes of a single country
I shoot and kill the bacteria infecting our lives

I stand in my uniform
And cry to myself about all the lives that have been taken
I remember the innocent child that was killed
I remember my friend that was killed

I stand in my uniform
And fear my destiny
Fear going home
To tell his family that he is not coming home

I stand in my uniform
With blood dripping down my clothes
I am a murderer

Walt
By: Saba Aziz

From the second they
They see the ad on TV, it fills every
Nook and cranny in their mind...
Magical and fun, both that
Never end.
Princesses, pirates,
And every Disney movie
Character from the very beginning. Wonderful and ethereal.
For a child, the closest thing
To Heaven on Earth.
Walt Disney
World.
My lucky charms!
By: Kheelan Gopal

Lucky the Leprechaun was full of energy! He just finished making his brand new pair of shoes! These shoes were the best you could ever make. They looked good with his green suit and they made him run even faster so he could not get caught and the kids couldn’t steal his lucky charms. Just as Lucky the Leprechaun sat down to eat his bowl of lucky charms, he heard a loud giggling and noise coming. Those darn kids are coming to steal me pot of gold and take me lucky charms! I have to get out of here quickly! I have Pink Hearts, Orange Stars, Yellow Moons, Green Clovers, Blue Diamonds, and Purple Horseshoes! And they cannot have any of them! I have to get on the rainbow so it takes me far away from them! So Lucky hopped on the rainbow and floated away.

The children all chased after him eagerly. They wanted to see all the lucky charms and eat them! They also wanted to take his pot of gold as well! But they could not have any of it; that was only for Lucky. If they caught him, he would have to grant three wishes just for them to let him go! He managed to escape them for a little while, but Lucky the Leprechaun was still very worried. A few hours passed, Lucky was walking around and managed to find where the kids were hiding out. They all retreated back to their little fort and Lucky peeked in. To his surprise he saw that they were plotting for a way to capture him and take his lucky charms! They were going to grab him, tie him up and force him to give up the gold and the lucky charms. What they did not know is that Lucky was watching them as they planned it all out. The kids quickly went out to go find Lucky again. If only they knew that he was standing on the roof of their fort. Once they all left, he jumped down into the fort to look at their plan. Once he hopped down, he was looking at the plans and stepped out towards the door. There was a trap! There was a rope there that grabbed onto his foot and put him hanging upside down. Lucky thought he was definitely in for it now.

The kids were gone but he was stuck here; there was no way he would be able to get out. He tried to wiggle his foot as much as he could out of his shoe and out of the rope, and he got himself free! But when he got himself free, he fell right on his head and was knocked out. Lucky awoke only to find himself tied up in a chair with the kids who had his lucky charms and his pot of gold. “Please let me go; I just want me pot of gold and me lucky charms!” Lucky exclaimed. The children said we will not let you go until you give us your lucky charms! Lucky said, “I can grant you three wishes if you let me go!” The children thought about what they would ask for. They were thinking for a long time, but luckily, Lucky had a knife in his pocket that he was cutting the rope as they were deliberating. He cut himself out, and since he had his new shoes, he grabbed the lucky charms and pot of gold, and he took off speedily out of the fort, hopped on the rainbow and was never seen by the children again. Don’t leave your lucky charms or pot of gold out where someone else may grab it!
The Rocking Chair
By: Kierstyn Fornoff

The Rocking Chair
I sit there all night, just waiting for someone or something to come along. The dust piles upon my arms, yet I have no thumbs or hands to brush it off. During the night, I am very sad. Everything is quite and no one wants to spend any time with me. My back aches during these long nights, and my entire body stiffens up. I long for the mornings when I will be visited once again. Finally, they arrive, first with the Pledge duster and then with their bodies. They rock me, swivel me, and twirl me. I smile and laugh with joy and my foot stool pops out from under me. My legs are weak from laughing, so I wobble back and forth which brings great pleasure to the humans or animals that sit in my lap. While the day dies down, we finally come to my favorite time of the night. My favorite person plops down on my lap, kicks out his feet, and turns on the TV. We watch NCIS all night while he silently rocks back and forth on my weakened legs. I’ve never felt so happy; I love this time of night. Eventually, he will fall asleep in my lap, and he will start to get heavy because he is no longer rocking. I give him a gentle push and his eyes open back up. He gets up and stretches, and covers me back up with his blanket and then heads to his bed. All the lights go off, and once again I am alone. Although he was heavy, I miss his presence and immediately regret that little push I gave that woke him up. As I sit there in saddened silence, I hear a thump and some little, tiny footsteps across the hardwood floor. Here comes fatty! The cat jumps into my lap and kneads on me for an hour before finally getting comfortable. Even though the TV is off and it is dark all around. I am happy once again because I have a friend curled up on my lap, and we are regaining our strength for the next long day together.

The TV
Throughout the day, people turn me on and then they turn me off. They abuse my buttons and yell at me for no reason. I do nothing wrong, I always respond to their requests, yet I get yelled at. I am so jealous of the rocking chair that sits directly in front of me. No one ever yells at him. They sit in him and love him and keep him warm with their blankets. No one puts a blanket over MY back. They even sleep with him, and with that, they forget about me while they snooze in his soft, squishy self. They forget to turn me off, and I grow tired of the voices coming from my stomach and I grow tired just from pure exhaustion of being on all day. They have no respect for me. I wish I could be the guy across the room and just lounge around all day.

The Cat
Oh what a long day! I cleaned my fur, I scratched up all the furniture, and I even walked down to the basement to go to the bathroom. What a day! What is this? A chair unmarked by my claws or my fur? Well I will just have to fix that. Da de da de da de daaaaa, no one’s looking.....here I come you red rocking chair! SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH!! Haha, I have put my mark on you. Sally is going to beat me for this, but hey, it’s tradition for me to break in the new furniture.

Alright, now it is time to get cozy. Knead Knead Knead......4 hours later.......ahhhh the perfect spot. ZzzzzZzzzzZzzzz.
Fall 2011 Welcome Back BBQ winners:

First place haiku:
By: Kathryn Silva
While I sit in class,
I begin to lose focus.
Curse you, Zuckerberg.

Second place haiku:
By: Nathan Wesche
Look up at the sky
The sun, the moon, and the stars
Handiwork, not chance.

First place poem:
By: Kelsi (Padaokoula) Moua
I’m a girl
Far from home
It’s the first time
That I’m alone

When I arrived
felt so scared
But I’m surprised
That it’s not weird

Seminar games
The Amazing Race
Learned new names
But got last place

Delmar Loop
The Amazing Race
Learned new names
But got last place

Made new pals
Met the staff
Guys and gals
Smiles and laughs

I’m a girl
Far from home
But I know now
I’m not alone
Oil
By Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee, Peter Ho, Crystal Naes, Susan To and Kierstyn Fornoff

The sun glistens in the sky
The warmth touches my skin
As I splash in the oil
That goes up to my chin

"Over there!" I see a blackbird
But the bird is a swan
Who is also drowning in oil
Along with a fawn.

The ocean is a black monster
Destroying everything in sight
It will swallow you whole
with all of its might.

I shouted out,
"save me save me!"
and then I heard
the swan reaching his neck to me
It gives me a peck on my skin
And pushes me towards land
But it is to of no avail
We soon realize well never reach sand.

To Give Meaning
By: Natalie Brooks

To live life
Does not mean to be living
To give love
Does not mean to be loving
To have forgiveness
Does not mean to have forgotten
But above all
To have hate in one’s heart
Does not allow you to live and fulfill your part
Stinky Skunk
By: Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

Did you know that Skunks did NOT used to be stinky?

A long long time ago when the earth was created, God made one of each kind of animal. All the animals got along very well except one, and his name was Skunk. All animals didn’t like him because he would pull pranks on them. For example, Skunk would hide the food on top of the high tree so that giraffe would stretch his neck to reach for the food. That is why giraffes today have long necks. Another prank that Skunk did was making scary noises when the rabbit was sleeping. The rabbit was a very light sleeper, so she woke up several times a night and did not sleep much. She was so scared that even during the day she would listen carefully to random noises. That is why rabbits today have red eyes and long ears. Lastly, lion used to have hair all over the body but while he was sleeping, skunk shaved all the hair except around the head. That is why lions today have manes.

Because of all the mean pranks that Skunk pulled on the animals, they decided to pull a prank on him. They noticed that Skunk liked to be clean all the time, so they hid the soap. When the Skunk came back home to take a shower, he couldn’t find his soap. He looked everywhere for his soap, but other animals hid it where he could never find it. Skunk didn’t take a shower since he didn’t have his soap, and that is why skunks today are very stinky.

I am an Animal
By: Kushbu Patel

I am a monkey
Brown as a teddy bear
I eat bananas
I like to climb on trees
I can entertain people
I make people happy
I am a monkey
You are Amazing
By: Stephanie O’Brennan

You are amazing,
And I can't stop gazing.

You're gorgeous from head to toe,
And your personality tends to glow.

In your arms is where I want to be--
So no harm can be done to me.

You can make my smile arise--
Yet can bring tears to my eyes.

You're irresistible, it's true--
That’s why I love you.

I'll wait for you,
Because my feelings are true.

And I hope one day you'll see,
Just what you do to me.

Put the thoughts of my past away,
And give me the chance that may--
Turn into something great.
Who knows, we might be soul mates.

Angelic Wings
By: Suong Nguyen

Wings in heaven lay
In solar disarray

Gracing light and air above
Letting floral petals fall below

Fluttering, dancing
Like the first snow of winter

Flapping on the backs of saints
Flying on the white winds
Savoring the taste of pure divinity
“Okay, funniest thing ever; I got my mom to make a profile on eHarmony!” I tell my best friend Lilly.

“No way!” she responds, sharing my excitement. “Your mom is actually looking for a boyfriend... and on the internet of all places?”

We both share a laugh, “Oh wait, it gets better. This was actually like two weeks ago; she just made me promise not to tell anyone. But apparently, she really likes the guy they matched her profile with, and he’s taking her on a date!”

Lilly’s mouth opens as her jaw drops. “Okay, at first I believed you. But now, I know you’re lying,” she says to me, showing clear doubt.

“No, I’m serious, for real,” I assure her. “Wait… Lilly you should come over tonight! He’s coming to pick mom up, and we should both meet him. You know, give him the drill,” I suggest extremely excited.

Lilly and I make plans to meet at my house at seven, and Tommy (my super gorgeous boyfriend) comes over to my locker and walks me to class. I don’t tell him about the eHarmony hookup; he wouldn’t share my thrill.

I can’t wait to meet my mom’s new hottie. The second hand on the clock, the teachers’ lectures, the ride home, the TV shows; they all happen in slow motion as I impatiently anticipate tonight’s event.

Seven o’clock is finally here, and Lilly and I are in my room talking. Mom is still getting dressed, and as soon as we hear the door open, Lilly and I sprint to her bedroom.

“Wow, Ms. Keyes!”

“Whoa Mom, you look hot!!”

We both stare at Mom as she nervously smiles at us. She has on a red dress with matching heals and her legs look long and amazing. Her hair is hanging in big curls and she’s wearing makeup. “Ms. Keyes you look like you’re twenty one,” Lilly comments impressed with Mom’s hottie transformation.

“Yeah, you have a nice butt,” I add with a giggle.

“Thanks girls, so you really like it? I had to rush because he changed the time from 8:00 to 7:30,” she says, looking in the mirror and adjusting her hair. I think that it’s so cute how nervous she is, like a teen all over again.
Within twenty minutes, the doorbell rings, and Lilly and I race to answer it. Swinging it open without asking who’s there, I am staring at a face that looks oh-too familiar.

“Mr. Roberts?”

That’s all I can say as confusion, disappointment, and embarrassment all drowned my face.

“Hey Ashley, this is… your house?” he asks, just as confused and shocked as I am. My mom comes down the stairs smiling, and then she notices the look on Mr. Robert’s and my face.

“What’s wrong?” she asks, not directing the question to either of us in particular. “Mom, this is Mr. Roberts, my boyfriend’s DAD!”

“Oh snaps,” Lilly comments, the first words she’s said since we opened the door.

The next few minutes are a blur to me; Mom laughs and says something about it being a weird coincidence; they leave for their date, and I’m in my room listening to Lilly’s replay of the night.

“I can’t believe your mom is dating your boyfriend’s dad! That is so weird. And who would have thought that they would be a perfect match on eHarmony... of all the people in the world. So are you guys going to go on double dates? If they get married, will Tommy be your step-brother and boyfriend?” Lilly goes on and on, feeling my pain, but laughing at the situation too.

“Lilly I just want to go to sleep; call it an early night, alright?”

She gets the idea, and we both lay down. I fall asleep, escaping from this nightmare of reality. Lilly’s mom comes and picks her up around nine. Hopefully, Mom and Mr. Robert’s date didn’t go too well. And to think, I’m the one that talked her into making a stupid profile on eHarmony.

**Domestic**

By: Maryanne Lee

I flame an ice, I sweeten food with salt
I stir with a knife, I fry with a spoon.
I chop with a fork, I put milk in a bowl,
I mop with a pillow, I clean with a silk cloth.

Whenever I lend a hand to cook
Or reach for a towel or sponge
They all scream NO.
Why doesn’t anyone trust me in the kitchen?

They never cherish my efforts.
The Invention of Pot Stickers
By: Robyn Lowe

Once upon a time there was a man named Wonton, who was a chef for the Emperor of China during the Song dynasty. Wonton wasn’t well-liked, because his food was often too bland or too overcooked for anyone to really enjoy. The Emperor, however, was a kind man and allowed Wonton to continue working for him even though his work was mediocre at best.

One day, Wonton decided to impress the Emperor by creating the most fabulous wonton soup ever. He told the Emperor that he would have this soup ready for him to enjoy in only 30 minutes. Surprised and amused by Wonton’s ambition, the Emperor sat down and waited patiently for Wonton’s offerings.

Wonton started by creating the filling for his dumplings. He mixed some soy sauce, pork, and whatever else he could find. He then started wrapping the dumplings in a different style than the other chefs so that his soup could be set apart from the others’. He crimped the edges of the dumplings together to make the dumpling look fancier than normal. Satisfied with his work, he then started to cook his dumplings.

Wonton greased the bottom of a cooking pan and started to place his strange looking dumplings in an orderly fashion around the pan. Then he added some water to the pan for his soup, and then covered it so that it would boil faster. To save some time later, Wonton started to clean up the kitchen and wash some dishes. However, since Wonton wasn’t the greatest chef, he didn’t realize that he didn’t add enough water. The water soon reached a boil and started evaporating from the pan.

When Wonton was finished cleaning, he checked on his pot of dumplings to make sure they were cooking well. By this time though, all the water was evaporated from the pan. The casing on the dumplings look shriveled and a crust formed at the bottom of the dumplings. With only 5 minutes until his promised time, Wonton fought back tears and started to try to plate his ugly creation. When he tried to pick up the dumplings, they stuck to the bottom of the pan. Frustrated and angry, Wonton flipped the pan upside down over the plate and banged on the bottom of it. The dumplings fell out and revealed their crusty bottoms.

Even though he knew he messed up, Wonton gave the dumplings to the Emperor anyway. The Emperor was weary of the creation, but took a bite anyway. They were delicious! The Emperor ate the entire plate of dumplings and asked Wonton to make more for everyone to enjoy. Wonton’s dumplings were then called pot stickers, and soon became one of China’s signature dishes.

Come Back
By: Benazira Mustafic

My soul is crying tonight
Please come and hug me one more time
I just want to cry
If you only knew how much I love you
I endlessly pray for your return
Bring back to shine in my eyes,
So I don’t feel the pain in these cold November nights.
Sensational
By: Zach Moser

As I started to go blind,
I trusted you to be my eyes.
Though I couldn't see you by my side,
I had faith that you were mine.

And when I could no longer taste your kiss,
From tasting over and over,
I threw my arm over your shoulder,
And chalked it up to bliss.

Soon the smell of sweet red roses,
Was indistinguishable from dirt.
I so wrongly trusted your nose,
To smell the rat that was bound to hurt.

Finally my ears were clogged,
Like Highway 40 in rush hour.
Months upon months I logged,
Living off your loving power.

Then came the days,
When I could no longer feel you.
I thought I had lost that sense as well.
Soon I realized that the haze
I felt was untrue.
You had left me long ago,
and only now could I tell.

When you left, my sight returned,
And by the light my eyes were burned!
Then the hearing in these ears began clearing.
Just in time to hear your lies.
And on my lips appeared a stranger sense;
That I was due my recompense.
The fowl stench of rotten egg
Inflamed my nostrils once again.
Proof that all the times you begged
Me to stay were nothing but your sin.
Washing Away the Fear
By: Crystal Naes

Listen to the rain pounding down on us like heavenly tears.
Let the sound continue like a peaceful song.
The rain can comfort us and suppress our fears.

Listen closely, and be thankful you have ears.
But we blast our disgusting music louder; such a horrible song.
Listen to the rain pounding down on us like heavenly tears.

Listen to the thunder as the storm nears.
Like a powerful father, angry and strong.
The rain can comfort us and suppress our fears.

The earth is so peaceful after it clears.
The horrors of life will be back before long.
Listen to the rain pounding down on us like heavenly tears.

All of the sin throughout the years,
What if everything we do is wrong?
The rain can comfort us and suppress our fears.

When that special being appears,
Oh, that is scary thought! But for now, we can
Listen to the rain pounding down on us like heavenly tears.
The rain can comfort us and suppress our fears.

-Untitled limerick –
By: Dhruvi Patel

With a jump and a bounce and a leap
I know I went ever too deep
I let out a bit shout
Someone please let me out
I then hope and I pray with a weep

Haiku
By: Dina Saakova
Yellow, white, green stem
for support. Daisy drinks water,
eats rays from the sun.
It was coming down to the end of my adolescence. I had to start making decisions for myself, and the biggest decision I needed to make was what I was going to do with the rest of my life. I had no idea what I wanted to do, and I was graduating from high school in a month. My parents were nagging at me to figure it out, and I hated when they did that, but I knew that they were right and were just trying to help me get on the right path. I just had to find something that I would really like to do, so I started looking around and started searching my brain to find out what I would be good at.

I started off thinking about maybe going into the army, but that idea flew out as fast as it flew in, because I was scared of the dark; how was I supposed to be a soldier. So then I started to think of more practical 9-5 kind of jobs. Maybe an office job, but then I thought about how boring that would be, and I threw that idea out too. Then, something clicked; I love to eat and I love food in every way. Thus I was decided I was going to be a cook. So I started researching places that I could train to become the best cook around. I stumbled upon an ad for Le Cordon Bleu. It was a college just for the culinary arts, and it was close to my home town. I thought that it would be perfect and set up a visit.

When I went to visit the college, I fell in love with the atmosphere as soon as I walked in. The people were friendly, the school was specialized in just my field, and they all got to wear the awesome chef outfits. My mom came with me and she was very excited that I had found a place to continue my education, and she was glad that it would be close to home. I was an only child, and I was her only baby, so she was a little overprotective, but I didn’t mind because I got along so well with my parents. So it was decided; I was going to Le Cordon Bleu, and I was going to be a successful chef. I could commute from home, where I loved to be, and I could do what I loved to do; it was going to be perfect.

In the fall of that year, I started my first classes at the college, and they were okay, just a little boring since I had to take a few nutrition and basic classes about food. But then I got to start my first cooking class in the spring semester, and I was in love with everything about cooking. I was succeeding in all of my classes, and I was so proud of myself. I felt like I was on top of the world when I got the worst news of my life.

An officer was waiting at my house when I got home from my Tuesday night cooking class. He told me that my parents were driving home together from going out to eat with a few friends when they were struck head on by a drunk driver. They were both killed instantly. I didn’t know what to do. My knees felt weak and my legs just collapsed, and I was on the ground bent over my legs in sobs. I could not believe what happened. My life was forever changed.

Hours went by and people I hadn’t seen in ages were visiting and asking what they could do to help. My life was going by in slow motion. Being an only child with only a few distant relatives that I only visited for holidays every other year, I had no one to turn to; I had nothing left to my life. The funeral came and went just as the people did. I couldn’t bare being in my house because everywhere I turned I saw my parents. I had to find a new place to live; I had to sell everything that reminded me of them. So I found a small apartment that was just big enough for me, and I had an estate sale and only kept my things and a few things of my mom and dad and sold the rest. I had become a cold person, without feelings, without smiles, without laughter, without anyone to love.
Three months later, it was summer, and I had to find a job in order to keep myself busy. I had a few friends from school that I spent some time with, and I made sure to fill the rest of my time with work. I couldn’t stand to be alone, and yet that’s what I was. I had to find help; I knew that. One of my friends recommended a psychiatrist, and I gave her a call and made an appointment. She was a little older and nice with short brown hair and glasses, kind of like my mom. It was hard to talk at first and I really didn’t know what to say, but after a few weeks of sessions, I found it easy to talk to her about anything and everything even my parents. She was the one person that I had that didn’t make me feel like I was alone. She helped me to see my place in nature.

We continued our sessions through the rest of summer, and she made flexible hours for me to meet with her during school. I felt as though I was getting back into the groove of school, and I started to feel happy again. It was as if I was back to being myself, and I was glad.

Then the day came; it had been one year since I lost my parents, and it was the first time that I decided to go to visit my parents’ graves since the funeral. My psychiatrist thought that it would help me to have closure and have a final goodbye, so I could really move on. It was a cold day, the ground was wet, and the sky was gray. I walked through the graveyard to their graves. Once I saw their graves, a rush of sadness filled me, and then I felt something I hadn’t felt in a year, a tear. It ran down my cheek and I finally let go and let myself cry.

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**Pandora’s Box**  
By: Jerrica Rucker

For so long  
My heart was sealed  
Keeping my feelings safe from  
The world  
So dumb was I  
To open my Pandora’s box  
Releasing my emotions  
Hurt by the damage done  
Not by my emotions  
But by heartless love  
& now I reap my consequences  
But like Pandora’s box  
There’s still hope left  
In the pit of my heart  
I find a reason to smile  
I find the ability to laugh  
I find the strength to love again…

**Confidence**  
By: Chang Lee

When you say hi  
I think oh my  
When you walk towards me  
I want to flee  
I get butterflies in my stomach  
My confidence is always a lack  
I don’t know what to say  
I wish I can man up and say hey

**Family**  
By: Roshani Patel

Moms and Dads  
Brothers and Sisters  
Aunts and uncles  
Families are forever
Becky and Her Dog
By: Samantha Pinkley

Becky’s dog had died three months ago in a freak delivery car accident, but still thinking about her faithful Sparky always upset her. Sparky had been Becky’s dog since childhood and her parents didn’t blink an eye when she requested that Sparky live with her while she was away at college. She had to search high and low for an apartment that would allow for a dog to live there, and had to shell out a lot of money, but it was all worth it for Sparky. Her lease had ended the week after Sparky’s death, so Becky had moved to a cheaper apartment where dogs weren’t allowed. It was still hard to see other pet owners with their pets so soon after her beloved pet’s death.

While walking home from school one night, Becky kept hearing someone behind her. It was really scaring her, so she started to walk faster and faster and pulled her mace out of her pocket. She looked behind her, but no one was there. She was only a block away from her apartment building when she heard a low whining noise. She glanced over her shoulder, just to see a stray mutt behind her. Becky, being the ardent animal lover she was, turned around and squatted down to the dog’s level.

“Hey, boy,” she said. “Come here.”

The dog jumped on top of her and started licking her face. Becky smiled to herself. This was the first dog that didn’t make her feel like she missed Sparky. Becky knew she wanted this dog. He was completely opposite to Sparky. Sparky was a purebred Chihuahua, and this was a mutt off the streets. Sparky could do all sorts of tricks, and this mutt acted like he wouldn’t know how to do any sort of trick. Still, he was the perfect dog for Becky.

Becky’s happy thoughts all disappeared at once. Her new apartment wouldn’t allow her to have dogs. What was she going to do? For a brief moment, she seriously considered stuffing the dog in her backpack, but realized he wouldn’t fit. Becky wanted to cry. The moment she found the perfect animal she couldn’t even keep it. Becky pulled out her cell phone and began to scroll through her address book. She texted a few of her friends, but only one replied to her text. She called Adam, one of her friends from school, and explained her situation to him. He readily agreed to take the dog in for a while, until she decided what exactly to do with her dog. Becky was so happy and told him she would take him out to thank him. Adam agreed; secretly he really like Becky.

Becky was just happy that she was going to have a dog again and maybe even get a boyfriend.

Sisters
By: Maddie Normansell

Always there for me
When I need to laugh or cry
It’s my best friend Beth
Your Achilles
By: B. J. Byland

An ice cube drips slowly on the coffee table
Water leaving a small puddle growing from the center
Sinking into the polished wood
Destroying everything that was paid for
The sun’s rays move across the room
No blinds blocking the penetration
Running across the carpet
Sun and ice race through the day
Time diminishing both
Who wins?
Ice melts and then water evaporates
Leaving a mark that can never be erased
Sun crawls across the floor
To only be reborn the next day

Boulochers
By: Ashley Benain

They come in many colors, they vary in size a lot.
Some have different side effects, you may sit on the pot!
Some will cure in one hour, some it takes a few days.
Most of the time they help you, some will put you in a haze!
I prefer the pink ones, they taste like bubblegum.
Others prefer the white ones, and sit on their bum bum.
Their shapes are very different, triangles, squares, and circles galore.
I wish they were more exciting, because taking them is a bore!
Their milligrams vary in strength.
The higher the number, the stronger it may be.
Some people do not understand this, and end up going crazy!
Some of these objects can be very expensive, and some people don’t understand.
But I do advise you this,
GET A GOOD INSURANCE PLAN!!

Sunrise
By: Stephanie Hand

Red, orange, yellow
Light up the morning sky, a
Sunrise so perfect
The Bouncy Beagle
By: Kristin Hagan

The Bouncy Beagle loves to play.
He rolls in the grass and jumps in the hay.
His cute little ears flap as he goes.
Sniff. Sniff. Sniff. He follows his nose.

The Bouncy Beagle loves to run.
He romps and frolics in the sun.
His fur is so soft, just like jelly.

The Bouncy Beagle loves to eat.
Bone shaped biscuits are his favorite treat.
His big, brown eyes you have to adore.
Arf. Arf. Arf. He begs for more.

The Bouncy Beagle loves to bark.
He spots a rabbit in the park.
His head up high, he howls real loud.
Woof. Woof. Woof. He draws a crowd.

The Bouncy Beagle loves to fetch.
Thrown a toy, he will surely catch.
His fast little feet jump way up high.
Squeak. Squeak. Squeak. What a funny guy!

The Bouncy Beagle loves to chew.
Oh, no, not that! He has dad’s shoe.
His sharp little teeth, you can probably guess.
Rip. Rip. Rip. They make quite a mess.

The Bouncy Beagle loves to cuddle.
It turns my heart into a puddle.
He melts in my arms without a peep.
Shh. Shh. Shh. He is fast asleep.
Halloween
By: Stephanie Chen

The small hand strikes seven.
It’s time to depart into the dark.
The night’s still young.
We begin the fun.

Leaves crunch beneath our feet
As we take all the shortcuts,
Stepping across front lawns
We march to front doors.

We ninjas, princesses, and monsters,
Crowd around the dimly lit entrances.
Then one little ninja rings the doorbell,
And we wait for the big people.

The big people open their doors for us,
They carry a bucket of goodies.
We hold out our raggedy pillow cases
And look innocent with our young faces.

It’s a contest for us,
Whoever gets the most.
That kid has the right to boast.
We compare our pillow cases
Then we’ll count out and sort
Candy like we’re playing a sport.

The Monster Beneath Our Beds
By: Susan To

Underneath all our beds it lies
Waiting for us to fall asleep
So that no one would hear its cry
When it gets ready to leap

Our fear makes it grow stronger
It feeds off our guilt
It will not go away until we no longer
Keep our lies beneath our quilts

We are the ones that put it there
The monster beneath our beds
And it will not go away until we share
What is really inside our heads

For fear comes from the guilt within our soul
And it will eventually swallow us whole

Haikus
By: Crystal Powell

Sunny but cold out
Winter, snow, I hate the cold
Black ice, wrecked my car

The thunder crashes!
And the windows shake a lot
Loud bang like a bomb
Society of Apothecaries and Dreamers
Rest for the Ancients
By: Teresa Nadolski, Joel Henneberry, Xing Yang

There in the snow swept plain
White enthroned sweeping valley
There in the chambers laid
The son of earth

There in the sweltered heat
The sweet dream floating
The light summers-dress
The daughter of the sun

Sealing crest and wax melted solid
The flight of the written word;
Adorned in curls traversed the world
And bound their love together

There under the moon-lit sky
Darkness was shattered by rays of white
Letter in hand with thoughts softly humming
Son of earth waited and hoped

Before I Die
By: Saba Aziz

I want to climb Mount Everest
Definitely before I die.
I want to win a hot dog-eating contest,
Surely before I die.
I want to sky dive from a plane
Certainly before I die.
I want to accurately locate the hepatic portal vein,
Unquestionably before I die.
I want to discover a new element,
Absolutely before I die.
I want to be able to set up my own camping tent,
Undeniably before I die.
I want to live a wonderful life,
Of course, before I die.
Home Sweet Broken Home
By: Bre Dunsworth

For as long as I can remember, I have lived in the same location and I have grown very accustomed to its surroundings. I was born in a nest that my mother built in a window sill at the top of a building. It is in a little hole in the siding tucked in the corner by the window to keep us safe from the wind and other damaging weather. My mother found it vacant one day and decided to call it “home.” Because there are not many trees around this area, my mother always tells me tales of how she had to search so hard for the perfect place to raise her family. Luckily, she stumbled upon the little hole and it turned out to be quite perfect. There are a lot of other tall buildings like ours around us and there are always people and cars in the streets. It can be really noisy. A lot of cars drive by with flashing lights on top and make the most obnoxious noises. Sometimes my friends and I try and chase them. They are always going so fast, so we rarely catch them. This hectic scenery doesn’t always allow me to get the beauty rest I need each night.

In the morning after a good night’s rest, I love to play with my other bird friends. We love to fly around and play tag. Our favorite spot to play is right by my nest. As my friends and I wake up, we get so excited for the great day ahead. I always yell to tell all my friends to come over right when I get up. I don’t want to brag or anything but I would definitely have to say that I can yell the loudest. My friends and I have different calls that we do to communicate with each other. Recently when I have been calling my friends as the sun starts to rise, a loud banging noise comes from the window by my nest. At first it really frightened me, but I’ve gotten more used to it now. I told my friends about this and now we all yell and scream to try and get the loud noise to start. As soon as the banging starts, we all yell and fly away and laugh. But we are only gone for a short while to get our breath back. When our laughing fit is over, we head back to my sill to try again for the loud noise to come from inside the window. We had gotten really good at it, but then it happened.

After a great game of hide and seek with my friends, I flew back to my nest to relax and take a nap. I got to my sill and went to the hole, but my nest was gone! I didn’t know if it had to do with the mysterious noise or not, but my nest was no longer tucked in the corner of the window sill. I searched all the windows on the building thinking maybe someone had stolen it, but I could not find it anywhere. I quickly chirped our emergency call and my friends immediately appeared, instantly worried by my alert. I explained the crisis at hand and at once everyone split up to widen the search. Within minutes, I was called down to a bush directly below my window. There, in the middle of the bush was my nest…upside down! Little sticks and straw from my nest surrounded the location. I could not believe my luck. Why would this terrible thing happen to little innocent me? I guess all I can do now is build a new nest on a different window sill now. There is no way I would rebuild it in my hole because what if it was knocked to the ground again? What a pain. I will really miss the hole I grew up in. Hopefully that loud noise will be at the new location of my nest so my friends and I can still play our game.
**Stalactite Searching Club**  
By: Kristin Hagan, Mike Feller, Mitual Gandhi, Bre Dunsworth, Joseph Kang

All I can say is that I had a bad feeling about this “cool cave” from the start. Yes, I know I signed up for a day of spelunking. I’ve been known to spend an exciting day or two slithering through caves on my belly as my headlamp spotlights those little cave dweller bats hovering overhead. Cave geology fascinates me, and that’s why I jumped at a chance to spend a Saturday exploring some “breathtaking” Missouri caves with a group of self-described seasoned spelunkers like myself. Only when I arrived at the designated meeting area with gear in hand, did I realize that these “seasoned” cave aficionados were a dedicated bunch of carefree college students more interested in finding adventure than stalactites. Prior to my arrival, they had decided to cast caution to the wind and explore an unregistered cave that looked really cool. I should have known better, but their enthusiastic peer pressure overtook my good sense and that’s how I found myself knee deep in this heap of underground trouble.

So much for a relaxing day of admiring the fantastic types of stalactites in these renowned Missouri caves; instead I’m going to have to spend the entire day patrolling these college kids to make sure nobody gets hurt. I guess that’s what I get for trying to start a stalactite searching club. The name implies the basic goal of the club, but clearly this group of five college students does not know how to read or were just too slow to understand what the name meant. Oh well, I remember when I was a carefree college student; maybe I can show this group just how fascinating stalactites can be.

“Hey Jerry, want a beer?” asked the ring leader of the group, Paul. I thought to myself, a beer already, it’s only 10:00 o’clock in the morning.

“Ha-ha, Paul, you know that it’s not even 12 o’clock yet, and by the way it isn’t smart to drink before you go crawling through caves,” I responded.

“It’s only one beer; it’s not gonna hurt you, but more for me if you don’t want one.”

Paul reminded me of myself when I was that age, always looking for the next party. All types of memories of my college days rushed back to me, but those days are long gone. Now I’m a 65 year old retired teacher who spends his free time examining caves. I thought though, wouldn’t it be nice to just change up the routine a little bit and enjoy the time I have with these crazy kids, but then my common sense came back to me, and I knew that going into an unmarked cave was already a bad move and to add alcohol on top of that could become disastrous.

Jerry shot Paul another look. Paul gave in. He took the beer out of Jerry’s hand and took a long swig. I really didn’t want to seem like the uncool tour guide so I didn’t say anything. I figured these kids are probably heavy weights so one beer won’t do anything. Paul passed the bottle to Jerry, but Jerry simply waved it off because out of thin air he produced another Budweiser.

I decided it was probably a good time to head to the cave before the group was too drunk to walk. The sooner into the cave, the less likely they’d be sloshed. I told them to leave the beer in their cars. It would be more fun afterwards anyway. Kind of like a celebration, I explained to them. Reluctantly, the kids rounded all the beer in the car, but not before everyone shotgunned a last one together. I rolled my eyes at the absurdity of drinking before exploring a cave, but I waited patiently. Eventually, they all gathered towards me and I gave a brief discussion about safety and precautions, and they all attentively listened to my little speech. I handed out gear to everyone
Heading towards the “cool cave” the kids wanted to explore, they began asking me questions about how long I had been doing this and about past stories. As we neared closer to the cave, I began to tell a tale about how a couple years back, I had led a little expedition like this one with several college kids. I told how we had been in the cave for a little while when this strange noise started coming from several caverns away. Some of the kids got nervous and really wanted to leave, but the others wanted to follow the noise and see where it was coming from. Because the majority wanted to explore, we headed towards where we thought the noise was coming from. I told them how we thought they were bats, but instead had turned out to be another group of cave “dwellers.” This other group was not like my past group of college kids, but they were in their mid-30s and were not exploring for fascination. I told the group how we were caught by them, and had become hostages. I explained how in the end, the past group of college kids did not pay attention to me and ended up in the mercy of the thugs. I told them I had escaped because I had past experiences in caves, and if the college kids would have listened to my advice about cave danger, maybe they would be alive today. Paul and the group were shocked and amazed. The deaths did not scare them, but instead they all wondered why the thugs in the story would be in a cave if it wasn’t for fun. I sighed, knowing that was all they came for too. They would soon learn that they should have heeded some caution before entering an unregistered cave. As Paul and Jerry were laughing about, I pushed Jerry off a cliff without any safety gear on. From the collapsing thud of Jerry’s body, the group gasped and they wondered how he tripped. They would never learn. I wouldn’t be the one to ruin the party, but I would sure be the one to teach them the lesson. One by one, I picked off each member. With everyone gone, I set out for my way out of the cave in search to find a better cave spelunking group.

Race
By: Keelan Gopal

Off to the races he went
Taking that car that he knew
Was the one that he lent
From his friend. It was brand new
Without a single scratch
I took it out for a drive
Wow this car is a catch
This car makes you feel alive
I took the turn really fast
Hoping that I wouldn’t crash
I have to make sure this car will last
So my friend won’t bash
Me in the head for wrecking his car
While we’re out for drinks at the local bar
“The Diet”  
By: Mallory Howell

I tried to stick to what she said was right  
A squash, a pear, oh how I tried to plan  
But once I saw a cake or even a jam,  
to calories I’d go with every bite.  
Who thinks of things as bad as a diet?  
Do not eat pizza, nothing from a can  
This low fat food is no more than a scam.  
Its been a month, I know my pants are tight,  
But you should know that I work hard for this,  
My friend said it would surely help my size.  
I’m not yet thin but you cannot dismiss,  
A real reduction hap’ning in my thighs.  
If you look and close just one of your eyes,  
You’ll see my diet may not be lies.

The Rose Bush  
By: Zach Moser

The rose, it wilts and then regrows.  
Why it does, God only knows.  
While on the Bush one flower may die,  
Next to the new that catches your eye.  
Though the beauty of the first has past,  
It will never outshine the last.

Rain: A Vilanelle  
By: Kierstyn Fornoff

The rain is coming down,  
It pounds the ground like thunder,  
The lightning in the sky makes a crown.  
Should we not go to town?  
Is what I sit and wonder.

The rain is coming down,  
It is such a beautiful wonder,  
The lightning in the sky makes a crown,  
Putting upon my face a frown,  
Oh my, oh my, here comes the thunder.

The rain is coming down,  
I will soon be under,  
The lightning in the sky makes a crown,  
I decide not to go to town,  
So now from civilization I shall be sunder.

The rain is coming down,  
The lightning in the sky makes a crown.

Words  
By: Samantha Pinkley

Words look funny the longer you look  
You know it’s right but you still have to look  
At how awkward the word looks right on the page  
The word the word the word  
This word already looks like its spelled wrong  
Poor word you didn’t do anything wrong  
Word word word word  
Why do you look so messed up on here?  
This can’t be how you spell word  
The word looks funny  
You can’t be right word word word
Grades
By: Kinjal Patel

As I sit thinking about school, I wonder
If I will ever get the grade “A” in a class.
Even though I get a “C” on an exam, I feel like I
Learned a lot, but everyone around me did a lot better.
Why does it have to be about a grade I receive?
And not what I learned from a course.
“You know what, grade A, I don’t care about you anymore.”

Pharmacy School
By: Erin Frevert

Finals are quickly approaching
It’s time to focus and study
These tests will be hard
I hope my grades won’t be cruddy

There is so much information to learn
I don’t know where to start
With such difficult information to know
Too bad my major wasn’t art

I need to do well in all my classes
To graduate with a degree
Because if I do poor and fail out
My parents will be angry with me
**Anatomy Slide**  
By: Crystal Naes  

What is this?  
It is making me angry.  
It is just a blob.  
How am I supposed to identify this?  
This is ridiculous.  
I am so angry.  
Why do I have to do this?  
It’s not that hard, but I keep getting them mixed up.  
Is this thin or thick epidermis?  
I feel buried and hopeless.  
When I get done with anatomy I’ll be so glad.  
But I know this slide will come back to haunt me.  
Boy. I should have paid attention during lab.

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**Chemistry**  
By: Malory Toebben  

Oh why do you make me study so long  
With much reading, making me want to sleep  
I try to stay awake with a new song  
But the words on the page become a heap.

Why can’t you be easy like the old days  
When I could look once and understand you  
But you have become like an unsolved maze  
Having your map would be a dream come true

For tomorrow I know it is too late  
Your final test will be placed in my hands  
At least I will know my name and the date  
Please just take it easy on your commands

Wish me luck and hopefully in the end  
You will understand why we can’t be friends
**Pharmacists**
By: Sonalie Patel

Being a pharmacist is a stressful job.
Sometimes the pharmacy is filled with a mob.
Pharmacists are always on their feet,
And they never have time for a seat.
They are always go, go, go,
And they can never tell a patient no, no, no.
Pharmacists need to have good communication skills.
Reading a prescription wrong can end in a kill.
Even though pharmacists are happy,
The patients are usually very snappy
It just takes a lot of patience,
And you always have to be gracious.

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**I Am a Pharmacist**
By: Boski Patel

I am a pharmacist
I listen to all of your complaints
I deal with insurance companies who don’t want to pay
I call doctors who need to improve their penmanship
I am a pharmacist

I endure eight hours of standing on my feet
I take the risk of getting robbed
I am expected to give speedy service like McDonald’s
I am the one you go to when you have questions that are answered on the bottle
I am a pharmacist

I protect my technicians from rude patients
I have to explain to patients that they cannot refill their Adderall within ten days
I am scolded by patients who need their compound medications filled within minutes, and yet
I am eager to help with a smile on my face
I am a pharmacist
Cosmo
By: Ashley Benain

“Easy, fun ways to fall more in love with your man!”
Are they giving me a plan?
“Make everyone wish they were you!”
Of course they do, I can speak Hebrew!
Ads on magazines make me excited.
It’s funny to watch women be so blinded!
The articles have funny headlines,
They make it sound possible to shrink your hipline!
All of these are fallacies.
Because if they were true,
I would definitely be a size two!
“What his texts really mean…”
I have been trying to figure this out since I was sixteen!
Cosmopolitan tries to give good advice,
However, they need to be more precise!

The Night Things Changed
By: Faith Slaton

The moon was high; no sun visible while everyone was securely asleep.
In the eerie night, sirens pierced the night; the phone rang with a seemingly quick pace.

Awake from slumber, vision still blurred, trying to make out the moment,
Her heart was hastened, perspiration forming under her skin.
Thoughts darting through her mind, consuming the thoughts and fears she had.

She paced to and fro, hands sweating, palms flinched.
Rage running up and down her spine; her became body heavy and strained.

Ordered to go into the room of death, she quickened her steps.
Objects spinning, head aching, she entered.

Grasping the pale and fragile limb of her offspring, her eyes encompassed with tears.
The last breath of her daughter was dreadful, for she could not sustain the accident.

Loneliness and despair flooded her mind. Too quick, too soon, and overwhelming.
The vision of the driver was blurred, for he couldn’t walk a straight line.
His decision ruined lives and it was the night things changed forever.
If the drunk wouldn’t have lost control, she’d still be here.
**Nightmare**  
By: Brett Lancaster

There once was a girl  
On Halloween night  
She thought she’d joke around  
And give people a fright  
She threw eggs at houses  
And stole candy from kids  
When the night was over  
She was proud of what she did  
The girl should have remembered  
What karma could do  
The leaves outside rustled  
As she lay down on her bed  
Something felt strange  
Like she could sense the dead  
The door opened  
The girl wondered aloud:  
“Who’s there?”  
“Are you really that proud?”  
A shrill voice replied  
Then the girl screamed  
Oh, how she cried!  
No one ever saw her again…

**Recipe**  
By: Mallory Howell

Two witches gather for the night to begin  
Two naked pillows they’ve left at home  
Three Ghouls meet them in the street  
Five monsters together continue to walk  
Excitement is added as closer to their target they draw  
One knock, three giggles and anticipation  
One Trick o’treat from each monster  
Candy and sugar are dropped into the pillow’s clothes  
One night making a fierce profit  
Tomorrow subtracts two witches and three Ghouls  
Leaving five ordinary children with a sugary buzz.
I was driving to STLCOP on Wednesday, and noticed a tree lying in the middle of the road. I widened my eyes in disbelief realizing it must’ve landed there due to the bad storm that had hit recently the other day. The streets in general were a mess, causing me to be late to class. I was very frustrated by this, especially since my Physiology teacher, Dr. Gopalan, had scheduled an online timed pop quiz for my 8 am class. I showed up to class literally when there were only 2 minutes remaining on the quiz, and she told me to go ahead and finish the quiz with the remaining time. I thanked her, but was really thinking that it was unfair to not be able to take the quiz with the full time seeing as how I had a legitimate excuse. I just sighed and reminded myself that we would be able to drop a certain number of quizzes, and that the quizzes individually weren’t worth that much anyway.

The day went by really slow, and I was just anticipating the moment my last class would end so I would be able to go to Wal-Mart with my friend to do some grocery shopping. Finally class was over, so my friend and I hurried to her car and we drove to Wal-Mart. It wasn’t too crowded surprisingly enough. We were quite thankful for this as we would be able to do our shopping more quickly. It was raining hard outside on our way there and still was but we hadn’t thought much of it, and were just glad there was an umbrella in the car.

After about half an hour, sirens suddenly went off. We looked at each other with nervous eyes, realizing it was the alarm for a storm. I widened my eyes as the realization had hit me: a massive storm was scheduled for today, which my Mother had informed me of via email. I typically disregard my Mom’s emails as she tends to bombard me with them. I take about a second to read them, and usually forget about them instantaneously. This time around, I was really regretting not having paid attention to my Mom’s potentially helpful email. I then also understood why the store was practically deserted. The news of the possible storm clearly got to everyone else. It would have successfully reached me if I hadn’t failed to carefully read my Mom’s email.

We saw the Wal-Mart manager who hurried over to us quickly. He told us that everyone would have to gather in the basement. My friend and I followed him along with the few customers and cashiers who were also in the store. We got to the basement finally. My friend said with a worried voice, “We’re gonna be stuck here forever! What are we gonna do about food? Place to sleep? Clothes?” I thought for a second and then asked her sarcastically, “Yeah, it’s too bad we got stuck at a place that doesn’t have any essentials.” Her eyes then lit up realizing the stupidity of her remark, and then she smirked at me for making fun of her. I smiled, kind of excited about the notion of being stuck in a Wal-Mart. Well, I was excited about everything besides the dangerous aspect of it of course. The basement was stocked up with all sorts of different things. The manager told us it would be fine to eat whatever we wanted. There was a microwave in the basement so my friend and I cooked some frozen meals for the each of us. We then indulged in various snacks. Chips, cookies, and just about any type of junk food we could lay our hands on. My friend got a whole box of peanut M&M’s, which went down like water for her. I got some Lindor truffles, my favorite candy in the whole world.

After eating a bunch of stuff we played Candy Land and reminisced of our child hood days. We also then made beaded bracelets, using those kits that are made for children 4 and up. Even though it was childish, we had fun. Soon we crashed. We got into some comfortable pajamas, as both of us were wearing jeans. Fortunately we didn’t have to sleep on the cold
ground, but instead on some huge comfortable bean bags with nice, warm blankets. We also had some fluffy pillows. Of course before we slept, we were able to brush our teeth with a toothbrush and some tooth paste. Throughout this time I had been texting my Mom, who thought it was funny that I was having such a good time being stuck in Wal-Mart because of a storm. Sometimes fun times come out of nowhere and are completely unexpected. I certainly appreciated that aspect of life.

**Silent Protest**
**By: Jessie Kim**

Time and effort don’t really matter
Don’t you see those sad faces? Terrified and afraid?
The frozen pizza you had last night, made you fatter
New equation you learn here; Weight = stress/grade.

But, don’t stress out too much dear, 
When test questions are randomized.
Be brave and test your luck after a sip of beer.
World may seem better once you’re buzzed.

Go to Tom’s, or Bar Louie after the test.
We can even make it a new custom.
They can’t judge us on our silent protests.
It’s not abusing when you are the victim.

No one said it was gonna be easy
Best we can do is to stay alive and stay busy.

**There is no I in team**
**By: Peter Ho**

The ball is in his hands
Six seconds to make it or break it for his team
He is so scared he drips sweat from his glands
To be the one to win the game would be a dream
He slows down to think if he should shoot
But to the left is a wide open teammate
He shoots and there is a big hoot
He gets all the attention and his team begins to hate
He learns that the smarter decision would have been to share the ball
If so he could share his championship with all
Pink
By: Ripple Patel, Josie Millard, Misty Collier, Libby Herman

It was a dreary, gray day. The dark clouds were swirling ominously over the sky. The plants, which were getting ready to put forth green, hadn’t quite yet achieved that happy color, but the early tints had removed the muddy brown from the earth—making it look even more gray. It wasn’t raining, but it could and probably would. It wasn’t really cold, but it was too chilly to go without a coat, and the strong winds made some head covering desirable. Jason felt gray too. The semester was nearly halfway through. He wasn’t flunking, but he didn’t have any good grades either. It was just gray. His mood was gray. He didn’t have a girl at the moment and no good choice came to mind. Gray! It was early morning, and since daylight savings time had just gone into effect, it was dark again when he woke up. Now, even though it should be daylight, the clouds covered the warm, bright sun. It was gray. An 8:00 class was always gray; who cared what chemicals did at 8:00? They were probably gray too.

However, Jason put on his coat and headed out to class. Everyone was wrapped up tight in dark winter colors, except for one girl. She was wearing a bright pink coat, but her head was bare and her long, light blond hair was sailing in a nimbus around her face. Jason blinked. Had he ever seen this girl before? Gorgeous as she was, he must not have; he would remember. He followed her up three flights of stairs. He kept following her right into his own classroom. He looked around as if recovering from a daze. It was his class. There were the people he knew. And there she was, taking off her coat as if she belonged here. Other side of the room and two rows down, but gosh, how could he have missed her all this time?

Rather than continue following, he went to his regular seat and sat down next to Henry, his friend. Henry asked if he got all the homework problems. Jason stared at him as if bemused. He sat down and then without answering Henry’s question, pointed to the girl and asked Henry if he knew her. “Well, yeah. That’s Nick’s kid sister.” Nick was Henry’s big brother in an organization he belonged to.

Jason paused. That would mean that Henry had an inside track to knowing her. “Oh, what’s she like?” Jason hoped he sounded casual. After all, he had first noticed her less than 10 minutes ago. But she was so bright and colorful in a gray world. A lot depended on Henry’s answer. It almost seemed as if it was love at first sight. So, Jason sat there anxiously waiting to hear what Henry had to say.

Then as Henry was about to speak, the teacher walked in saying, “Clear off your desks, today we will be starting the class off by having a pop quiz.” Jason looked at Henry hoping that he would reply soon, but instead he was freaking out about the quiz, and he told Jason that he would just have to wait until after class. There again Jason’s day went back to the gray world, and the pop quiz only made it worse. While taking the pop quiz, all Jason could think about was the beautiful girl he saw in the morning before class, and if only he knew her name. It was so hard for him to focus since she sat in the seat right in front of him. It was so hard not to stare.

Later after class, Jason rushed up to Henry and asked him about the girl. Henry responded, “Wow man, I haven’t seen you this worked up about a girl in long time!”

A little red, Jason retorted, “So, are you going to tell me about her or what?!” Henry hesitated a little before he spoke because there were so many thoughts running through his head at that very moment. He was thinking about how he liked this girl too, and he didn’t want Jason to know. Thinking of an excuse to tell Jason as he was rambling with questions, Henry just kept his mouth shut hoping for Jason to back off a little. But Jason continued, “What’s her name?
Do you have any idea what kind of guys is she into? Do you think I'll have a chance?”

Realizing that the questions were going to keep coming, Henry decided upon only saying her and
not much else.

“I’m pretty sure her name is Rachel, man, and I have no clue what she’s looking for,”

Henry said as a matter of fact hoping to shut Jason up. But at this point, Henry started to feel like
a bad friend. He could tell that Jason seemed like he was really into this girl, and yet, he wasn’t
even acting like he cared. Though he knew he had feelings for Rachel, he promised to help
Jason out.

The next morning at school, Jason’s mood turned a 180. No longer was he walking
around feeling glum, he held his chin high, determined to get to know the girl that he couldn’t
get out of his head. He spotted her sitting near a lunch table in the cafeteria, and she was
laughing and shining her bright smile. But yet, there was a very familiar body sitting right in
front of her, and Jason had to do a double take. It was Henry!

Jason could feel the heat fume to his face – how could he? Just the other day, Jason
started to confess his feelings for her, and his so-called best friend goes and stabs him in the
back! Henry watched as his shoulders moved up and down with laughter as well, and then he
saw him move her hair out of her eyes with a soft, slow touch. At this point, Jason couldn’t
watch anymore and wasn’t sure what to do. He played a couple of scenarios in his mind. He
watched himself march up to Henry and pour water over his head, but seeing that as too cruel, he
pictured himself walking up, Rachel swooning over him, and leaving hand-in-hand, with Henry
only left to stare.

But the tone rang these visions out of Jason’s mind, and he was back to feeling glum yet
again. Even worse, he had to head to class where he sat right behind Rachel and hope for her to
notice him. As he took his seat and breathed in the heavenly scent from her hair, Jason could
hardly stand it anymore. He slyly knocked his pencil off his desk ever so slightly that it would
fall right next to her foot. As Rachel bent down to pick it up, Jason reached for it at the same
time, and there, their hands touched.

Jason’s heart began to pound so hard that he thought it would jump right out of his chest. What was it about this girl that intrigued him so? Rachel picked up the pencil and put it in
Jason’s hand. He smiled and with a stutter told her hi. She returned the “hi,” giggled, and turned
around in her chair. Jason’s palms began to sweat. He thought to himself that he must have
 sounded like a complete idiot. He couldn’t even say hello correctly. Minutes seemed to pass
like hours during this last period of the day. Of course, Jason could only think about how he
embarrassed himself in front of Rachel, but he really didn’t care all that much. He had touched
her and had been face to face with her. If only he could get a moment like that again, he knew
that he would act differently. Then the thought of her sitting at the table with his so-called best
friend began to beat his brain. What had they been talking about that was so funny? What did
she even see in a bone-head like Henry?

Finally the bell rang, and school was dismissed. All the students hurriedly grabbed their
belongings and rushed out of the room. Jason was the last to leave. To his surprise, Rachel was
waiting for him at his locker. He immediately became nervous again and began to sweat. What
was he going to do? What was he going to say? He thought to himself, “Just be cool. You can
handle this. No biggie.”

“Hi,” he said, yet again. Realizing he sounded like an idiot, Jason began to fumble with
the lock on his locker, not paying attention to the numbers swirling past.
“Hi,” she replied, flashing that brilliant, white smile. “Um… I was just wondering… would you like to get a coffee with me?”

Her words came out in a rush, and Jason couldn’t help but smile. She was so cute when she was nervous. Twirling her hair anxiously, Rachel looked down at the floor, afraid to hear his answer. Jason finally managed to open his locker and shoved books haphazardly into his backpack. Slamming the locker closed, Jason turned to face her, his heart beating almost audibly.

“I would love to,” he replied nonchalantly. “My car is parked on the closest lot. We can drive to the Café Au Lait down the street if you want.”

Color flooded Rachel’s face as she began to comprehend his response. A lump had formed in her throat and all she could manage was a sheepish nod. Jason took her hand and led her out of the metal double-doors at the end of the hallway and out into the parking lot. Like a true gentleman, Jason walked around to the passenger side of his shiny black Volvo and opened the door for his beautiful princess.

The drive to the coffee shop was quiet, but not an awkward. The two youngsters were so enamored with the perfectness of the situation that words were of no use. Jason smoothly parked the car in an open space near the entrance to the café and helped Rachel out of the car. The two ordered drinks and sat face to face in a booth near the window. Conversation flowed effortlessly. As day turned into night, Jason decided to take Rachel home. Taking her delicate hand in his, he led her to the car and drove in the direction of her house. All too soon, he pulled into her concrete driveway. Windows all throughout the house were illuminated by a soft glow, mirroring the glow her face emitted. Jason smiled at this beautiful site.

Leading Rachel up the pathway to her doorstep, Jason knew the moment had finally come. He turned to face her, his hands intertwined with hers, and leaned in. The kiss was fantastic. Jason felt as if he was floating on a cloud, excitement flooding his veins. Full of passion, Rachel pulled Jason closer. Unfortunately, the kiss was cut short by the arrival of Rachel’s father. Dreamily saying goodbye, Jason bounded back to his car and drove home in a bliss, realizing this was the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

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St. Louis Arch
By: Sam Buckler

Gateway

To the West.

Soaring high over

The wide and mighty

Mississippi River so swift
Monsters in my head
By: Kristine Kang

The night was dark. The air was chilly. And there was no sound. But I knew that they were there. They were out to get me.

I looked outside and saw a giant twisted claw. It tapped at my window wanting to come inside. They were out to get me.

A loud boom came from the closet followed by a few other bangs. They were pounding at my door. They were out to get me.

Something was under my bed. I quickly took a peek and saw two piercing eyes staring back at me. They were out to get me.

I was scared and I only knew one person who could beat them all.

I cried out for Mommy and told her they were out to get me.

Calmly, she explained that there were no monsters and it was all in my imagination. She turned on the lights and showed me. The giant twisted claw was a branch outside my window. The sound from the closet was from some boxes crashing down. The piercing eyes belonged to our cat who had snuck under my bed.

She tucked me in and I slept soundly. The monsters were in my head. No one was out to get me.

Me
By: Clinton Martin

You tell me you wish things would be different
And I know that is not true.
You tell if this would have happened with anyone else
Things would be the same
And you think I would have no clue?
In a perfect world I would accept it and let it go.
But all I want to do is to let you know
You do not run my life.
I am the captain of this ship
If you decide to let me go
Here is a tip
You won’t find anyone better than me
I’d like to think that I’m a hard working guy, you know? I mean, I pay taxes, and I go to work, but with this crazy economy, money’s getting tight, and just like everyone else, I have to make up for it one way or another. So, here’s the deal, I’m just going to come out and tell you straight up. Yes, I like to eat my neighbors, and I’ll admit it, but those darn piggies look so freakin’ juicy, I can hardly contain myself. I’ve tried to stop; I really have. I’ve been to Cannibalism Anonymous meetings a couple times, but I just can’t get over myself. I mean, I’m a wolf for God sakes, eating other animals is what I was meant to do. I like to think of it as controlling the piggy population. I figure, they’re going to go extinct anyway, why not enjoy the process, right? Who’s with me? Ok, so no one, but so what? I’ll start the revolution. But I guess deep down- and when I say deep down, I mean really really deep down—I know it’s wrong, which is why I came to you. My friend told me you helped him with his bird obsession, so I was hoping you’d be able to help me with mine.

I guess I’ll start from the beginning of this whole charade. One morning, I was taking a walk like usual. My doctor says I really need to start exercising more because my cholesterol’s kind of high, and plus summer’s just around the corner, and I sure don’t want to be the wolf with the one-pack flap of a belly. The foxy ladies don’t like that, you know. Anyway, I was walking like normal, when all of a sudden I see the unmistakable pink curly q tail of a little piggy walking up the hill. Just the sight of them makes my head spin and my heart race, so I chased the pig up the hill. Well, by the time I got to the top, the pig had already taken shelter in his house. I approached the house, and like the fine gentleman I am, I rang the doorbell and even took a few steps back from the door. The piggy opened the peep hole just a crack.

I didn’t want to be a liar, so I just told him the truth. I said, “Look, dude, can you just come out real quick so I can eat you?”

Well, apparently that didn’t go over too well with him, so he gave me some piggy attitude and said, “Not by the hairs on my chinny chin chin!”

Ok, let me tell you. I can take a lot of stuff, but attitude... and from a pig? No way, so I huffed and puffed, and I blew down the piggy’s house. It’s a good thing his house was made of straw because I didn’t want my asthma to start acting up by blowing too hard. Anyway, so the house fell revealing a heavenly pig with a side order of straw fries. The next day, the same thing happened again, but this time the piggy had a house of sticks. It’s a good thing the pollen level was green that day because it was as hard as hell blowing that house down, and afterwards, it left splinters on parts of my body that I didn’t even know could get “splintered.” So that’s how the second piggy came down. Now, the third pig...well, I wasn’t so lucky that day. I hadn’t listened to the weather that morning so I didn’t know that the allergy forecast was in the red zone. When I got to the house, which was made of bricks this time, I tried to huff, and I even tried to puff, but the house didn’t budge. On top of that, I started wheezing like an old man, and I didn’t even have my inhaler with me, so I had no other choice but to leave. Every day and night since then I have thought about what a good opportunity I missed. Eventually, I went into a state of depression, and that’s when my friend referred me to you, so here I am. My name is Mr. Wolf. I’m tired of little children making fun of my story, and I want to change.
From Loathsome to Languish – Breaking the Bleak Bloke
A Short Story Inspired by The Taming of the Shrew and 10 Things I Hate About You
By: Brandon Gregory

The clock-tower sounds its monotonous countdown; only a few more steps to make it. Will hastens along the long hallway to the last door on the left, listening to the near matching tunes of his pounding heartbeat and the lonely clicking of his leathers upon that cold, stone floor and hoping he can beat the sound of the clanging metal threatening him from across the valley. Finally reaching the end of the hall, the tall and heavy door looms over him as it has many students before him, intimidating his very presence. Will pauses just long enough to gather his breath, wits, and calm as he slowly reaches for the worn brass handle and is nearly sucked into a black hole through the doorway. A slow realization creeps over Will as his world comes crashing back into reality; the resounding clash of that sinister clock-tower had beaten him again and he now had the attention of every pupil within the 9AM Theology 101 class of Liverpool University.

“Late again, I see, Mr. Hallinan. This is the third time already this month, sir. I suspect you know the procedures,” came a familiar voice from seemingly no one behind the large desk in the front of the room. In fact, the voice came from the small professor who still styled heavily rimmed glasses and somehow managed to hoard all knowledge that managed across her path.

“The poor country boy hasn’t ever known the concept of time, Mrs. Thomson. He simply can’t understand our ways of our civilized city,” teased the red-headed Celt from the back corner of the room. Aiden, this fair-skinned junior, had a notorious habit of being very conceited and tetchy amongst his classmates.

Mrs. Thomson quickly but cautiously retorted. “Careful, Mr. Preston, or you may be visiting the counselor’s office right behind Mr. Hallinan!”

Thus began yet another morning for Will at his new chapter of life. No matter how hard he tried, he simply couldn’t seem to beat the clock’s tedious ringing every morning to Mrs. Thomson’s class. This meant many long and uneventful trips back up the long and narrow hallway to the spacious room the counselor held as his personal office. Most of these meetings were mostly pointless mental recordings that Will could recite the dialogue from before he even stepped foot into the office. “Late again, Mr. Hallinan? It is usually not a good thing for the counselor to already know your name this early in your semester. Have you not followed my instructions to find a room closer to the university and find a better way of managing your time?”

“Well, I can’t afford a place closer to town, and from what I have seen so far, I’m not entirely certain I would truly enjoy four years deeper into this forsaken city.”

“My word, Mr. Hallinan, how could you not enjoy everything Liverpool has to offer?”… Some of what Aiden had said that morning was true: Will was from a poor family deep into the hills of Old Wales. He had never lived near anything such as Liverpool and didn’t have much more than his scholarships to help pay the old couple for his modest room in the far outskirts of town. His superior knowledge had gained the attention of a Liverpool University alumnus passing through his small hometown of Llanwrytd Wells who then began the process for a full scholarship to be given to Willard Hallinan for four years.

Katelyn and Victoria Hornby were two sisters from a prominent, historically noble family who could trace a long lineage of land-owning south of Warrington, even though the last few generations had lived in town to keep up with their modern desires. The girls were sent to gain
an education just in case the family’s wealth found a way to run slim with the growing family
and keeping up with all the lavish longings. Tori always had a way of getting nearly anything she
wanted by whatever means necessary and had excelled through much of her schooling, including
the long first three years at Liverpool. She kept seeking out more challenging experiences and
tried helplessly to get Kate to enjoy the thrill and challenge of courses most students avoided
with a passion. Being the younger sister and trying to live up to Tori’s fame, Kate commonly
went along with her older sister’s wishes – much to her demise with some of the courses she
found herself in. With the first round of exams appearing near over the horizon and Tori
studiously working through her own studies, Kate was forced to find help with her honors
courses. She approached her science professor but he merely brushed her aside mentioning he
was far too busy to take on the specific needs of every student and told her to ask some of her
classmates for help. Finding the boy that sat next to her, Kate decided to ask him for help.

“You’re kidding, right?” said John McVey in a sarcastic sort of sneer. “I don’t really know
where to go at this point in science, either. I do know somebody who could help us both, though.
I know of a guy who tutors most of the classes here and he uses the money to pay for his rent.
I’m sure he could tutor us both. I will ask and then I will tell you tomorrow in class.”

After classes the next day, John and Kate went to meet with the tutor for their first session.
As they walked to the tutoring section of the library, Kate noticed the tutor and nearly walked
out. She wasn’t too sure of being tutored by the ridiculed country boy who was late to many of
his first classes, dreading his wretched reputation and how hers might change being noticed
around him. However, she had to pass the exams so she could continue to graduation and stayed
for the tutoring. As the tutoring session started, Kate began to realize that Will’s reputation that
she knew him by didn’t quite match his personality – much in thanks to Aiden and his friends
mixed with Will’s lack of social activity with the other students. Will was a gentle minded
person who was very brilliant and soft-spoken. He made a great tutor because he didn’t force the
ideas at the students, but rather he spent the time to work through everything until the student felt
comfortable with the topic. He seemed to uphold a lot of older knightly and gentleman-like
characteristics that she had remembered her grandfather speaking of in his old stories of
noblemen. As the tutoring sessions continued up to the exam, Kate was beginning to really
enjoy her time spent with Will and began to schedule some extra tutoring times with just Will so
she didn’t have to share the times with John, as well. Leading up to the exam, Kate was feeling
very certain of more than just her studies; she was beginning to feel very warm toward Will, too.

An interesting twist of fate turned about with the first round of exams. Of course, Will and
Kate fared well with John surviving, as well. However, Aiden had failed his first theology exam
and was brought into Mrs. Thomson’s office to discuss the course. “Mr. Preston, you of all
people should know by now how I formulate my exams. This is your last chance at passing this
course or you will be expelled from the campus. I am going to require you find a tutor to help
you pass my course to get out of this campus by graduating, not expulsion.”

Mrs. Thomson directed Aiden to Will – much to the dislike of both boys, where Will claimed
to be too busy with his studies and already committed tutoring. Aiden then thought of a girl in
his grade he knew could help and he had an eye now for some time: Tori. However, Aiden was
not expecting to be rejected again. Tori flatly refused to help him, claiming she had too much on
her plate with her full honors courses. She did know of somebody who could help, though; her
friend Jane Trimble didn’t have as many honors courses but she was still very brilliant and could
help Aiden. Aiden reluctantly accepted Tori’s offer, even though he wasn’t sure of being tutored
by someone he saw as such a simpleton and a quiet mouse.
Jane had always admired Aiden, but always for his outward appearance. The stoic, egotistical manner he held himself added with his provocative nature kept the meek girl at a distance, afraid of his rejection. However, his being forced into her presence so she could tutor him, making sure he would graduate was exhilarating to Jane. She had always dreamed of being able to be with Aiden, thinking maybe she could find a way to mature his personality and make him her perfect man. She could hardly sit quietly still while waiting for Aiden to appear for the first tutoring session. As she saw him peer around the corner to make sure nobody he knew was watching, she nearly screamed for joy but managed to hold herself outwardly calm as he approached. As he sat down, Aiden thought he would try to take control of the meeting, as due his nature, and originally Jane let him take control – it meant she had more time with just the two of them. However, as the sessions continued and Jane realized Aiden wasn’t learning a single thing, she decided that a few things had to change. She began taking control of the meetings, not allowing him to talk through the entire session, trying to show he knew something and trying to sweet-talk her into just giving him answers; Jane began taking Aiden’s role as the dominant figure in the meetings, making him read and study the materials. Aiden originally saw this as a threat until he realized he was wasting his time trying to tell her what he knew, and she was supposed to be increasing his knowledge of the subject. Slowly, he began to alter his ways and for the first time since starting at Liverpool, he began to listen to what somebody else had to say and actually worked for something himself.

As the semester rolled along, Kate and Will spent a lot of time studying together for classes and celebrating their successes at the local pub. They were both enjoying each other’s company and wished they had more time together than they currently enjoyed. Will realized that much of the shortcomings were probably due to his living so far out of town and wished he could find a place closer to campus, even though he had often informed his counselor that a day would never come that he enjoyed something so much to live in Liverpool closer to campus. In looking across many sections of town surrounding the campus, Will quickly realized he would never be able to afford anything near campus on his measly tutoring salary and practically gave up. One day at school, however, he was complaining of his failing to find a place within his price range to his best friend, John McVey. “It seems that no matter where I go, I can’t even afford the first few months’ rent on what I have saved so far and can make tutoring. And I can’t tutor more or I will lose too much of my own studying time. I just can’t seem to make anything work; I have to live out in the country so I can afford my rent!”

“Well, my older brother just got married and moved to London, so maybe my parents wouldn’t mind you moving into his room. I can ask if you would like and maybe that’ll work.” John replied quickly. “It would only be 10 minutes from campus and a lot closer to Kate…” Will quickly became excited about his good fortune as of late; that would work out a lot better for him. He could tutor more often, study with friends more often, and maybe even make it to class on time! John came back the next morning and informed Will that his parents had no problem in allowing Will to take the extra room and wanted him to take the room free of rent. That way the boys could work together on their schoolwork and actually find some things to do in their leisure time, as well. Will quickly went to find Kate and surprise her with his great news of the upcoming move, praying that she would be as excited as he was. Upon hearing the news, Kate became just as excited and wanted to know the exact date so she could begin planning things for them to do together in town. Will decided that he didn’t mind finding things to do in town as long as it meant spending time with Kate.
Jane found Tori in her dormitory late one night and asked her if they could talk for a while. Since Jane seldom came and sought her out, Tori couldn’t refuse her friend and invited her into the room. They talked about some of the problems in classes and the next round of upcoming exams. Then the conversation turned to talking about Jane’s tutoring experiences with Aiden and how Jane wasn’t sure he’d be ready since they wasted time at first letting him take control of the sessions. Then Jane completely shocked Tori when she asked Tori what she thought of Aiden. Tori didn’t know where to start or how to say anything about him to Jane. She hated his patronizing manner and how he scorned nearly everybody who crossed his path and couldn’t stand how everybody just let him keep his ways and adopted their lifestyles around him. But Jane didn’t seem to be wanting that kind of answer in the tone she asked the question. She seemed to almost be admiring him and wanting somebody else to confirm that he wasn’t so bad after all, and Tori didn’t have the heart to crush her every thought. She said she just didn’t think he was her type but thought the right girl was out there for him somewhere; even Jane could be the right one and that’s why fate put them together for tutoring. Jane was very excited to hear this from Tori and asked her if maybe she could help her win Aiden over – she didn’t think she had it in her to win Aiden over herself. After a few minutes of begging and pleading, Tori finally agreed to help Jane show Aiden she was the right girl for him.

The next day for the tutoring session, Aiden arrived to find Tori and Jane already tutoring another couple of guys from other classes and began to feel threatened. Jane was his tutor and had been helping him now for some time; he shouldn’t have to share her with the other guys that were doing better than he was in classes. For the first time in his life, Aiden was jealous of the other guys and all over a girl he thought he couldn’t stand before. Not knowing how to react, he carefully walked over to the tables and sat down at his usual spot to wait for Jane to notice – even though Jane knew he was there the whole time and simply hadn’t reacted to see what he would do. After sitting for a minute or so quietly, Aiden began to make a little noise with his books and moving around noisily in his chair, trying to gain her attention. Finally, Jane acted as she had just spotted Aiden and went over to him for the tutoring session. Much to her surprise, Aiden actually began asking her questions about the material, reading through the book, and paying complete attention to what she had to say through the entire session. Tori was watching from the other tables, too, and noticed this newfound respect for Jane from Aiden. It was something she had never seen from him and simply smiled. The next visit, Jane was surprised yet again whenever Aiden came to the session prepared – he had read much of the section and actually took notes during class, trying his hardest to impress her and make sure she didn’t go to tutor other students instead. This became the new normal for the tutoring sessions, and by the time they reached the last session before the exam, Jane actually felt that Aiden would pass it with flying colors.

The time came for midterm exams at Liverpool University and the halls were all coldly silent once again. Everybody was complaining about the exams, as was common to almost any student taking any sort of examination, as they studied fervently. However, one person in particular had a completely different perspective on the exams than ever before; Aiden actually knew how to work through the questions and answer them instead of putting down a mixture of words he tried to recall the professors having said at one point or another during lecture. He came out of his tests actually feeling like he had accomplished something and had few regrets toward his answers – he felt like a whole new person and truly enjoyed the new feeling he had after taking his exams. When the grades came out, nobody was more surprised that Mrs. Thomson to see the outcome of Aiden’s tutoring sessions: he only missed 7 points on the entire examination! Once
the exams had been returned, everybody was up for a little celebration for all their achievements on the mid-term examinations.

Having more time together, Will and Kate had become very close as friends and spent most of their leisure time exploring the city and everything it had to offer. Will was becoming very fond of Kate and was hoping to find just the right time to ask her a very personal question. He had never felt the way he did about anybody before and didn’t know how to approach the topic. When they went out to the beach after the exams, Will took her to a quiet side of the beach away from everybody else and told Kate he needed to ask her something. He explained to her that he really enjoyed her company and had grown extremely fond of her over the semester. He then told her he had never been to an organized function before, much less having taken anybody out to one. He asked her if she would go with him to the fall dance as his girlfriend. Kate’s cheeks turned crimson red as she giggled softly and replied, “I have been waiting for you to ask me ever since we had our private tutoring sessions. Of course I will go with you!”

The entire school turned out for the dance, whether they had a date with them or not. Kate and Will were the new talk as they had just announced they were dating the day before the dance. Tori congratulated her sister on finding a date and told them they were meant to be. At the dance, however, Tori and Jane didn’t have any dates and just went for the fun of the event. Not realizing her secret admirer, Jane mostly talked and danced with Tori and didn’t notice Aiden making his way across the floor toward her. Coming up behind her, Aiden startled Jane when he asked her to dance. Tori whispered into Jane’s ear to follow her sister’s example then left the couple alone. Jane accepted and they began talking of the times they spent and how Aiden had become jealous of the other students at the tutoring session. Before the dance ended, Aiden began explaining to Jane his feelings for her and told her that he wished they could spend more time together, not just to study. Jane said that she would love spending more time together – they could become study partners and find some leisure time just for the two of them, as well.

The rest of the semester followed suit rather uneventfully. Will and Kate continued dating and studying together as the mastermind couple of the freshman honors courses. Aiden and Jane finally admitted to everybody that they were truly dating and were probably the most popular couple of the entire university. Tori finished the semester with a perfect grade in every course, married only to her academics. Liverpool University became the home for many students over the course of time during the students’ reign, but nobody has yet to explain the broken habits of many students that fateful semester.

Graduation
By: Luke Walker

May, twenty-fourteen—
It can’t come quickly enough.
I’ll just go to sleep.

Icicles
By: Luke Walker

Frozen poetry
Hangs from gutters in winter
But won’t melt in spring
The Best Day
By: Stephanie Hand

I met a guy when I was eighteen
He was tall with brown hair.
His smile made my heart scream.
To become a couple was my prayer.

He took me out for dinner and a movie
I tried to act grown up and proper
To my luck, he could see right through me
He preferred the real me, who was definitely not proper.

A few weeks turned into months and months into years,
I hoped the day was coming, but didn’t know when
Until the night he got down on one knee and I knew he was sincere
“Marry me and make me the happiest man who has ever been.”

That was six months ago and leads us to this place.
In the most expensive dress I’ve ever owned,
White veil covering my face
I feel so grown.

The church doors open wide
Cameras flash as I walk down the isle
My father by my side
He greets me with his wonderful smile.

You Never Know
By: Benazira Mustafic

From the numerous paths life offers
Only one is uncertain
The path of love…
Sometimes you have luck and sometimes you don’t
Sometimes you fall for the wrong one
Sometimes you make mistakes unknowingly
Sometimes you love the right one
But all that is uncertain and you never know
New Years
By: Vruti Patel

One year ends, a new one begins.
A time to reconcile all your sins.
For many it's a chance, to erase the past.
To look forward in life, and make it last.
Let every bad memory, that brought you pain.
Be lost and left behind.
Let's ring in this new year, with memories to gain.
And keep the good things in mind.

Crazy Taxi
By: Ripple Patel

I ask, what is the time on the clock?
Seconds just flying by
why is it going so fast?

The game needs to last
go crazy taxi, go! Don’t make me cry
I ask, what is the time on the clock?

So many cars to pass
but then gone with the blink of an eye
why is it going so fast?

The taxi can go for miles, but never runs out of gas
Wishing the number of seconds left is high
I ask, what is the time on the clock?

Need to beat the score from the past
I see her score is racing up, oh my
why is it going so fast?

This game is almost over and to surpass
the score of others is not that easy, that’s no lie
I ask, what is the time on the clock?
Why is it going so fast?
**Guess Who**  
By: Smit Patel

They only take me out on Christmas Eve  
They put me together

They decorate me with ornaments and things  
They put a star on top of me  
After Christmas they take all the ornaments off  
Then they take me apart  
They store me in a safe place until next Christmas Eve

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**Haikus**  
By: Roshani Patel

Typical Snow day-  
Children sledding and building  
Snowflakes falling down.

On the icy pond  
Skating with the family and friends  
In the cool evening

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**Holiday**  
By: Vruti Patel

Through snow and cold, silver and gold.  
We cherish this time of year.  
Waking up early, with presents to hold.  
Each one close and near.  
With laughter and joy, getting each little toy.  
It's truly a heartwarming feeling.  
For each little girl, and each little boy.  
To pile their gifts up to the ceiling.  
It's a time to cheer, when it's all here.  
Celebrating this very special day.  
As I'm here to say, with a heart so sincere.
Rare Jewels
By: Ashley SooHoo

True friends are like gems.
They are precious, priceless, and hard to find.

True friends always have a ready shoulder for you to cry on.
If you have the best news or the worse news, they are the first ones to know.
They tell you if your socks don’t match or if you look fantastic!
They call you all day, every day, just to hear your voice.
They know exactly how you feel from the look on your face.

When you fall, true friends help you find your wings.
When you have been beaten down, they bring out their boxing gloves to fight with you.
When you feel hopeless, they bring baskets full of hope and laughter.
When you think you cannot go on, they uplift you with prayer, encouragement, and comfort.

Fair-weather friends are swept away by rough waves and the storms of life
But true friends stand unwavering with deep roots, anchoring into the ground.

Boys come and go, but true friends are forever.
The only question that remains is . . .

What kind of friend are you?

Friends
By: Kushbu Patel

Friends are just like notebooks; whatever you write stays in there forever
If you say something to them, it stays in them forever
There is always sadness and happiness in our friendship
Which we always had, but we should keep it going, that’s called true friendship
You and I were always there for each other
Till the end, won’t let go, don’t care about others
Moments of our friendship will always be there in our hearts
Let’s make some more moments that can just give a smile to our hearts
We will be there for each other, Tom, let’s make the present the best
Because you know you will always be there in my heart, because you are the best
My alarm goes off at the same time every single morning of every single day of every single year. I’ve been working in the same office building since I graduated from law school. I’ve considered getting a new job or moving somewhere else, but I find that I like the stability in my life. I like knowing that every morning at eight, I’ll pour coffee into my mug, grab the briefcase leaning on my office door, and get into my black Audi. I wait for the security guy to open the vintage wrought iron gate, and I pull out of my driveway. My office building is in downtown, and taking rush hour into consideration, it takes me exactly 21.5 minutes to get there. Sometimes when I’m sitting in traffic, looking out over the rows and rows of cars ahead of me, I get to thinking about my life. With the exception of my cook, a few servants, and my driver, I live in my 8-bedroom house all by myself. Lots of people know me as the rich lawyer guy, but in other aspects of life, I’m not as successful. My mom always scolds me and says, “You’re almost 30 years old, why haven’t you found a wife yet?! Just say yes once, and I’ll find the perfect woman for you.” But, I always tell her no. I want to find whoever it is myself. I know my mom would never force anything on me, and she’s always had my best intentions at heart, but I just feel like this is something I should do alone. A while back, my sister recommended using those online dating sites, and I did give in to that nonsense once. But after it set me up on a blind date with a crazy woman— who I’m pretty sure was growing a beard, I decided that I wouldn’t/couldn’t ever rely on those again. Even though I’m financially secure to buy anything under the sun—or the sun if I want—I still feel emptiness inside me: An emptiness that can only be filled with a family. I try not to dwell on the topic for too long. Actually, I’ve confined these thoughts only to my 21.5 minute commute to and from work. I know that one day I’ll find someone, it’s just…. I don’t know when.

I get off work early on Fridays. That’s when I run errands around town. Sometimes, when the weather’s nice, I go for a walk in the park. There’s something about the abundance of trees and the ducks circling around the pond that makes me feel peaceful and grounded. One particular Friday afternoon, I decided I needed some fresh air, and after going home to change into my jeans and a Polo, I drove the three blocks to the park. When I pulled up into the parking lot of the park, I noticed something different about the place. The park landscape was no longer an escape from urban living, because straight ahead of me I saw three giant bulldozers and an alarmingly ugly clearing in what used to be a large, healthy stretch of verdure. It was a plain and awful site to witness. Looking at the clearing reminded me of the emptiness I felt inside.

“Hi there, sir. Are you okay?” asked an elderly lady who was walking with her dog.

“I’m fine, thanks,” I replied.

But I was not okay. I was not fine. I was suffering from a deep emptiness in my soul that was only magnified a thousand-fold by the barren gap in the park that lay ahead of me. Usually, I could accept the fact that my life was not perfect, that there were still elements of my life that required change. And as I mentioned earlier, I would reserve my reflections on the emptiness of life for the commute to and from work. But this time I really could not prevent myself from dwelling on the thought that I could end up without ever meeting THE woman and rearing a family. I was struggling to understand the reality of my existence. I could not accept that I would live alone for the rest of my life. I would not accept such an outcome. Yet, the more I thought about my situation, the more I had to remind myself that I was not yet thirty years of age. My
defense mechanisms had kicked in. I was trying to justify why I had not met THE woman that I already decided that I would meet.

It was really a problematic existence that I lived. My life’s work is and was dedicated to preserve justice in this world. But I honestly have a difficult time believing that justice exists in this world. How could I deserve this life of emptiness? What cruel and unusual punishment I endured by simply living! Is there really only one person that everyone is destined to be with for the rest of their lives? Had I already met my “The One”?

Throughout these past thirty years, I had only been in a relationship with one woman, and her name was Charmaine. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life. She had the biggest honey brown eyes that you have ever seen. Her long, wavy dark brown hair shines in the sun and smells like warm vanilla. Charmaine was the woman of my dreams. We were together for six years. I loved her so much that I had bought a diamond ring with “Always Loving You” engraved on the band, and I was going to use it to propose to her. I still remember that day, the day that I was going to propose. I had called Charmaine and told her to meet me at the little park by her house, the place where we first met. I was waiting for her on a bench. As her car pulled up to the parking lot across the street, my stomach started filling up with butterflies and I could feel my hands dampering. As she walked across the street, we made eye contact, and she gave me the warmest smile. I will never forget that smile, because one second later, a car sped out of nowhere and ran over her and crashed into a tree. I dropped the ring and ran over to her. Blood was seeping through my clothes as I held her. I put my head close to hers, as she whispered “I love you.” She died in my arms.

As I held her and watched her bleed to death, I thought how she trusted me to protect her. I could do nothing, I did nothing. I just watched her die. How could I forgive myself? I needed her in my life. I knew at that instant that my life was gone. I would not let go of her though. I did not accept her death. I kept replaying the whole scene over and over. If I only called her five minutes later, everything would be different. Why did I let her walk to me? Why didn’t I go to her? Why didn’t I warn her? Why did she have to leave? My mother tried to help me get through this, but she could only do so much. I was 24 years old and I had lost my entire life. I tried to kill myself so I could be with her, but I was unsuccessful. “What is life without her? I refuse to live in a world without Charmaine,” I told my mother. As time went on I learned through counseling that Charmaine was watching me and only wanted the best for me. I knew that she would be very upset seeing me like this and I could not bear that image. I began to study hard and I graduated valedictorian from Harvard University. After graduating, I immediately got job offers and I decided to take one in Boston. After a couple years there, I was promoted to the highest spot in the office. I bought a beautiful house and cars for myself and my mother. Even though I had done everything possible to make myself happy and to not disappoint Charmaine, I was still dead inside. I was no longer living for myself; I was living for Charmaine.

This was quite normal for me though. I did not have friends and did not go anywhere except to work and home. Everything continued this way until one day something very strange happened. As I was traveling back from work, I saw a girl being harassed by two men. I immediately stopped my car and got out. I asked the lady if everything was okay. She replied with tears. I knew I had to step in, even though the men were telling me to leave. I always kept a gun in my glove compartment, so I went back and got it and told the men to get lost. I pointed the pistol towards them and they immediately took me seriously and left. I pulled the lady towards me and asked her if she was okay. She would not reply. I asked her if she had a car and she shook her head. I began to hear more men coming and I knew that I needed to take her away
from here. I gently walked her to my car and told her to get inside. She hesitated, but I reassured her that she would be safe. I was the only person she could trust to help her at this moment so she got into my car. I closed her door and ran to my side and sped away. Once I felt we were far enough and in a better area, I stopped the car and asked her where she lived. She could not talk with all the tears coming down her face. I looked at her arm and saw blood. At that instant, I knew I needed to help her. I drove as fast as I could to the hospital and rushed her in. I waited for her to make sure everything was okay. The doctors came out and asked me if I was her husband and her information.

For some reason I lied to them and said, “I am her boyfriend. We have not been dating for a long time, so I do not know much about her personal information, but her name is Charmaine Jones. I received a call from her and she told me to meet her at Bar Louie. When I got there I found her being harassed by two men, and as I was taking her home, I saw she was hurt.”

The doctor replied, “Alright, she is doing a lot better; you will be able to take her home tonight. I just need you to sign a couple of forms.” The doctor handed me a form. As I was signing it, he said, “It is good you brought her in when you did, that was a very close one. Try to take care of her and make sure that does not happen again.”

“If you don’t mind can you tell me what happened?” I asked.

“Charmaine was stabbed,” the doctor replied.

I was in shock. This poor girl was in so much pain. I brought her back to my house and called off work saying I was sick. I do not think I had lied to anyone since I was 24. It was a strange feeling, but I knew I had to take care of her. I cooked breakfast and as I brought it into her room I saw her awaken.

“Where am I?” the girl asked.

“You were stabbed and I took you to the hospital,” I replied tentatively as I handed her some eggs and bacon. The girl took it from me gratefully but winced in pain from her stab wound. However, she took the pain very well, considering how badly she was hurt. “My name is Jake Bell. What’s yours?”

“Amy,” she said as she took a huge bite of eggs. She seemed pleased with my cooking.

“Do you have any coffee?”

“Uh … yeah, sure,” I went to the kitchen and started to brew up a pot of coffee. This girl was fearless. First I find her fending off two strange men, and then I find out that they stabbed her, and now she’s completely comfortable with a perfect stranger in a house she’s never been in before. Who is she?

I poured a cup of coffee and brought her some sugar and cream as well. Amy took it and started chugging down the coffee. In the time that it took me to brew her coffee, she finished eating her huge breakfast.

I sat down on the chair adjacent to her and waited for her to say something. I wasn’t sure what to think of her yet, but I was very intrigued. I’d never met someone like this before, and maybe she was the kind of person I needed that could get me out of this monotonous lifestyle I seemed to be stuck in.

“Well,” Amy said as she started to slowly get up. “Thanks.”

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“Home,” she said. “I don’t want to intrude, and I really have to get going.” Amy started walking towards the front door, her hand on her stab wound.
“You should really get some rest,” I said, and I helped her open my heavy front door. My mansion was starting to seem ridiculously oversized for just one person to be living in all of a sudden.

“It’s fine, really,” Amy said with a small smile. She opened her purse and handed me a business card. “Here. Call me sometime.”

And with that she was gone. I look down at her business card. It read: “Ms. Amy Caldwell, Senior Accountant.” On the bottom of the card, the name of the building she worked in was written. I immediately recognized it as being one of the buildings just a few down from mine.

I looked up quickly, looking left and right, but I didn’t see her. Over the next few days, I found that I was constantly thinking about her, and not just while I was driving to work, almost everywhere. Sometimes, in the office, I found myself doodling her name as “Mrs. Amy Bell,” just to see what it would look like, and a week later, I decided that I really needed to go see her. I mean, I should at least check on how she was doing, right? That’s what I told myself, but I knew I had different motivations. I asked the receptionist in her building if I could speak to Amy, and she pointed me to her office. She was, in fact, doing much better, and I only felt that it was gentlemanly and polite to ask her out to dinner to “formally” get to know her. That was the start of a beautiful relationship. It didn’t take long for either of us to realize that we liked each other, so we stuck together, and we’ve been together ever since. Whatever emptiness I had before, Amy filled to no end, and I can’t imagine being any happier than I am now.

My Family
By: Joe Hobbs

My family is great
It means so much to me
My family is one of a kind
It can never be replaced
Without my family
I could never be the same

FRIENDSHIP
By: Chang Lee

Friends are here to make you smile
They will be there when you’re down
It’s worth waiting a while
They will never let you drown

There will be conflicts once in a while
You will realize it’s not worthwhile
Keep your friends by your side
Friends will put your troubles aside
“New Life”
By: Jessie Kim

Bob Parker lives in the middle of nowhere Nebraska. He is a farmer and takes pride in his work on the farm. Bob stands almost seven feet tall, but is as gentle as they come. Bob lives with his two older brothers and his mom on their farm. They are tight family and Bob is a very protective person of his family.

One day, Sam, the oldest brother, decided to go to the STLCOP. Bob Parker, the protective brother, decided to move to St. Louis with his brother until everything was settled down. Although Sam declined his offer at first, Bob insisted because St. Louis is such a huge and dangerous city with the highest crime rate; coming from such a small town in Nebraska, Bob thought that it would be nice for Sam to have someone to rely on, rather than being all alone.

The family decided to celebrate Sam’s big decision on continuing his education after 5 years graduating from college. A couple nights before the big day, the family gathered and went to their favorite place called “Big Bang,” the only bar in the town.

As the Parkers walked in, Crum said Hi to the Parkers. Crum is a homeless man, who lived outside the bar for a while. His short height and a long beard was how people recognize him. No one has ever seen his clean face before or knows where he’s originally from. But according to Crum, he chose his life to be a bum and left everything behind, although he could’ve had other brighter opportunities. (Well, that’s what he says anyway.)

People enjoyed his company and so did he. Bob and Crum have known each other for about a few years now and they cracked jokes all the time whenever Bob came around. Even though the difference in between their heights was hug, their relationship as friends was close.

“Sam and I are moving to St. Louis for his college. I’m gonna help him out with settling down and stuff, then come back to help out with the farm.” Bob said after a sip of beer.

“That sounds like a lot of work; you want any help with that? I’ve always wanted to move to a big city. Maybe I can come along and start a new life there!”

Bob smiled at Crum and said, “Sure man.”

Two days later, everything was finally ready. Sam packed stuff he needed and Bob finished checking his car. Crum on the other hand had nothing with him, as usual, and neither of the Parkers was surprised.

After the long drive, Sam, Bob and Crum finally arrived at STLCOP campus.

“This school is HUGE!” Sam shouted.

“I’m really proud of you bro; this really seems like a nice school,” Bob said as he was patting his brother’s shoulder.

“This is exciting!” Crum shouted also, and Parkers looked at him with smiles on their faces.

“We all get to fresh start our lives here in the big city. Good luck to both of you guys; I think I’m going to find a place for tonight. But Thanks for the ride and I will see you guys around!”

The Parkers waved at Crum as he was turning and walking towards the opposite direction, stretching his arms.
Family Christmas  
By: Libby Herman

It was Christmas Eve. A blanket of fresh-snow covered the ground, glittering brightly under the stars in the dark night sky. Bundling up against the brisk, cold winter wind of December, excitement flooded my veins. As the car warmed in the garage, I helped load piles of presents and mounds of delicious food into the open trunk of our Pathfinder. One of my favorite nights of the year, my mind was swirling with thoughts of beautiful carols, delectable food, and wrapped gifts. The time had finally come to depart. Eagerly jumping in the car, I waited in anticipation for the rest of my family to join me.

The normally long, tedious 40-minute drive to grandpa’s house in Saint Charles flew by incredibly fast. In no time, we were pulling up to his appropriately decorated brick house. White lights hanging from the roof twinkled in the night and smoke poured from the chimney. The door was open, lighting a pathway up the driveway. Inside the frame, I could barely discriminate the outline of my grandpa, eager to greet us upon arrival. The rush of cold air as I opened the car door was not enough to dampen my spirit. Unaffected, I grabbed as many presents from the car as I was capable of holding, and made my way toward the front door.

Smiling buoyantly, my grandpa greeted me joyfully. I returned the greeting as I stepped carefully into the living room and placed the presents underneath the large green pine tree in the corner adjacent to the door. Removing my winter coat and hanging it in the closet, I watched the rest of my family stream in, faces flushed from the cold and laden with food. A delicious aroma of cinnamon and sugar filtered through the air and wafted into my nose, making my mouth water. The fireplace crackled and popped at the opposite end of the room, burning brightly and emitting a wonderful heat. Happiness and a wonderful sense of ease encircled me, causing irrevocable feelings of pleasure and repose.

As was tradition, my little brother scampered downstairs into the basement. The only time he ever got to play billiards and test his luck at a slot-machine was at grandpa’s house. Bemused, I followed him to the basement and flopped down on the couch. Closing my eyes, I let the harmonious sounds of Christmas carols emanating from the satellite radio consume my senses. A sigh of content escaped my mouth as I envision how the night’s events are to proceed. My daydreams of the delicious dinner followed by an even more delectable dessert are interrupted by the sounds of footsteps stomping down the staircase. Cracking one eyelid, I peek to see who could be disrupting my fantasies. As expected, my parents, followed closely by my grandpa, come venturing down the stairs and into the basement.

My dad walked over to the bar to fix drinks for the adults, while my mom and grandpa took their customary places at a side-table not too far from the couch. Sitting up, I decided to get myself a soda and join the lively discussion. The conversation flew by in a blur. As my stomach began to grumble, the quaint bell of the oven chimed. This sound meant only one thing: dinner was ready. The adults arose lazily from their chairs and trudge up to the kitchen. My brother and I darted up the stairs, nipping at their heels, eager to devour the customary feast.

Mouth-watering odors seeped into the dining room from the kitchen. Each platter placed delicately on the wooden table looked divine. The ham, drenched in oozing brown sugar and decorated with a slice of pineapple, flaunted its luscious pink color. Perfect, flaky golden brown rolls were wrapped warmly in basket. A colorful medley of vegetables, steaming profusely within a bowl, contrasted vibrantly with the black table cloth cloaking the table. Solid, snow white mounds of mashed potatoes heaped over the edges of the blue China bowl. And the perfect
complement, sitting next to the potatoes, floating in a matching blue China boat, was the homemade gravy. There was hardly any room left on the table once all of the dishes were brought out from the kitchen. Surprised the table hadn’t collapsed underneath the staggering amounts of food, I took my usual seat at the table and waited patiently for the rest of my family to join.

Once everyone was settled, we bowed our heads in unison, folded our hands, and chanted the Lord’s Prayer. Then, the time came. Plates and bowls filled with food were passed clockwise around the table. For a while, the chink of silverware was the only noise heard within the dining room. As everyone ate their fill, conversation picked up again. Scraping my plate clean, I felt the waist of my pants tighten as I knew my stomach had expanded from the enormous amount of food I had just gobbled down. Feeling incredibly relaxed, I leaned back in my chair and stared up at the ceiling. Ignoring the conversation going around me, my thoughts shifted from food to presents, my favorite event of the night. As I imagined ripping off wrapping paper and examining new gifts, fatigue began to overwhelm my body. The scraping of chairs against the wooden floor signaled my cue to help clear the table. Once the dishes were properly stacked in the dishwasher, the time came for dessert. My grandpa brought out a golden pie, filled with delicious cherries, and a carton of vanilla ice cream. Helping myself to a huge slice of pie and a heaping mound of ice cream, I began eagerly devouring the dessert. The contrasting sensations of the bumpy, warm cherry pie and the smooth, cold ice cream excited my taste buds. Suddenly, my stomach was no longer full to the brim. Now that dessert was finished and my brother nearly jumping out of his seat, my parents decided it was time to open presents.

Feeling significantly heavier than I had before dinner, it constituted a great effort to heave myself out of the chair and over to the couch sandwiched between the fireplace and Christmas tree. Acting as an elf, my brother donned the customary Santa hat and began distributing the presents. As was tradition, the kids were allowed to open their gifts first. The sound of ripping paper filled the room as shards of color flew through the air and littered the floor. Adrenaline pumped through my veins as I unveiled the gifts that had been kept secret for so long. Smiling and giving thanks to my grandpa, I scrutinized my presents carefully. Everything was exactly as I had asked. Content, I watched the adults open their presents much more calmly than the children. Once all of the gifts were opened and the proper thank-yous exchanged, my brother returned to the basement in an attempt to squeeze one last game of billiards in before the time came to depart. I watched my parents and my grandpa pour themselves a cup of coffee and sit around the kitchen table, chattering merrily. Still feeling rather full, I did not feel compelled to prate alongside the adults. The couch seemed to be calling my name and looked much more inviting. Laying my head against the pillows of the couch, I drifted easily off to sleep.

All too soon, I was stirred from my peaceful slumber by the voices of my parents yelling for my brother. Sitting up abruptly, I heard my brother trudge up the stairs and over to the coat closet. I too, ventured over to the closet and buttoned up my coat against the bitter cold of the winter night. Gathering my presents, I followed my dad out to the car and helped him package leftover food and newly acquired presents in the trunk. Exhaust was streaming out of the pipe, signaling the time had come to leave. The family took turns kissing and hugging my grandpa good-bye. A few last-minute witty remarks were exchanged before we braved the winter night and returned to the Pathfinder.

Along the ride home, snow began to fall. Tiny, crystalline flakes descended from the sky and landed delicately on the ground. To my right, my brother babbled on about Santa and
bragged about how early he was going to wake up tomorrow morning. Disappointed the evening had ended so quickly, I looked forward to the events in store for tomorrow. The soft sound of choirs performing Christmas music emitted from the car speakers. Songs changed endlessly from one to the next, without so much as a breath in-between.

As the car pulled into our familiar garage, I knew the evening had come to a close. My brother, with the help of my parents, prepared a large glass of milk and an overflowing plate of cookies for Santa; I sauntered up the stairs and into my bedroom. Changing absentmindedly into pajamas, I crawled underneath the warm covers of my bed. Magnificent thoughts of carols, food, and presents followed me into unconsciousness as I drifted off to sleep, hoping the night would pass as swiftly as today.

**Best Company**

By: Jerry Hu

Ekphrastic poem to “Lap of Choice,” a sculpture of a Yorkshire on a woman’s lap.

I await your company,
    as you climb atop my lap.
Softly, I sing to you about my day,
    and attentively, I inquire for yours.
Serenely, you listen,
    and silently, you answer.

I enjoy our friendship,
    as you rest atop my lap.
Tenderly, I stroke your flaccid ears,
    and caress your curled paws.
Tiredly, you cuddle closer,
    to better seal the warmth
    flowing between our hearts,
    on this chilling night.

I long for more,
    as you yawn atop my lap.
Slowly, I feel your breath deepen,
    as your lights shimmer and fade.
Sadly, I watch your head dip,
    and your tail go limp.
Tearfully, I wonder about how
    someday, you’ll drift away.

But for now, I’ll relish the moment,
    as you dream atop my lap.
The Big Catch
By Joe Hobbs

It was a bright, sunny day and I was getting to do one of the things I like to do the most with my dad--fish. The pond was beautiful with sparkling clean, clear water while a fresh summer breeze blew over. My dad and I had our favorite Rhino fishing rods and picked our lucky Heddon Torpedo Hardbait lures. After a while, my dad had caught four good sized Largemouth Bass and I hadn’t caught any. After a few more casts, I got a feeling something good was about to happen. So, I wound up my reel, swung, and casted my lure into the pond. I started reeling it in. Bam! I hooked a big one that made my pole curve like a “C.” I was trying so hard to pull in the fish my face started to turn white. My dad hurried over and grabbed the line to help me pull in what felt like a ten-ton block. When we got it on land, we realized I had caught two fish on the same lure! There was a big, ten pound Largemouth Bass on the front hook and a small, three pound Largemouth Bass on the other. My dad and I were as happy as we could be and made a memory we would never forget.

The Rough draft
By: Justin Szymczak

Sitting alone
A lonely bean,
My pencil
The paper

That is all.

A lonely lamp tries to
enlighten the task at hand
And encourage me to start.

Pencil taps
a marching band cadence.
Teeth have left their marks
Like chew marks on a bone.
another pencil used up.
But to sharpen another means
all that knowledge is wasted.
Do I dare?

Who is SHE?
By: Marquita Martin

She lies to the people she loves
She loves to be the center of attention
The attention makes her feel better about herself
She can’t be herself because she’s afraid that they won’t like her
They only pretend to be her friend, and she knows this
She knows the answers to her exams, but she pretends to be stupid
She’s stupid because she just cares about fitting in
She wants to fit into those jeans, those expectations, that crowd
That crowd overlooks her as an individual with a heart
That heart was broken many times by rejection
Rejection is the reason she wants to be the center of attention
The attention makes her feel better about herself
Being herself was never good enough for the world
The world taught her to hate her true reflection
The reflection that is coming from the mirror
The mirror that I’m standing in front of
As she stands in front of me
Embarrassing Moment
By: Maryanne Lee

Bundled up from head to toe, Miley rushed to class, snow crunching under the soles of her feet with each step. She let out a small cry, thinking to herself, "I have only three more minutes." With fear of being late, she ran as fast as her legs would take her. As she entered the classroom, she checked her cell phone and found that it was exactly ten o'clock AM. She thought she was right on time, but, the clock sitting upon the wall said otherwise. It was apparently five minutes fast, and lecture had already started. She tried to quietly enter the classroom, but all that she carried kept brushing against the desks. All eyes glared at her as she trudged towards the back of the classroom.

Mrs. Fanny was giving a writing task to the entire classroom. "Class, we are going to do a short writing exercise. I want you to take the time to write about an embarrassing moment. It could be anything, but I want the class to be in complete and utter silence so everyone has the opportunity to think and write."

Miley thought this task would be completely easy. She thought to herself, "This will be a breeze. I am such a klutz, and there hasn't been a single day where my cheeks haven't turned red from embarrassment." She reached for her pencil. But as everyone else scribbled, Miley sat still. "What the heck is wrong with me? Why can't I think of a specific example to write?" Around the room, she heard pencils scratch against the papers, only to find hers empty and pure white.

Moments passed and Miley's paper was still empty. As she sat in frustration and fear, she could hear the clock ticking away. She let out a short sigh until a huge growl came from the right of her. Miley turned her head to find her friend Stacey with rosy cheeks. Miley let out a small giggle and then went back to pondering about what she should write. But as she turned her head forward, another growl came. This time, the growl wasn't from her right, but from her left where her friend Lily was sitting. Miley let out another small giggle and attempted to return back to her wandering thoughts. But, her thoughts were once again interrupted from a grumble as loud as thunder. Miley couldn't hold herself together as she thought the stomach growl war between Lily and Stacey was too funny. As the two stomachs began to growl back and forth from one another, Miley's giggle soon turned into a loud, unstoppable laugh. Miley attempted to turn the laugh into a cough, but her classmates glared at her for disrupting the peace.

Miley could feel her cheeks turning a rosy red and wanted to stop laughing. But, she couldn't as the stomachs of Lily and Stacey were "having a conversation with one another." Miley began to tease the two, making fun of the two girls and their stomachs. Until, one of the loudest grumbles came upon the silence. "GGGGRRRRRRRRROOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWLLLLLLL." Everyone’s head turned towards the source of the noise.

"Uh oh." Miley's eyes turned big as she knew the stomach growl wasn't from around her, but inside her. She slowly turned her head down, staring at her own stomach. Stacey and Lily began to roll in laughter, and Stacey proclaimed, "Welcome to the stomach growl club. Karma sucks huh?"

This is when the light bulb hit her. Sure she couldn't think about a specific example when Mrs. Fanny first assigned the task, but now she had waterfalls of words to scribble on her paper. She began to get excited to write, lifting her pencil and getting ready to touch the tip of the lead to the surface of the pure white sheet. Until, that is, the bell rang and class was over.
"Turn in your papers," Mrs. Fanny proclaimed. The fearful look on Miley's face came back, and as Miley began walking up to the classroom to turn in her paper, she looked down to see only a single string of words were written: "Today was one of the most embarrassing days of my life." As she turned in her incomplete paper, she began to turn rosy red again.

**I'm in Charge of the World**  
By: Brett Lancaster

If I were in charge of the world  
I'd make all equal,  
Erase weapons of mass destruction, and  
Create world peace  

If I were in charge of the world  
There’d be no global warming,  
An end to all discrimination, and  
Freedom for all  

If I were in charge of the world  
You wouldn’t go hungry,  
You wouldn’t kill animals for stupid reasons,  
You wouldn’t pay more than two dollars for gas,  
Or waste energy.  

If I were in charge of the world…

**Peace**  
By: Kristin Hagan

I walk alone down a country road  
Full of thanks for peace and quiet.  
No one is talking, birds are singing  
Fields of golden wheat swaying and waving.  
Sweet, fresh cut clover entices my senses.  
Playful horses gallop freely in their pasture  
A serene moment I will savor forever.
Christmas
By: Samantha Pinkley

There are many curves on the road to grandma’s house. Six curves and the little boy is feeling queasy. He’s visiting with his five cousins to go to his grandma’s house for Christmas. He’s really excited to get to go; he’s only three. So Christmas is still the biggest deal in the world to him. It’s the one thing he looks forward to all year. He looks forward to opening his presents one by one. He’s so excited he runs up the six steps to grandmas’s door. His five year old sister tells him to calm down, but he’s too excited to stop. He sees his three Aunts in the kitchen cooking food to die for.

The little boy doesn’t care about food, he’s ready for the presents. The family gathers as one around the table. The three courses are served. The family is so stuffed that they feel like they gained six pounds and five years to their age too.

The grownups count to four
And all the grandkids run to the five foot tree. “One present at a time,” six
Groans fill the air as one of the three Aunts yell. The boy picks up three boxes, too excited to open yet. His sister is already on present six, She’s ripping so fast before anyone else is done with their first present. Everyone laughs at her eagerness. They remember being five.

The boy unwraps the best present- five racecars, but his three toy guns are just as good. Wonderful presents, everyone is just too happy for words. All six kids are in high heaven. They begin to play with each other, the six kids are there til four.
**Starry Night by Vincent Van Gogh**
By: Crystal Naes

I feel as though I am floating
Oh how it is so relaxing
I am swirled quickly around
Above water I am found
Now I clearly see stars singing

**Thanksgiving…thanking the big and small**
By: Boski Patel

I am thankful for life’s happiness and sorrows-

for that soft, chewy, chocolate chip cookie

for that fresh pine tree smell

for my mother’s trust and faith

for green, leafy vegetables which I don’t like, but are good for me

for spell check on Microsoft Word

for my strong, powerful will

for my humorous personality

for my artistic abilities

for that silly cat that roams around the neighborhood at night

for my Constitutional rights

For all these and for so much more, I am thankful
“Going Through the Motions”
By: Lisa Kim

Every day we go through the same motions and interactions
We are so blinded by the business of our lives
And driven by how to just get by and survive
We could be missing out on the satisfaction
That we can possibly get from a day’s distractions
We try so hard to be the best and strive
But look inside and see how deeply we are deprived
Our hearts are divided into a million fractions

Each one of us is a broken soul
In dire need of some place to hide
Though some may seem complete and whole
They, too, undoubtedly have a dark side
There are certain things that are beyond our control
Which make this life no easy ride

Pharmacy school
By: Stephanie Hand

I want my life to make an impression
The career I choose will set the mark.
Pharmacy is a good profession.

“How hard could it be?” Is my only question.
With an acceptance letter in my hand, I enter the dark.
Studying is my new obsession.

Classes are going to send me into depression
STLCOP has definitely lost its spark.
Pharmacy is a good profession.

“I want to go home,” is my confession
When I feel like I’m missing the mark.
Studying is my new obsession.

An “A” is what I want in my possession
That would light my spark
Pharmacy is a good profession

Despite the pain and depression
I have but one remark:
School is tough, but despite the repression,
Pharmacy is a good profession
New Life
By: Kierstyn Fornoff

She had gotten in a HUGE fight with her parents; they had never fought like that before. Her eyes filled with tears, she got in her convertible, put the top down, and headed out onto the open road. She needed to get out of the city, out of the town, she hated her life. She turned off her GPS and headed out of New York City; she’d never been out of the city by herself before. So she punched the gas and her car lunged forward going faster and faster; the wind in her hair felt amazing.

She drove for a couple hours, ignoring the persistent phone calls from her parents, when she heard a loud POP, and her car began to slow down. There was smoke coming from the hood so she pulled over to the side of the road. She put the top up and locked the doors while she reached for her phone. There was no reception! What kind of place is this that you don’t have reception? She decided to wait awhile to see whether or not someone would drive by and see her before she decided to walk to an area with reception, as it was getting dark.

Minutes passed by before she saw anything, but when she looked in her rearview mirror, she saw a horse drawn carriage trotting up behind her. A young man with a tall hat and full face of hair approached her. She rolled down her window, and he asked her if she had broken down, and she told him yes. He said he could not help her as far as the car goes, because this was an old fashioned Amish town, so he said he could take her back to the town where she would hopefully be able to contact someone.

The nice young man, whose name was Able, took her back to his town where she saw nothing but farm land and women in long dresses with their hair covered with bonnets. She felt so out of place with her fancy clothes and big hand bag. She still didn’t have reception so she talked to Able about it, and he said since it was late, he wouldn’t be able to get help for her until the morning. He set her up with his family for the night, and she enjoyed a nice home-cooked meal with a family of 10. She felt out of place, yet she felt so wonderful; the love in everyone’s eyes was so welcoming, and she realized the kind of life she had been living. Money couldn’t make her happy; she just wanted to be with a family that didn’t fight and that could spend actual time together. After dinner, the family sat around and talked with her and then showed her to a spare room where she could sleep for the night. They gave her old school long johns to sleep in and a towel to bathe with in the morning. She fell asleep so quickly, that when she awoke, she thought she was in a dream.

The youngest child of the family woke her up, as it wasn’t normal for them to be sleeping till noon. They had a big day ahead which included helping her with her car. She went with Able to another town where she was able to call her parents who later picked her up and took care of her car. She couldn’t stop thinking about the town and Able on her way home, something about that place felt so right.

She frequently went back to visit the family that had taken her in and eventually fell in love with Able and got married. She lived the rest of her life in the Amish village, working hard to feed her 5 children. She remembers that day of her car breaking down and treasures it, for it made her the happiest woman in the world.
Robbery
By Kheelan Gopal

How could I possibly have forgotten to get money out of the bank before I left home? How stupid was I? I had to find some bank around there to get money from. This was going to waste so much time and I had so much planned for that day. I hoped there would not be a big line at the bank; I didn’t have time to waste. I walked around the city and looked for a bank. Finally, I found one bank and decided to go in. Of course, there had to be a huge line. This was going to take forever! I had people I had to meet very soon too and I could not be late! So I waited and waited in line, anxious to get to the front of the line. I played games on my i-phone, texted, did everything I could to make time fly by; it was just taking forever.

When I was about four spots away from the front of the line, I was playing a game on my phone when I suddenly heard someone yell, “EVERYONE GET DOWN THIS IS A HOLD UP.” To my surprise, it was one of the three men in front of me. Those three men now had masks on so no one could see their faces. This was just great, another way to ruin my day and ruin all of my plans. The security guards couldn’t do anything because the robbers had guns pointed right at them. If they moved, they would be shot. As I was down on the ground, I quickly tried to call 911, but the minute I took out my phone, the robber kicked it away from me. Then he yelled, “Everyone crawl to the middle of the floor and throw all your cellphones towards me; anyone who tries any fast moves gets a bullet in their head!” I was scared out of my mind; I did not know what these bandits wanted. They found the bank manager and found a way to get the keys to the safe. Two of them disappeared for a while, while one stayed and watched over all of us. There were people speaking about a plan to get away from these guys and find a way for us to stop them. Once the other two robbers came back with all the money, two of the men sitting with all of us on the ground quickly ambushed them and took their weapons! They grabbed the money from the robbers, drew their guns at them, and slowly ran out of the bank with it. The robbers were confused because they were just robbed by two random people! They went to chase on after them and left the bank. What a relief! Who would have thought that there would be two sets of robbers in a bank at the same time? I was just happy I was out of there safe and alive.

Heart
By: Natalie Brooks

No one knows the pain that can haunt you every day. People think that you are okay. They go on with their lives and never bother to ask you about that certain time in your life. And as you go on and try to live a lie, it can only last for so long before you merely break down inside. You can’t keep it in for long, you just have to scream and shout in order to let it all out… but all you really want to do is simply cry. Because no one told you that you’d ever have to say good bye.
Registration
By: Maryanne Lee, Tia Joseph, Robyn Lowe, Kheelan Gopal

To ensure that I’ll be ready for battle
I wrote down all my reference codes.
My alarm is set for 6:30 am
So I go to bed with calm SA nodes

What is that sound?
Is that my phone ringing?
I guess that’s my alarm.
So early, I’ve never heard birds singing

I run all around looking for my computer
Oh, where oh where did I put it?
The clock keeps ticking towards the deadline
I think I am going to have a nervous fit.

Finally the clock strikes 7am
My heart is racing so fast.
Suddenly it’s over, and thankfully a success
It is now a thing of the past.

Ages
By: Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

When I was young
I wanted to be a princess
And meet a prince who is handsome and strong
But I realized my dream was useless

When I was in middle school
I wanted to be a popular person
And be remembered as someone cool
But ended up being a shy person

When I was in high school junior year
I didn’t know what to do with my life
I was confused till the beginning of senior year
And I finally figured out what to do with my life

Now I am in STLCOP and always holding a coffee mug
It is worth it because I want to improve other people’s lives with drugs
The Frog Prince
By: Kristine Kang

Fred was my friend or so I thought. We would eat together, swim in the pond together, play in the field together, basically do everything together, that is, until she took him away from me. It was a relaxing day in the middle of summer and we were sitting at our usual lily pad under the tree. We were patiently waiting for our food when, all of a sudden, a golden ball came flying at us out of nowhere forcing us to jump out of the way. The next thing we hear is a young, blond girl running towards the pond while screaming and crying and disturbing the once silent area. Fred hopped towards the beautiful, fair-skinned human and seemed to be communicating with her somehow because she stopped sobbing and he went down to fetch the ball. She was glad for an instant until he said something that must have disgusted her. However after a few minutes, with hesitance, she leaned down and kissed him, and magically, he turned into one of her kind, a handsome man. Without looking back, they left together and I never saw Fred again.

Native Land
By: Sarah Oh

The smell is unfamiliar as it comes from the fishy sea,
People look at me strangely; they’re not used to what they see.
Food tingles on my tongue as I struggle to eat,
It’s definitely not vegetables, sushi, or meat.
The air is rough and the pollution is strong.
Breathing is tough; I can’t do it for long.
Crowded buses and streets full of people and cars,
But night life is alive full of clubs and bars.
What a place, so new and yet so old.
Part of my past, my future will hold.

Lost
By: Stephanie Suhany

What is the time?
   It is getting late.
What are you doing?
   You know it’s not ok.
You’re away from home,
   And you’re lost today.
But there is One
   To help you find your way.

First Snowfall
By: Nicole Albers

Kids staring out the window
can’t wait to go out and play
Getting all bundled up in cap and gloves
Sledding, snowballs, and ice skating
Loving the first snow!
Perfect Jealousy
By: Bre Dunsworth

Jennifer strutted into the club knowing that all eyes were on her. Her deep brown eyes managed to sparkle even in the dim lighting. She sat at the bar and a drink was instantly handed to her by a gorgeous man sitting to her right. Giving him a quick once over, she took a sip of the drink. Jennifer knew this night had great potential.

Standing behind the bar making drink after drink, all Becca could do was glare at this stunning woman. The whole club seemed to be envious of her. But what made her so special? Becca wished she had the privilege of going out and having a good time. But there wasn’t even time for her to shop for groceries, which was evident from her bare fridge. Her days of looking fabulous were in the past.

After scoping out the place, Jenn quickly decided this man to her right was definitely the most attractive male, so she didn’t move from her spot at the bar. She was going to enjoy this perfect night because with school and a baby girl at home, these nights were far and few between. This man was very intriguing and Jenn could not take her eyes off him.

Becca continued to work her butt off the entire night. All she could think about was how hard she had to work for everything in her life. This was one of two jobs that she had to help get her through school. Becca always managed to excel in school, even with her hectic daily schedule. The beautiful girl still sat at the bar and Becca’s envy was starting to shift towards resentment.

A couple of drinks into the night, Jenn was still enjoying the chat with this man. His name was Josh and he was a model. Go figure. Josh leaned in close to tell Jenn how beautiful her eyes were. Jenn blushed and turned her head away, flattered yet a little embarrassed by the compliment. She suddenly felt the bartender’s eyes on her and she turned back around to face her.

Becca could not believe what she just witnessed. This guy just slipped something in her drink and she had no clue. She reached forward to grab the glass that was now poisoned and the good-looking girl grabbed it and said, “I haven’t finished that.” Becca froze. How was she going to get this drink away from this innocent woman without making a scene?

Grabbing her drink, Jenn could not believe how rude this bartender was being. When she tried to explain that she hadn’t finished her drink yet, the girl behind the bar just sort of stared at her. For a brief, awkward moment, the bartender seemed to plead with Jenn to let go of the drink. Jenn tugged back a little, and all of a sudden the girl spilled her drink all over the bar.

It was mostly an instinct. Becca didn’t really want to make a scene, but she saw no other choice. The only way to get the drink away was to let it “accidently” slip out of her grip. After semi-cleaning up the mess she had made, Becca told her manager what she had seen.

Jenn could not have been more surprised when she saw several police officers walk into the club and then head her way. They quickly put Josh into handcuffs. One cop explained to Jenn they needed to her to come downtown, and that she wasn’t in trouble.

As jealous as Becca had been, she couldn’t fathom any human being having such a horrible thing done to them. Feeling almost embarrassed, Becca couldn’t believe how petty her thoughts had been toward someone she knew nothing about.
The Wind
By: Mallory Howell

When the wind blows it brings a scent
   It reminds me of time passing by, slowly bringing memories
When the wind blows I smell the fall
   It reminds me of time dancing to keep the moment’s rhythm
When the wind blows the leaves swirl
   It reminds me of time moving in its mysterious way
When the wind blows I feel a chill
   It reminds me of times long ago with running noses and mittens
When the wind blows I feel like a child
   It reminds me of times when I played in the snow with my brother.

Black Roses
By: Dhruvi Patel

Dusty, blackened, and shriveled up
The dead roses sit in the vase
Reminding her of the sweet memories
Of what it used to be
“Bring me back to life” it says
And all she can do is sit and weep

Sleep
By: Sarah Oh

Droopy lids and dry eyes,
As we dream, times flies.
Soon morning arrives,
Back to our normal lives.
Waiting for the day to end,
To be back in bed for our dreams to extend.
Yearning for our happy place,
In which every second we embrace.
Precious it is for STLCOP kids,
For we lack sleep with heavy eyelids.

A Close Game
By Eric Schadler

Players on the ice,
A hockey stick in their hand,
What a winter game.

Chilling atmosphere,
Fans yelling and screaming loud;
“Come on get a goal!”

The score is a tie,
And now there is overtime.
The next goal will win.

Skating down the ice,
It’s our player with the puck.
He shoots at the goal.

The puck goes in goal.
A red light is flashing now.
We have won the game.
My Body
By: Samantha Pinkley

Brainthink

Eyes seeing

Ears hearing

Yum food

Arms for working and lifting

Muscles bulging. A heart to love

Others with. Lungs to breathe with.

Elbow rib cage spinal cord elbow

Bend playmoveworkeat pivot

I like to twist and shout and move

All about. Bend at the waist to pick

Things up and grab with it with my hand

Fingers hips, bones, behind, rear end it’s

All connect -ed in my

Body. Run like the

Wind on my legs

So fast strong

Bend at the knee

To pick up a ball

I love my body

From head

Shoul ders

Knees and

Toes toes
Crush
By: Susan Lee

When I was in seventh grade I found,
I found my first and the biggest crush
Every time I went to church, he was always around
And my face would blush

I liked him for three years
Those three years my heart was jumping
And my mind was full of fears
Thinking that he would know my feeling

Then he moved away to go to college
And my heart was sore
Because I didn’t want to acknowledge
That I can’t see him anymore

Four years have passed
Then my heart was beating again
Because all of the sudden he appeared
And I was able to see him again

He became a better guy
Who was preparing for a law school
And he was the exact same guy
Whom I liked since middle school

Maybe he and I are meant to be
It is crazy to see him
Or maybe God sent him to me
So that I can forget him

I don’t know if I still feel something
Or if I moved on
I need to figure out my feeling
If he’s the one

Untitled
By: Jerrica Rucker

I spread my wings & take flight
Soaring through my imagination
Searching for inspiration
Above the world I soar
Escaping reality
To obtain a peaceful mentality
And away from burden I fly
Looking for my paradise
My oasis away from distress
Where I am immune to
Teary eyes & sleepless nights
I fly
Defying the gravity of pain and agony
No longer bound by society’s conscience
No longer imprisoned by bars of opinion
I soar
High off the complex simplicity of my dreams
I fly…
All Is Right
By: Ripple Patel

A moment where all is right
And everything falls in place,
Where life is not finite.

Many little triumphs bring delight,
Like a chemistry test that you ace,
A moment where all is right

A Plethora of ideas takes flight
And in the mind, it’s a race,
Where life is not finite.

No sleepless night,
The conscience is not in a chase,
A moment where all is right.

Quicker than day and night
It moves at a new pace,
Where life is not finite

When life reaches a new height,
Grasp the second to embrace
A moment where all is right,
Where life is not finite.

“If School Were Closed”
By: Lisa Kim

If school were closed, I would be sleeping in for sure
If school were closed, I would be cooking up a storm
If school were closed, I would be lying in bed all day
If school were closed, I would be listening to Coldplay
If school were closed, I would be jumping up and down
If school were closed, I would be without a frown
If school were closed, I would be eating Bakers Square pie
If school were closed, I would want to fly sky high
Cell Phone
By: Kristin Hagan

Ring around the table. Ring around the table. Oh goodie, momma left her phone on the

table. But I’m not supposed to touch it. It’s pretty, like mine. But I’m not supposed to touch it. It

has buttons like mine. But I’m not supposed to touch it. Ring, ring. Ring, ring. Ring, ring. But

I’m not supposed to touch it. Ring, ring. Momma must be busy. I’ll turn it off with this button…..

“Hello, hello, hello. It’s your LUCKY day! This is DJ Eddy Flash from KCUL 99.6 FM

hoping to give you some cash. That’s right-KCUL-Oldies and Goldies on the air 24 hours a day!

And you, Lucky Listener, can turn KCUL into LUCKY money just by identifying the Oldies

song of the day which was played at 5 a.m. this morning. Hello, are you there, Lucky Listener?”

“Hi.”

“And a big hi to you too, Lucky Listener. And what is your name?”

“Rosie.”

“Well, Rosie. Today’s Lucky Listener is Rosie. Rosie, if you can tell our listening

audience the name of KCUL’s song of the day which was played at 5 a.m. this morning, you will

win one hundred dollars. Yes, that’s ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS just for naming KCUL’s song

of the day. So Rosie, what song is running through your head? Come on Rosie. Run for the

money!

“Momma told me not to run…” Oops, I dropped the phone.

“Rosie, did I hear you say ‘Momma Told Me Not To Come?’ That’s it! Our KCUL song

of the day is Three Dog Night’s 1973 blockbuster hit ‘Momma Told Me Not To Come.’ Rosie

you just won ONE HUNDRED LUCKY LISTENER DOLLARS! Rosie, are you there. Rosie?”

“Hi. I dropped the phone.”

“Listeners, Rosie was SO excited about winning one hundred dollars that she dropped the

phone! Well, I’d be excited too. Now, Rosie, if you are a KCUL listener, you know that you

automatically qualify for a chance to win even bigger money. That’s right. You can win five

hundred Lucky Listener dollars if you can name KCUL’s Midnight Madness Oldies and Goldies

song of the day that was played at 12 a.m. this morning. So Rosie, for FIVE HUNDRED

DOLLARS, name that GOLDIE!

Silence.

“Rosie, I said, name KCUL’s Midnight Madness Goldie.”

Silence.

“Rosie. Rosie. You have five seconds to name the Midnight Madness Goldie and win

FIVE HUNDRED LUCKY LISTENER DOLLARS!”

Silence.
“Last chance. Talk to me Rosie!

Oh, no. There’s mommy. I’m going to get in trouble. I’ll smile at her. “Mommy, mommy, mommy.”

“Oh, Rosie. Just in the nick of time. That’s it. ABBA’s 1976 mega hit ‘Money, Money, Money.’ What Luck. Congratulations Rosie! You are our Midnight Madness Five Hundred Dollars Lucky Listener! Stay on the line so we can get your address and zip this big fat KCUL check your way. Okay, Rosie? Rosie?”

Click. “Hi Mommy.”

“Rosie, have you been playing with my phone again?”

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**Ten Rights**
By: Stephanie Chen

One is not the gun.
   It’s say what you want.
   Publish what you want.
   Practice what you want.
   Appeal whenever you want.

Two is the gun. Carry a few
   at home or hold them in your hands.
   Three lets the soldiers in.
   Four stops them from searching you.
   Five is the prosecution.
   Six bears witness and a speedy trial.
   Seven has a panel of judges.

   Eight won’t accept the hate,
       the cruelty of punishment or
       extreme bail amounts.
       Nine is your umbrella.
       Keeps you safe from the unspecified.
       Ten reserves the power of the State.
Crush
By: Zach Moser

Out of the corner of my eye I see,
You sitting three seats down from me.
We talk sometimes. I must admit,
I think your hand, in mine, would fit.
Quite nicely might we go together,
Maybe for a day, maybe for forever

Dreamer
By: Malory Toebben

Oh how I love to dream
Thinking about being a part of a team
Or maybe being on the beach
Where my cares are far out of reach
Or where I can become a star
And drive in a fancy car
Or I can sit in a field of flowers
Where there are never rain showers

But how I hate nightmares
They make shiver with scares
Thinking of someone dying
And I end waking up crying
Or thinking of losing it all
And feeling like I am in a constant fall

Oh how I hope to dream tonight
For a nightmare will only give me fright

Call Me Everything, But My Name
By: Boski Patel

She’s the one too afraid to look at herself in the mirror
Can't admit that she's screwed up again
Can't see straight anymore
The drugs obscured her thoughts

They say that she’s not going to make it in life
She might as well quit now
And just go back

Falling
Falling further
With the bottle in her hand
And the pills in the other
This isn't just a cry for help
No, it’s just another lost life

She'll fight for life
Everyday she gets
Fight her parents for something that she won't get
Look for approval she'll never see
Looking for love that she's got in only one place
Running from help
Running from herself

I'm falling deeper
I'm taking more hits everyday
How long is it before it takes me down
Takes me down
When the roof is blown in & all clouds are clear
Will you still be there for me?

I know I'm just a failure & sometimes even less
I'll wander the streets at night to figure out
something to get it right
To make it better
They call me a druggie
They call me a punk
They call me everything but my name
And I'm starting to doubt myself
Because I'm scared of losing again
Ode to a Pair of Boots
By: Justin Szymczak

You know, every road around here. An acknowledged guest in hell. Inured by the path chosen for you. You don't complain or ask questions, you just do as told.

You are warm. Comfy even through a hard day’s work well if not left standing. You push on though.

Been in every fight and still come out on top Champions.

Till now.

Your burnished coat turned gloom and dull.

But this reflects great adventures, knowledge, wisdom that you've acquired.

Now you no longer stand tall but limp.

If only I could get one more ride, with you. What's another hundred miles? I’ve taken care of you. You try hard not to disappoint.

But it's understandable that you'd lose your impenetrable shield. Your lust and durability have depreciated with time.

You wear your scars and imperfections as badges of honor. You've been beaten Left face down in the mud.

You fear no creek. Pungent odors linger over you considered appalling by the meek.
But this smell has purpose
Commending a lifetime of hard work and determination.

You are reliable, more so than a
dog is to a man's best friend.

But now you let me down.

It's not your fault.
Nature takes its course.
If only there was truth to a fountain of youth.
I'd bring you back.

I will not allow you to be hauled away,
that is where garbage goes.
You are not junk.
I will honor you for your dedication somehow.
Your resilience will carry on.
You will always be my pair.

My little cat Louis
By: Jessie Kim

He seems confused
Or am I confused?

Broken cups
My heart rate goes up

Those big black eyes,
Asking for a prize.

Shaking its tale
“where is my bail?”

Though it’s hard to tell
If he’s an angel or an evil from the hell

His soft furs
Makes me happy

And when he purrs
Makes me happy
Waking Up
By: Erin Gragg

The alarm is sounding
My head is pounding
I’m begging for a few more minutes of sleep
But the alarm keeps saying, “beep, beep”
I just want to go back to bed
Down on the pillow goes my head

Darkness
By: Monica Scigala

Never ending darkness
surrounds her every move.
It drains her till all hope is lost.
The light is far away,
evading her every step.
The rage at her loneliness
begins to destroy her.
She’s weak, alone, and her smile
has left her.
Opting out of deep sorrow
she battles her dark addiction
and its master,
a step
at a
time

Alpha and Omega
By: Mallory Howell

You show me the way
You make my paths straight
You show me the Truth
You open my eyes
You are Life
There is nothing apart from you
Is Seattle Depressing?
By: Stephanie Hong

In Seattle, rain is a part of life. Five rainy days in a row, a day of sun, then back to the rain. The weather changes so frequently that the forecasters seem lost at times. Being a Seattleite, it is hard to survive without loving the rain and becoming friends with it. Considering this reality, does it mean that Seattleites are hermits or poor at outdoor sports? Surprisingly, the answer is an explicit no!

As far as outside sports Seattleites do suffer from an inability to practice frequently. Sports skills depend on how hard one practices and how long one trains. Consequently, Seattleites don’t have the same advantages as, let’s say, Californians. But guess what? Through the years, the Western Washington schools have more than held their own in regional or National competitions, in football, baseball, track and tennis. Therefore, I believe that along with the inclement weather there is a greater sense of perseverance and challenge in Seattleites, and these qualities, somehow, counter balance the negatives (or it’s the coffee).

Now, what about Seattleites not being able to hang around outside as much? Well, we can always walk in the rain and get soaked. Actually, being confined has helped Seattle’s ranking as one of the more “educated” cities. Also, world renowned companies such as Starbucks, Microsoft and Amazon were created in spite of the depressing conditions, and perhaps a little because of them. As Seattleites hide away for a steaming cup of coffee or shopping online, in a warm and dry room, a few felt the rest of the country should as well.

The weather in Seattle is very similar to the weather in London, rain and gloom. London is famous for umbrellas, everywhere and all the time. For some they are a “best friend” (although sadly so). However, do not connect Londoners with Seattleites. Londoners do not like to get wet, Seattleites do, at least those under 18 years old. When passing by a school bus stop, one will notice an absence of umbrellas. Now, let’s be clear, Seattle area students don’t necessarily “like” being soaked—they like being “cool.” And-this necessity seems to override even common sense and health concerns. Is it love of rain or love of reputation?

Loving the rain, practicing sports in the rain, getting soaked, and a lack of umbrellas qualifies you to live in Seattle. However, Seattle is not alone with strange behavior, as many parts of the country proudly flaunt their negatives. It is a way of saying who you are and identity is everything.
Driving in the Snow

By: Kheelan Gopal, Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee, Lisa Kim and Crystal Naes

It was pouring down snow today. Everyone was scared to leave their house and go outside. All the schools were cancelled, most people stayed inside, but today I wanted to go on an adventure of my own. I wanted to try something that I have never tried before. I always wanted to take the car out in the snow and see how much fun I could have driving around. I always dreamed of sliding through the snowy streets and drifting through corners in my car. It couldn’t be that hard to do. I did it all the time when I used to play video games. So I decided today would be the day to do so. I went to the garage, put on my seatbelt, put the car in gear and took off. I figured I should not stay on the main road just in case the cops were around. I went to a park nearby and wreaked havoc. I started out going straight pretty fast, then I would quickly turn the wheel to the left and pull the emergency brake and watch my car slide through the snow. I regained control quickly and then sped off and went into another turn to try it again. There were not many people at the park or anyone around, so I knew I would not be getting in trouble for this. It reminded me of the video games I used to play when I was younger. It was as if I was racing around the track trying to beat the clock. I would slide through the turns as fast as I could to make it through the race. But then I was coming in too fast, and next thing I knew, I hit the curb. Oh no! What will my dad think when he sees the car? What if it is completely messed up? Will he never let me take the car out again? All these thoughts were running through my head as I sat there contemplating what I should do. I did not want to get out of the car and look because I was too scared of what I might see when I stepped out of the car. I finally got the courage to step out.

A miracle! Absolutely no damage to the car! I couldn’t believe it. It was too good to be true. As I started to jump up and down in glee, I felt my left ankle go out from under me. I fell towards the right and my elbow hit the car, and the next thing I knew, I hit the snow. My ankle was throbbing and I couldn’t get up. It hurt to sit still, but it hurt even more when I tried to move. “oww, owww, oooowwww!” I kept thinking to myself. And I kept thinking that for the next few minutes. Nothing else entered my mind. But then, a police car pulled up. I started breathing faster and my heart started pounding. What was the policeman going to do? I managed to pull myself up and made sure that I was indeed howling in pain silently, not loudly. I definitely had to pull myself together. My ankle protested the weight of my body with even more pounding and I pushed through, just to hear the footsteps of the policeman come up towards me. I turned around to see a short, angry-looking female cop. I waved and my heart sank as I tried to come up with an excuse as to why I was in this park when I should be inside.

And then it came to me: I was coming to take pictures of the scenery and happened to slide out of control. My new camera that I got for Christmas was in the passenger side compartment of the car. Would the cop buy it? She just looked so grumpy. It was like a frown was a permanent part of her face.

As she approached, I felt like she was eating my soul out. I tried to breathe slowly. In... Out...In...Out. I so hoped that she’d believe my story.

When she got within talking distance, I shouted out, “Thank goodness you’re here! I was coming to take pictures of the snow-covered trees and my car slid out of control! Could you help me?”
The cop responded with, “Are you sure you were just out here to take pictures of the snow-covered trees? Why do you look as though you’re in so much pain?”

Quick! Quick! How did she catch me? Do I really look like I’m in that much pain? Oh no, what do I say? It felt as though a million thoughts were racing in my head, and then I finally came up with, “I got too excited with taking pictures and ran around and slipped and fell because there’s so much snow outside.” As stupid as it sounded, inside I was praying that she would buy this.

After all, part of it was truth. I wasn’t hurt while I was in the car. I got hurt jumping up and down in joy. What difference did it make if the joy was due to how the car looked or how the trees looked? Joy is joy, and falling is falling. I did not crash—well at least my pain was not from a crash.

The cop looked at me quizzically and started laughing. Why was she laughing so hard? She then said, “It’s very surprising to me that some people take the time to stop their busy, routine lives for just a moment and look at the beauty in life.”

“Uh...well...I love trees. I was joyful about them. But I do think maybe my ankle is broken. Can you help me? Could you maybe call my mother who is at work.....no, if she didn’t have to be there, she wouldn’t have gone in on a day like today. Could you call a friend for me?”

She laughed again. “Can’t you call you friend yourself? Where’s your cell?”

“Uh..next to my camera... in the front seat of the car.”

She laughed even more. “Hard to take pictures of trees with a camera lying in the front seat of your car. Come on. I’ve had a good laugh. I’m in a better mood. Spill it. How’d you hurt yourself?”

“I really was jumping for joy.”

Tear were coming out of her eyes, she was laughing so hard. “Okay tree boy.” She walked over to my car, picked up my cell phone and threw it at me. She was a good shot, but it was so unexpected that I nearly didn’t catch it and nearly got clobbered on the face. “Call your friend. No monkey business.”

I called Shannon while lying on the snow. I explained the entire situation. Shannon was not pleased but decided to come help me anyway. In the meantime I tried scooting myself near my car, pulling myself up next to it and hopping to the passenger side where I sat and waited.

Fortunately Shannon was more rational than I. He did not come alone, but brought Dennis with him so one could drive my car out and the other could take me to Mediquick to have my ankle taped. They decided that Dennis would drive my car, and Shannon and I would follow to my home. If my parents were not home (which was almost certain), we would leave my car there, and all three of us go in Shannon’s car to Mediquick.

As we got into the car, Shannon gave me a slap on the head. “What were you thinking?!” I tried to justify my craving to drift in the snow, but nothing plausible would come into my head. Thus, I simply
agreed how stupid it was for me to take part in such a dumb idea. We finally reached my home, and just as I thought, my parents weren’t home. Dennis came out of his car and started running towards Shannon’s car. One moment, I could see him through the windows. The next minute, he disappeared out of thin air. A scream came running from his mouth, and Shannon and I looked to see what had happened. Dennis had slipped in the snow as he ran.

Shannon ran towards him, hoping that there weren’t two men he had to take care of. As Shannon approached Dennis, Dennis was laughing about on the ground.

“Are you okay?” Shannon asked.

“Yeah, I’m cool dude. Let’s go now to Mediquick for that idiot over there, sitting in your car.” Dennis replied.

With that, we all went on a car trip in the snow to help my poor leg from a stupid tragedy.

The Companion
By: Mallory Howell

You are there
You are everywhere
You are here
You are always near
You are love
You came from above
You are old
You are new
You love me
You were
You are
You always will be

Haiku
By: Roshani Patel

Late night studying
A lot of food, laughs, and friends
Procrastination at its best
you ever thought about how powerful a word really is,...
i mean REALLY thought about it....
for example...
our thoughts are words unspoken
poetry is an artistic arrangement of words
songs are words spoken rhythmically over a beat
a conversation is a constant exchange of words
sermons are words from god
a book is a compilation of pages of words that trigger imagination.....
there are words of encouragement
words of advice
words of thanks
words that people make up just to sound more intelligent than they really are
i mean word is a word too right....
see... like the concept of a word is amazing to me...
love
its a four letter word
just like those other four letter words we are frowned upon for saying
or what about no...
its just two letters that have the power to deny access
or inhibit the increase of drug abusers
wait.... so is I really a word...
technically its a letter of the alphabet
yet is probably the most used word..... in America [selfish bastards]
Google.... the richest company EVER
is a word...
specifically a verb meaning to search on google.com
or take insurgents for an example....
has insurgent always been a word
or did the government wave its magical wand
and make it a word for their sake...
which leads me to the words lies deceit sneaky bastards etc.
right....
words are like a skeleton key
the specific arrangement of letters and sounds
can do everything from
express the most heart-felt feelings to
determine which bathroom you use
people claim that money, family, love, friends, success, change are all keys to life
but they're words,
ultimately making words the key to life
so choose your words wisely
I was walking through the garden.
And saw many types of flowers: lilacs, daisies, mums, and roses. All have their special qualities. Dahlias, my favorite, are yet to come. Peonies never look good in a vase. Lilacs never really make me giggle because I used to call them mums. Tulips are nice, but they never look as simple and not overly sweet. Lilies are such a mystery to me. Mums make me hard to see. Little does my society that all about them; what they do I don't understand. Columbine are so little; they are not so simple. And hosta plants could be in a hundred species. These are a family of over one was left that I quite do not understand. These are blue rose; one that blooms on a warm summer's day. But that new life is found in an almost any color. Any color except blue. This flower is one represents love. Is that why they can't be blue? I really want to find a rose. Roses aren't my favorite flower; until I got one in my sight. They are so unbelievable until seen with one's own eyes. One look and they can take more than a breath away. And all to say, they come from the dirt. Just the plain old dirt; decomposing. How neat it is to think that the beautiful and confusing rose can come from such a place. When I walk into a garden, now I appreciate the dirt, the flowers, the everything. But without the dirt there can be no flowers, no roses for me to appreciate. Well now I think I have said enough of gardens and roses, but there is way too much to talk about. How roses grow and grow, live and live. Gardens and roses are two topics that I would like to discuss. Now, I have just begun to get to know what lies within a garden, within a rose. Have fun exploring!
Table Of Contents

Toy Shop by Erin Frevert P.1
‘Twas the Night Before Halloween by Smit Patel P.2
The Season of Fall by Josie Millard P.2
The End by Susan To P.2
Haiku by Susan To P.2
A Twin Sister by Tia Joseph P.3
Haikus by Libby Herman P.3
A Soldier’s Confession by Peter Ho P.4
Walt by Saba Aziz P.4
My Lucky Charms! by Keelan Gopal P.5
The Rocking Chair by Kierstyn Fornoff P.6
Fall 2011 Welcome Back BBQ Winners: P.7
  First Place Haiku by Kathryn Silva
  Second Place Haiku by Nathan Wesche
  First Place Poem by Kelsi Moua
Oil by Susan Lee, Peter Ho, Crystal Naes, Susan To, Kierstyn Fornoff P.8
To Give Meaning by Natalie Brooks P.8
Stinky Skunk by Susan Lee P.9
I am an Animal by Kushbu Patel P.9
You are Amazing by Stefanie O’Brennan P.10
Angelic Wings by Suong Nguyen P.10
Internet Connect by Marquita Martin P.11
Domestic by Maryanne Lee P.12
The Invention of Pot Stickers by Robyn Lowe P.13
Come Back by Benazira Mustafic P.13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensational by Zach Moser</td>
<td>P.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing away the Fear by Crystal Naes</td>
<td>P.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled by Dhruvi Patel</td>
<td>P.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiku by Dina Saakova</td>
<td>P.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On by Malory Toebben</td>
<td>P.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box by Jerrica Rucker</td>
<td>P.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence by Chang Lee</td>
<td>P.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family by Roshani Patel</td>
<td>P.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky and Her Dog by Samantha Pinkley</td>
<td>P.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters by Maddie Normansell</td>
<td>P.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Achilles by B.J. Byland</td>
<td>P.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulochers by Ashley Benain</td>
<td>P.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise by Stephanie Hand</td>
<td>P.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bouncy Beagle by Kristin Hagan</td>
<td>P.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halloween by Stephanie Chen</td>
<td>P.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monster Beneath our Beds by Susan To</td>
<td>P.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haikus by Crystal Powell</td>
<td>P.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest for the Ancients by Teresa Nadolski, Joel Henneberry, Xing Yang</td>
<td>P.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before I Die by Saba Aziz</td>
<td>P.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Sweet Broken Home by Bre Dunsworth</td>
<td>P.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalactite Searching Club by Kristin Hagan, Mike Feller, Mitual Gandhi, Bre Dunsworth, Joe Kang</td>
<td>P.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race by Keelan Gopal</td>
<td>P.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Diet by Mallory Howell</td>
<td>P.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain: A Vilanelle by Kierstyn Fornoff</td>
<td>P.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rose Bush by Zach Moser</td>
<td>P.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words by Samantha Pinkley</td>
<td>P.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades by Kinjal Patel</td>
<td>P.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy School by Erin Frevert</td>
<td>P.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy Slides by Crystal Naes</td>
<td>P.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry by Malory Toebben</td>
<td>P.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists by Sonalie Patel</td>
<td>P.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a Pharmacist by Boski Patel</td>
<td>P.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmo by Ashley Benain</td>
<td>P.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night things Changed by Faith Slaton</td>
<td>P.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightmare by Brett Lancaster</td>
<td>P.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe by Mallory Howell</td>
<td>P.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuck in Wal-Mart by Tia Joseph</td>
<td>P.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Protest by Jessie Kim</td>
<td>P.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no I in Team by Peter Ho</td>
<td>P.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink by Ripple Patel, Josie Millard, Misty Collier, Libby Herman</td>
<td>P.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Arch by Sam Buckler</td>
<td>P.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monsters in my Head by Kristine Kang</td>
<td>P.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me by Clinton Martin</td>
<td>P.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Wolf and the Pigs by Saba Aziz</td>
<td>P.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Loathsome to Languish- Breaking the Bleak Bloke by Brandon Gregory</td>
<td>P.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradation by Luke Walker</td>
<td>P.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icicles by Luke Walker</td>
<td>P.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Best Day by Stephanie Hand</td>
<td>P.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Never Know by Benazira Mustafic</td>
<td>P.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table Of Contents

New Years by Vruti Patel  
P.45

Crazy Taxi by Ripple Patel  
P.45

Guess Who by Smit Patel  
P.46

Haikus by Roshani Patel  
P.46

Holiday by Vruti Patel  
P.46

Rare Jewels by Ashley SooHoo  
P.47

Friends by Kushbu Patel  
P.47

Life? Love? Lawyer? by Saba Aziz, Peter Ho, Robyn Lowe, Stephanie Chen, Susan To  
P.48

My Family by Joe Hobbs  
P.51

Friendship by Chang Lee  
P.51

“New Life” by Jessie Kim  
P.52

Family Christmas by Libby Herman  
P.53

Best Company by Jerry Hu  
P.55

The Big Catch by Joe Hobbs  
P.56

The Rough Draft by Justin Szymczak  
P.56

Who is SHE? by Marquita Martin  
P.56

Embarrassing Moment by Maryanne Lee  
P.57

I’m in Charge of the World by Brett Lancaster  
P.58

Peace by Kristin Hagan  
P.58

Christmas by Samantha Pinkley  
P.59

Starry Night By Vincent Van Gogh by Crystal Naes  
P.60

Thanksgiving…Thanking the big and small by Boski Patel  
P.60

“Going Through the Motions” by Lisa Kim  
P.61

Pharmacy School by Stephanie Hand  
P.61

New Life by Kierstyn Fornoff  
P.62
Table Of Contents

Robbery by Keelan Gopal P.63
Heart by Natalie Brooks P.63
Registration by Maryanne Lee, Tia Joseph, Robyn Lowe, Keelan Gopal P.64
Ages by Susan Lee P.64
The Frog Prince by Kristine Kang P.65
Native Land by Sarah Oh P.65
Lost by Stephanie Suhany P.65
First Snowfall by Nicole Albers P.65
Perfect Jealousy by Bre Dunsworth P.66
The Wind by Mallory Howell P.67
Black Roses by Dhruvi Patel P.67
A Close Game by Eric Schadler P.67
Sleep by Sarah Oh P.67
My Body by Samantha Pinkley P.68
Crush by Susan Lee P.69
Untitled by Jerrica Rucker P.69
All is Right by Ripple Patel P.70
“If School were Closed” by Lisa Kim P.70
Cell Phone by Kristin Hagan P.71
Ten Rights by Stephanie Chen P.72
Crush by Zach Moser P.73
Call me everything, but my Name by Boski Patel P.73
Dreamer by Malory Toebben P.73
Ode to a Pair of Boots by Justin Szymczak P.74
My Little Cat Louie by Jessie Kim P.75
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waking Up by Erin Gragg</td>
<td>P.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkness by Monica Sciagala</td>
<td>P.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha and Omega by Mallory Howell</td>
<td>P.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Seattle Depressing? by Stephanie Hong</td>
<td>P.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving in the Snow by Kheelan Gopal, Maryanne Lee, Lisa Kim, Crystal Naes</td>
<td>P.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Companion by Mallory Howell</td>
<td>P.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiku by Roshani Patel</td>
<td>p.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words by Jerrica Rucker</td>
<td>P.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Garden by Crystal Naes</td>
<td>P.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>