ConjureRings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful World by Xing Yang</td>
<td>P. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Write a Poem by Vruti Patel</td>
<td>P. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Circle by Joe Hobbs</td>
<td>P. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obituary of an Unsure Metaphor by Alex McConnell</td>
<td>P. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration by Sean Kennedy</td>
<td>P. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Strength by Boski Patel</td>
<td>P. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regarding Life by Sujal Patel</td>
<td>P. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In My Head by Ashley Werle</td>
<td>P. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball Sonnet by Kayla Gray</td>
<td>P. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories by Jerry Hu</td>
<td>P. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits by Peter Ho</td>
<td>P. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scene at Jackson Lake by Katie Bussan</td>
<td>P. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking an Exam by Tia Joseph</td>
<td>P. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haters by Boski Patel</td>
<td>P. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five to Marry by Susan To, Peter Ho, Saba Aziz, Robyn Lowe, Stephanie Chen</td>
<td>P. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Wonderland by Eric Schadler</td>
<td>P. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Life Wasted Studying by Kinjal Patel</td>
<td>P. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STLCOP by Sonalie Patel</td>
<td>P. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch At STLCOP by Robyn Lowe</td>
<td>P. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceuticals by Stephanie Hand</td>
<td>P. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m At Peace by Anonymous</td>
<td>P. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Soldier’s Confession by Peter Ho</td>
<td>P. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Je Souhaite For You by Maryanne Lee</td>
<td>P. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Maddening with Boundaries” by Lisa Kim</td>
<td>P. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Big Sweet Wolf by Marquitta Martin</td>
<td>P. 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Me by Benazira Mustafic</td>
<td>P. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep by Dhruvi Patel</td>
<td>P. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Left by Amanda Recchione</td>
<td>P. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memphis by Bre Dunsworth</td>
<td>P. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Memory by Jessie Kim</td>
<td>P. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate E3 by Anonymous</td>
<td>P. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time by Thuy Tran</td>
<td>P. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tornado by Kayla Gray</td>
<td>P. 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Only by Jonathan Orf</td>
<td>P. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent Sobs by Troy Porter</td>
<td>P. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Winner by Gozie Uzendu</td>
<td>P. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty Rhythm by Troy Porter</td>
<td>P. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet by Amanda Syers</td>
<td>P. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn Around by Samantha Pinkley, Tia Joseph, Kierstyn Fornoff, Susan Lee</td>
<td>P. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man by Min Ho An</td>
<td>P. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly by Xing Yang</td>
<td>P. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying by Sarah Oh</td>
<td>P. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Luck Quarter by Saba Aziz</td>
<td>P. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall txt by Nicole Willoughby</td>
<td>P. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic Justice by Peter Ho</td>
<td>P. 34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yes, That’s Me by Brett Lancaster  P. 34
Fall by Josie Millard  P. 35
Winter by Sabeena Rahman  P. 35
I Love Winter by Alexis Dancy  P. 35
Leaves by Crystal Naes  P. 35
Xmas! By Sabeena Rahman  P. 35
First Snowfall by Nicole Albers  P. 35
Fall by Devon Reece  P. 35
African Safari by Kayla Gray  P. 36
An Irish Murder Story By Michael Shan and Accomplice  P. 37
Something New by Puja P. Patel  P. 42
As the Rain Falls by Malory Toebben  P. 46
Treasure/Trash by Amanda Syers  P. 47
Living Life by Kushbu Patel  P. 47
Untitled by Clinton Martin  P. 47
Black and White by Xing Yang  P. 48
Don’t Do It by Luke Walker  P. 49
Lies by Kierstyn Fornoff  P. 50
Lies by Suong Nguyen  P. 50
Too Much Candy by Ripple Patel  P. 51
The Ides of STLCOP by Ashley Benain  P. 52
College by Kushbu Patel  P. 52
Lab by Steven Nguyen  P. 52
Midlife Crisis by Tia Joseph  P. 53
Memory by Xing Yang, Amanda Syers, Rachel Franz Kayla Gray  P. 54
Hero by Maryanne Lee  P. 55
Walt by Saba Aziz  P. 56
Inception by Stephanie Chen, Peter Ho, Robyn Lowe, Susan To, Saba Aziz  P. 57
Fragile Hearts by Tracy Nguyen  P. 60
Grin and Bear It by Kristin Hagan  P. 61
Dear Moon by Boski Patel  P. 62
Death of Summer by Suong Nguyen  P. 62
Monkey See, Monkey Do by Samantha Pinkley  P. 63
Haiku #1 by Saba Aziz  P. 63
I am From by Faith Slaton  P. 64
Rob’s Passion for Basketball by Birju Shah  P. 65
Niagara Falls by Kristin Hagan  P. 66
Children by Susan To  P. 66
Friday Evening by Xing Yang  P. 67
Ipod by Nicholas Tonjuk  P. 68
Prince Pasta House by Susan Lee  P. 69
Dream on the Beach by Kheelan Gopal  P. 70
Isabella by Tia Joseph  P. 70
Wait by Zach Moser  P. 71
-Untitled Haiku- by Dhruvi Patel  P. 71
Memories by Malory Toebben  P. 71
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Him by Thuy Tran</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of my Dog Tommy by Vruti Patel</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimchi by Sarah Oh</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take 5 by Xing Yang</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking Up by Eric Suh</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The God of the Universe by Mallory Howell</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuck by Stephanie Chen</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Home by Lisa Kim</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by Maryanne Lee</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause in Life by Marquitta Martin</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Date by Susan Lee</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am Happy by Vruti Patel</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adele by Xing Yang</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Love by Amanda Syers</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Sleds by Susan To</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence by Libby Herman</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain by Carrie Covet</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A Sad Tail” by Mallory Howell</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aria Sulla Quarta Corda –Bach by Susan Lee</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candles by Hannah Renner</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiku by Kayla Gray</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finals at STLCOP by Brittney McGlasson</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finals by Kushbu Patel</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration by Danielle Robbins</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aiden kicked off from the narrow ledge. This allowed the propulsion unit on his back to give the needed leverage to close the distance to the next ledge. It was a dangerous matter when visibility was limited, with the only light source coming from his helmet. It required practice to time the jump and propulsion unit, which allowed hunters, as they were called, to travel long distances that lacked proper routes. Since the boost from the propulsion only worked for ten seconds at a time, one could not just simply lay suspended in air as they pleased. When Aiden found the security of sturdy ground beneath his worn-down boots, he swiped the soot from his suit, not paying attention to the smear it left behind.

“Clear!” he shouted. In response, he saw Glenn signal up ahead that all was clear for the next jump. Aiden still took care to make sure there were no obstacles in the way, especially with the danger of falling rubble from above. Both Aiden and Glenn made sure that the impact of their jumps and landing did not disturb the structure of the sunken building. All it took was decent sized debris to make this building into a grave for any man who was misfortunate enough to take a hit. When Aiden could see no signs of danger, he took a second jump and landed next to his best friend of eighteen years. Glenn was in the same gear as Aiden: heavy boots with traction to prevent skids; a rubberized suit designed to protect from radiation, but which was thin and skin-tight to prevent excess weight; a propulsion pack strapped to their backs; a hard helmet that had a built-in flashlight; the helmet was secured to a mask that filtered the filthy underground air. These were the same gears they used for hunting. Except this time, they weren’t hunting.

“Aiden, tell me why the hell we are doing this?” Glenn asked. In the millennium since civilization had migrated underground, technology in hunter gear has allowed for many conveniences. One such convenience was being able to converse through their mask, which allowed sound out the mouth piece.

Aiden merely smiled in response to Glenn’s frown. “C’mon Glenn! Didn’t we make a promise to reach the surface? Wasn’t that why you wanted to be a hunter?!”

Glenn snorted. “We made that promise in elementary school. And I became a hunter, because I was too dumb to do anything else.”

“Aren’t you the least bit curious to see what it’s like, though?” There was excitement driving Aiden’s voice, borderline hysterical. Glenn sighed. There was no turning back with Aiden behaving the way he was. Instead, Glenn focused the light on his helmet up above. There was no sign of an opening. The darkness was a hungry beast that devoured greedily his light. Come at me, it said, drool foaming from its mouth. Except it was debris and small rocks that flowed from its mouth, not saliva.

Glenn sighed one last time. It seemed ridiculous that both of them would make it out of this trip alive. If not the journey, then what awaited them on the surface would kill them. There was a reason why humanity was forced to migrate from the planet’s surface, to live underground. It was the largest supernova recorded within the galaxy. The resulting gamma rays from that supernova destroyed the planet’s ozone. This allowed for the ultraviolet radiation from our own sun to destroy any chances for humanity to continue living on the surface.

A thousand years later, shifts in the planet’s tectonic plates caused disturbances to the underground civilization. One of these disturbances was the breaching of surface structures, such as skyscrapers, to sink underground. Only this building, later named Ground 0, was determined
to open up to the surface. Five hundred years after the incident, a small group of hunters were daring enough to journey to the surface via Ground 0. They never came back.

And it’s been another five hundred years before another attempt to the surface was made. Or being made, Glenn thought gloomily. And by two amateurs, to boot. Glancing from the corner of his eyes, Glenn could see the urgency in Aiden’s fidgeting. Growing up, Aiden was always fascinated with the Surface. And now, he is able to hopefully live that dream. Glenn was fearful that their gear wouldn’t be sufficient to prevent radiation poisoning, if they made it, that is.

With this thought, a small trail of debris coated his helmet. Except the small trail gave way to small pieces of rocks. Aiden held up a hand, which was quickly engulfed by the steady stream that was trickling down from above. They both remained silent, relying on hearing where sight was not reliable. When sounds of crumbling were followed by loud pounding, they both swore.

“Jump!” Aiden shouted. Glenn didn’t need the advice. Both men jumped in opposite directions from the ledge, using the propulsion unit to allow them to land onto a ledge higher up in the building. There was no shelter, and they could only continue to leap into the darkness, dodging the fall of lethal remains of the building. Glenn wished he could say his movements were calculated, and the skill and training of hunting allowed him to make over a dozen jumps and still survive from the avalanche of debris. Except it was more of blind luck. Midway in the chaos, he shot his grappling hook blindly ahead and used the rope to guide his movement upwards. The sensation of impact on his arm, followed by the feeling of moisture was pushed aside: panic was the dominating force, only controlled by the need to survive. Taking deep breathes on a flimsy ledge, he noticed the injury to his propulsion unit. There was a leak in the propellant tank, which meant he wasn’t making any more than one jump. His helmet and mask were cracked, and he was bleeding where the sharp rocks had cut through the rubber suit. His left arm had gone numb from an earlier impact, and was slightly bleeding. But that didn’t matter at the moment.

“Aiden!” he shouted. His best friend. Where was he? Panic was close to sinking into his mind a second time, taking control of his emotions. He looked around frantically, hearing a whimper come from his mouth. As he was about to lose himself to despair, he felt a small piece of rubble tap his helmet from above. Ignoring it, a second piece of rock flew at his helm. This caught his attention. When Glenn stared in the general direction of the rocks, he saw a disturbance in the darkness. It was Aiden’s hand, waving down at him.

“Are you alright?” Aiden shouted down. Glenn instinctively went to wipe his eyes, but left a smear on his mask instead.

“Not really. I only got enough juice for one more jump,” Glenn replied.

“Then that’s perfect. Look at this!” There was a pause and the sound of hinges being forced open. What followed was a penetrating sensation that caused Glenn to instinctively close his eyes. It was a force that completely dissolved the voracious darkness, leaving in its wake a stream of unsettled dust. Glenn made his jump to the final ledge, and grabbed hold of Aiden’s hand. He was pulled up through the opening of the building’s ceiling and onto the rooftop. Aiden had his helmet and mask off, where his disheveled dark hair was blowing in the wind.

Glenn wanted to scold Aiden for taking off the mask, but was at lost for words. The world was a mosaic of amber and scarlet, its colors splashing a canvas that stretched as far as the eyes could see. Tiny specks of light dotted the background, with a golden disk so intense it seemed to bleed through the delicate mess of the dusk. The disk was sinking, almost appearing to
drown below the horizon, and struggling to stay afloat by amassing everything in brightness as intense as a final desperate call for help.

Glenn could feel the cool comfort of the wind against the scars on his skin, and decided to take his own headgear off. Apparently, Ground 0 stood among a graveyard of skyscrapers submerged in a sea of water. Most buildings were covered in some patch of greenery as a testament to time. Remnants of early civilization remained afloat on the water. The sound of foreign creatures echoed in the solitude of the ancient city as many flocks of them took to the sky. Glenn closed his eyes, allowing the feel of wind to caress his body and whisper secrets of long past.

I Write a Poem
By: Vrut Patel

I write a love poem
on a cold winter night
by the window
next to the flickering candle.
Untouched, my cup
of hot cappuccino
smokes rusty mist
into the crisp night air.

Family Circle
By: Joe Hobbs

Family
Love
Heart
Red
Truck
Big
Elephant
Peanuts
Food
Dinner
Table
Legs
Kicking
Fighting
Siblings
Obituary of an Unsure Metaphor
By: Alex McConnell

The Shadow walked among us. Not with us or along the same path, but still accompanied. It was a human-like figure with elongated limbs and a blank expression; almost faceless.

For a time, the Shadow remained and would interact with us. Spend time and share moments seeing our ways and copying them to feel like one of us. But the Shadow could never be like us; the Shadow would not be us. To be us the Shadow could not be itself, the shadow would be gone completely and possibly forever.

Not all interactions with the Shadow could be marked as dark. In truth, the Shadow was a careful and understanding guest. Shy at first, but warmth came fast. The Shadow could become somewhat of an old friend that you couldn’t place how far back you had met. Almost like the shadow that walks beside you along the walls and roads.

The Shadow slipped into mimicking and following. Almost could be mistaken for one of us. Pulling away our fragile rib cages and softly feeling every curve and indent that is our hearts.

Compassion and trust would follow and the Shadow was further accepted among us. Not seen as one of us, but accepted as one. The Shadow was here and no one would want it any other way.

Not all of our ways were easy for the Shadow however. Times of hurt and anguish would confuse the Shadow. As much as the Shadow would think of comfort, the shadow could not help. Why are we so fragile? The Shadow saw us as invincible. What if comforting us would leave it showing weakness? Weakness was bad; the Shadow could not allow weakness. To see hurt though, the Shadow would watch quietly unsure of what to do, but too afraid to speak a word.

The Shadow was not a hard being. So much soft emotion sparked through it, but little could step out. A cage was a good way of seeing the Shadow. A jail with emotions held prisoner. These emotions would reach out through the bars, but could only go so far. Sometimes the lengths of their arms were not enough to satisfy.

Outside the Shadow would be still and expressionless. Inside the walls of the body would be pressed out in all directions and battle worn. All good emotions of happiness and confidence would flee and hide, leaving only doubt, anger, and sorrow to grow and fill the wasteland of the Shadow’s soul.

You can never be nice. You can’t be good at nothing. The Shadow’s mind would scream and the faces the voices belonged to would dance behind the Shadow’s dark eyes. You can never be nice. The Shadow wanted to be. You can’t do nothing right. The Shadow wanted to try.

But the Shadow had many qualities like us. Fear corrupted the urge to try and the Shadow remained silent. Silence was the escape, but escape did not come without pain; pain of doing nothing. The pain of us possibly seeing it as cruel haunted the Shadow.

The Shadow felt this and more. It felt a sense of never truly belonging. That it would not be missed. And so it went.

There was no shadow. Did the Shadow grow until it had become one of us? It is possible, but there is the other possibility that the Shadow went back to the dark. I believe neither. The Shadow cares and has a hard time showing itself to us. The Shadow can never truly die, but neither can it ever truly live.
Inspiration
By: Sean Kennedy

When tasked with writing a poem
they head out into the wide world
seeking grand experiences to regale us with.

Perhaps by chance some phenomena
of nature will sling words onto their pages
like a tornado or perhaps
ideas will erupt
as if from some dormant volcano.
If they venture far enough
they may encounter some
rare creature we can only dream about.

Speaking of dreams,
what if these young poets
fall fast asleep night after night
and awake without the faintest memory?

I myself am content

to stay at home once again with
a breeze drifting through the window
carrying in the scent of rain
as the radio plays on into the night.

Family Strength
By: Boski Patel

Being there when someone cries
When it's hard to say goodbyes
Family's always there for you
Tough times are hard and they get you through
We may whine, argue and disagree
But we still love each other as much as can be
We all need each other now more than ever
Our family will be stronger if we all stick together
Through good and the bad our family's strength will grow
Our family is stronger than anyone will ever know
Regarding Life
By: Sujal Patel

Mike had always been the top swimmer at Valley High School. Since he was born, he just seemed made for the water. Friends of his parents would always joke that Mike was half fish because he always swam so well. Throughout his high school career, Mike had started to break almost all of the swimming records. When he was just a freshman, he out swam Valley High’s best senior swimmer by two whole seconds in the freestyle swim. Mike started to build a reputation around the school even at such a young age. Everyone knew exactly who he was and wanted to be best friends with him. Along with all the popularity that he had started to accumulate, Mike was also the top student in his class. There was never a math problem that he couldn’t solve or a science experiment that he couldn’t handle.

As the years went on, Mike continually broke records that he had set just the year before. Although, as his popularity grew around the high school, so did his head. Mike thought that everyone loved him and that nothing bad would ever happen to him. He walked around the high school like he owned the place, knocking anyone down that got in his way. When he was a senior, Mike started to pick on the incoming freshman just because he and his friends thought it was funny. And what did it matter to him, he was Mike Phillips, greatest swimmer that ever lived. His good friends always joined him in the fun of picking on the “little babies” as they liked to call them. The freshman knew that there wasn’t much they could do about being picked on; it was just the way high school worked.

In the summer, Mike found the perfect job, a life guard. He started this job the summer after his freshman year of high school. The local pool was just a few blocks away from his house so he knew it would be easy to get to and it was easy money. He took the lifeguard test that included swimming, holding one’s breath underwater, pulling a heavy weight out of the bottom of the pool, and a CPR test. Mike passed all the tests with flying colors, as he knew he would.

The school years went by and so did the summers. Mike’s head grew bigger and bigger as nothing bad ever happened in his pool.

The summer after his senior year would be the last summer he would work at the Central Park Pool. After the summer, Mike planned to attend Stanford University where he was looking to get a free ride on their swim team. He could train in their Olympic size pool and work on his ultimate dream of reaching the Olympics just like his idol, Michael Phelps. Mike knew that this summer would be like any other and then he could finally get out of this one-horse town and move on to something more meaningful. Little did he know, the summer would be the most eventful of his young life.

Sitting at his lifeguard post bored out of his mind, Mike Phillips scanned the pool for the umpteenth time of the day. There were a few little kids splashing and mothers chatting away at the kiddy pool. A lady with an orange sun hat sat on a pool chair reading about the latest and greatest on blueberries and dieting. Some kids he knew from school were tossing a beach ball back and forth in the pool. There was Corbin, who came to the pool every day, though what he did here, Mike was not sure. It was clear that Corbin didn’t like to swim; he always sat on the side reading or writing, though today he was playing with the beach ball. A little girl was getting what looked to be swimming lessons, though it was a poor excuse for one in Mike’s opinion because the girl was not even kicking her feet. A few people were doing laps, but compared to Mike, they looked like frogs trying to swim with one leg. No Olympic swimmers here, he sarcastically thought. People were having a great time splashing and playing around, but he was
baking in the sun. All he could think about was the 6:00 p.m. closing time when he could finally have the pool to himself.

Mike’s daydreams about the Olympics were suddenly interrupted when a flying beach ball knocked a cup of soda off the table next to him and spilled all over his new red swimming trunks. He saw it was awkward Corbin and his group of nobodies. “Hey! Watch what you’re doing!” Mike yelled from his pedestal. Corbin rushed over, retrieved the ball, and mumbled some sort of apology and went back.

Annoyed that he had to change out of his new swimming trunks, which was a gift from his girlfriend, Mike plugged in his iPod ear-buds and went back to the lifeguard longue. Mike and Corbin went to the same school, and over the years Corbin had gained the reputation of being an easy target to make fun of. Such a shame, since Corbin’s older brother, Jeff, was the captain of the football team when he was in high school and was the ultimate guys’ guy. Being an only child, Corbin’s brother’s superb athletic skill and Corbin’s lack of skill puzzled Mike. *Guess some talents just are not shared between siblings*, Mike thought. Corbin was good at getting attention, though not for good reasons. He dressed as if it was still the 90s, he was tall and built, but could not throw any type of sports ball to save his life, and he hardly spoke; it was rumored that English was not his native tongue. Needless to say, Mike had no problem amusing his classmates at Corbin’s expense. In the end, it always made Mike look better to his friends anyway.

Emerging into the unforgiving summer sun again, Mike closed the door of the lounge behind him and proceeded back towards his seat. Mike glanced around the pool again; nothing new or exciting had happened. The only thing worth watching was at the west end of the pool, a group of kids were dancing to music blasting from a little set of speakers. They invited Corbin to join, to which he declined. One of the girls said something to him. *Maybe she’s teasing or taunting him*, Mike thought. Then, to his surprise, Corbin started doing a little jig. That was a funny sight to see. How Mike wished he had his camera; it would be good laughter-ammunition for his friends at school. The kids started getting into the water, some still dancing, other’s just splashing around. Corbin slipped in, made a splash, but he continued to dance.

There was a tap on Mike’s shoulder; turning, he saw that it was Jenna from his biology class. They exchanged greetings and talked about what their summers had been like so far. He told her pool stories while she told him about the marathon she was training for. Mike never told anyone this, but he had always had a slight crush on her. When he was not thinking about the Olympics, he was thinking about Jenna. She was the perfect girl; she had the looks, the brains, and was athletic. Laughing at her comment about something about a peanut butter sandwich and a car horn (he wasn’t really paying attention), Mike’s thoughts drifted to how he could ask Jenna on a date. *We’d be the perfect couple! She would make me look great! Maybe we could catch a movie? Watch the sunset? Go to that new restaurant in town? What do girls like to do? Why is this so hard?* Thoughts about a potential date continued to circle his mind as he watched Jenna talk. *Okay, I’m going to do it. Man up, Mike!* He thought to himself.

Clearing his throat, Mike began, “Hey Jenna, I know we’ve known each other for a while now. I was wondering would you…” Suddenly he was interrupted by a little tug on his swimming trunks, looking down he saw it was a little boy about 6 years old.

Pointing towards the dancing group of kids, little boy said, “Mister, I think that guy is drowning.”

Annoyed Mike looked up to see who he was talking about. It was just Corbin and his clumsy dance in the pool. Mike dismissed it and told the boy to go back to the kiddy pool; he
was not about to give up this one moment with Jenna that could change everything. He made a little joke about the boy, to which Jenna giggled and then he started again, “Sorry, Jenna. I guess what I mean is, would you like to…” Jenna was not even paying attention. Something behind him had caught her attention. Great! What is it now? Mike angrily thought. Mike stopped talking and noticed that the noise level of the side of the pool behind him had risen. Turning he saw a crowd of people around the edge of the pool, pointing at something in the water. Someone was yelling for the lifeguard. Another person was looking for a flotation device. It was Corbin. Mike finally realized, Corbin was not joking or dancing around, he was really drowning. No, actually he was already at the bottom of the pool. Mike frantically sprang into action. Using his well-trained swimming strokes, he swam across the pool in record timing and proceeded down to where Corbin was. He grabbed Corbin’s limp body and headed for the surface. Adrenaline rushing, Mike put his life guard skills to work. He told someone to call 911. He listened for Corbin’s breathing, and after not hearing anything, he proceeded to do CPR. What was he thinking dancing by the deep end if he couldn’t even swim?! This is making me look terrible! One, two, three; with each chest pump Mike started to get more desperate.

As the ambulance drove the body away and the crowd started to disperse, Mike stood speechless. His hair was still dripping and his heart beat was still accelerated. He could not believe what just happened. Just a few moments ago Corbin was alive and Mike was judging his dance skills, but now he was gone. The woman with a bright orange sun hat interrupted his thoughts, “What kind of lifeguard are you? How could you let this happen?” Everyone else seemed to be coming out of their initial state of shock. Murmurs of agreements could be heard all around him. What have I done?

And that’s when Mike’s world turned upside down. After the next few days had past, news spread throughout the small town. Everybody knew what happened at the pool, and there was one person everybody blamed: Mike.

A few weeks following the incident an assembly was held at school in Corbin’s honor. They were honoring the life of Corbin and acknowledged all that he had done in the community. While Mike thought Corbin was some sort of loser, Corbin was the type of person that people loved, even if they didn’t know it. He didn’t have an outgoing personality, but he was someone who always made himself available to help others. The dean of the high school began by addressing what had happened to Corbin. He essentially died doing what he loved, which was spending time with his twin sisters. It turns out, the reason Corbin was always at the pool everyday was to accompany his younger twin sisters, the girls who had the swimming lessons, one of which was wheelchair bound. She had lost the use of her legs in a car accident a few years ago and Corbin faithfully brought her to the pool for her physical therapy sessions. This is the type of person Corbin was. He loved spending time with his family and did everything he could for other people and not for himself. This was all information that Mike didn’t know even though he worked at the pool often. It goes to show how ignorant he was of other people besides himself.

Essentially, Mike was the complete opposite of Corbin. Although, Mike thought of Corbin as a loser, in reality, Corbin was the all-around better person. Even though Mike had all popularity and the accolades of being a nationally ranked swimmer, he was selfish, arrogant, and didn’t care for anybody except himself.

As the week continued at school, there were a lot of students that made remarks to Mike. Some said, “What the hell were you doing at the pool?” or “How the hell are you a lifeguard?” Many made remarks about Mike essentially being responsible for Corbin’s because he was not...
paying attention. Any lifeguard that was paying attention would have been able to save him. All of the hateful comments took a toll on the impermeable Mike Phillips. He was beginning to realize what he had done; he was responsible for a death of another person.

In the following weeks, Mike was beginning to realize the type of person that he was. If he had not been talking to a girl instead of doing his job, Corbin would still be alive today. If he cared more about the lives of the people around him, Corbin would still be here. He began to realize that he lived life because of his selfish desires and didn’t care for anybody else.

With his life hastily going out of control, Mike’s swimming became his emotional outlet. Friends had left him. His mother tried to speak with him, but the more she tried, the more he turned away. His father left when he was young, and they had never had a good relationship since. Water became his new best friend. Not being able to show his face at the Central Park Pool, or at any pool for that matter, Mike began swimming at the lake. Hardly anyone ever came to the lake, and that was just the way Mike wanted it. It gave him time to think or not think. He just wanted to be away from it all. Freestyle. Breaststroke. Butterfly. Anything to get his mind off of the guilt and shame. Nothing else mattered, or so he thought. No matter how hard he pushed himself, doing extra laps, lifting heavier weights, nothing helped. He still felt awful; a sick deep stomach churning feeling was always a constant reminder of Corbin’s death. Mike’s swimming skills excelled, but he felt more and more empty. The Olympics did not even seem to matter anymore. Corbin had a life worth living; Mike finally realized he had been selfishly wasting his own life.

Days turned into weeks and weeks became months, nothing changed, Mike was still depressed. Swimming for the fifth hour of his time at the lake, Mike was lost in thought about where his life was headed. Earlier that morning his mother had nagged him for the tenth time that week if he had started thinking about getting ready to go to Stanford, what he wanted to major in, and whether he still wanted to go or not. Why does it matter?, Mike thought, I don’t deserve it. Suddenly his left leg cramped up. With his muscles contracting and pain shooting up his leg to his spine, Mike fearfully found he could not move. Desperately he tried to search for something to help him stay afloat, but being in the middle of the lake, there was nothing but water around. His best friend had just become his worst enemy. This is it, Mike thought, I am going to sink to the bottom of this lake and die, and nobody is going to care.

Mike stopped fighting, and let himself go. Sinking into the darkness of the lake, Mike couldn’t help be amused at how ironic it was that he of all people would die drowning. What goes around comes around as the saying goes.

As Mike floated further and further down into the darkness of the water, he let out his final breath, still unable to move from the leg cramp and the tiredness even if he wanted to. I deserve this, Mike thought. Mike was only left to his thoughts as he lost consciousness and continued to sink.

Suddenly, a splash was hear from the top of the water and an arm reached down and took ahold of Mike. He was pulled up to the surface of the water and he started to regain consciousness. Mike couldn’t imagine who this person could be that was pulling him to safety. He attempted to look at the figure that was pulling both of them closer and closer to the shore but couldn’t make out who it was. Who could this person be and why would they be saving me? thought Mike.

The two finally made it to the beach that surrounded most of the lake. “What are you doing out here, Mike?” said a deep voice. Mike was still dazed from the events that had just occurred and was not sure how to act.
Choking and coughing up water, Mike managed to sputter, “What? Who, who are you?” The figure leaned back and Mike’s eyes focused on his face. Mike recognized the face very well. “It’s me, Jeff. What are you doing out here?” Jeff was Corbin’s older brother who had always come to pick up Corbin and his sisters when they were ready to leave the pool.

Regaining his breath, Mike responded, “I was just trying to get a work out in and then my leg cramped up. I tried to swim to the shore but my leg hurt so bad that I just couldn’t seem to move. I felt it was best that I just drown and leave the world a better place. What are you doing out here and why would you ever save me?” Mike thought this was the last thing he deserved, especially from the brother of the boy he had let die.

“I have been out here watching you swim almost every night,” said Jeff, “I take evening jogs around this lake myself. It’s a good place to think.”

Mike still couldn’t understand why Jeff would ever even think of saving him. “But why would you save me? I have caused you nothing but pain,” Mike said.

Giving a small smile, Jeff replied, “I saved you because I have been able to do what other people seem to not. I was able to forgive you. I know that you did everything you could to save my brother but some things just aren’t meant to be. Corbin would have done the same thing if it was me instead of him. But to move on Mike, you have to be able to forgive yourself.”

Mike looked up at Jeff, water still dripping off of his hair. That was the kindest and most valuable thing anyone had ever said to him. Mike and Jeff left the lake together that night, neither of them said much, but it was a comfortable silence, there was calmness and peacefulness in the air.

Touched and deeply moved, Mike’s life started to look up after that day. He applied for some swimming scholarships and was able to get one to the school he had always wanted to go to, Stanford. He learned to genuinely care about the people around him and never missed an opportunity to meet new people. Mike made new friends at college, and over time was able to mend some friendships from high school. He continued to swim and eventually made his way to his dream, the Olympics. However, every summer, Mike came back to Central Park Pool where he gave swimming lessons to Corbin’s little sisters. This is the way it should be Mike thought.

In My Head
By: Ashley Werle

I lay in my bed
Each day I dread
I say in my head
I may be dead
I pray instead
A ray of sunshine rises ahead
I stray away from the light that has been shed
A fray that is widespread
A way that is misled
At bay my mind is led
I obey what has been said from overhead
And today I have won the battle that was unsaid
Softball Sonnet
By: Kayla Gray

Nowhere in the world have I smelled something more sweet, than the fresh green grass that has just been cut. Or the lava rock dirt beneath my cleat, I take it all in with my eyes slightly shut.

The smack of the ball as it comes off the bat, or the wiz in my pitch. The smile as I sent the batter back where she sat. The grip falls into my hands perfectly on every stitch.

On a diamond is where I was born to play. With my parents near, for they are my biggest fans. Picture the grass and the trees as they sway, I know this is something God has put in my plans.

I miss the feeling as the coach hands me the ball, because nothing will replace my love for the game of softball.

Memories
By: Jerry Hu

The sad ones are best forsaken, but they haunt me, like clinging nightmares. The best ones, I guard as precious gemstones. until they fade away, like a forgotten dream.

LIMITS
By: Peter Ho

The sky is the limit But what about the moon What about the stars What about Mars? What about the dreams we never achieved The dreams we gonna achieve Where will we be in 10 years Or 20 years The future is unclear But we step forward with confidence And embrace life challenges with open arms.
The Scene at Jackson Lake  
By: Katie Bussan

One summer afternoon, Stephanie sat in the grass beside the clear waters of Jackson Lake. In the distance, four snow topped mountain peaks reflected on the water. In front of these mountains, land covered with deep green pine trees enclosed most of the bay, leaving only a small space for canoes to pass into the lake. A gust of wind carried the sweet smell of wildflowers. She looked around noticing their shades of deep red. In front of her, four young pine trees grew. Suddenly the image began to fade, and she was awake, back to reality.

It was ten o’clock on a Sunday night. Sitting at her desk, Stephanie pealed her face from a stack of biology papers and got back to work. For just a second, she admired the poster she had dreamt about, which was hanging in front of her. It was beautifully lit by her desk lamp, making it the focal point of her dark room. For what seemed to be the millionth time, she read the small text in the lower left-hand corner, which said Jackson Lake. As always, Stephanie speculated when the picture was taken. The poster was a gift and rather old, so she figured things probably looked different now, yet she couldn’t help but wonder what it would be like if she could find that exact spot. Would it be recognizable? Does it even exist? All of these questions ran through her head, and she promised herself that one day she would find out.

It was a hectic Monday evening, ten years later, when Stephanie’s dream finally came true. She had just moved and was in the process of unpacking her things when she stumbled upon a relic from the past. Tucked deep inside an old suitcase was her poster. Feeling guilty for forgetting her youthful dream, Stephanie immediately got her computer and researched Jackson Lake. She found that it was located in Wyoming near Grand Teton National Park. She reserved a flight for later that night and a room at the Jackson Lake Lodge. Unsure of what to bring, she packed a pair of tennis shoes, a hat, sun glasses, pajamas, three summer outfits, and, of course, her poster. Since she could only take three days off from work, Stephanie needed to find the spot before 8:00 p.m. on Thursday in order to catch her 9:00 p.m. flight.

Stephanie arrived at the hotel late that night and woke up the next morning at eight o’clock. She had hardly slept but was eager to start her day. While hastily eating breakfast, she began her investigation. Using Google maps, Stephanie identified five possible places where the picture could have been taken. The first place she noted was near Half Moon Bay. She decided to visit this spot before the others since it was the first to be identified. However, problems quickly arose. She had no means of getting there since it was a remote area without roads. Stephanie contemplated hiking from the nearest road but realized that would take hours, not to mention it would be extremely dangerous alone. Finally it hit her, she could take a boat. At a nearby boat rental, she acquired a speed boat for the day. About thirty minutes later, she was docking on the beach of Half Moon Bay. The scenery was breathtaking, but it was not the place she was looking for. Pulling her poster out from her backpack, she verified this sad realization; it was definitely not a match. Without wasting any more time, Stephanie got back in the boat and headed toward her second destination. She continued to do this all day without any luck. The next morning she did the same until she was simply out of possibilities. As she pulled the rental boat into the dock, she began to believe that it just didn’t exist. Sad and upset, Stephanie headed back to the hotel.
She reached the hotel grounds at about seven o’clock. Most of the guests were gone by this time, so Stephanie sat down on a boulder and watched the sun set over a row of dark green pine trees. When the sun dipped below the trees, she walked west through the small forest toward the lake. On the way, she picked a fragrant red wildflower. As she walked, Stephanie carefully plucked pedals from the flower. For some reason, this made her feel better. She thought about her trip and realized she had been so focused on finding just one spot that she had forgotten to enjoy the beauty all around her. With only one day left, she promised herself that she would forget about the poster and enjoy the rest of her vacation. She plucked the last pedal just as the forest cleared, looking up she saw something familiar. It was the scene from her poster. Her mind immediately flashed back to her little dorm room from years ago. The scene she had once dreamed of was now a wonderful reality.

**Taking an Exam**

**By: Tia Joseph**

Worry and anticipation
I hope I do everything right
Oh gosh, I don’t know the answer to this question
It seems like everything in this room is dim, where is the light?
At this moment, I have a lot of fear
But I cannot waste time
The end is near
What is that fluid in the small intestine, is it chyme?
It’s okay, just calm down
So far, not so bad
No need to frown
Maybe after this test, I won’t even be sad
Finally, I am almost done
Now I can happily walk, out into the sun!

**Haters**

By: Boski Patel

You know my name, not my story
Before you judge me, take a good look at yourself
Recognize that ignorance and jealousy go hand in hand
Understand that three fingers face you when you point one towards me
I guess they were right after all, never rely on someone else for your self-worth
Five to Marry
By: Susan To, Peter Ho, Saba Aziz, Robyn Lowe, Stephanie Chen

Once upon a time, in a far away land, there was a very rich family that lived on the top of Mount Geronimo. The father of this family, Goliath M. Frank, had five daughters and no sons. His wife’s name was May Frank, and she gave birth to Stephanie, Sophie, Lisa, Susan, and Mary Alice Frank, in that order. The Franks were rich because Mr. Frank was a cheap and stingy old man who never spent a penny without thinking and rethinking and then thinking some more. Mr. Frank was in the gold business. He provided gold for all the gold merchants in the town of Lamesburg at the bottom of Mount Geronimo.

Business was going very well for Mr. Frank. However, Mr. and Mrs. Frank were still very stressed out. They were stressed out because it was time to find a husband for each of their daughters. The daughter with the first priority in marrying was Stephanie Frank, who just turned twenty three years old. Sophie Frank was next on the list, as she had also recently turned twenty two years old. Lisa was the third on the priority list because she was twenty one years old. Susan and Mary Alice were twins, and they were both twenty years old and on the bottom of the priority list.

Stephanie, the oldest daughter, was also the most intelligent daughter of the Franks. She excelled in school and had a particular strong interest in the arts. Painting was her biggest hobby. In her free time, she enjoyed going to the public library in Lamesburg and discussing philosophy with the librarians there. Sophie, the second daughter, did not enjoy school at all. Sophie enjoyed learning how to do housework and managing the family’s business and financial matters. Nothing pleased Sophie more than to have dinner with her family. Lisa, the third daughter, was the energetic and playful one. She enjoyed going out to parties and staying out late. However, on the weekends, she preferred staying home with her family and doing family things. Susan and Mary Alice not only looked alike, but they also had similar personalities. They were the cutest of the five daughters and you would always see a smile on their faces.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank both set up dates with available Lamesburg men that they felt were appropriate and right for Stephanie. They had about 50 available men respond, all of them highly interested in marrying Stephanie. In order for these men to gain approval from their parents, each of the men had to undergo a 2-hour interview with each of the parents, do a round of karaoke to the popular American song, “Thriller” by Michael Jackson, and finally do a physical strength test characterized by pulling a carriage containing both the parents for as long as they could before getting tired. About half of the men failed in all three of the tasks, and only about 10 of the remaining available men were able to successfully complete all three of the required tasks. Mr. and Mrs. Frank talked to each other and then made a decision based on the results. They ended up choosing a man named Ima Buffman. He passed the interviews with flying colors, was perfectly on note and key throughout the song Thriller, and pulled the carriage out of Lamesburg and into the neighboring city of Lamesigo.

For their second oldest daughter, Sophie, Mr. and Mrs. Frank had a different set of obstacles for her suitors. Like her sister, Sophie had 50 bachelors looking for her hand in marriage. All 50 suitors had to take part in a 2-hour interview with Mr. and Mrs. Frank just like before, proving they were financially successful entrepreneurs because Sophie loved to take care of the family business. Sophie loved family affairs. Her potential husband also had to be extremely fluent in at least ten different languages (the more the better), for the Franks wanted their daughter to see the world beyond caring for a house and family. The final test was culinary
test, where each suitor had to prepare a 12-course meal to show that their daughter’s future husband would not take advantage of Sophie’s wonderful housekeeping skills. After a long grueling process, only eight bachelors actually passed the test, and the ultimate decision was based on physical appearance and an awesome name. Chris P. Bacon was the man chosen for Sophie, for he was a gorgeous, driven, intelligent, Iron Chef. There couldn’t have been a better man for their beloved Sophie.

Lisa was the third daughter up for marriage. Her parents decided that instead of finding 50 bachelors the traditional way, they would just pull out the 10 contestants from the popular dating show, *Genuine Ken: the Search for the Great American Boyfriend*. The show had already narrowed down thousands and thousands of potential “Ken’s” from across the nation, so in a sense, they had already done all of the hard work for Mr. and Mrs. Frank. Even though all ten contestants were very eligible bachelors, Mr. and Mrs. Frank did have a few obstacles of their own that the contestants needed to successfully hurdle. Because Lisa was a hard-core party-er, all of the contestants had to compete in a dance off to see who could dance without stopping for 12 straight hours. Only three potential Kens made it out alive, so they moved on to the next obstacle. In this event, each of the three men were given one day with Lisa. Their goal was to make that day the best day of her life. After a day with each guy, Lisa and her parents decided that Lawts O’fun was Lisa’s perfect other half.

Last, but certainly not least, on Mr. and Mrs. Frank’s love agenda were their youngest daughters Susan and Mary Alice Frank. Although the sweet, smiley twins were still young and enjoying their carefree lives, they were, nevertheless, approaching their peak marriage deadline as well. So Mr. and Mrs. Frank developed an unthinkable plan for their twin daughters. Their plan was nothing like their previous match-making tactics. They didn’t set-up any interviews. They didn’t hold any sort of contest. They didn’t even mention to their daughters about their strong desire for the girls to wed soon. Make no mistake, though, Mr. and Mrs. Frank were concerned and loving parents, but the two were incredibly wise and perceptive people too. So instead of employing their usual match-making tactics, Mr. and Mrs. Frank decided that the best way for their twins to find true happiness in life was to give them the freedom to explore on their own. They realized that the twins had grown up together and had learned to depend on each other so much that it was time that they should separate and blossom into their own unique personas. In effect, Mr. and Mrs. Frank’s ingenious plan was no plan at all. The result was better than the Frank family could all have hoped for.

Susan Frank traveled to the far city of Lamerthan LameVille, and she went there alone without her twin sister. There she met many a strange looking man, who spoke strangely with heavy lisps so thick that they made Hardee’s famous thickburgers seem anorexic. But there was one man in Lamerthan LameVille who caught Susan’s eye. His name was Togoode To Betrew. Toogoose was six feet and three inches tall. He was nearly a giant, but a gentle giant at that, because his heart was pure and sweet just like Susan’s heart. The two found each other and fell in love in a most natural, raw, and true manner.

Mary Alice Frank did not travel from home. She was focused and determined to get her doctorate degree in pharmacy at the university she was already attending. So she spent another five years completing her schooling and eventually received her shiny degree. As fate would have it, Mary Alice met her future husband at the pharmacy she worked in. He was a patient at the hospital, also very tall and well-built. In fact, his body was the product of years of hard-training. He was an NBA player, who recently injured his right knee during playoffs and was at the hospital for surgery. When Mary Alice handed the athlete his prescription for his pain, the
two locked eyes and from then on they were together like peanut butter and jelly. But the best part of their story is that Mary Alice and her husband Lamebron James had five sons and no daughters. Mr. and Mrs. Frank were ecstatic, so ecstatic that they passed peacefully in their sleep the night the fifth son was born.

Winter Wonderland
By Eric Schadler

A sheet of white covering the land,
No grass in sight, no flowers bloomed.
Snow falls gently to the ground,
And carpet the trees with powdered flakes.
Boots on my feet and scarf around my neck,
The cool crisp air chills my chest.
At the top of a mountain looking down,
A breathtaking view of all below.
I strap in my feet to the cold, sleek board,
And zoom down the mountain.
This is my playground…
My winter wonderland.

My life wasted studying
By: Kinjal Patel

My brain is exploding while I continued to read.
I stop and the book looks back at me while I just sit there.
“Biochemistry, you have no idea how much you have hurt me.”
Even after studying for hours I feel dumb like a rock.
The book will read itself.

STLCOP
By: Sonalie Patel

Studying endlessly yet still managing to fall behind with
Tiresome hours spent in the lab three days a week when
Laughing is something that comes around rarely while
Crying is something that comes around daily.
Overworking and stress is our motto, but it will
Pay off in the end when receiving that degree.
Lunch at STLCOP
By: Robyn Lowe

“Phil, please sit still,” my mom said to me. She’s the one to talk. She’s constantly shifting her weight around trying to get comfortable. Her belly’s gotten huge within the last two months and due date’s tomorrow. And it’s not my fault both of our hormones are going crazy.

It’s hard enough being 13 years old and having to wear braces AND glasses at the same time. And here I am, waiting for my dad, the pharmaceutics professor at St. Louis College of Pharmacy. Cool, right? Not.

“I’m boreddddd,” I said as I sat down once again and started playing my Nintendo DS. This is not how I want to spend my snow day. Mom decided that we’d go to the college and have lunch with my dad, since STLCOP didn’t close for the snow. So instead of having snowball fights with my friends, I’m going to be having a “nice” lunch with the family. Awesome.

Since my mom’s a waitress, she likes going out to eat and have someone else serve her instead. I guess I don’t mind, because that means I get to eat good food. Even though my mom works in the food industry, her cooking isn’t the greatest.

I look out the window behind me at the St. Louis Arch. I’ve been up there a million times looking down at the city below. Maybe when the new baby’s older I can take him or her up there and be cool big brother. Maybe.

“What’ll it be this time?” my dad says as he walks towards us. “Sushi? Sandwiches? Vietnamese?”

“Sushi,” I say as I start walking down the steps.


My dad and I rush to her sides as we try to help her get down the 5 flights of stairs. Luckily, St. Louis Children’s Hospital is only a block away.

Pharmaceutics
By: Stephanie Hand

Studying takes time
Pharmaceutics is a pain
I just want to cry
I’m at Peace
By: Anonymous

It’s been ten years
To the day
My best friend’s life
Was washed away
A day of surfing
“How fun it will be!”
Oh, why God, why
Didn’t he just ignore me?
Out twenty feet my best friend went
Unaware, not happy, but content
The waves picked up,
Jason fell
They surrounded him
Like the flames of hell
He started swimming
To and fro
The mouth of death:
The undertow
As I return
To this horrid place
The pictures flood my mind
His wedding, three kids, his happy face
The waves crash
On the golden sand
Brooding, they scare me
Like a slap with the hand
And on today,
The anniversary of his death
I release my fears
Into the ocean’s depths
With a surf board in hand,
I wriggle my toes
And place my foot
In the shivering cove
As I glanced up,
The dolphins jumped high
And I finally knew
It was time for goodbye
I’m at peace.

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
Je Souhaite For You
By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

I used to thrive on solitude, once fearful of the epitome of love.
But amidst one flashing moment, sunlight basked through the shadows
   Blinding me with such captivating beauty.

   Her golden brown hair perfectly wrapped into silky curls.
   Her sweet, strawberry perfume, disseminated by the winds.
   Her chiffon dress flowing while hugging her bosom and waist.

I yearned to muster the courage, to embellish her with flowers of love.
   To “carpe diem” while time still ticked.
   But all I could do was watch, and ponder to my own self in despair.

How if life was an impending storm, I was nothing but a simple drizzle.
   While she, herself, was a deadly hurricane. Wreaking havoc
   with her alluring statuesque form.

“Maddening with Boundaries”
By: Lisa Kim

   Maddening?
   It’s maddening that we both know of this strong attraction
   Neither of us has even attempted to pursue this venture
   We both zigzag through light flirtation
   Then stop and start again
   Which leads to a few days of questioning mellowness
   We are two peas in a pod
   Pain is natural
   And you know I will always be there for you
   I respect, care, and appreciate you
   The thing is, I cannot wait either
   Why is it wrong?
   Boundaries

   The next time we speak
   Tell me what you want
   Be straightforward
   Let me know where I stand
   And where you want us to stand
The Big Sweet Wolf
By: Marquitta Martin

Everyone always thinks that I’m the bad guy! “Oh, let’s make a story and have a wolf be the crook.” Why do they always pick on my family, why not a bear or dragon or something. First, my brother is accused of eating a grandmother and stalking a little girl. No one ever asked for his side of the story. For heaven’s sake, that little girl was meddling on his property in the woods. If anything, she should have been the one convicted for trespassing. He had every right to follow her, to make sure she didn’t steal or destroy anything.

With my brother facing time in prison, I decided that it was up to me to make a change. For too long, society has depicted my kind as ferocious, sneaky animals, so I wanted to do something to prove them wrong. When I saw that three pigs were moving into my neighborhood, I figured that would be a perfect opportunity for me to show everyone how loving and pleasant we wolves really are.

I think that the three pigs were brothers, or maybe close friends, because they all came to build new homes at the same time. I remember that it was during the spring time because my allergies were killing me. “They’re new to the neighborhood. I’ll go over and offer to show them around, so that they can be comfortable and familiar with their new home,” I thought to myself, slightly blushing at my wonderful idea. Then everyone would see that I’m a nice guy, and people around here will start showing me some respect.

I waited for a while before introducing myself to the pigs because they seemed so occupied with building their houses. They all worked independently; three separate houses made of three different materials: straw, stick, and brick. The only thing that was similar among the houses was the flowers each had planted and set in the window sill.

The pig that made his house out of straw just so happened to live the closest to my house, so when I felt that it was an appropriate time to finally meet him, I walked over to his house.

“Knock, knock!”

I knocked on the door and waited for a reply, but no one answered. Looking up into the window, I saw that the bedroom light was on, so I figured that the pig must not have heard me knocking. So I yelled out toward the window for him to hear, “little pig, little pig, let me in!” I was excited about meeting my new neighbor. It was an opportunity for a fresh start with a potential friend.

“Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!” the pig yelled out of the window. I didn’t understand why he would say that.

“Little pig, my name is B. Wolf, and I jus… jus… just… awwww CHOUUU!!!!”

Out of nowhere, a massive sneeze escaped from my mouth. It was so extreme that it made my chest hurt and my eyes close shut. When I opened them, before me stood a pile of straw.
The pig’s house… it was gone!! My sneeze must have been so powerful that it knocked down his home. I didn’t know what to do, I felt so bad. The little pig was nowhere in sight, so I ran to his brother’s house to get help.

“Little pig, little pig, let me in!” I cried out as I knocked on the door with alarm.

“Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!” I still didn’t understand that response. Was the pig shaving? This was no time for hygiene, I didn’t know where the first pig was and I needed help.

“Little pig, something terrible has happened and you mus…. mus… must…. Awwww CHUUU!!!!

It happened again! The house crumbled slowly before my eyes leaving only a pile of sticks to remind me of the chaos I’d just created.

This can’t be real. This must be a dream. Here I am, trying to welcome my new neighbors and introduce myself. Here I am, trying to do a good deed and make friends, but instead, I’m ruining their homes. And even worse, the second pig was nowhere to be found. My allergies weren’t usually this bad. That’s when it came to me: THE FLOWERS!

The flowers that the pigs planted on the window sills by their front porch must have triggered my allergies, making them worse. After knocking two houses down, I had some major explaining to do, and I needed to talk to those pigs quickly. Maybe they had run to their older brother’s house; the one made of brick. Scared that the pigs might call the police on me, I rushed to the third house.

“Little pig, little pig, let me in!” I yelled without even knocking on the door.

“Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin!” he replied. What is it with pigs and their beards? It’s just so weird.

“Pig I really need to talk to you because when I was…. was… was…. Awww CHUUU!!!!”

Not again, I thought to myself after sneezing. I was too afraid to even open my eyes; I couldn’t stand to see another broken home added on to my broken heart. Slowly and hesitantly, I opened my eyes. To my surprise, the brick house was still standing. This had to be a miracle.

With another chance to make things better, I had the perfect idea. Seeing that the flowers on the porch wanted me in prison, I decided to avoid using the front door. I needed to talk to that pig fast, and to see if his brothers were inside with him, so instead of knocking again and allowing those flowers to hassle my allergies, I decided to take the chimney instead.

At the time, it seemed like a brilliant idea. The pig didn’t have a back door, so the chimney was my only way inside the house. The third pig was obviously busy shaving his beard, so I took it upon myself to go upstairs to him.
I climbed to the roof and made my way to the chimney. Let me add that I am extremely terrified of heights, but being the kind-hearted wolf that I am, I did what I had to do. Looking down the chimney, I thought to myself “that doesn't look very roomy. Oh well, here goes nothing.” I closed my eyes and slide down the chimney.

“SPLASHHH!!!”

“OUCHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!” A hot, burning sensation melted my bottom as I realized I had fallen into a pot full of boiling water. I looked up to see the pig, who cruelly smirked at me as I screeched in pain.

Anxious for this hellish dream to be over with, I managed to get out of the pot and ran home. How could that pig have been so evil; to trap me when my only intentions were to help and befriend him?

Of course, as with every other predicament we wolves get caught up in, the media made me out to be the bad guy. “A local wolf destroys two homes and eats the residents inside! The older brother was the only one to survive, thanks to his strong, brick house.”

Are you serious? This is what happens when I try to get society to accept me? After hearing that news on the television, I left town. I couldn’t bear the comments, allegations, and lies. I don’t even like pork, why would I eat a pig? No one got to hear my story, and I’m sure no one cared to.

“Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?” well apparently the government isn’t because they’re trying to haul us all to prison.

Love Me
By: Benazira Mustafic

Love me without stopping
Love me wherever I am
Love me just as I am
Love me when I’m gone
Love me no matter what
Love me even if you don’t have a reason

Sleep
By: Dhruvi Patel

The chocolate melted in the mouth with the bittersweet taste
Now she had a sugar high and could not sleep
But she hadn’t slept for days
And feels that once her eyes close, she can sleep for years
What is Left
By: Amanda Recchione

Another person who is quick to judge
For once let's live without it
Without the harsh words of others
The many thoughts they might think
Let's just be happy

Don't let a thing they say
Ever get in the way
Of what makes you smile

Or of what might come from this chance
Risk it, what is left to lose?
UFO's may come steal you away
Lift you off your feet
Weightlessly flying

Don't let what the world says
Make you feel that you shouldn't
Swim against the current

You remind me of a time
Where things seemed much simpler
Love was easier to find
And effortlessly stuck around

Whenever, whatever, whoever
As long as emotions are content
Life is Good.

Memphis
By: Bre Dunsworth

It’s a wonderful day today
It is just my luck
“Off to Beale Street!” I say

It’s almost summertime, almost May,
I can’t wait for tonight, it won’t suck
I am so ready for this day

I put on my Memphis clothes and yell YAY!
I walk outside and there’s my friend Chuck
“Off to Beale Street!” I say

Time for lunch, my boyfriend will pay
I want chicken -- Cluck Cluck Cluck
I am so ready for this day

As the sun sets, all I can think is Par-Tay!
It’s getting crowded, I hope I don’t get stuck
“Off to Beale Street!” I say

The people in the streets are starting to sway
It is time for fun, wish me luck
I am so ready for this day
“Off to Beale Street!” I say

Old Memory
By: Jessie Kim

Grey sky reminds me of hot coffee.
This craving gets worse when it rains.
Little things like this I see around
Bring back the old memory of mine
Though I miss Seattle and its weather
I must move on with my life.
Though, I miss Seattle and its weather.
GATE E3
By: Anonymous

They smile to each other one last time,
As they both part their separate ways,
With one last embrace he feels sublime,
With one last goodbye he is put in a daze.

He walks away from her not looking back,
Holding in his deepest emotions,
Ideas and regrets start to stack,
As he stops his forward motion.

He smiles when he starts to remember,
All the memories flow back to his mind,
Those little moments in November,
That showed him love isn’t blind.

An epiphany turns him around,
He’s made a mistake,
He runs in rebound,
His heart fully awake.

Running down the sky way,
Chasing down a plane,
Hoping to change his day,
What he is doing seems not in vain.

He is suddenly put to a hold,
While his heart is beating fast,
Feeling amazingly bold,
Because he finally sees her at last.

With one look he knew,
She was thinking the same,
He said “I love you.”
She responded back with exclam.

They stood there at gate E3,
With joy encompassing their hearts,
Knowing that this is meant to be,
Not even distance can keep their love apart.

Time
By: Thuy Tran

Empty space in the path
Change is our unknown.
Spring and summer gone from time.
Were we all meant to be alone?
Dark clouds loom over Mother Earth,
Cold winds whisper in fear.
No more sunshine fills our hearts.
The end is very near.

Yet we pretend nothing has changed,
Same ole, same ole, we all say;
But it’s the feeling of reassurance
That keeps uneasiness at bay.
It’s easy to turn back,
To run and hide.
But time is everlasting.
The very thorn on our side.

The inevitable will arrive,
A guaranteed fact.
Who’s to say it won’t?
Just the very thought makes you crack.

Were we all meant to fear?
Were we all meant to be alone?
Does it matter really
That our skins will turn to bones?

Live the life we shall want
‘Cause this is our time.
The time to explore and to create
The very time we love and hate.
Tornado
By: Kayla Gray

A green cloud, a boom of thunder and a flicker of light. Threatening hues of black, green, blue and more. A frightening wall a cell so big and high. A pre-planned attack is what nature has in store for today. The lightning cuts across this late afternoon sky. The hail comes down the size of eggs. When the cool and hot air meet, it upsets the clouds. And they start to turn and turn without any begs. The cloud stubbornly grows and reaches for the peaceful ground below. The world is unhappy with its unwanted foe.
Welcome Back BBQ Winners

First Place Poem:

If Only (a poem about Lia Lee)
By: Jonathan Orf

Little Lia Lee,
    Born into a world unknown,
Your parents pray your soul won’t be lost,
    While your doctors say it is all their fault.

If only they would have given the right meds,
    If only they would have spoken English,
    If only we could have compromised,
    Lia Lee could have been saved.

But saved you were to your parents,
    Their love unconditional,
You proved the doctors wrong,
    Still your parents only wondered.

    If only we were in Laos,
    If only we were home,
If only the doctors didn’t give her too many meds,
    Lia Lee would be as normal as anyone else.

    If only, If only…

First place haiku

Innocent Sobs
By: Troy Porter

Younger hearts will cry
    Upon softened lullabies
Tears of the mother
Honorable Mention Poem

GAME WINNER!
By: Gozie Uzendu

Ten seconds left in the game
The entire gym echoes my name
“G! G! G!” roars the crowd
Nervous as I am, I’ve got to make them proud
70-68, we’re down by two
A three-pointer would win the game, but a two would do
I run through a screen my teammate sets for me
I catch the ball and glance at the shot clock: 5, 4, 3…
I fake a shot as my defender approaches and he flies into the air
Then with one dribble to the right, I throw up a pray’r
The official puts up three fingers; the shot would win the game
And all the while the excited crowd is still chanting my name
My phone goes off, it’s 8:05, I’m late for my morning lecture
“What happened, G?” “I had a dream I made the game winner!”

Honorable Mention Poem

Empty Rhythm
By: Troy Porter

My fingertips were filled with a steadier heartbeat
Arteries got their pride from a hue of bluer veins
Streetlights pulsed in yellow where older shadows meet
When the seconds of a stranger time sounded less insane
A newer truth came with the wind and dissolved on my tongue
But silent breezes couldn’t calm my rambling slurred speech
The song of my palm had notes the choir never sung
And my hands were looking to hold a belief out of reach
I was painted by the brush of a greener envy
Beneath a sky that swelled and couldn’t contain the rain
Through the grayest of fog I was sifting my debris
And stumbled on the lost link to my blackened ball and chain
Diet
By: Amanda Syers

Approaching the vending machine, I quickly stopped when I began to look at the current selections. The choices left me wondering why this day was starting off badly. As I got up to the machine, various chips and candies lined the many levels that begin to startle my stomach. Why do I have to always be so hungry in situations when the food selection is not to my standard? I didn’t want to give in to the urge to eat this unhealthy food. My stomach on the other hand was fighting a war of its own; no longer was food an option, it was a necessity. Strange noises began to come from my stomach, loud enough where people began to look at me funny. It’s as if these people felt sympathy for my stomach. No longer was it funny. People began to walk up to me and wanted to give me their food; three people offered chips and many other people wanted to give me money. I felt very strange. I refused all the food and people started to ignore me. They would never understand; this body was trying to get healthier, and I needed to stick to my diet regimen or I would fall back into my old routine.

Ever since 3rd grade I was always the bigger kid in class; girls would make fun of me and they never wanted to hang out with me because they were ashamed of my appearance. It has taken me 10 years and finally I have gotten my weight to a manageable level. If these people only knew how much I struggled with food, maybe they would back off. I had class and wouldn’t get a break until 8PM. That meant that I would not have an opportunity to get food for 4 hours. I decided to go against my stomach and skip out on the unhealthy food. I could wait 4 hours if it meant being able to eat healthier food.

My stomach was still in much disagreement. As I arrived to class, my stomach was now in a full on war. No longer was a snack an option; my stomach wanted more. The sounds coming from my stomach sounded loud enough to be heard across the room. After about one hour the sounds finally came to a stop. It was sweet relief knowing that no longer was my body demanding attention. Lecture continued to go on and I started to feel a little bit funny; no longer was I hungry but I was feeling dizzier by the minute.

My body started to feel weak, but I decided it was just me being tired because I had only gotten two hours of sleep the night before. I was using my hands to hold my head up so that I wouldn’t fall asleep. Then all of a sudden my head crashed into the computer screen. I heard noises all around me, people screaming and other people in awe of what just happened. I heard the teacher becoming frantic as she asked the class what happened. I think my friends were communicating with. .................

Waking up I noticed that I was not in class but at the local hospital surrounded by nurses and doctors that began to tell me what had happened. They told me that I passed out during class and went unconscious because I had not eaten anything. I begin to think why I didn’t just eat the chips in the first place. If I learned anything, it’s that my diet is no longer a diet when I start putting my life on the line.
Turn Around
By: Samantha Pinkley, Tia Joseph, Kierstyn Fornoff, Susan Lee

It was snowing. It wasn’t even the soft pretty snow that was fun to play in. It was the angry, blustery snow that covered the ground in a matter of minutes. It was the kind of snow that made Mommy worried about Daddy coming home from work. This snow was the kind that let everyone stay home from school. For the most part, I didn’t like this snow.

Last night, the news had said snow was coming so Mom let me stay up late. She said I probably wasn’t going to get to go to school. I was sad because I wanted to have recess, but the snow made me excited again. I love snow! Snow is so much fun to play in. When I woke up in the morning, I ran to my window to see if it snowed during the night. It was really hard to see outside though because it was snowing so hard. That’s when I got upset. I knew if it was snowing this hard, today wouldn’t be a fun day. Mom would be too worried to want to play with me. And none of my friends could come play in the snow until it quit snowing.

Mom made me pancakes for breakfast, but I wasn’t really hungry. I poked around at them for a while.

“Mikey,” Mom asked, “why aren’t you eating your breakfast?”

“I don’t want to eat. I wanna play in the snow!” I gave Mom my best sad eyes, hoping she’d let me just maybe go outside.

To my surprise, the sad puppy eyes worked. “Alright, Mikey. The mailman should get here at any minute. Put on your snowsuit and you can play in the snow while I check the mail. But finish your pancakes first.”

I was excited. I got to go outside and play! I ran over to the closet where my snowsuit was always at. I pulled it out of the closet and rushed to get into it. I put the ugly hat that Grandma got me for Christmas on my head. I was ready to go.

Mom walked by me and told me I looked like the Stay-Puft marshmallow man, but I didn’t know what she was talking about. All I knew was it took her a long time to get her snow clothes on. Way longer than it took me anyways. Finally she had all her snow clothes on and we went outside the front door together.

It was colder than the North Pole outside. I flopped to the ground and moved my arms and legs to make a snow angel. The snow was already up to my knees and it was really hard to walk. I tried to make a snowball and throw it at Mom but the snow wouldn’t stick together.

“Mikey! It’s time to go back inside!”

I replied with a long drawn out, “But Mooooom!” She gave me the look she gives me whenever I refused to eat my broccoli. I hated that look.
I was looking around and noticed the Sanders next door playing outside. I yelled out, “Hey Tommy and Jane!”

They replied, “Mikey!” Jane seemed extra excited for some reason. She was a little weird. But most girls were, so I didn’t care.

My Mom rolled her eyes a little and knew she wouldn’t make me go inside if other kids were out. I smiled to myself because of this. Jane and Tommy slowly trudged over to me. I giggled a little as they looked pretty funny trying to get through all the snow. Mom laughed a little too.

The first thing Tommy said to me was, “This snow sucks!” My mom gave Tommy a concerned looked and told him not to use such language, or she would tell his Mommy and Daddy. Tommy looked down to his feet squirming a little and said he was sorry.

Jane didn’t say anything but was just staring at me. Me and Tommy were in the fifth grade and she was in fourth. I always hated when I went to Tommy’s house and all of Jane’s little friends were there. They were super weird and always giggling for no reason. I usually just ignored them.

The snow wasn’t really any fun since it wouldn’t stick. So my mom asked us if we wanted to go in and have some hot chocolate. We eagerly agreed to this and rushed in the house. Maxie ran up to me shaking his tail really fast. Maxie was our golden retriever. Even though she was old, she was really hyper and happy all the time. I loved Maxie.

While my mom was making hot chocolate, the three of us sat on the couch and flipped on the TV. I went to cartoon network and Thunder Cats was on! I roared as loud as I could, “Thunder Cats!!!!”

Mikey asked me to check Nickoledean, and Spongebob was on. Tommy said, “Can we pleaaase watch Spongebob?! This is the newest episode, I gotta see it!”

I just said, “Tommy, you always watch what you want to at your house! That’s no fair.”

I guess my Mom could hear us, and said, “Mikey that is no way to treat guests in your house young man.”

I just said, “But Tommy never watches what I want to when I’m at his house!” Mom looked at me and sharply yelled, “Mikey!”

I let out a deep sigh and kept it on Spongebob. Tommy clapped his hands together really fast like a little kid. Even though he was my best friend, it sure did get annoying when he got everything to go his way. So, I decided one way or another I would teach him a lesson.

Throughout the day we watched all of his dumb shows, thanks to my mother, and when it started to get dark out, he said he needed to go home. I asked my mom if Tommy could stay the
night if it was ok with his mother, and she agreed. I ran excitedly over to Tommy to tell him the news!

“Tommy, Tommy! Wait! Do you want to spend the night?! My mom said it was ok if your mom doesn’t mind!” Tommy jumped for joy in hopes that his mom would say yes, and he threw on his snow clothes and ran home to ask her.

In the meantime, I was planning how to get my revenge. I know he is my best friend, but I wanted to teach him that you can’t always get what you want and life isn’t perfect. So while I waited, I remembered that Tommy was a complete germaphobe. And then, it came, my brilliant idea! Just as I thought of it, there was a soft knock on the door. I quickly ran to the bathroom to wet my hands while my mother let him in.

As I was in the bathroom making sure my hands were good and wet, I heard my mom and Tommy talking. He had asked where I was and she told him I had run up to my room real quick. So I quickly, but quietly, made my way to my room. As Tommy hit the creaky part on the stairs, I begin to walk out of my room and towards him. As I got closer, I began to snuffle my nose and wiggle it around while taking deeper and deeper breaths. Just as Tommy reached me, “ACHOOOOOO!” The water blew everywhere, all over Tommy’s face, hands, and shirt.

Tommy looked mortified, tears began to well up in his eyes as he surveyed the snot (but really water) all over him.

Tommy burst into tears. “You know I hate it when people sneeze on me! I hate you! I hate you!” Tommy ran back to his house. My mom yelled at me for making Tommy cry but I didn’t feel bad at that time because I finally taught him a lesson. And I thought he would forget about it and hangs out with me again.

But as time went by, Tommy didn’t come to my house to hang out. He ignored me at school and he didn’t say hi whenever I said hi back. I felt terrible. I was so bored without him. So I decided to apologize to him.

I went to his house before the dinner. He was in his room playing video games.

“I’m sorry I sneezed on you. It wasn’t a real sneeze. I just wanted to joke around with you so used the water. I am really sorry.”

AT first Tommy still seemed mad. I kept apologizing and put on my sad face. Then he asked me if I wanted to play a video game. I said yes. And I stayed at his place for the dinner. I was happy that he was talking to me again. I learned my lesson that I shouldn’t be mean to him and I should sometimes let him get what he wants.
**Man**  
By: Min Ho An

I like to cry but I smile  
I want you back but I let go of you  
I know you fool me but I let you deceive me.  
Because I am a man.

I try to hold tears but I cannot hold it,  
Why sky is so blue when I am sad  
Although I am a man, I would like to cry  
Why sun light is so blazing when I am sad

I smile because I am a man

**BUTTERFLY**  
By: Xing Yang

Butterfly, your delicate wings feed greedy flames  
Lost among the fireflies, can you find your way?  
A storm is rumbling from the distance  
To the spell of your wing’s sigh  
The winter stars are a reminder of past promises  
To reach that sky  
Your wings are set ablaze  
Scaring the evening night in pairs  
Tonight, you shine brighter than the stars

Butterfly, are you in a better place?  
Where the sky and midwinter stars are your lovers?  
I see a window that is colored in nostalgia  
Of a beautiful meadow with fireflies  
And of a dream  
Both fleeting and beautiful

**Studying**  
By: Sarah Oh

Long nights of no sleep  
Taking a toll on our life  
Dreadful work we hate
Bad Luck Quarter
By: Saba Aziz

Every afternoon, after school, Steven’s grandmother took him to Forest Park. Unlike other kids his age, Steven never complained about going. In fact, he adored not just Forest Park, but every other park too. While his grandmother sat on the bench mingling with other grandmothers, Steven would often sneak off to explore. Every day, he designated his two hours to closely observing one section of the park. Today he decided to look around the fountain in front of Art Hill to see what he could find. He sat by the edge looking into the water and saw a quarter. His mom had always told him never to take money from the fountain unless you wanted bad luck, but the quarter was so shiny, he just had to. Steven told himself he would return it as soon as he had taken a closer look. He reached his bony arms quickly into the water and pulled out the coin, while looking around to make sure nobody had seen him. At home, Steven had a collection of quarters from every state. It wasn’t complete yet but he was almost there; after all, he was only missing one state: Hawaii. Steven cradled the coin in his hand and carefully flipped it to the tail side anxious to see what state he’d found. It was none other than the very coveted Hawaii quarter.

He held it up to the sun, walking around to have a look at it from every angle. Steven absentmindedly walked around the park, eyes focused on the quarter. He was so lost in his own world that he didn’t even realize he’d been knocked over by a guy on a bicycle until he was already on the ground. He looked up to assess the situation: where he was and who he’d run into. The guy who was riding the bicycle was short, probably in his twenties, and probably still a student. He was scanning his bike from every angle checking to see if any damage had been done, and then he turned to Steven. His round face was furious, boiling with anger. He yelled at Steven for not watching where we was going and completely blamed him for everything. Then he began rattling off how this incident would throw him off his schedule, that he would never be able to make up the lost time, and that his whole day was completely out of whack now that these three minutes had been disrupted. He was talking so loudly that other people around them turned to stare. When the guy realized that, he kneeled down to Stephen, and in a stern, but quiet voice said, “Look, kid. I’m a scientist, and I save lives. You, on the other hand, ruin them. I don’t have time for this or annoying kids like you. So I suggest that you turn around and go back to where you came from and don’t ever think of crossing my path again. OK? Now, beat it.” Steven was so taken back and shocked from the experience, he felt like he was about to cry. He scrambled to stand up, grabbed his quarter, and scampered back to his grandmother, hiding the tears that streamed down his face.

Fall txt
By: Nichole Willoughby

All of the colors
Just around this time of yr
Wud suck 2 b blind
Poetic Justice
By: Peter Ho

It was humungus! It was hands down the most frightening scary vicious thing I have ever seen in my life. It just sat there, staring at me with its ferocious beady little eyes, its dark red eyes piercing my soul. Its hairy eight legged self was just waiting for me to make a move, waiting for me to sprint to the door, so It could run up behind me and get me! It was either sprint to the door and hope it doesn’t chase me, or sit there staring it down while it gradually crawled closer and closer. I decided to make a run for it! I sprinted to the door and was almost home free when the freakishly gigantic spider sprung up and bit my neck. I instantly dropped to the floor in excruciating pain, with venom diffusing throughout my body. I lay there paralyzed while the spider attached its web to me, dragging me to its huge spider web. It threw me on the web, and I lay there motionless, looking around in terror as tons of bugs and insects lay motionless around me in a tangled mess. The spider then crawled over to where I was at and began covering me with its web. I lay there still paralyzed, while the spider covered me like a mummy. The spider ate me and I died.

Yes, That’s Me
By: Brett Lancaster

Yes, that’s me
Look and you will see
My hair a big curly mess
My eyes bright blue and fully aware
My arms wide open in love
My hands grasping for more
My heart pumping the love that is me
I’m the one you love to love
I never judge people I just meet
My friends laugh at me
I live to love
I hope I get one hug at least
I dream that one day everyone will love as much as me
It’s all clear as can be
That’s positively, absolutely me.
Fall
By: Josie Millard

The Season Of Fall Orange Yellow Red Brown Gold Leaves Pumpkins Scarecrows Oaks Nights Moon Breeze Shadows Winds Harvesting Collecting Fruitfulness Hammock Field Clover Silence

Winter
By: Sabeena Rahman

Winter brings joy To everyone in sight. They watch the snow Covering things—all white.

I Love Winter
By: Alexis Dancy

Snow falling down It hits the ground all around It’s so pretty I can’t make a sound I love winter So cold and breezy I definitely don’t want a freezy

Leaves
By: Crystal Naes

The autumn leaves crunch Their colors are jumping ‘round They twirl on the ground

Xmas!
By: Sabeena Rahman

Tinsel, garland, lights galore Where to put the ornaments Who knows! But stop and think Every Christmas is unique

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!

FALL
By: Devon Reece

Leaves drifting down Orange, red, gold Frosty mornings, chilly nights Breezes blowing all around Loved by young and old Coming and going without a sound I love fall
African Safari
By: Kayla Gray

Here it was the last three days of our trip. My father had always dreamed of going to Africa and that is exactly what I wanted to reward him with for his retirement present. I felt like I was a native I had been here so long. Africa was really something. I remember my first day when I arrived thinking how none of this even compared to National Geographic magazine. The color was worth the trip in itself. The animals were so much more breath-taking in real life. The way they acted with one another was so fascinating. It was like another world.

It was about 4 o’clock in the afternoon and we were setting off on the last game drive. In front of our lodge were two gazelles that were thoroughly enjoying the water hole. As we were watching the gazelle, the two elephant bulls came down for a drink. It was a perfect opportunity for me to get some photos of the gazelle with the elephants in the background.

While we sat in awe of the beautiful creatures, another ranger came over the radio saying that he had spotted a rhino. I froze. I couldn’t believe it! That was the only animal I had wanted to see on our trip over here and here it finally was. We took our rover over there as quickly as we possibly could. As we sped across a dirt road alongside a halfway dried up riverbed, we spotted a pride of 5 lions underneath a tree.

As we pulled up near the other rover, we climbed in with them so we could get a bit closer. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. There it was just on the other side of the brush. I could I wish I could get closer but I knew what the risky results in that would be. I was able to get a few good shots as I we were slowly driving by. Suddenly the rhino disappeared. The rangers started speaking very quickly in Swahili, so fast that I could not understand the little bit of the language I had learned. We went speeding off. I was so scared. We didn’t stop back at our other rover; we just kept going. We were so packed, it was extremely uncomfortable.

I wondered what was wrong. Was the rhino charging? Was there other danger in the area—My thought process was interrupted when I picked up on one of the words I was most familiar with in the Swahili language, ujangili.

POACHERS.
An Irish Murder Mystery
By: Michael Shan and Anonymous Accomplice

Chapter One
“Sheesh, this has been a long day,” Fiona Tierney mumbled to herself, checking her watch for the billionth time that day. “At least it’s the last day of the workweek.” Fiona had worked dedicatedly at her job for fifteen long years and wouldn’t change it for anything, especially in Ireland’s radically down-falling economy at the moment, but still, she felt entitled to feel sick of it at the end of a crazy week. She looked at the clock once more and smiled. “Alright, just one polygraph left to administer today.”

Just at that moment, her last client walked in. “Oh dear, he’s one of those,” Fiona thought to herself. She didn’t encounter them often, but it was often enough to ruin her day. The man walked in as confidently as he could, which to Fiona didn’t look like much. After all the years she’d spent observing characters waltz in and out of her office, she’d come to learn and read many signs of human speech and body language for what they were. The man was doing relatively well in containing his nervousness, but she still saw the subtle signs. The slight jerk of his feet while he was walking, the barely accelerated breathing, and the rigid way he held his hands, probably to keep from fiddling with them. This was a nervous man trying a little too hard to keep from looking nervous.

Fiona painted on her charming smile and applied her coaxing voice. “Good afternoon, sir. I assume you are Mr. O’Fallen?”

“Yes, ma’am, I’m here for the polygraph.”

“Of course, will this be your first time taking one?”

“Yes, ma’am, is it that obvious?”

“Only to a trained professional, sir. Don’t worry, you have absolutely nothing to worry about, unless of course you’ve done something wrong.”

That statement was meant to help ease the nervousness of Fiona’s clients, but as soon as she said it, she knew something was wrong. He laughed, as many of her clients did, but it felt forced. It was too loud, too boisterous, and, frankly, too fake.

Alright, wise guy. So you are up to something. The question is, what? Fiona set up her machine and then strapped all the implements onto Mr. O’Fallen.

After that she paid no attention to the machine whatsoever, instead choosing to focus on the man’s face for the telltale signs of truth or guilt. Then she began to ask the questions, as usual, but putting her own spin on them whenever she felt that he might be hiding something in one area or another.

“Just answer a simple yes or no, okay, sir?”
“Yes.”

“Alright, is your name Thomas O’Fallon?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever been convicted of a crime?”

“No.”

“Have you ever committed a crime that has as yet been uncaught by the federal authorities?”

“No.” The slight twitch of his mouth said otherwise.

“Have you ever used or sold any drugs illegally?”

“No.” That’s not the problem, so what is?

“Have you ever stolen anything from police HQ?”

“No.” That’s a lie, but I don’t think that’s the main reason he’s nervous. He just glossed straight through that. There must be something more at work.

“Have you ever tampered with crime scene evidence?”

“No.” There it is! He’s been messing with certain evidence, for bribery maybe?

“Have you ever accepted bribes of any kind while in your profession as a police officer?”

“No.” He’s getting really uncomfortable. That was obviously a lie, but there is more to it. I can see it in how he keeps shifting. I’m scratching the surface here, but I’ve not gotten anywhere near the particulars.

“Have you ever done anything in any way offensive to the law while in the employ of your department?”

“No.” Of course not, O’Failing Liar!

Fiona took a look at her machine, having finished the routine questions and was startled to see that he had passed.

Looks like I might just have to do a bit of bluffing. “Alright, Mr. O’Fallon, would you kindly explain to me before I take this polygraph to the authorities what exactly you’re up to?”

“What?”
“I’m talking about your blatantly obvious lies, you scum wad! Now, tell me what the heck is going on. Or don’t and I’ll just report any and all possible scenarios to the authorities. One thing is certain. Whatever you’re doing, I’m not letting it continue!”

Mr. O’Fallon’s face turned into a malicious sneer as he replied, “I would watch my mouth if I were you, Fiona Tierney.” With that he marched out of the office.

Fiona grew angrier and angrier. He would dare to threaten her? And he had the audacity to treat his job with so little respect that he went about doing the very things he was supposed to prevent?

Fiona glared at the clock and found it was time to go pick up her little boy, Donal, from the daycare. Unfortunately, that last polygraph and her confrontation had taken far more of her time than it should have. She still needed to finish up some paperwork. Fiona punched the daycare number onto her office phone and heard Catherine Malloy, the manager of the daycare, answer.

“Yes, Ms. Malloy? Would you mind watching Donal for a little while longer today? I’d be happy to pay you extra for your time, I’m just a tad behind here at work. I should only be an hour or so. Oh, thank you, you’re a lifesaver!”

What was supposed to only be “an hour or so” became close to two hours, but at least Fiona had finished all her tasks for that day. While riding the bus to her destination, she dug out 50 euros to pay Ms. Malloy. Once she reached her stop, she was stunned to see police sirens and officers everywhere. The daycare itself looked completely fine, besides the overabundance of yellow police tape and cops running amuck everywhere.

“What’s going on?” Fiona insisted.

“Listen, ma’am. I’m afraid I’m not at liberty to disclose any information—”

“Baloney! My son’s in there! Or at least he was! Now you tell me what the heck is going on!” Just then, Fiona’s cell phone buzzed. It was a text from a blocked number. All it said was simply, “Here's an incentive to keep your mouth shut.” Below it was a picture of her son.

Chapter Two

“I hate this flight.”

Those were the first words that came out of the flight passenger 27E’s mouth as he woke up from his nap, blinking his eyes, and stretching his arms. In the eyes of any random stranger, he appeared to be nothing more than the sleepy, cranky passenger who occupied seat 27E; but from the perspective of a keen observer, there was more to passenger than met the eye. Tall, dark-haired, and 5’11, Felix Wright was a forensics expert of the NYPD; apparently, his job was to understand and apply his specialized knowledge of physical evidence for the sole purpose of narrowing down suspects. That’s right, Felix wasn’t just a sleepy, cranky passenger; he was a sleepy, cranky INVESTIGATOR who had the misfortune of being on a plane.
Despite his immense understanding of detective work, Felix never fully understood why he chose the aisle seat of the plane; nor did he understand why he even bothered going on the plane in the first place. Sliding his finger across the “unlock” section on his iPhone for what appeared to be the millionth time, he groaned, leaned back on his aisle seat and said, “Are you kidding me! I have to sit in this pathetic excuse of a plane for another one more hour before landing?” Where’s a first class ticket when you need one?

Of course, his complaining, both verbal and mental, would be interrupted by another voice.

“Should’ve bought first class when you had the opportunity, hmmm?”

Our aisle passenger turned his head, and found that the voice belonged to the window passenger right next to him, a bespectacled man wearing an FBI jacket and reading a copy of Machiavelli’s The Prince. He frowned slightly, and said, “Oh, so NOW you finally decide to talk?”

“Oh, I could have talked this entire time, passenger 27E; I simply find that the prospect of reading my book has more appeal than the idea of talking to such a uninteresting man.”

“But didn’t you just talk to me right now?!”

“Only because I enjoyed seeing you make a fool out of yourself, 27E.”

“…” I hate this guy already. “I have a real name, you know…”

“Don’t know, don’t care,” said the window passenger.

Is this guy for real?

Felix then looked at the window passenger very carefully, trying to gauge his motivations (a task which wasn’t exactly his forte). Either he’s on drugs, a sociopath, or a really bored guy with nothing better to do. Which one is he? Better remain calm and ignore him. But before I do that, better tie up one final loose end.

“You know, can you at least give me YOUR name for a reference?”

“Niccolo Machiavelli.”

Okay, now I’m just confused. Where’s aspirin when you need it?

But before Felix could continue to complain, his thoughts were interrupted by a familiar voice. Only this time, Machiavelli’s voice exhibited a much more relaxed, less snarky tone.

“Do you like murder mysteries?”
Felix looked puzzled. “CSI and NCIS demonstrate some promise; but, I’m not a diehard mystery fanatic.”

“I’m not surprised you picked those two; after all, they’re the epitome of forensic crime dramas. But you know what, forensic evidence is… passé!” retorted Machiavelli. “I prefer the psychological thrillers which encourage the reader to focus more on human nature and less obvious physical evidence. They’re so unpredictable, yet so satisfying.”

Thankfully, Felix had a retort of his own. “Well, knowing human nature is a good thing for solving crime; but, it is ultimately too abstract to be considered reliable. Murder mysteries give a fair share of false impressions as well.”

“Can you list examples?”

“A murder mystery deludes the reader into believing that a case can be resolved with circumstantial evidence, luck, and bluffing,” finished Felix, “Don’t you get it? The author reduces the so-called mystery into a protracted gamble!”

“Not really, it’s just plain game theory. But for the sake of argument, we’ll assume that the term is labeled “gambling.” However, given that you are correct, even gambling requires a few educated guesses, correct?”

It was then that a sudden pause took place. For a moment, Felix was at an impasse; there was no counterargument that he could make without contradicting himself. Thus, the silence was exploited by Machiavelli, who added, “I understand your type; you like observing the technical details that are right in front in you. You see the world around you, basking in the comfort of certainty and routine; who would blame you? After all, a predictable world is a controllable world, and a controllable world is a stable world. But there’s only so much that your technical nature can perceive; you can only peel the first layer of deception!”

“What am I, a character in your novel?” sarcastically asked Felix, “What layers are you talking about? A little context would be helpful!”

“That’s where you need to widen your gaze,” smirked Machiavelli, “You want to look for what’s there, yet, you fail to realize the importance of things that are “not there,” if you know what I mean.”

But before Machiavelli could continue, the airplane P.A. interrupted, “Ladies and gentlemen, we’ll be landing one hour earlier than planned! Please put your seat belts on and turn off all electronics!”

Strangely enough, Machiavelli seemed to handle interruptions in a far calmer manner than Felix. He smiled, and merely replied, “We’ll continue another time; I doubt this is the time we’ll be seeing each other.”

To be continued...
“Who made you all upset?” asked Annalyse.

“Nobody…,” I responded, “what are you talking about?”

“Well I was just asking since you have your bluetooth on and I saw you muttering something under your breath, like you always do I might add. I just thought whoever you were talking to on the phone pissed you off,” she stated while gently setting her books down on the lunch table.

“Ooh no, don’t worry nobody upset me,” I said quietly. Gosh I hate it how she is so nosy and is always antagonizing me, wanting to know every little thing in my life, I thought. ‘So what are your plans for the day,’ I quickly asked, without thinking, just so we could get on a new topic?

With a weird look Annalyse responded, “We’re going to my brother’s Halloween party, remember?”

“Oh that’s right, I forgot that was tonight,” I said.

“Please don’t tell me you’re going to back out on me again, I don’t want to go by myself,” she pleaded while staring me down.

I just sat there staring at my food, thinking to myself, ‘do I really want to go,’ but then I just decided to say, “what!? You must be crazy; of course I’m still going!” With a sigh of relief, Annalyse continued to finish up her lunch.

Why is it so hard for me to always decide on things, especially when it’s a dumb thing like a Halloween costume? Honestly I don’t even want to go. “Then why are you going?” an unfamiliar voice asked. I’m just going for Annalyse. We’ve been best friends since birth. We both even have the name ‘Ann’ in our first names, Annalyse and Roxanne. It’s all because of our moms. Those two are like older versions of us, except for the fact that they are alike in every aspect, whereas Annalyse and I; well, let’s just say we love each other, but we definitely have different interests. I would say she’s more of the preppy, girly girl, loves to socialize, go out, and ready to take on the world kind of girl. Then there’s me, the quiet, reserved, socializes a little, but definitely scared of what’s out there in the world kind of girl. I guess you can say I’m just a ‘plain Jane.’ Somehow though, we both cannot leave the other one behind, no matter how different we are.

“Rox, who are you talking too?” my mom asked stepping into my room like an overly excited, quiet mouse

Startled, I proceeded to say, “Nobody, I’m just getting ready for tonight.”

With a weird expression on her face she asked, “did you pick out your costume for the party yet?”
“Not really, I might just wear jeans and a tie-dye shirt, and call myself a hippie,” I said casually.

“What!? That’s no fun! You need to think of something creative,” she pretty much demanded. I just gave her a dumbfounded look; my mom knows that no matter what she says I’m still going to do what I want in the end, and so she just shrugged without making too much of a big deal about it, like she usually would, and walked out. I quickly changed, put on my converses, some aviators, and went to go meet up with Annalyse at her house.

“Hi honey,” Annalyse’s mom said while giving me a hug, “how have you been?”

“Pretty good, thanks,” I stated. “How are…” Before we could even continue to carry on a conversation, Annalyse came running down, showing us her well thought out and put together costume. She would be the type of person to go as a gypsy; she’s always pretending like she knows what’s going to happen to people anyways.

“Did you really just put on jeans and a tie-dye shirt?” she asked me rolling her eyes. “Oh well, it’s too late to change now; we have to get to the party!” She grabbed her clutch, and without much time passing we were already at the party.

“Hey squirts,” Jake, Annalyse’s brother, said, “just put your stuff in my room and enjoy the party!” All I could think about was whether or not I was going to have a good time or not. I was already feeling quite uncomfortable, as I stood on the side with my drink by myself while Annalyse was already socializing with new people. “Look at all those people staring at you…,” whispered the unfamiliar voice again. I tried to ignore it, but when I looked around it felt like everyone was staring at me.

“What’s wrong with you?” questioned Jake, “come and take a shot with us; you look really stressed.” Without thinking too much about it, I decided to just join Jake and his friends; maybe I was just being paranoid and school has been stressing me out a lot lately.

“All those people are talking about you; maybe they’re aliens from another world trying to get back at our world; watch out,” murmured that voice again. The sound of the voice brushed across me, like those ghosts you see in horror movies. Dropping my glass, I exclaimed, “Who is that, who keeps talking to me!?” The voice went away again, and now I could not help but feel so small compared to everyone in the room. Was there something on my face? Did I spill on myself? Why was everyone staring at me!? As my comfort level drastically kept dropping, I ran to the bathroom, breathing heavily.

Looking in the mirror, nothing was wrong. I just saw the same old ‘plain Jane’ staring back at me. Wow, maybe I had too much to drink even though I only had one drink and a shot. What is going on with me, I asked myself? I feel like I’m going crazy.

Annalyse came into the bathroom with soft eyes, arms extended, and a total look of concern. “Rox, what’s wrong?” she asked.

“Nothing…I just don’t feel well,” I lied, still confused as to what was going on.

“Do you want to go home?” she asked me. I stood there for a little bit, contemplating whether or not I wanted to go home or not. “You can’t go home; you need to do something about all those
strange people staring at you,” said the returning voice. Alarmed, I jumped a little bit and fell back only to have the wall catch my fall.

“ROX,” screamed Annalyse, “what is going on!”

Shaking, I slowly stuttered, “tho...tho...those people out there are out to get us…”

“Oh my gosh, what are you talking about?” she asked me, frightened. “Can you just tell me what is going on; you’re always hiding things!”

“Don’t tell her anything, she is one of them; you can’t trust anyone!” demanded the voice. I slowly slid down the wall, eventually sitting down, with my head faced down, tears rolling down my face, hands pressing down on my ears to make me get away from the world, and constantly muttering, “go away, go away, go away…”

“Who needs to go away? Me?” she questioned with a shaky voice and tears slowly forming. “Rox, you are really scaring me right now; I am taking you home.”

“You need to get away, before these people hurt you; they are out to get YOU,” screamed the voice! I could sense Annalyse’s arm about to touch my arm and I jumped up and backed away faster than I’ve ever moved in my entire life. “DON’T TOUCH ME,” I screamed as my whole body was trembling and pushed her away.

“ROXANNE, DO NOT PUSH ME LIKE THAT WHEN I’M TRYING TO HELP YOU. WHAT IN THE WORLD IS WRONG WITH YOU RIGHT NOW!” cried Annalyse with tears of anger and sadness.

Without much wait, Jake came running into the bathroom after he heard her scream, and said “what is going on in here!? Rox, why are you shaking, and Annalyse, why are you yelling, and why are both of you crying?”

Completely ignoring her brother, Annalyse looked at me with a look I’ve never seen before. Her eyes had both a look of concern and gentleness, but at the same time she was about ready to punch something or someone. All she wanted to do was help; why couldn’t I let her? I wanted to trust her so much, but for some reason I just could not, and I didn’t even know what that reason was to be honest. Before much longer, the world seemed to close in on me, and all I could hear was heavy breathing and a sense of panic. Swirling into a sea of blackness, I felt like I was in the Twilight Zone. That was when the voice finally stopped.

I was finally at peace with the world again, at least for now, I thought to myself. Geez, what happened last night? I was in the bathroom and Annalyse and I were fighting or something, and the next thing I’m waking up in a hospital room. I almost felt like a newborn baby, unfamiliar with everything going on, totally and inevitably scared to death. Opening my eyes felt like lifting weights off my eyes, and my head was throbbing. Hangover. Only thing I could think of, and the bright, illuminating light on top of my head was not helping.

“How are you feeling, honey?” my mom calmly asked while gently putting her icicle-like hand on my head. I jittered a little bit, and she asked with concern, “what’s wrong?”
“Nothing,” I responded with a voice that sounded like a sixty-year old woman that smoked her whole life, “your hand was just cold.” Looking back at my mom all I could see were worry lines all over and her eyes all shiny and glossy as if she were about to cry. I could tell she was trying to hold it back so I wouldn't get too scared, but it was already too late for that. “What happened last night? Why am I in a hospital? Am I sick?” I asked one after the other, seeing if she’d answer anything.

“Just take it easy and rest,” she replied. I tiredly obliged as I was too weak to fight for the answer.

Annalyse came into the room and quietly exclaimed, “Oh my gosh, you’re okay,” sighing with relief while handing my mom and her mom a cup of coffee.

“What happened last night,” I asked Annalyse as I decided to try my luck with her.

Before her mouth could even open though, my mother decided to jump in, yet again, and say, “don’t you think it’s best if she just takes it easy? I mean she just woke up.”

Annalyse softly nodded and took my hand and said, “don’t worry; you’re fine,” with a slight smile on her face that could not hide the face of worry that had taken over not only her face, but all their faces. I just decided to give up trying; I mean if there was seriously something wrong they would tell me in due time, and just decided to lay there as I slowly closed my eyes.

“If you think you’re safe, you are mistaken. Watch yourself. People are going to tell you that there is something wrong with you, when in fact they’re just trying to manipulate you into their control,” the voice whispered. I opened my eyes abruptly as I clenched onto the side bars of the hospital bed, breathing harshly.

They all came running towards me, “honey! Honey, what’s wrong!?” exclaimed my mother. I could not talk; all I could do was stare at the ceiling, praying to God the voice would just leave me. Annalyse went and got a nurse, who called the doctor. I could not think straight; the voice in my head clashed with everyone’s voices, it all seemed too real to me. As I tried to get away from it all, the nurses held me down, and they injected me with some sort of medicine to calm me down. I slowly closed my eyes, yet again, with the image of my tears streaming down my mother’s face, feeling helpless, and crying out loud, “what is wrong with my daughter...?”

“Mrs. Anderson, I am not fully positive as of right now, but it seems to me, from the information you have told me as well as the recent event, that your daughter may have a psychological disorder.”

“What do you mean a psychological disorder? My daughter is one-hundred percent healthy,” she stated, upset that my doctor could ‘accuse’ her daughter of having a disorder.

“Like I said, I am not fully positive, but she seems to exhibit the symptoms of a mental illness, most likely schizophrenia. I will have a psychologist come in a talk to you more about it shortly,” said the doctor while jotting down some notes on a chart. Nobody knew I was awake, but I could tell, even without opening my eyes, that my mother was standing there with a blank face on, not knowing what to do. I finally decided to open my eyes and see that I was right about my mom.
She finally walked over to me at a snail’s pace and told me the news that I had already heard. Neither of us knew how to react. All I could think was how could this be possible? I’m too young; I still have my whole life ahead of me. Why me? Annalyse and her mom were right by the bedside as well, showing their support and making it clear that whatever was wrong with me, they would be there to help until the end, all without saying one word.

“Hi, my name is Dr. Riviera,” she said. Who knew that after that introduction, she would be the person my friends, family, and I would rely on for the rest of our lives, especially mine? Who knew my life would become more difficult as of that moment? As time went on, I was diagnosed with having schizophrenia. I had never known much about this disorder, until it had overtaken my mind, body, and soul. Now it was everything. It was my life. Years have gone by since the moment I was diagnosed. I am now twenty years old. Adjusting to this disease was really hard on not only me, but my mom, Annalyse and her mom also. Random nights and days filled with panic attacks, changing prescriptions to see which ones helped and which ones didn’t, and trying to adjust to my new life. I have now gotten used to it, and live a pretty normal life. The voices (yes, there were more) don’t come as often now. I’d like to say that I am a survivor. Life is not how it used to be anymore, but I’ve adjusted. This is my life now, and I must keep moving on.

**As the Rain Falls**

By: Malory Toebben

The rain falls on my umbrella softly
I sit calm underneath in question
A case of sadness all around

Gray skies overhead without sun
With a thought about this session
The rain falls on my umbrella softly

Now does this man deserve his son
Who am I to have discretion
A case of sadness all around

Father protecting with a gun
Horrible form of aggression
The rain falls on my umbrella softly

But he will have to lose this one
His most valuable possession
A case of sadness all around

My final decision is done
But it is not with oppression
The rain falls softly on my umbrella
A case of sadness all around
**Treasure/ Trash**  
By: Amanda Syers

Don’t take that away which is not your own  
My life so lived not to acquire money and fame  
The world looks down upon and sees the unknown  
People at a distance keep shouting my name

Trash, throwing my perfectly content life away  
For something this world will never offer  
A chance to be free and run out and play  
Live for a purpose and be His daughter

Treasure not stored up in things of this place  
But in heaven is where the victory is won  
A love so divine and full of mercy and grace  
God paid the price by sending his son

For that reason this life is not living for me  
Because with faith there is more than you see

**Living Life**  
By: Kushbu Patel

Money, cars, and girls  
Guys can never live without pearls  
Purse, jewelry, and phone  
Girls can never live without these, in this zone

Why is our world like this?  
Let us be who we are  
Just don’t leave your life, with a big scar.

**Untitled**  
By: Clinton Martin

I think we will have to agree to disagree,  
because when you told me,  
I was upset,  
but now it’s ok, don't you fret.
Charles knew, from the very young age of twelve, that everything was about to change. No one could fool him; his eyes could see through the facades his parents had put up, mostly to keep from Betty, his six year old sister, from noticing that things were going to turn for the worst. But Charles was just a “kid,” so he played the part well. He took the smiles from his mother and stories of the daily happenings at work from his father with his own fake smile. It only seemed appropriate.

It wasn’t just the parents that tried to weave the lie into reality. The parlors were packed with more people than usual; their shouts were more obnoxious and exaggerated, which could clearly be heard when Charles walked home from school with Betty. Radios were blaring louder than usual. Board games lasted longer around the dinner table, which also stopped consisting of dessert.

But reaffirmation to the stagnant turn of city life came one evening. It was the sound of loud pounding downstairs that woke Charles, followed by his mother’s plea to be quiet.

“You’ll wake up the children!” Charles’ mother exclaimed, her voice quieting towards the end of her sentence. Charles was listening from the top of the stairs, crouching low enough to get a glimpse of his father’s back.

“All they keep giving us are these damn scrips!” There was some “shushing” from the mother before the father continued in a strained voice. “Mary, we’re gonna be living under those boxes outside Boston if this continues!”

Lines of boxes lining the hills along the city outskirts were vivid in Charles’ mind. It was a sight to see, the Hoovervilles actually appeared in Boston like in the other cities. He was trying to hear more of the conversation when a tug from behind brought his attention to Betty.

“Charles, what are you doing?” Betty slurred, obviously tired. Charles placed a finger over his lips to signal Betty to be quiet. He tugged Betty away from the stairs and whispered in her ears, “just grown-up talk.”

“I wanna know!” Betty exclaimed, her tiredness lifting with childhood eagerness.

“It’s boring adult stuff,” Charles replied. “And I wouldn’t know how to explain it to you.” This seemed to squelch Betty’s excitement. Charles led Betty to her bedroom, giving her a nighttime kiss before settling in his own room.

It wasn’t until the next morning Charles noticed the abundance of people inhabiting the city. Many of them appeared out of place; without a destination in mind, they stood on the sidewalks. Probably from the rural areas, Charles thought.
Already, the chill of fall was threatening the ending summer, making it unpleasant to be out and about. Betty was tucked into a coat, walking hand-in-hand with Charles to school. Betty was skipping as usual, completely oblivious. Charles wondered if the reality was too complex for a six year old to understand, or if they were just too impatient to take the time to understand. Regardless, Charles was happy to be able to spare Betty this misfortune. Was this how his parents felt?

As usual, the number of kids at school was less today. It wasn’t till smoke from the distance brought a crowd of people running towards the outskirts, near the river. Charles didn’t realize the crowd until he was swallowed up in it. In the midst of being jostled, Charles made sure Betty was close.

“They’re burning the Hooverville!” someone, who appeared to be a farmer, shouted. There was loud whistling, with the crowd thinning after the span of several minutes. Charles was able to move his way against a house with Betty. When the sounds had indicated the span of distance, Charles could hear Betty crying. He first made sure she was without bruises and such before wiping the tears away and calming her down.

“What’s happening?” she mumbled, her nose running as her hands tightened around Charles’ leg.

Charles wondered that same thing. But he knew, was able to connect the dots in the situation. It was a depression. President Hoover called it a “great depression.” Charles never cared much for names, only what it would mean. His father wasn’t getting paid with money, and it wouldn’t be long before their family would join the row of burning shelters in the outskirts of Boston. But was it fair to let Betty know the onslaught of unfortunate events to come? Would it be better to leave her in the dark?

“Betty,” Charles began. “Let’s go home quickly before mom gets worried.”

And together, the children walked hand-in-hand to their home, not realizing it to be their last day under that roof.

Don’t Do It
By: Luke Walker

Propagandistic
Poems are really awful.
Don’t ever write them.
The Lies  
By: Kierstyn Fornoff

I look into her eyes,  
And I let out a sigh,  
As I think of all her lies,  
While waiting for the clothes to dry.

She acted like a menace,  
As if I wasn’t a human being,  
She hung out with Dennis,  
Like I had no feelings.

I don’t understand,  
Does she not love me?  
Did I misunderstand?  
Does she love he?

I look deep into her eyes,  
And finally see where her love lies.

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Lies  
By: Suong Nguyen

Bring the day  
Cause night is over

Turn off the lights  
For darkness has come

Let it rain  
Drenching this burning land

A land, burning with lies

No truths are told;  
From masked goblins

Just words spewing out;  
Overflowing

Words with no meaning  
Or words that needn’t be said

Each sentence, our thoughts in disguise;  
Hiding hidden intentions…no truth-only lies

Each word giving off a portion of ourselves  
And each breath, pouring life into those pieces

The breaths we exhale  
Emanates a part of our souls  
And as we live, we breathe  
Spreading one soul to the next

A plague  
Contaminating everyone  
With the filthy souls they give off

Souls filled with lies
Too Much Candy
By: Ripple Patel

Bobby saw most of the children were wearing some of the most bizarre and frightening outfits in which no one would recognize them. The sounds of doorbells ringing, doors opening, and the children stepping on the fall leaves that made a “crunch” sound, filled the cold, dark night.

“Trick or Treat!” shouted many young children as they looked up to the person who opened the door. All night long, rustling sounds came from children taking candy and putting it into their bags. The rain made the night very spooky for the children. After leaving a house with a handful of candy, another scary and spooky house popped up in front of Bobby. Open coffins lying on the ground, a witch on a broomstick, people wearing ghosts costumes, and fog all around the house made the house very mysterious. Bobby was frightened so he ran off to the next house with tears in his eyes. He looked around and only saw strangers. Bobby started running around in circles because he was scared and wanted his parents.

“Bobby! Where are you?” cried his mother. Bobby heard his mother and he started running towards her. Bobby was so happy to see his mom and then the family headed home because they were so tired from walking around all night.

At home, Bobby ran straight up to his room. The old wooden steps made squeaking sounds when he ran and that was the only thing he could hear. When he opened up his bedroom door, he saw the shiny, white moon in the sky through the window in his room. He went closer to the window and he looked down and saw many kids outside trick or treating. He closed the curtain and poured all of the candy onto the bed. He began to jump and down because he was so happy to see so much candy. On one side of the bed he put all the candy he liked to eat and on the other side he put all the candy that he thought was gross. Then he put the candy in a big bag and hid it under his bed.

Bobby’s mom came in the room and said, “Let’s see all the candy you got!” Bobby was so excited to show the candy so he ran and got the big bag of candy from under his bed.

Then Bobby’s mom said, “I’ll keep this bag of candy with me and I’ll give you one piece of candy each day so you don’t get a tummy ache.” Bobby then told his mom that he wanted to keep the bag with him and that he would promise to eat only one piece a day. But his mom still took the candy bag with her, so he followed her to see where she put the bag. Bobby saw his mom put the candy in the kitchen drawer.

The next day Bobby’s mom gave him one piece of candy to eat, but Bobby wanted more so he quietly went into the kitchen when his mom wasn’t looking and he ate more candy. Every day, he would eat more and more candy when his mom wasn’t looking. Then at the end of the week all the candy in the big bag was finished and he started to get a tummy ache. Bobby ran to his mom and started to tell her that his tummy was hurting, and then his mom said, “Did you eat more candy even when I told you not to?” Bobby felt sick and said, “Yes, Mom.” Then his mom gave him medicine and that tasted so bad. So, then Bobby promised his mom that he wouldn’t
eat too much candy at once and that he would listen to his mom next time. It was a lesson that Bobby had to learn the hard way.

**The Ides of STLCOP**  
By: Ashley Benain

Hello self.  
I hope you don’t have a stressful week  
if you do, stay strong not weak.  
This semester's visit was a fail  
it makes me want to wail,  
therefore I want to see your happy face  
over winter break or else I'll use mace  
against someone, which won’t be pretty  
do you know someone named kitty?  
And next semester we must plan a time  
for us to party in the city...it’d be sublime!  
Happy Monday.

**College**  
By: Kushbu Patel

College has change me so much  
I have become more outgoing  
I stay up late everyday thinking about parties  
I go to clubs and dance with cute guys  
I study more than I studied in high school  
I started eating more junk food  
I went out with my neighbor  
I am having a great time in college  
College has change me so much

**Lab**  
By: Steven Nguyen

I rush to each station  
because two minutes given  
Bio Practicum.
Midlife Crisis
By: Tia Joseph

Julie, a mother of two, was sitting at home feeling unsatisfied with her life at that moment. For some reason, knowing it was silly considering she was a woman in her 40’s who was a housewife, she really wanted some excitement in her seemingly dull life. Wanting thrill in her life didn’t mean she wasn’t content with her marriage or her children. She simply wasn’t satisfied with where she was in life and just yearned for something new.

As she sat in her favorite recliner, while watching Desperate Housewives and simultaneously skimming over that day’s newspaper, her eyes lit up as she came across a particular advertisement. It read: “Harley Davidsons: 2009 Harley Davidson Heritage Classic Cruiser, loaded, only 657 miles.” Her mind wandered back to her high school days, when she was dating the school’s “bad boy” who all the other girls wanted. His name was Mike, and every day he would pick her up from her house and she would ride on the back of his motorcycle all the way to school. She loved the adrenaline rush she would get right as he was about to fly off onto the road. She missed that. She missed the feeling of being carefree.

It only took a few seconds of reminiscing to make Julie impulsively call the number that was listed underneath the advertisement. The person on the other line, a man named Stanley, sounded a bit startled when he first heard the voice of someone who seemed to be a sweet, middle-aged woman. But of course, he wasn’t one to judge, and told her to come and check out the motorcycle when she was ready.

Julie wasn’t exactly doing anything productive right then so she hopped in her mini van and drove to the site where they were selling something that she thought would give her that instantaneous boost of excitement that she had been hoping for. Once she arrived, she took one look at the Harley Davidson and fell in love. Stanley went over all of the details of the motorcycle such as the functions, cost, etc. As he talked, she nodded her head, falling more and more in love with the idea of this possible purchase. Once he was finished explaining everything, she agreed to buy it. Stanley gave her a high-five stating she was undoubtedly one of the coolest moms around.

He offered to drive her mini van back for her, so she could ride the motorcycle. She decided against consulting with her husband about this purchase, knowing he would fail to understand. She simply would surprise her husband and children with it, hoping they wouldn’t be too baffled by her seemingly rash decision. As she rode back, she felt incredible going down the high way, the wind freely blowing against her. She felt like a speed demon, which she had always known she was at heart.

Finally she arrived home and thanked Stan for driving her mini van home. She noticed her husband had arrived from work. She greeted him with a sheepish smile on her face that she couldn’t bear to hide. She certainly was the world’s worst liar. Her husband, John, immediately questioned her, also smiling, curious as to what she was about to admit to him. She told him to come to the garage causing his eyes to light up immediately, indicating a bit of anticipation and fear. As she swung open the garage door, his jaw abruptly dropped. He could barely stutter out
the words but he managed to finally ask, “….Why?” She replied, “Oh honey, it’s always been a dream of mine. I knew you wouldn’t understand so I just went ahead and bought it. Don’t worry, it was a great deal!” He then asked, “But I thought you were saving up all your money for that new washer and dryer set you had been obsessing about.” Julie simply shrugged her shoulders and said, “I could care less about that washer and dryer now that I have my baby.” John seemed stunned by the fact that she addressed her new vehicle as “baby.” She managed to let out a chuckle at this notion.

She then said, “Hey before you know it, a mid life crisis will certainly come and nip you in the butt too! You won’t even see it coming, just like it happened to me!” He managed to give her a smile and to shrug his shoulders in agreement. And that was that. She then thought to herself of how she couldn’t wait for her children to come home from school, to see their new “sibling.”

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**Memory**

*By: Xing Yang, Amanda Syers, Rachel Franz, Kayla Gray*

It is a reoccurring moment
The past is my opponent
Time becomes a stage
That long ago summer, my cage

As it if it was only yesterday
How vividly I recall that day
When the my world fell apart
How I just wish it could restart

I awoke that morning, bright and new
To end that day feeling awful and blue.
My dreams were shattered and broken
And have left me weak and softspoken

It seems like a dream, that it never will be
But why on earth would he want to leave me?
My heart is like an empty hole in my chest,
I wonder with many thoughts, is this a test?

How many times must I live it again?
I want it over!... But then again
do I want to forget--my major love--
No! My memory fits me like a glove.
**Hero**  
By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

Setting: Chicago, gay bar, year 2011

Dressed in a crisp, white suit against the breezy, dark night, Seth was walking with his friends to a bar down Michigan Avenue. Upon the Chicagoan streets, little Christmas lights sparkled and noises of laughter and excitement were carried by the cool winds.

At the bar, Seth squeezed into a booth with the rest of his friends. While his friends were chattering away, he began to slowly enter that dream state of becoming a hero. In 2010, he could not think of himself completing any heroic actions. But this year, he made it a goal to make a positive impact in some stranger's life. He yearned deeply for that stranger to look at him and utter three words without any thought, *you're my hero.*

Taking his right hand and snapping it in front of Seth, Jason exclaimed, "Seth, stop daydreaming! We're trying to scope you out a girl, but you can't just sit there doing nothing!" It wasn't unnatural for Seth's best friend Jason to experience Seth's eyes fade into an abyss of nothing as he dreamed.

"How am I supposed to find a girl here when this is a gay bar, Jason?" Seth questioned with slight disappointment.

All Jason replied was, "hey, this is a new experience. And if you weren't daydreaming so much, you would notice that there are actually a lot of girls here. I'm sure they're looking for a handsome hunk like you to scope them out."

As Seth looked around, he heard a faint sound of whimpering. That sound of whimpering drew him in, as this could perch as the beginning of a heroic era. As he got closer to the sound, he saw a young girl holding her face in-between her hands. She was a scrawny girl with silky brown hair, perched upon a stool near the bar. Seth got closer and placed his left hand on her right shoulder asking, "Are you okay?"

She kept just crying in her hands. Seth was unsure of what he should do, so he repeated his question again. The second time that he asked, she took her hands from her face. Hidden underneath her hands was a beautiful face with eyes of a raccoon. Her eyeliner had smeared all over her eyes.

"What's your name?" Seth asked. The girl remained silent. "Where are you from?" Seth would ask again. The girl again remained silent. Seth continued to ask her questions, but she would just sit in blank silence. The silence continued and soon became awkward, until finally she replied back that her name was Judy.

Seth asked her why she was swamped in tears, as the tears continued to fall down her smooth skin. Genuinely caring for her, Seth reached for a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped her tears. She initially pulled back, but Seth continued to wipe her tears. Feeling a sense of comfort
from Seth, she didn’t push back as he pressed the handkerchief against her for a second time. Judy mouthed three words, but Seth could not hear her against the pounding music. “He dumped me,” she said louder.

Seth was silent at first, not knowing what he could say. Thinking that fresh air was what she needed instead of the sight of people screaming and groping each other against the music, Seth asked, “do you want to just get some fresh air? Just take a walk down the street? I’m not trying to be creepy or anything. I just think you could use some air.” Judy, hesitant at first but receiving a good vibe from Seth, simply nodded her head.

The two began to walk out of the bar and were welcomed by a cold, refreshing breeze. Seth put his hands on her shoulders and stated, “hey, that guy was probably a jerk. You are absolutely beautiful, and a girl like you does not deserve to cry.”

The corner of Judy’s lips began to curl up as Seth was not exactly the best-looking guy around, but was a decent guy compared to her old boyfriend. As they began to stroll down the street, they reached a stoplight corner. Seth stopped and looked both ways before crossing. As he took a step with his left foot, Judy took his hand and abruptly pulled him back. From out of the blue, a taxi was rushing towards him and honking uncontrollably. The window began to roll down as the taxi passed, and a man pulled his fist up and yelled, “Watch where you’re going!”

Seth, confused from where the taxi had come from, felt as if his heart had stopped a beat. He thought to himself of the possible pain he could have felt if he continued to walk the street without Judy pulling him back. As he shook his head back to reality, he noticed his hand remained tightly gripped under Judy’s small fingers. Judy, realizing that her hand was still attached to Seth, quickly pulled her hand back to her side. Seth quickly let out a small thank you and felt as if his life was saved today. He turned to Judy and stated, “you know, I was dreaming about becoming a hero this year. But I think instead, you just became mine today.”

Walt
By: Saba Aziz

From the second they see the ad on TV, it fills every nook and cranny in their mind... Magical and never ending.

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.
Inception
By: Stephanie Chen, Peter Ho, Robyn Lowe, Susan To, Saba Aziz

They say that dogs are a man’s best friend. But little did Susie know that when she adopted a puppy from her local Humane Society that the puppy was literally her childhood best friend trapped in an animal’s body. Her childhood best friend was named Charlie. For the most part Susie and Charlie’s relationship during elementary to high school remained platonic. However, it was one of those friendships that could easily develop into something more.

Susie, now twenty-five years old, had visited the Humane Society multiple times without making an adoption. She had investigated and explored different options for adoption: bunnies, hamsters, cats, and even an exotic-looking chameleon. But none of those options satisfied Susie. Initially, she had wanted to adopt a kitten, because deep down she knew that felines were much more manageable than canines. But her plans to adopt a kitten were soon forgotten once she met Choco the puppy.

The day that Susie adopted her puppy Choco was the happiest day of her life thus far. There was an immediate bond shared between Susie and the puppy that could not be explained. Somehow the puppy and the human were able to communicate and understand each other. So, Susie finalized the adoption decision and took Choco the puppy home with her. She surprised her boyfriend Steve of two years when he returned home from work. Something felt wrong. Choco attacked Steve upon first meeting. He charged at Steve and proceeded with nasty barking and biting. The struggle was much like a wrestling match. Susie could only stand in horror.

Because of the hostility of Susie’s new puppy, Steve decided to break it off with Susie. Susie was devastated when he told her that he wanted to break up. She even offered to let Choco stay with her mom so that he would stop attacking Steve. However, Steve insisted on breaking up with Susie.

“We’ve been together for two years! Are you really going to let a dog come between two years of love?” Susie asked.

“It’s not just the dog, Susie. The dog is just the topping on the cake. Don’t you understand? The spark is just not there anymore. The feelings are gone,” Steve replied.

“You don’t love me anymore?” Susie asked.

“No, sweetie. It’s not that. It’s just, things have changed. We have both changed and our relationship has changed. I think it’s time to move on.”

With that, Steve left Susie. Susie cried and cried. She cried for a week straight, with Choco as her only comfort. Two weeks later, Susie finally stopped crying and decided to go out with her best friend Helen to a bar. When they arrived at the bar, Susie saw Steve, but he was not alone. Next to Steve was his new girlfriend, Stephy, Susie’s roommate from college. It turns out that Steve broke up with Susie because he was cheating on her with Stephy!
“I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU WOULD DO THIS TO ME!” Susie cried.

“Don’t yell at her,” Steve said, “it was my fault. It was all my fault, yell at me!.”

“I’m sorry, Susie! I didn’t mean for things to be this way,” Stephy said, sadly.

“I don’t ever want to see either of you again!” Susie exclaimed as she stormed out of the restaurant. Helen chased after her and took her home. Susie cried and cried some more with Choco at her side. Suddenly, a miracle happened. Susie’s tears landed on Choco’s head and Choco suddenly gained the ability to speak!

“Don’t cry Susie,” he exclaimed. Susie was confused, she thought she was hearing noises. She looked all around her room and started to get nervous. She immediately took Choco into her bedroom and locked the doors. She then heard Choco say, “Don’t be scared Susie, it is me Choco, who is talking to you.” Susie began to scream. She pushed Choco away and ran out of the room. Choco followed her and stopped her at the door.

“Susie, please just hear me out,” he continuously repeated.

Susie finally sat down on the sofa and said, “Please Choco, if that even is your name, tell me what is going on and please don’t hurt me!”

“Susie, I am a talking dog; actually I am your soul mate stuck in the body of a dog. My name is Charlie Babcock. I love you and only you and I want to marry you. I am from Mexico and I would love if you would take my paw in marriage?” Charlie asked.

“Are you serious? You are a dog! I do not want to marry a dog,” Susie pushed Charlie aside and ran out the house and kept running until she entered New York City. She sat at Times square and imagined her life in a nut shell. All she could think about was love, and to her advantage it was Valentine’s Day. She was all alone and began to cry. Then a white gloved hand asked her for her hand and said, “Susie will you take my hand in marriage.” Susie looked up and the sight made her puke! It was JUSTIN BEIBER. She began to cry some more.

Justin picked her up and then dropped her, “I am sorry I do not have muscles yet. I have been working out, but my mom says she thinks I am perfect.”

Susie pushed him aside and continued to run until she was in Brooklyn. She began to slow down and think she was free from all this crazy love madness. Little did Susie know, Ellen DeGeneres was waiting for her around the corner. As she turned the corner, she saw Ellen dancing.

Ellen exclaimed, “SUSIE! I have left Portia De Rossi for you! I realized this morning that you are my true love and I only want to be with you!”

Hearing this, Susie began to run faster and longer until she was in a train station and was surrounded by owls. She just wanted to get away from everything so she jumped onto the train.
She walked until she saw a cabin with an extra seat. She finally opened a last cabin and found three people, two boys and a girl. She asked the three if she could sit in the cabin with them.

They answered, “Of Course. We have never seen you around. Oh how rude, let me introduce myself and my friends. My name is Hermione. This is Harry and Ron.”

Susie abruptly woke up in a cold sweat. Her throat was so dry and her heart was beating a million miles per hour. Was all that craziness seriously just a dream? Of course it was. How else would her dog proclaim his undying love for her, as well as Justin Beiber and Ellen DeGeneres in one night? Not to mention meeting three fictional characters from her favorite book series as well.

After gaining some composure, Susie looked around at her surroundings. She was in the living room of Helen’s apartment. How she got there was a complete mystery to her. She probably drank way too much last night. A clock nearby read 3:49am.

Susie walked to the kitchen, gulped down a huge glass of water, and went back to sleep on the couch. When she woke up, she smelled bacon cooking.

What a rough night. Susie took a seat at the kitchen table and watched her best friend cook breakfast.

“How’d you sleep?” Helen asked as she started scrambling some eggs.

“Wonderfully,” Susie replied sarcastically.

“Well, you did freak out at your ex-boyfriend and old roommate, as well knocked yourself out on the door while running out of the bar,” Helen said with a remorseful look on her face. “It was horrible trying to get you in here by myself.”

“I’m so sorry,” Susie said as she stole a piece of bacon. It tasted like heaven. “I’m so embarrassed.”

“Just don’t let it happen again!” Helen said with a smile on her face.

They ate their breakfast fairly quickly. Helen left for work, and Susie was left at the apartment by herself. Susie took a shower, grabbed a cab, and went back to her own apartment to check on Choco.

Trusty Choco. When she opened her apartment door, Susie was greeted with kisses and much needed love from Choco.

She was skeptical at first, but, more importantly, she was desperate so she embraced him with open arms. She didn’t want to think about her dream, and she couldn’t imagine what it would be like if it really happened. Of course, it would definitely have its advantages because she was pretty sure any girl would kill to be Mrs. Justin Beiber. The Ellen thing she was not so
sure about, and meeting Harry Potter was something she wanted to do since she was a child. As she was thinking about all of this stuff, the movie *Inception* popped into her mind. In the movie, whenever anyone wanted to know if they were in the real world or in a dream, they would take out their “totem.” The totem would indicate that somehow. She got up and scavenged around her kitchen drawers for something she could use as her totem. Coincidentally, she found a top similar to the one Leonardo DiCaprio (drools…) had. She explained to herself that if the top fell over, she was in reality, and if it didn’t, she was still dreaming. She glanced at Choco, who was still sitting on the couch, and she spun the top. It spun for a good fifteen seconds, but it didn’t stop or slow down. It kept going and going. Her heart started racing, and she was whispering to herself, “Please stop. Please, stop,” but it never did. Hands and legs trembling, she slowly looked up. Choco wasn’t sitting on the couch anymore! She turned her head frantically trying to find him. When she turned around, she found him staring directly at her. He opened his mouth and said, “Hey, there.” Her body naturally responded to the situation and she dropped to the floor unconscious. When she finally regained consciousness, she opened her eyes to find herself sprawled out across the couch and leaning over her were none other than Justin Beiber, Ellen, Harry, Hermione, and Ron. She looked past them to see the top lying on its side motionless on the counter. It didn’t take long for her brain to realize what that meant.…

**Fragile Hearts**

By: Tracey Nguyen

Fragile hearts, you can withstand
the sharpest of needles and biggest of blows

Vulnerable hearts, you will fight
the storms of anger and the flooding of sorrow.

Naive hearts, you will realize
you can beat out a volume greater than any sea

Strong hearts, you can endure
Any brute force of any magnitude

Open hearts, you will receive
The light that is aiming to illuminate your souls

United hearts, you can withstand
the emotional void of loneliness

Invincible hearts, you should know
not even death can outdo your resilience.

With your capabilities fragile hearts,
Do take heed that it is He who created your most beautiful heart.
One summer when I was about ten years old, my family visited the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Relatives who had visited Gatlinburg had told us about the multitude of cute black bears that roamed freely through the park which fueled our excitement for the trip. As we approached the park, my younger brother and I were on the lookout for anything black that moved and resembled a teddy bear. We hiked with our parents. No bears. We drove up and down winding roads circling the park. No bears. We explored old rustic cabins and pioneer homesteads. No bears. We whined and hiked some more with sore feet. No bears. In fact, after three days of playing hide and seek in the park, the only bears we saw were of the Beanie Baby sort which my parents bought to appease us. After weeks of “we’re gonna see some bears” hype, the trip was a bust.

Soon our vacation neared its unfortunate end. After we packed our suitcases and ate supper, we decided to spend the last evening at the pool. My mom, brother, and I were sitting on the pool deck relaxing while waiting for my dad who went back to our second floor hotel room to retrieve some towels. All of a sudden we heard a little boy shriek with excitement, “Look at that big dog!” Heeding his advice, we all looked at the big black creature charging towards the pool. The next sound that we heard was that of a huge group splash accompanied by an assortment of panicked screams as everyone in the vicinity of the pool jumped in the water. The “big dog” was actually a very irate mama bear looking for her wayward little cub which was stuck up in a tree on a branch dangling over a portion of the pool. Obviously oblivious to the inherent danger, I was ecstatic. Finally, we got to see some bears and they put on quite an entertaining show. Growling mean mama bear definitely lacked teddy bear charm as she lumbered back and forth on the sidewalk along the perimeter of the pool. The sweet little cub swayed perilously back and forth on the branch in and out of our view. The vacationers in the pool were now the ones hiding from the bears as frightened parents and curious children popped up and down in the water like prairie dogs.

Spotting her crying cub, mama bear soon took off and ran up the stairs to the second floor chasing a terrified maid with an armload of towels who was unfortunately in her way. White towels parachuted to the ground as the melodramatic maid’s arms flailed back and forth while she screamed with a southern accent, “There’s a BA-ER! HA-LP” Just in a nick of time, the panicked maid escaped danger by leaping into our hotel room just as my clueless dad opened the door with an armful of beach towels. By then, several trained hotel workers arrived on the scene and lured the cub down from the tree with some Little Caesar’s pizza. Apparently the cub just dropped by for his usual dumpster dive pizza meal deal and took an unplanned detour up the tree. The happy cub and his scolding mama scurried off into the woods. Even today when I think of Little Caesar’s pizza, I laugh. The image that my mind conjures up is not one of a little Roman guy chomping down a slice of pizza, but rather vision of a happy little cub with a piece of pepperoni dangling from his mouth running behind a dumpster.
Dear moon
By: Boski Patel

I find myself gazing up toward you, but it seems as though tonight you have left me in the darkness and solitude of the night. I blame myself for overlooking all of the light that you have shinned upon me, and ignoring the time you spent above my bedroom window. I hope that you come back and give me the time of night so that I can tell you how much I have owed you. I hope that you have not forgotten the nights of my youth when I used to touch the brake light in the backseat of the car and use it as a medium to communicate with you while you followed me on the journey.

You were my first friend; you were my only friend. I turned you into pale death and I turned myself into the white of it. I decided to reject the hue that you once used to nourish me. I truly miss the taste of the days when we walked together, in unison. I will count every single star if you ask me, but I just ask that you will one day return, before I have consumed the last of the white and fall under the blanket of my lost desires.

Sincerely, your lost friend.

Death of Summer
By: Suong Nguyen

Summer nights have died
Blown away
By the frozen winds of Autumn
Forgotten
In the crippling realm of death
Laid to waste
Upon abandoned streets
Denied
By the coming storm;
The weeping cries of winter

62
Monkey See, Monkey Do
By: Samantha Pinkley

I had been sitting on this park bench for two hours. I had nothing else to do in my old age, so I figured people watching was a good idea. I always sat on this park bench when I was bored. I looked around, almost ready to get up when I saw the funniest sight in the world.

What appeared to be a man in a gorilla suit was running through the park, flailing his arms wildly. He was being chased by two policemen. The three people were getting closer and closer to me and I could hear their yells.

“Stop,” one of the policemen yelled.

The other policemen chimed in. “We saw you try to break into that car! You need to stop running.”

The gorilla man suddenly stopped and turned around to face the officers. They were only a few feet away from me, so I could hear every word being said.

“I need you to take off your mask.”

The gorilla man only shook his head and pounded on his chest. This was very amusing, but also very realistic. The policemen moved towards the gorilla man. One tried to pull the face off; it reminded me of the ends of Scooby-Doo when the bad guy is unmasked. Only, this mask didn’t come off. It didn’t even appear to budge. The cops looked angry.

“What did you do, super glue this on?” one of the cops asked.

More grunting from the gorilla. The cops tried and tried to get that mask off.

Suddenly, a scream was heard as a zoo vehicle pulled up. A zookeeper ran over to the policemen and explained that this was a real gorilla, not someone dressed up. Somehow, the gorilla had escaped from its pen earlier that morning and the zookeepers had been searching for it ever since.

It wasn’t long after that the news vans appeared to interview the policemen about “finding the escaped gorilla,” but I knew the real story. I knew they weren’t as heroic as they made themselves out to be, but I didn’t blame them for lying. I wouldn’t want to say that I tried to pull a gorilla’s head off either. I got up from my park bench, rushing to get home. I couldn’t wait to tell everyone what had happened.

Haiku # 1
By: Saba Aziz

Late-night studying,
Tell me something I don’t know
Orgo test today?
I am From
By: Faith Slaton

I am from John Deere,
from rabbit to turtle speed.
I am from rocks in the mailbox
that stop the mail from coming.
    I am from horses,
the Windstead’s that we rode.

I am from Grandma Joyce,
from grilled cheese to birthdays.
    I am from Jamie Hoffmann,
from fighting over the Little Mermaid swimsuit,
    and aerobics with Kelly.
I am from Though the Mountains May Fall
    with my first communion
    and the Ten Commandments.

I am from big bows and socks with beads,
and my mom’s pearls and fancy dresses.
    I am from my sister Brooke,
big glasses and stray cats and Elf.
    In my back yard was a trampoline
oozing with butt-busters and back flips.

I am from Evansville, Indiana;
from climbing and building dirt piles
and lemonade in the golf cart throughout summer.
    I am from WWF,
from scraped knees and carpet burns.

I am from Canada,
from ehh and leeches and the Ringer.
    I am from video games,
from Crash Bandicoot to Sonic
    and SSX Tricky.

I am from Microsoft,
from hangman to word searches.
    And, most of all,
    I’m from love
from which I’ve been given
from those who surround me.
Rob’s Passion for Basketball  
By: Birju Shah

Rob was a fifteen year old boy who loved the sport of basketball. He was a boy from Chicago, who lived thirty minutes from the United Center, which is where his favorite team, the Chicago Bulls played. He watched basketball whenever it was on television, no matter what team was playing. He liked to learn new moves by watching NBA players play.

Rob started to play basketball when he was ten years old, and always had the dream of one day playing basketball for a college team. He started playing basketball at the park near his house with his friends, and also played for a park district team. Rob was not very good at basketball when he first started playing. His friends knew he made better grades than they did, but would sometimes make fun of him when he would airball shots, and when he made other mistakes on the court. His friends usually never passed the ball to him because they knew that he would miss or get a turnover. During the first season of his park district basketball league, Rob did not start any games because the coach noticed that Rob was not very talented at basketball, and he was not as athletic as the other players on the team. Whenever Rob’s coach would tell the players on the bench to come into the game, Rob always hoped that his name would be called, but it hardly ever was called. Rob always felt sad sitting on the bench for the majority of games, when all his teammates would be called upon to play in the game. His coach would only tell him to play in the 4th quarter when the team was either down or up by a lot.

Rob finally noticed that he had to work harder in order to get better and fulfill his dream of one day playing college basketball. Rob started to wake at 6 am and went to the park by his house when no one was there to practice his shots and dribbling. He really wanted to prove all his doubters wrong, so he practiced for 2 hours in the morning before school and 3 hours after school every day. When Rob started to play basketball games with his friends at the park again, his friends noticed that he had drastically improved his shot and dribble. Rob would not be afraid of dribbling the ball or shooting it when his friends passed him the ball. During his second year playing for his park district basketball team, Rob started to get better and better after every practice, and his coach was very impressed with his work ethic, so he rewarded him by letting him start during the games. Rob got better and better after every game he started and ended up being the 3rd leading scorer on the team, which was much better than being the worst player a year ago.

Although Rob was a much improved player than when he started to play basketball, he still knew that he had to get better in order to fulfill his dream of getting a basketball scholarship. He started to workout in the morning before school and continued to practice his basketball skills everyday afterschool. He also knew that getting good grades was very important in order to get a college basketball scholarship, so he studied and did his homework every night.

Rob was finally a freshman in high school and basketball tryouts were coming up. All of Rob’s family members, friends, and even his coaches encouraged him by saying he would do great during tryouts. During his tryouts, the high school basketball coaches were very fascinated by Rob’s skills and intelligence on the court, and he was selected to not only be on the team, but also be named captain. Rob ended up leading his high school team to the best record in the
Niagara Falls
By: Kristin Hagan

The breathtaking sight of God’s creation,
The water roars at a steady rhythm.
Water thundering down the falls
Continuing its journey down the river.
Suddenly a rainbow spreads over the falls
Painting a masterpiece for all to enjoy.
I can feel the damp mist from yards away.
The smell of fish and taste of freshwater
Allows me to be a part of the falls.
I am surrounded by a wonder
That is beautiful to all.

Childhood
By: Susan To

Written By: Susan To
All children wish to grow up
And be an adult like their moms and dads
But beneath all the glories
Of being an adult, there
Lies pain and suffering, for
Becoming an adult is not an easy task, you will soon be loaded with responsibilities and other things that make you regret ever wanting to become an adult. But since you have already become an adult, you should not complain, because that is not what adults do. Do not whine about wanting to be a kid again, cause it is impossible to do, is remissible, all moments in your heart, because that is all that is left of your childhood, and you will never get it back, because you are now an adult.
I never realized just how much I really don’t care anymore. My left hand was fumbling for the right keys in the dark, while my right hand was straining under the weight of several plastic grocery bags. It was a Tuesday evening with classes running a whole twelve hours followed by a desperate trip to the grocery store. With such a busy schedule, how was a girl supposed to find time to shop at a decent time?

Shit, the first key didn’t work. Why do I have so many keys that look alike? Even better yet, why does it feel like ten degrees outside?

Finally, the lock turned with the key, and my anticipation for warmth added to the extra force I used to push the door open. Except the door didn’t budge and I found myself reciprocating from the impact. And of course, a cold wind decided to punch the breath out of my lungs.

Of course the bolt was also locked.

So once again, I grudgingly found the right key and unlocked the bolt. And as always, things could not be made any easier with my backpack and grocery bags barely fitting through the door frame. But once through, I kicked the door shut against the cold like an unwanted guest. In the dim light of the entrance way, I noticed the door now sported a dark smear from my kick.

Whatever.

Walking through the entrance hall, I could feel the heat sink into my skin, working its way in. I was relieved, and threw my backpack onto the floor and plopped my grocery bags onto the futon. Light was seeping from my roommate’s closed door, but I didn’t bother to knock since he’s been busy enough as is. Digging out my laptop from my bulging book bag, I trudged across the carpeted living room into the cluttered kitchen. I placed the laptop onto the small kitchen table, avoiding the stain on the cloth left by my dinner the other evening. It was then that I noticed that my shoes left a nice trail of my journey through the duplex. Good thing I was in a “I don’t care mood,” or I might have felt guilty.

At this point, the heat was a little overbearing, so I threw my coat over the only free chair, since the others were occupied with my white lab coat and work vest. The grocery advertisements that came in the mail yesterday were sticking out from the trash bin, which sparked a bit of annoyance on my part.

How many times have I told him not to throw away the advertisements?

I fished them out of the trash and plopped them on one of the chairs.

Some soup was definitely in order. However, my juice jug, box of artificial sweeteners, and used measuring cups thought otherwise as they cluttered in front of the microwave. To be
honest, the whole kitchen counter was taken up with my possessions such as the waffle maker (that I never use), popcorn machine (which I always used), popcorn seasoning, and coffee maker. Now that I realize it, where are his “things?” Does he never make anything in the kitchen?

Not wanting to put more thought into it, I shoved everything over the stove counter and nuked the soup until it was nice and steamy. I think some of it might have ended up on the microwave, but that’s just how it is when it comes to soup. When it was all gone, which was a bit too quick, I decided it was going to be nights out. Good thing tomorrow’s a Friday and I don’t have any classes. I tossed the bowl onto the clean side of the sink, since the second half was beginning to tower with the week’s dishes. I wished my roommate would quit being difficult and start using the dishwasher instead of doing everything by hand. That way, I could run the dishwasher more often. Stepping over some stray popcorn kernels on the kitchen floor, I went to bed.

I love sleep.

These thoughts were all I could remember until I heard the entrance door shut loudly. My first thought was that my roommate was leaving, but a familiar set of voices made me pop out of bed in a flurry of panic I had not felt since high school.

“Nancy, honey, are you up yet? Guess who came for a surprise visit?” asked a voice that sounded very much like my mother. Yikes. This was the mother who tolerated uncleanliness as one would a pedophile: with swift justice and without mercy.

“Nancy, hon…” The abrupt ending of her speech must have meant that her eyes had processed the mess of the duplex. And since mom knows what a clean-freak my roommate is, it was obvious who the culprit was. Damn, it was going to be a long day.

iPod
By: Nicholas Tonjuk

Press and hold to turn on. Slide switch to left to lock.
Plug earbuds into audio jack in top left corner.
Select artist, genre, or song. Choose your play back mode, shuffle, repeat, or continuous. Enjoy hours of all your favorite music accessed from the tips of your fingers music has never been this simple. iPod is revolutionary. Iconic it may be but quite the blow your wallet takes, especially around the holidays when new model is released, and the old one becomes obsolete.
It was a bright sunny day. Jessie got up in the morning, ate breakfast, took a shower, and stood in front of her mirror. She took a deep breath. Then she started to wrap tightly around her chest with the long white cloth. She put on a guy’s shirt and baggy jeans. Then she headed to the pasta house called ‘Prince Pasta House.’

Jessie was a hard-working, bright girl who had no family. Everybody was impressed by her because she was confident and happy all the time even though she was alone. But one thing that they were concerned about was that she looked like a boy. She had a really short hair, wore baggy clothes, and drove a motorcycle everywhere she went. Most people thought that she was a guy at first. But this wasn’t a major problem. The major problem was that she was working at the pasta house that only allowed guys to work. That is why the restaurant was called the ‘Prince’ pasta house. All the chefs in the pasta house thought that Jessie was a boy. Jessie didn’t want to tell them that she was a girl because ‘Prince Pasta House’ was the only place that paid a lot and she didn’t want to get fired.

The boss of the Prince Pasta House was named Mr. Duke. Even though he was a very intelligent and a creative guy, Mr. Duke liked to party and just have fun because he didn’t have a dream. He started the pasta house because he needed to earn money. Mr. Duke and Jessie were like brothers and they would spend time together. Mr. Duke thought that Jessie was the best brother he ever had, but Jessie secretly liked him.

Because of Mr. Duke’s smartness and creativeness, ‘Prince Pasta House’ became known throughout the East coast. Their signature pastas won several competitions in the past few years. But just last year, the rival restaurant got the first place and the Prince Pasta House got the second place. So this year, it was very important for the chefs to work hard to win. The chefs including Jessie and Mr. Duke stayed late every night and tried to figure out something different and better that nobody ever thought about. Jessie didn’t have the license as a chef but she helped the other chefs and Mr. Duke. She had a dream of becoming a famous chef, so she observed them carefully. After a week of hard work, they finally created an amazing pasta dish that could win the competition.

But one major problem happened. One of the chefs accidentally burned his right hand, so the Prince Pasta House was unable to compete. Mr. Duke was desperate to find another chef but it was too late. Jessie thought that this was her chance. She asked Mr. Duke if she could compete with them. Since Mr. Duke trusted Jessie, he asked the judges if she could join the competition. The judges said yes even though she’s not a professional chef. Other teams were laughing at Jessie, thinking that her team would definitely lose because of her.

But this thought was completely wrong. Since Jessie paid careful attention to how her team members made the pasta, it was easy for her to follow suit. And the first place went to the ‘Prince Pasta House.’ Jessie couldn’t believe what she just did. The judges were so surprised at her skills that they decided to give her the title as a professional chef. But the joy of winning was completely gone as soon as Mr. Duke and his team found out that Jessie was a girl. Jessie had to
give her personal information to the judges to become a chef, and she accidentally told the judges that she was a woman in front of everyone. The team members and Mr. Duke were in shock, but later they still thought of her as their team and Mr. Duke realized that Jessie was a beautiful girl who was full of dreams and he then fell in love. So Jessie continued to work at the Prince Pasta House and Mr. Duke proposed to her. Everybody was happy for Jessie and she accomplished her dream of having a family and becoming a famous chef.

Dream on the beach
By: Kheelan Gopal

The old man snored on the beach.
You could see the drool fall off of him.
There was plenty of sunshine out and girls were wearing their dresses.
The old man yawned and rolled around
I wonder what he was dreaming about
I would dream about the best meal ever.
With pizza and ice cream only makes it better
I want spicy food, but something that’s also has a crunch
Something that you normally don’t eat for lunch
Not a moldy meal
But something delectable to seal the deal
And for dessert, gooey butter cake
And off to the movies and after the lake

Isabella
By: Tia Joseph

She was born rather early
So small and so sweet
My lovely Isabella
Her precious feet

I lay there with her
The doctor came in
I tried to be hopeful
The doctor looked grim

My hand met my husband’s
We shared gazes
This wasn’t ideal
Oh life, and its crazy mazes

Acceptance miraculously filled my heart
Love would be there, forever and always
No one could steal this special moment from me, from us
This memory would be mine, forever and always…
Wait
By: Zach Moser

Here comes the rain
to cleanse my mind
of thoughts that drain.
For months we grind
through this union of futility
The water’s rising; the levee’s buckling:
A flood of great destructibility.
To us apart I can but Sing,
the dirge of death and sorrow of
the lost time, the impropriety
of false and boughten love.
From this I earn too much anxiety.
The rain is come, and has washed this sad path of futureless abyss.

-Untitled haiku-
By: Dhruvi Patel

Sitting quietly
Waiting for him to arrive
To make memories

Memories
By: Malory Toebben

Running through my mind,
Making me laugh,
Making me cry,
Wishing that I could be there again,
Just hoping that they never leave,
The one thing that I still have of you,
I miss you dearly,
At least it still remains.

For Him
By Thuy Tran

The streets are fill with lights and angels,
For the Holidays are coming.
I walk slowly in thoughts
Just thinking and wondering.
What to give you I questioned,
For you’re a difficult person to figure
If only you’ve told me what you want,
That would have been so much easier.
As I walk further down,
The situation seems to get harder.
I have no clue what you like
Someone please give me an answer!
Something shines at the corner of my eye
A small and memorable item.
What luck I have found.
This is totally awesome!
Next day, I gave you my present.
You open it and laugh with glee.
You then just smile and said,
“You’re so cute, giving this to me.”
If I knew one thing that you loved
Is that you always say you love me.
And guess what I gave my dear lover.
His favorite picture of us you see.
Death of My Dog Tommy
By: Vruti Patel

My best friend…
   My pet dog named Tommy
   We were like two peas in a pod
   Loved him dearly with all my heart
   Hard to forget the day he died, leaving me and this world, to be in a better place
   Got awfully sick
   Leaving me alone in a lonely world
   I remember the days you snuck up behind me like a growling, yet cute tiger, and frightened me
   Still remember how hyper you got to see me
   The way you jumped on me happily wagging your tail rapidly that created a rush of wind that could blow a person away
   Every morning the sun would rise
   Running to my room
   Woof woof woof
   Barking as loud as thunder
   You would come and wake me up
   Slobber upon my face with your long, yucky tongue and panting stinky breath
   For the morning’s here and it’s time to play
   You always got your way
   Still remember the day I got the nerves to stick my itty bitty finger in your mouth
   “OUCH,” I said
   When your teeth grinded against my finger
   I still loved you
   And learned a big lesson to NEVER put my finger in a dog’s mouth
   Can’t forget those pearly green eyes
   And furry white ears like a coyote
   The day you died, you overflowed my eyes with tears for the first time
   Wasn’t your fault
   It was your love that hurt me deep down
   You may not be with me now but
   I love you still even though we're apart

My very loyal friend

KIMCHI
By: Sarah Oh

Traditional food
   Hot and spicy it’s hard to eat
   Strong smell not pleasant.
**Take 5**  
By: Xing Yang

Set me on fire  
In a sea of swaying grass  
Its green blaze cold to the touch  
Rippling through this tired shell  
My senses breathe in the nostalgic sky  
Painting my uncertainties blue  
I reach with my hand where there is none  
I am scattered  
Dancing with the afternoon cherry blossoms  
Winding up towards those memories  
In the uncertain sky.

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**Breaking Up**  
By: Eric Suh

Going to college we knew  
We were slow dancing in a burning room  
So sad we didn’t think of what we were going to do  
So next thing you know we were through  
Now I am in pieces, mourning about all the times we’ve had  
Wasting my time thinking of all the faults I’ve had

---

**The God of the Universe**  
By Mallory Howell

As you speak the mountains quiver  
As you work the rivers turn  

With each word your lips deliver  
Molecules will crack and burn  

With creation I will shiver  
As from I to you I turn
Stuck
By Stephanie Chen

Let’s go back in time, rewind the clock some
Start over and begin again
I’m burnt out and sick of feeling so numb

Where did this nausea come from?
Black ink spills from a broken pen
Let’s go back in time, rewind the clock some

The pages wrinkle under my thumb
Living was simpler and easier back then
I’m burnt out and sick of feeling so numb

And look at what we’ve become
Far from a perfect ten
Let’s go back in time, rewind the clock some

Sound the horns and beat at the drum
It’ll let you know when
I’m burnt out and sick of feeling so numb

Forget the wine, and forget the rum
Stop asking how i’ve been
Let’s go back in time, rewind the clock some
I’m burnt out and sick of feeling so numb

My Home
By Lisa Kim

Home
My Home
My favorite place in the world
Nothing could ever replace my very own home
It has everything I could ever need: shelter, comfort, and rest
If
I
only
go
home
as
often
as
I wish
That would be the greatest gift above all—to go where I belong.
Learning
By Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

Ducks quack, crows caw, grasshoppers chirp, doves coo
Dogs bark, flies buzz, horses neigh, cows moo
Owls hoot, snakes hiss, geese honk, wolves howl
Lions roar, mice squeak, turkeys gobble, bears growl

I sit in class, excited to learn what I already know
But then all my facts begin to swirl in a turbulent flow
I now start to think that what I once thought
Was something that my teacher should not have taught

Doves quack, grasshoppers caw, ducks chirp, crows coo
Flies bark, horses buzz, cows neigh, dogs moo
Wolves hoot, owls hiss, snakes honk, geese howl
Mice roar, lions squeak, bears gobble, turkeys growl.

I’ve never been so confused before.

Pause in Life
By: Marquitta Martin

Stop the world from spinning
Stop the wind from blowing
Hold your breath
Nobody move

I feel as if my life is ending
My heart is beating fast, pounding against my chest
I can’t breathe, my vision is blurry
This can’t be happening to me
Not now, not ever

Stop the dogs from barking
Stop the children from playing
Hold your thoughts
Nobody speak

My life flashes before my eyes
I try to remember my last moments, my last hour
My palms are sweaty, my mind going insane
This can’t be happening to me
MY CELL PHONE IS DEAD AND I CANT FIND MY CHARGER!!
**FIRST DATE**  
By: Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

Put on a swimming suit  
Put on a summer dress  
My heart is beating for my first dream date with you

I am on my way to see your face  
Your face makes me drool  
Your face makes me feel delectable  
Your face makes me roll on my bed with excitement  
Your face makes me feel like I just ate a spicy jalapeno

Our first place together: pizza place  
The pizza was moldy  
The crust was so crunchy  
But it was the best food I have ever eaten  
Because I was there with you

Our second place together: movie theatre  
The movie has so many gooey scenes  
People were snoring and yawning  
But it was the best movie I have ever watched  
Because I was there with you

Our third place together: the beach at night  
Watching stars in dark sky  
Hearing the sound of the wave  
Sharing our first kiss  
It was the best first date I ever had.

**I am happy**  
By: Vruti Patel

I am happy  
Not kissing a hot guy happy  
Not being at the beach and having lots of fun happy  
Not being asked out by my best friend’s crush happy

But falling in love happy  
Happy that I can see you, feel you, and kiss you  
Happy that I can laugh, cry, and smile with you  
Happy that I LOVE YOU!!!
Adele
By: Xing Yang

Adele didn’t know who she was. Then again, she knew that many people can live and die without ever really finding that particular answer. But was it people don’t know the answer, or they don’t understand the question? Does the answer matter when the question hasn’t been asked? This was the type of circular thought that Adele started out with, with that starting point being complete emptiness.

In fact, Adele started out as a consciousness in the center of what could best be described as a “web.” The web was a complexity of woven patterns that spread around her, creating an infinitely expansive structure that paralleled the universe. And there “she” was, at the center of this web, where all patterns were securely anchored. At each intersection of the network was a sort of “existence”: a conglomerate of memories within a lifespan.

It’s so fragile, Adele thought. Yet beautiful, because of its own delicacy. Like a glass rose.

It took a quick glance for Adele to notice that each conglomerate of memories only existed in the presence of one another. In other words, Adele thought, the two only existed when they were both together. It made a strange sort of sense, Adele reflected. If you never knew a stranger who lived in a country on the opposite side of the planet, not knowing his or her contribution to the world (if any), then wouldn’t it be the same that this person never “existed” in the confines of your reality? You exist in my reality, because I am aware of you. People exist by acknowledging one another. The same applies to memories.

And it was this conclusive thought that Adele understood that this “web” was a connection between memories of the dead. And to throw even more intricacies to this very delicate design, the web was not flat. Indeed, it was stratified, with each layer anchoring to a supporting structure, which ultimately anchored to the center. Which was her.

Ah. That’s right, Adele realized. Quickly, the darkness and webs alike dissipated and gave way to dim lighting. Chandeliers were suspended from ivory ceilings. Next, bronze tinted walls and mahogany floors decorated the large room. Tables and a bar stand followed. A small window accompanied each table that lined the walls.

Each layer of the web was a generation, Adele assumed. When the living keeps the departed in their memories, the soul becomes a new pattern to her web. As such, the soul remains existing as a dense form of energy, known as “memories.” After many generations, the older generations will be completely forgotten, and then…

In answer, Adele felt the snap of a supporting pattern in her web. Without an anchor to keep the pattern suspended, a small piece receded into the abyss that Adele’s consciousness was birthed from.

Once Adele was satisfied with the layout of the building, she gave herself the appearance of a woman: a tall brunette with hair layered and reaching to her shapely hips. Olive colored eyes accentuated a calculated face that was both clever and beautiful. Done with this task, she snapped her finger (not that it was necessary), from which started the sounds of a piano humming away a classical score. The appearance of a glass vase and rose accented each corner of this café with the gothic theme she had planned to achieve.

And thus, Adele has been serving Café Twilight. For how long, that didn’t matter. The café was the meta-physical manifestation of the web her consciousness was born from. And the conglomerates of memories bore shape as constantly changing patrons to the café. These ghosts
were silhouettes, fashioned in clothes that were suspended in air. They spoke in hushed conversations of memories long past.

“Mama, mama!” shouted an enthusiastic girl: her summer dress suspended no more than four feet in the air, with sleeves that ended a hand’s length short of a rag doll. The girl ran to one of the tables on the other end of the café and quickly disappeared.

If feelings could be given to beings like Adele, what would she be able to express? She never understood who she was or how she came to exist. The café was her limit. She could never step out of the world she created. And to be able to identify feelings would require a standard: angry compared to what? Happy compared to what? Adele seemed to lack this standard, or foundation, to be able to understand what these “feelings” are.

It was long moments thereafter that Adele dropped the cup she was wiping with a towel. The glass’s impact to the tiled floors exploded in a shower of shards. It was a testimony to what she felt at the periphery of her consciousness, a ripple of sorts in the pattern of her web. It gained momentum and ended at the center, when the sound of the bells rang in response to the café door opening. Who could this be? Adele thought.

It was a living person.

“Coming!” she shouted from behind the bar counter, walking towards the guest. It was a man, in his early twenties. Tall, with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. Adele walked the man to a table. It was strange for any man to come to Café Twilight, not because it violated any universal law. It had just never happened before. And when Adele finally got a name from the stranger, she had to ask.

“So…Galvin, what brings you to Café Twilight?” The question sounded foreign to Adele's own ears. Was this how her voice really sounded like?

But Galvin never answered the question, Adele noticed. Instead, he asked about the ghost town surrounding the café and of the café itself. Apparently, the town had been abandoned generations ago, left to the desolate war-driven present.

“How many years have you worked here?” Galvin asked. It was pure curiosity, Adele was sure. Just like her own curiosity in Galvin’s visitation. But it was a valid question, Adele realized. How long ago has she woken up as a mere consciousness? Time was irrelevant because it was all relative. And once again, she had no standard for comparison to tell how long a second truly is. And so, she laughed, waving the question away like a pesky fly. But Galvin was insistent.

Throughout the conversation, Adele felt discomfort, a sort of itch at the back of her mind. If she took a mental step back, she could see her meta-physical body conversing with Galvin. But shifting her vision away, she noticed a disturbance in the patterns around her consciousness.

“Adele, I’m looking for someone,” said Galvin.

Suddenly, Adele felt the uneasiness close in to her center. Completely leaving her meta-physical body behind, she receded back into her consciousness, a world of nothing but darkness and patterns. There, in the periphery, the pattern was losing shape. In fact, the structure was folding in on itself to a state of least tension, like a stretched rubber band allowed to slacken. The state of least tension was where the patterns were anchored. In other words, it was coming at her.

What started this? Adele thought, but she knew the answer before asking herself. Ah, it was the moment the café door opened to the new guest. Or perhaps even before then, when she felt the ripple of Galvin’s presence.

But a sudden feeling like a hand placed on her shoulders forced Adele to shift her mind’s eye. Suddenly, she was standing before Galvin in the suspended darkness, back in her meta-physical body. “Galvin,” she said, not really sure where this was all headed.
“I know what you are,” he replied. And he was willing to tell me, Adele knew. But a revelation came to her as she slowly felt the lax in the threads of patterns around her. The café was beginning to lose definition as the world around her became smaller and smaller.

And finally, Adele understood too. The whole network of memories, including herself, was going to disappear into the darkness from which she herself came. Things only exist when they are remembered. Thus, Adele stood at the foundation of memories for all the inhabitants of this town. Yet the town has been abandoned, according to Galvin. And apparently long enough for no one to remember the people that had once filled its streets and homes. Yet with these very thoughts, a hand reached out to her from the corner of her vision. Galvin was reaching out to her amidst the falling strands of pattern that moved through both their bodies.

But Adele was not afraid. After all, she didn’t know what it really meant to be scared. They both now stood in the café, the walls and ceilings gone to the darkness. She declined the offered hand and merely smiled. “Thanks for the chat,” she said. Galvin merely nodded, and walked away. Surprisingly enough, the café door still stood despite the fading architecture. When the bell rang to the closing door, Adele sat her physical body on the lone chair. There were no more lights, chandeliers, nor roses.

At this point, Adele’s body was gone too. It was just her consciousness now, being aware that she existed. Most people would wonder at this point, “Ah, what was the point of my existence?” But that didn’t matter to Adele. What mattered was that she did exist, at one point in time. And that existence was very relative, and that she really would not exist in the reality of others. Except maybe Galvin.

And it was with this last thought that a weight of sorts seemed to dissipate from Adele. Was this relief? She thought, as her consciousness receded. It became smaller, yet infinitely dense, and eventually disappeared into the absence.

By: Amanda Syers

Dear love,

Who are you?
A feeling in need of words
One can’t possibly comprehend
A speck of hope a midst hurt and shame
Unspoken at times but still deeply felt
Able to break through are hard interior
Undercover and ready to be exposed
Warmth and comfort fill your presence
Inside these walls all the truth can be said
Not afraid of what one thinks, or of others
They will not understand,

You keep coming back to get me and don’t let me go
Grasping me with all you have
Even though I don’t see you
Still I know you’re there
Small Sleds
By: Susan To

It is a really cold Friday afternoon in February. It had just snowed the previous night in Saint Louis and there is about five or six inches of snow on the ground. The snow is really fluffy and good for packing to make snowballs and have a snowball fight with. Since the roads were kind of bad after the snow, my boss decided that we should not go to work today, so I have a day off. I had gotten these new spandex leggings for jogging from my sister on Christmas and have wanted to try them out. Since I don’t have work today, I should try out the new leggings for jogging in the cold.

My goodness, it is cold out here! I have on gloves, leggings, an under armor shirt, a sweater, ear muffs, and I’m still freezing my butt off! I decided that I will run five miles today to start off with. This exercise should get me all geared up to do my presentation at work tomorrow. Ah, it feels so good to just run and let out all my stress and frustration and just breath in the nice fresh air. The air always seems so fresh and crisp when it is cold outside. It is so refreshing. I am going to run down Forest Park and Kingshighway today.

Kingshighway is so long. What is this? There is a group of college students outside forest park and it looks like they are sledding. Those sure are small sleds that they are using. When I went sledding as a child, I had the biggest wooden sled that my dad built me. I sure miss those days. Wait, those aren’t sleds, they’re lunch trays! These kids sure are resourceful, using lunch trays as sleds. They seem to be working pretty well too, surprisingly. These kids are sure having a lot of fun it seems. They are throwing snowballs at each other, having sledding races, and even tackling each other in the snow. It makes me miss when I was a kid.

Adolescence
By: Libby Herman

The little girl grows up all too
Quickly. Dolls and kitchen play sets give
Way to make-up and cell-phones.
She no longer lingers by mommy’s side,
Gripping her hand tightly. Instead, she breaks
Away, longing to be free. She drifts
Apart, leaving her mother in tears, behind.
Rain
By: Carrie Covert

The water is nice
I love the smell of today
Rain makes my day great

“A Sad Tail”
By: Mallory Howell

It was all for good fun you see,
We got out of school and jumped in the car
To Lauren’s house we’d flee.
There was always food over there.

Lauren’s parents had a big screen TV
And she always seemed to have the best snacks
That’s why it was the best place to be
We got there and ran up the steps to the door

Let’s watch some spongebob! was my plea
We raced inside and slammed the door
Up the stairs in such a big hurry
But when we sat down we heard a strange noise

We looked around to all we could see,
But no sign of where the sound came from.
We followed the sound desperately
And spotted something peculiar in the door

Her cat’s tail was stuck and couldn’t get free!
It was outside but its tail was in here
We opened the door and quick did it scurry
Back inside with its tail looking limp

“Aria Sulla Quarta Corda –Bach
By: Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

This morning I woke up to a sound of rain
Not the kind of rain that would make babies cry
Not the kind of rain that would make streets icy
It is a kind of rain that would turn the world into silence
It is a kind of rain that would turn the world into peace

The window was slightly open
And the rain drops sneaked in and made a mess
But every single drop of rain washed my heart

The little green plant always seemed melancholic
But when the rain drops gently landed on the leaf
It became greener than ever

I sat down in front of the window
And watched the rain falling from the sky
And for a short time I became one of those rain drops,
Wishing that I could turn the world into peace

Candles
By Hannah Renner

Sweet scent fills the air
A room instantly made home
I wish for no more

Haiku
By: Kayla Gray

A quick white tail flash
I heard a distant stick break
The hunt was over
Finals at STLCOP
By: Brittney McGlasson

Finals are here
The time has come
Have to start studying
Can’t sit on my bum
I’m scared for bio
Chem makes me sad
I’m in denial
I know I’ll do bad

Finals
By: Kushbu Patel

Finals make me nervous
Finals are so hard that I can’t answer all the questions
I always do badly on the finals
I need to start studying before hand
Finals make me cry
Finals bring my grade down
Finals are frustrating
Why can’t finals be easy?

Registration
By: Danielle Robbins

O how nervous I am
One minute left…
The clock is ticking…
It’s time- Hurry- Click!
I’m in! Now type- type faster!
NO- Next numbers- 2nd choice
YES! I can relax now.