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Winner of the 2013 Norton Writing Center 3 minute Fiction contest

**Remembering New York**

By: Zachary Moser

“Mr. Shaw, this is your last chance. Please tell us where you were when Ashlee Shaw died.”

“I don’t… I still can’t remember,” Kevin stuttered.

Without removing his piercing gaze from Kevin’s eyes, the interrogator boomed, “Doctor!”

“No. NO! NOOOOO,” came the futile screams. Kevin tried to break free of his restraints, but ultimately succumbed to the fiery liquid flowing into his veins. With each passing second the pain in his body increased. It felt as though his hands were engulfed in flames, his eyes like two balloons being filled to twice their size. Finally, the feeling of the vice clamped on his head seemed to tighten even further, sending everything to darkness.

“Why are we bothering with this? We have a company to run. We don’t investigate murders.”

“I’m convinced there’s something else going on here. We must find out what it is. Don’t question my judgment.”

The investigators and the doctor all stepped out of the room, leaving behind a starved, broken, and sedated shell of a human being named Kevin Shaw. Outside of the interrogation room waited Mr. Black, the mysterious executive of the Compound.

“It’s been three days, Roberts,” said Mr. Black.

“I know sir, but I’ve got it under control. I think he’s getting close.”

“You have eight hours.”

The pain was gone, leaving him feeling weightless and euphoric in the wispy fescue field. Like smoke from a hundred pipes, the ashen clouds billowed overhead, shielding the sun from his eyes. Standing up, Kevin had the chance to examine his surroundings. For miles in every direction, soft, green hills rolled as the red and yellow wildflowers mottled the field. It was, to Kevin, the most beautiful place he had ever been.

A voice from behind startled him. “Kevin?!” it whispered.

A familiar voice, it seemed, as he turned around to see the face of his wife, Ashlee, smiling back.

“Ashlee. How did you—“
“Don’t worry about that right now. It’s more important that you remember. Remember who you really are. Remember your cover story.”

“I – I’m your husband, and you’re dead. I killed you.”

“I’m not your wife, and you didn’t kill me.”

“But – I don’t understand.”

“Shhhhh. Stay calm. Let’s take a walk.”

Ashlee’s touch comforted him as they walked for a half an hour without speaking. Finally, Ashlee asked, “Do you remember New York?”

“Yes, that’s where we got married. Central Park,” Kevin replied.

“No, that’s where we became partners. We work for the CIA as institutional infiltrators. Our first assignment was Reinhardt International, in NYC. We exposed and severed their links to Al-Qaeda.”

Suddenly, everything came rushing back.

“Our marriage was our cover for the BioPharma infiltration, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, you’re starting to remember. It seems that when we tried to fake my death, you started believing our cover was real. You must snap out of it. Get a hold of yourself and get out of this room!”

“Revive him.”

The doctor pushed another vial of drug into his veins, and Kevin instantly awoke.

“Tell me, Mr. Shaw, why did I find your fingerprints in my office?”

Kevin did not respond.

“Doctor!”

The fire filled his body again. He drifted out of consciousness.

“Sir, he’s dead.”

“Get rid of him.”

As the doctor slipped off his restraints, Agent Shaw sprang back to life. With the doctor’s back turned and the interrogator out of the room, he took a syringe full of the drug flowing through his veins, jabbed the doctor with it, and climbed into the ventilation ducts, undetected.

He had a mission to complete
Separation
By: Peter Ho

Politicians place themselves in their respective pews, their dull crosses dangle, entangled in their chest hair.

They slouch, engulfing the finest of Cuban tobacco, lips suctioned to the ends of the boring brown wrappers.

They drag the fumes to the pits of their charcoal lungs, their wheezy respiration stifles the young priest.

Some make their presence known because they possess true faith, others arrive because they campaigned on god's famous shoulders.

Whatever the motivation, whatever the inclination, they have no sort of significance, nor any importance.

For we the people will never know the veracity, unable to view through their impervious hooded cloaks.

They warned about this sort of thing, those past presidents, emphatically emphasizing critical separation.

I presume their aspirations are now merely untilled soil, and their visions of America dishonest hallucinations.

For we the people are not a united people at all, so long as it remains one nation under god.

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NO NAME
By Vruti Patel

A fish is something that needs water.
A dish is something that needs to be washed.
A wish is something that needs to come true.
A bug is something that gets squished.
A person is something that needs to live.
It all started the day that I was going to the doctor to get my wisdom teeth taken out. I don’t know why this day had to come so soon. It was 5 am and I was starving already. The doctor’s office had called the day before just to remind me that I was not allowed to eat or drink anything 12 hours before my surgery. I was not happy. I was the first person in my family to get their wisdom teeth taken out. All I heard were horror stories from friends about how badly their surgeries went.

I started to crawl out of bed; it was way too early for me to get the day started. I had to adjust my body so that I could pick up my legs in such a fashion to slide gracefully into my wheelchair. I loved my wheelchair. Without it I was no longer self-sufficient. The shine on the metal and the sleekness of its composition always left me in awe and wonder about its beauty. I have been using this chair for the past 2 years. That is when I got into a car accident that nearly cost me my life. Never before had I ever felt my life flash so fast right in front of me. I thank God that my boyfriend Mark was there to protect me; if his hand didn’t brace the impact, I would not be alive. He is in worse shape now then I am but he has continued to get better each day. Since he was in the passenger seat and the truck side-swiped my car, he got hit the hardest. Currently he is paralyzed from the neck down. I really do love him. We are both disabled but we are both alive. We find time in the midst of our hectic high school schedule to hang out but it is hard with all the therapy we both have to go to weekly.

Once in my wheelchair I headed over to the bathroom to get ready. This was the real task. Having to prep myself for showering and make sure that I didn’t get hurt. My parents were so gracious that they bought me a new shower that is very wheelchair accessible. I have truly been blessed. After getting ready I had to get something to eat. But wait, I forgot, I’m not allowed to eat anything. I then slowly made my way to the car to get into the van and head over to the doctor’s office.

My dad had put me in the car and we were all set and ready to go. Everything was in place and we headed off to the doctor’s office. I was a little taken back when I had realized that my dad’s breath smelled like he had been drinking way to much this morning. He didn’t seem like he had everything together. I was worried and I wanted to tell him to pull over but I was too scared. I didn’t want to hurt his feelings. Things never go well when he drinks.

But then again, I got the feeling that dad would probably wave my concerns aside. Oh, you are worrying too much, he would say. Regardless, that didn’t put my tensions at ease. We slowly pulled to the first intersection on the road, where an inconvenient stop sign was posted in the midst of low hanging tree branches. Another car was making its way to stop at the intersection as well. Expecting our car to slow to a stop, my tensions began to rise as we approached the sign without evidence of slowing.

“Dad, dad, DAD!” I shouted. Like a light bulb that slowly flickered to life, dad quickly slammed on the brakes as the car screeched to a stop in the middle of the intersection. The second car at the intersection honked as it too stopped just inches from the driver’s side of our car.
There was a moment of silence after the initial honking from the other driver, when I was collecting my thoughts. My mind was a soup of emotions: relief, fear, worry, and a whole bunch of other unnamed feelings were simmering and ready to pour over the edge. It was my dad’s groggy cursing brought me back to reality.

“D-dad, are you okay?” I tried to change my position to get a better look at dad’s face, which was planted on the steering wheel. I reached over to pat his shoulder, to arouse some kind of response from him. He finally pushed his face from the wheel and looked around. It was then that his mind seemed to register the situation, in which he quickly turned around and grabbed my hand.

“Carrie! Carrie! Are you hurt? Are you alright? My god!” dad started shouting, his eyes tearing up as the worry spilled over.

“I’m fine…” I began to say when we heard knocking on the window. It was the other driver, a woman in her middle ages, who looked concerned. My dad rolled down the window and began apologizing. When the woman was reassured that no one was hurt, her concerned gave way to anger.

It was only a few minutes, and luckily without any other cars coming towards the intersection, but it felt like the whole day had come and gone. Afterwards, dad pulled the car over the intersection and parked on a side street. He let out a long sigh, in which I handed over a half-filled bottle of water.

“Thirsty?” I asked.

“Carrie…I’m sorry.” I felt he wasn’t just apologizing for the incident just now. Over the past two years, I could tell that both mom and dad had lived through what felt like decades of worry and grief. I knew that they wished either of them could be in the wheelchair instead of me. But I was, and even though the chair gave me independence, I needed them both. How could I make them understand?

“Dad, I know you didn’t mean to cause an accident. I know you wish you could trade places with me. But I’m fine, really I am. Well, except for my surgery today. We probably should go.”

Dad suddenly remembered and pulled himself together. He drove slowly and carefully to the Out Patient Surgery. He helped me out of the car and we went in together. They wheeled me off to surgery and my father sat in the waiting room.

A few hours later they wheeled me back to my father. He looked as if he hadn’t moved from the chair in the reception area. I, on the other hand, was woozy from whatever medication they had used to put me out for the surgery. I was weaving all over the place. My father watched me with a queer look on his face. I laughed at him, but he didn’t laugh back. “Do you feel well, Carrie?”

“Gosh yes,” I replied. “I feel wonderful, like I could float. Like I could fly. Like I could go anywhere I wanted.” And I really did feel that way. Why on earth had I worried about having a tooth extracted?
“Well, Carrie. That is exactly how I feel when I drink. Free. Light. Happy. I know you are the one who is in the wheelchair, but I’m the one who has been limited by it. Your body was crippled in the accident; my spirit was. You were my hope for the future; it severely damaged me to see you crippled. That’s why I drink. So I can occasionally feel like you do right now.”

“Oh Daddy…Daddy,” I rambled on with a goofy side grin. “Why are you so…saaaad?” I wasn’t listening to him. I was so out of it. I could tell by the look on his face that he was not amused in the least bit.

“Come. Let’s go to the car, Carrie” my father said in a sympathetic voice.

Several hours later I awoke from my bed, and immediately felt pain. I started to stir around in my bed until I realized something was laying on my covers. It turned.

“Hey sweetie. You sleep okay?” my father exclaimed, while I wondered why he was laying in my bed with me. It was so unlike him. This sympathy was confusing me. Maybe it was just the drugs that they had given me. It was probably just an illusion and not really my dad. He touched my cheek ever so lightly. Nope, it was my dad. I wondered what his change of heart was, but he decided to tell me before I could even get the question out.

As I looked around, my dad being in bed next to me was not the only strange thing. I wasn’t in my own bed, or in my own room. As I looked around I realized I was in the hospital. My dad could see the panic in my face and explained everything. Apparently I had a strange reaction to the medication I was given after my wisdom teeth were removed. I went home the afternoon after my procedure and went straight to bed. My dad came and checked up on me an hour later and I was not responsive. He called 911 right away.

I was admitted to the hospital and I had been in and out of it for three days. This was the first time I was alert enough to hold a conversation. Then my dad got tears in his eyes and his voice began to quiver, “you’re cured,” he said. “I know, dad, I’m just fine. The medication is out of my system.” He quickly responded, “No, honey, your cured. The nerves have begun to send signals to your legs again. You were kicking them like crazy in your sleep. The doctors even think you might be able to walk again. You’ll be free again!”

Three months later I took my first steps in two years. It has been a long process but I am now able to function just like every other normal person now. My father was so happy that he quit drinking. It has now been five years since the accident, and I enjoying life more than ever, but these days of my live would mean nothing to me if not for the trials and troubles I came across while in a wheel chair.

Cinquain
By Amanda Syers

Alaska
Cold, beautiful
Cruising, hiking, touring
So open and Free
Anchorage
Ready, Set, Go
By: Crystal Naes

Hurry, hurry, Let’s Go!
The morning has already arrived.
Ready, Set, Go!

Don’t start your morning slow.
Get up, go get some bacon fried.
Hurry, hurry, Let’s Go!

Mother walked in and said, “Hello!”
“I’m so tired,” you sighed.
Ready, Set, Go!

It was noon, your shadow directly below.
“I want a nap,” you cried.
Hurry, hurry, Let’s Go!

Now it is evening, the moon is aglow.
It is time to go relax by the poolside.
Ready, Set, Go!

I don’t want to go to bed! Absolutely No!
But when you sit down, you rush into a sleep.
Hurry, hurry, Let’s Go!
Ready, set, Go!

Hound
By Xing Yang

The hands grasp at midnight
The nightmare startles awake
The sweat on my brow
The feeling of someone on the prowl
The darkness takes hold
The footsteps move swiftly
I am filled with forboding and fear
If I yelled for help, would anyone hear?
The footsteps are closer, heart beats fast
It’s in the bed, it’s the loving hound
Leon didn’t believe in such fiction, preferring the surety of his semiautomatic and years of training in the Special Forces to keep life moving forward. Death was a beast, a natural monstrosity with fangs ready to sink into the prey. And the preys are many in the capital: a world stagnant from industrialization and smog which fed the eternal overcast. Acid rain eroded the city’s outskirts, while leaving the protected central district free of harm. Disparity was one of the few constants in life, a lesson that drove Leon from the Special Forces to an agent working for the Black Market. It was simple: someone had a job and he came willing to help, but for a price. And it was one of these jobs, requiring delivery of a “special package,” that had landed him in his current predicament.

Puddles from the recent rain splashed indignantly from Leon’s heavy boots, which pounded the cracked concrete in haste. A lighter splash followed, a second pair of bare and bleeding feet following close. The splashing seemed obnoxiously loud, as if the heavy silence of the ghetto were walls that echoed the sounds of their urgent escape.

Leon slowed at the feel of resistance to his pull. The sound of loud gasping brought him to a complete stop as he glanced behind. Ruta was bent with delicate hands placed on wobbling knees. Her white cotton dress was torn from their escape, revealing pale skin that almost gleamed in the polluted evening. She wore a metallic headpiece, appearing like headphones, which contrasted with her delicate features. Ruta’s waist long blond hair hid hazel eyes and a thin mouth. To an average passerby, Ruta appeared to be the daughter of a wealthy white collar family. Nothing like the clairvoyant used by the government Council. Nothing like a person able to foresee and guide the industrialization and growing disparity of the capital.

A flicker of movement to his right, and reflex forced him and Ruta to the ground. A light graze from a bullet punctured his left shoulder. His right arm unfastened the semi-automatic, and a clip was emptied into the window of an abandoned office building. The lack of return fire was answer to his question.

“They’re coming,” Ruta replied, her translucent eyes indicating the capital from behind. Leon nodded, got up and pulled Ruta to her feet, not feeling any of the weight he expected. It would take an hour to reach The Gate to the Outside. It would only require a pass card, which he was in possession of. From the Outside, it would be more difficult. Where was his destination? The clairvoyant was the package. Surely the package would know.

Ruta started walking ahead, inconspicuous of the dangers that could be sighting on them from the abandoned office buildings. Leon instinctively reached out to her arm, feeling a slight prickle. A sensation of nostalgia so long swept away and blurred by emotions. It was a memory
that remains as a collage of colors: secure green, fresh blue, and flushed hands; hands that were not his. All too quickly, the feeling was gone and Leon was staring at Ruta, still holding onto her wrist.

“Where am I supposed to take you?” Leon finally asked.

“Some place far from here,” Ruta replied after careful consideration. There it was, her lucid tone complementing those translucent eyes. Even her emotions seemed bored. Nothing was uncertain for Ruta. She continued, “It’s a place only you know of.”

Leon sighed. This was the most he would get from the clairvoyant. But annoyance failed to appear when it was expected. Instead, he worked the metal bracelet off his left wrist. It was a simple woven pattern of metal, subjected to years of harsh weather and terrain. Ruta looked inquisitively at the item, unsure how to react as Leon carefully secured the bracelet to her bony wrist.

“It’s a good luck charm,” Leon explained, while keeping his eyes focused around him. “From when I was a kid. Don’t remember who gave it to me. But I’m alive now, so it must be good for something.”

Ruta nodded, cupping her new gift with her free hand. This time, Leon took the lead towards The Gate. Everywhere he gazed, rusted and abandoned ruins of a city stood to shelter imaginary enemies. Anyone could be aiming at the back of his head. There was no shelter. No safety. Every dark corner was beckoning at him with ill intentions. But Ruta shook her head. “It’s alright,” she said.

They continued to walk, side-by-side. Their light steps fed the silence, keeping the beast from sinking its claws into Leon’s suspicious mind. But these thoughts soon whittled away the time until a small open pavement separated them from the ten meter high gate. The gate was part of a wall that enclosed the capital. But all it would take was scanning his fake pass card through the card reader.

“Let’s go,” Leon said, noticing how Ruta seemed to fidget with the bracelet. Was she nervous? How couldn’t she be, if she lived her whole life in the confines of the capital. A caged bird exploited to predict the future for others’ benefits.

They were halfway to the Gate when a bright light surrounded them. Leon spun around, pushing Ruta behind his tall frame. The light was shone from an aircraft that hovered soundlessly behind an old skyscraper, hidden from view till this moment. Sounds of many feet came from all directions, with the sound of cocked firearms that were soon aimed at him. They were trapped.

Disbelief. Shock. Denial. These emotions quickly led Leon to glance back at Ruta, who refused to look at his eyes. Her hands were clasped to the bracelet. She knew this was going to happen.
“Resist, and we will fire,” echoed a mechanical voice from the aircraft. When Leon made a grab for his semiautomatic, Ruta quickly placed her hands over his. A sad smile, but not one of utter defeat, but that of something good about to end. Leon wasn’t aware that Ruta was capable of such an expression as she said, “Thank you Leon. You’ve brought me to that faraway place.”

At what point did the mechanical voice stop echoing? Or when had the soldiers disappeared and it was just the two of them standing in darkness so dense it appeared solid. A prickling sensation shifted his gaze to his left arm where a long blade of vernal grass reached from the floor. A similar sensation to his right arm: this time a Cocksfoot with its flowerhead ticking the skin of his palms. Now, he completely took his gaze away from Ruta and stared below his feet.

Blades of different varieties of grass shot up, creating a green patch. A feeling of warmth enveloped Leon in the form of light from above. The light rained down from the sky where a clear bit of blue peeked through the overcast. At the sound of his surprised breath, the heavy clouds quickly receded, peeling away to reveal an expanding azure firmament. Light flushed the darkness, illuminating a sea of turbulent grass that swayed with the force of summer breeze. Pink blossoms fluttered in choreography to the loud airy whispers, seemingly raining from the cloudless sky.

Leon’s eyes burned and watered from the sudden brightness, his hair imitating the swaying grass. The floral scented earth invaded his senses, evoking that vague collage of old memories: this was the meadow in his childhood. And those pale hands in his memories…

“You’ve brought me to that faraway place,” echoed a voice in his mind. Leon turned around: his sight didn’t fall on the pale girl like he expected, but on distant mountains that cupped the meadow in its hand like a precious treasure easily lost. The sound of swaying grass answered his call. Leon stretched his arm, caging a petal that easily slipped through his wide fingers.

She knew this was going to happen, Leon thought. She knew there was no escape, but wanted to come here, even for just a moment. And now, she’s not here.

Leon picked up his fallen semiautomatic. If he left now, it would take a month to reach the capital. The nostalgia that was replaced with wonderment now settled bitterly in his heart. With his resolve firm, he worked his way through the grass. Leon was not clairvoyant. He could not have known of that distant future where he stood once again in this meadow; in that future, he will not be alone. Next to him stood a girl with a white cotton dress, her usual stoicism replaced with a smile as bright as a childhood sun.
Crystal Star
By: Nathan Dodd

Crystal Star was finishing her last set list of her career at the showroom on the strip in Las Vegas. It had been a very successful two years for her. She gained a lot of attention and worldwide fame. The banners of her face would still remain up on the strip. She knew she would miss a big part of her life and that her move to work in the Peace Corps in Africa was a great opportunity that she was very excited for.

On the night of her last performance, there was a huge turnout. People lined across the stage to try to touch the Las Vegas icon. Before she went on stage, Matt gave Crystal a good luck charm bracelet to take to Africa with her. “This should bring you luck wherever you end up,” said Matt. As Crystal made her way to the microphone in the center of the stage, she saw all of her fans that would watch her perform for the last time. Fans screaming everywhere around her gave Crystal a feeling that she could not forget. She took it in for her last time.

During the show she could not help but notice a particular man with a hood on and binoculars covering his eyes watching her from the crowd. She came to the conclusion that his vision must not be very good and that he needed the binoculars to see her better. She dismissed ideas from her mind and finished her set list. She had put on the show of her career and realized that she went out in the best way she could think of.

Crystal arrived in Africa two days later after taking the flight out of Las Vegas. She got off the plane and an overwhelming feeling came over her. She knew she was destined to do great things in her time in Africa, but could not help but nervous. She looked at her bracelet that Matt gave her to calm herself down and ease some of the tension she was feeling. She looked ahead at the small village she would be staying in. It was a very poor area with shacks up and down the path. They looked like they were constructed out of hay, leaves, and sticks. There was no concrete or sidewalks, only dirt. The jungle surrounded the village. The area was very secluded where no other humans would be found within at least fifty miles. Crystal knew that this would be a tough lifestyle to adapt to.

One day while working in the fields, Crystal heard a noise through the grass. All she could think of was that she was about to be attacked by a tiger or some kind of large animal. The creature got closer and closer but Crystal was frozen with fear. She dropped all of her food she had gathered and tried to scream but nothing came out. Through the tall grass a man emerged. A man she had seen before. It was the man with the binoculars at Crystal’s last performance, her ex-boyfriend Damian. Crystal was not particularly happy to see Damian because they had just come off of a bad break-up and he had not taken it too lightly. He had stalked her all around Las Vegas and kept calling her and sending her letters. “I followed you here,” said Damian in a very monotone voice.

“Why?” replied Crystal.

“I saw you at the show the other night and noticed a man at the side of the stage gave you that bracelet you have on. I kept watching you with my binoculars to get a better look at it.
What happened to the bracelet I got you? It was much nicer. Do you wear that one because HE gave it to you?

“Damian, I don’t know what you’re talking about. Me and Matt are just friends and we work together. He gave me this bracelet to wish me good luck.”

“Well Crystal, you see, I could not have him in our way so I took care of him.”

Crystal began to cry and knew she had to run away.

Damian pulled a knife out of his back pocket. “If I can’t have you Crystal, then no one can.”

**Studying at STLCOP**
By: Patrick Metel

Here at STLCOP the classes are hard
In order to succeed one must study
Day in and day out
Students are seen preparing for finals
In the cafeteria, library, and quad
To be successful and happy

**Internet**
By: Min Ho An

Internet
How can I live without you?
How were people able to live without you before?

Why do you have everything that I need
Because of you I cannot go to bed.

I will never be able to get out of you.
You are so addicting and I need to get out of you.
But…… I need you so much….
I don’t know how I can live my life without you.
STUDYING
By: Michael F. Dillingham

I h8 studying
STLCOP is the worst at this
I get zero sleeeee..........  

Summer Days
By: Andrew Caruso

I like to spend ‘em fishin’,
Catchin’ big bass or wishin’.

Spool my reel with Seaguar line,
Expensive but very fine.

Pitchin’ my bait at a log,
Hopin’ to pull out a hog.

If I don’t I wouldn’t care,
Can’t catch them always, ain’t fair.

Throw some buzzbaits and spinners,
Trying to bring home dinner.

Sippin’ a nice Busch beer,
Refreshing and oh so dear.

Not too much a few is fine,
Or else ill bird’s nest my line.

That’s how I spend summer days,
Leave so fast I’m in a haze.

The Limit
By: Jessie Kim

You can’t really fight against the waves
Often times you’re forced to meet your limit
Sad I know, but that’s the truth.

People around tell you to stay strong
But they don’t know that you are forced to admit
You can’t really fight against the waves.

Don’t question yourself what is wrong
It’s not you, so don’t overcommit
Sad I know, but that’s the truth.

Look around, you’ve got friends to go along
It is a long journey but don’t quit
You can’t really fight against the waves.

There are no promises, yet be strong
You might have to intermit
Sad I know, but that’s the truth.

Things can go wrong
But don’t be too hard on yourself when admit
You can’t really fight against the waves
Sad I know, but that’s the truth.

Haiku
By: Saba Aziz

Facebook oh Facebook
You take so much of our time
Of course, we don’t mind.
This was her last chance. Tonight, although they didn’t know it, all three of them were going to the movies. Tommy and Lia needed to learn how to get along because it was driving Kate crazy. Last year at Kate’s 17th birthday party, both Lia, Kate’s best friend, and Tommy, Kate’s boyfriend, got Kate the same gift that she had been wanting for a really long time. Kate had wanted tickets to see her two favorite bands play together when they came into town that year. The problem was that the last two years the concert had sold out minutes after going on sale and Kate didn’t get to go. Last year, however, both Lia and Tommy managed to get two tickets each after painstakingly waiting in line for hours for them. However, they didn’t know that they had both gotten Kate the same thing. That put them on bad terms right away because they intended for the tickets to be for Kate and themselves only and now not only were they both going with Kate, but they had an extra ticket. Tommy tried to make it up to Lia by inviting one of his friends to go with her as her date so that Tommy and Kate could sit together without a third wheel. Lia thought it was a great idea at first. However, it turned out to be a catastrophe.

It wasn’t that Tommy’s friend wasn’t attractive or that he wasn’t a cool guy; it’s just that for whatever reason, he and Lia did not get along. While Tommy and Kate were enjoying the concert, Lia and Tommy’s friend got into it so bad that Lia got up and waited two hours in the car for the concert to get over. No one knows what happened but apparently it wasn’t good. Since then, both Lia and Tommy have absolutely hated each other’s guts. This was why tonight was going to be such a big deal. Kate had tricked both Lia and Tommy into going to the movies with her in the hopes that she could get them talking. Kate had been dating Tommy for a year now but Lia still had not come to grips with it. Last week she even tried to get Kate to go on a blind date with someone else. As for Tommy, he just ignored Lia when she was around and acted like she wasn’t there. Obviously this made it hard for Kate who enjoyed both their company.

Kate pulled up to the movie theatre in her car to find Lia already waiting for her outside. “Hey girl!” Kate said as she walked up to Lia. “Let’s go find a seat in the theatre before it gets too packed.”

“Sounds good.” Lia replied.

They bought their tickets and small talked until they got into the theatre when Lia spotted Tommy saving a seat for Kate.

“What’s he doing here?” Lia exclaimed. “I didn’t agree to this!”

Tommy spotted Lia as well and rolled his eyes.
“Come on Lia, let’s go sit down. It really isn’t that bad and you guys need to start getting along again anyway,” said Kate.

“No way, I have had it with him. Either he leaves or I leave. I am not dealing with this anymore. I don’t even know why you like him. And you know what, unless you break up with him I am not going to hang out with you anymore,” shouted Lia angrily.

Kate didn’t know what to say. She didn’t understand where this sudden drastic ultimatum and come from. Before she could reply Tommy walked up with a thing or two to say himself.

“What are you doing here? Did you come to ruin another perfectly good date night?” he snarled at Lia.

“I am waiting Kate” Lia replied.

Kate didn’t know what to do. Kate was her best friend, but obviously she didn’t understand how terrible of a decision this would be for Kate. She didn’t want to stop talking to Lia, but she really liked spending time with Tommy and didn’t think it was right for Lia to force her to break up with him.

“I have had enough too,” said Kate. “I am leaving and until both of you figure out whatever it is between you, I am not going to talk to either one of you.” At that Kate walked away leaving a shocked Tommy and a confused Lia behind in the theatre.

The next day Kate spent crying. She hadn’t heard from either Tommy or Lia and concluded that they had decided getting along was too great a cost for her. However, to Kate’s surprise, Tommy called her and asked her to come over to his house so they could talk. When she got there, she saw Lia’s car parked outside and her heart began to beat rapidly in her chest as she walked to the front door and knocked. Tommy opened the door and invited her inside. Lia was sitting on the couch and Tommy motioned for her to have a seat. Feeling nervous but encouraged by the fact that the two of them were obviously doing better than before, Kate waited for one of them to say something.

“Kate.” Tommy started. “We have something we want to tell you. Lia and I are, dating.”

Kate blinked. She was confused.

“See…” Tommy continued. “When Lia and I were in middle school, before we knew you, we dated for a couple years. But we got into a silly fight and broke up. The only thing was that we never stopped liking each other, and when I started dating you, it was only so that I could get closer to Lia, and I am sorry. Lia gave me a chance to be with you, but once she figured out what I was really after, she and I started fighting. Anyway, I am sorry I used you.”

Kate paused and then to Lia and Tommy’s horror, she started laughing.
“This is a joke right?” Kate finally said.

“No Kate,” Lia replied. “We are serious. This is why I couldn’t stand being around you two. I knew that he was just trying to get to me and it made me mad that he was using you.”

“Then why would you just up and date him then if you knew he was using me?” Kate retorted.

“Well, I wasn’t going to at first, but he really is sorry,” Lia said coolly.

Kate was furious. She couldn’t believe it. Slowly, she got up from the couch, walked to the door, and left. That was the last time that she ever talked to either one of them, and as far as she could tell, they didn’t really even notice.

ALONE
By: Marquitta Martin

I LAY IN THE DARKNESS, ALONE
THE CLOCK TEASES ME, CLICK-CLOCK, ANOTHER SECOND THAT YOU’RE AWAY
A CHILLY BREEZE CREEPS IN FROM THE WINDOW
IT KNOWS THAT I AM LONELY, AND KISSES MY CHEEK LIKE AN EX LOVER
CLICK-CLOCK, CLICK-CLOCK
IN THE SHEET’S COMFORT, I WRAP MY BODY UP
I CAN STILL SMELL YOUR COLONGE, THE SCENT OF DESIRE
ANOTHER KISS FROM THE BREEZE, THIS TIME COLDER
IT REMINDS ME OF YOUR LIPS, YOUR KISS, THE TASTE OF SATISFACTION
ALONE, ANOTHER SECOND THAT YOU’RE AWAY
I LAY IN THE DARK BELLY OF AN EMPTY ROOM, HUNGRY FOR YOUR LOVE
CLICK-CLOCK, CLICK-CLOCK
MY ONLY COMPANY IS THIS SHEET, THIS CLOCK, THIS BREEZE
THE KISS OF AN EX LOVER, SO COLD, CREEPING
THAT KISS, THE REASON YOU ARE SO FAR AWAY
THE REASON I LAY I THE DARKNESS, ALONE
The Wedding
By: Maryanne Lee

My toes wiggled deep underneath the sand, searching for a haven of coolness as my skin perspired underneath the sun's rays. Palm trees with a bundle of coconuts stood at my left and right, but provided no shade against the angle of the sun. I was sitting in a chair, looking out at the vast, blue ocean, while the white crest of the waves crashed against the grains of the Earth. It was a beautiful setting, the perfect place for one to express love to his or her respective soulmate.

The groom stood handsome as always, in his crisp, white suit. A wide smile was perched across his face as he stared at the other end towards a tall, beautiful woman. Her brown hair was curled with perfection on both sides of her head, and her eyes were gleaming with joy.

Music began to enter into my ears as she walked down the aisle with her arm locked against her father's. Her white, satin dress flowed with the wind, carrying the sweet strawberry scent of her perfume. As she walked, her gaze continued upon her fiancé, where she was soon reunited at the front with him. The priest continued to work his magic, blessing the two with a bond that would never be broken.

The groom and I have been best friends since childhood. Little did he know that I had secretly loved him all this time. It hurt as I saw him jubilant with joy to see his future wife walk down the aisle. Everyone around me was ecstatic. As his best friend, I would have to sit and put that loving smile on my face; to simply witness a perfect marriage at the most romantic setting, despite how much I yearned to be side by side with him. But today, I was to be just a part of the audience, watching my soul mate get married to what he believed to be his ideal woman.

Haiku # 3
By: Josie Millard

The night is so long
I see shadows before me
Only just a dream.

Haiku
By: Clinton Martin

When life gets you down
You must just suck it up and
get yourself back up
Mountain Vacation
By Samiha Badwan, R.J. Shaw, Justin Patterson and Ashley Sutherland

Lindsay woke up with the biggest smile on her face. The day that she would leave for Paris Mountain with her cousin, Caroline, had finally arrived. Senior year was rough, so the girls decided to spend their summer relaxing in the mountains at Caroline’s family mountain house. They didn’t have specific plans for what they were going to do there, but they were hoping for an adventure that could temporarily take their minds off of their best friends, Dave and Johnny, who had been killed in a car accident earlier that year. “Are we there yet?” Lindsay asked for the fourth time.

Caroline turned to her and said, “NO, Lindsay. I told you it’s a three hour drive from Columbia.” They drove a long way before they finally arrived to Paris Mountain.

When they arrived to the mountain house, Lindsay was a little surprised. She was expecting an elegant picture-perfect house, but what she saw was completely different. The home looked older than Lindsay and Caroline’s ages put together. There were spider webs everywhere, and the wooden floors creaked all throughout the house. “This place is…cute,” Lindsay hesitated.

“The last time I came here I was a baby, so I never remembered it being this old-looking,” Caroline said. Nonetheless, they put their bags in the bedrooms and got settled down. “So what do we do now?” Caroline asked.

“Let’s go hike through the mountains, dummy!” Lindsay jumped right up and was ready to go.

Caroline didn’t seem too fond of that idea and said, “Lindsay, it’s getting dark, and we don’t know our way around yet.”

Lindsay wasn’t going to take no for an answer. “Let’s go! We didn’t come all the way out here to sit around and think about the past. Let’s find some adventure.” Lindsay grabbed Caroline and dragged her outside to go hiking.

“Seriously, Lindsay, you’re making me do this now? We could get killed.” Lindsay just ignored her, and started to hike. Caroline was afraid to be left alone and followed after her. After a couple of hours, Lindsay stopped. “What are you doing? It’s completely dark outside and you stop.”

Lindsay had heard a noise. “Be quiet. I heard something.”

Caroline stopped and stared at Lindsay. “I told you that we should have stayed at house.” The noise became louder and louder. The girls started hugging each other. Finally the noise sounded like it was right upon them. The girls screamed!

Then two boys stepped out of the bushes. “What are you girls doing out on the trails this late at night?”

Lindsay and Caroline looked at each other. They smiled. “Looking for adventure.” The boys just laughed. “Anyways, what are you guys doing out here at night?”
The guys looked at each other. “We live just over the hill, and we heard noises so we decided to check it out.” The girls giggled. They could have a lot of fun on their trip.

“Well maybe we could hang out sometime.” Caroline looked at Lindsay as if to say, you are so intruding.

“Sorry, our dad doesn’t like guests.”

Lindsay just smiled. “Well you could always come to our place. No parents watching over us there.”

Caroline stomped on Lindsay’s foot. “Geez! That’s my foot!”

“And that’s my house.” The girls started bickering so the guys just started to leave.

“Hey, don’t forget to come visit us!” The guys nodded that they would.

“Lindsay, you don’t find that suspicious at all?” Lindsay looked at Caroline, confused. “Their dad doesn’t like visitors. They live in the middle of the woods. That is the basic plot line for every scary movie out there. For all we know their dad could be a serial killer and you just told them that we have no parents at the house!”

“You are being so overdramatic, Caroline,” Lindsay replied.

“No, I’m being realistic,” said Caroline.

“Let’s just go back to the house,” Lindsay quickly replied. Lindsay and Caroline started to walk back to their house in the mountain. An hour or so passed and they were still not back.

“We’re lost,” shouted Caroline, “I knew we should have stayed put!”

“Are you blaming me?” Lindsay shouted back.

“Yes, I am! I told you we should have waited until we knew where we were going but no, you had to go on an adventure!” Caroline shouted in fear.

In the distance the two heard some deep, dark, disturbing growling noises. “Forget the fault, let’s just get home before whatever that is gets closer,” whispered Lindsay. Caroline just nodded her head in fear and the two started walking even faster in the direction they thought their house was. After another hour and a half, the girls heard that deep and dark growl again and this time it was a lot closer and louder.

“I think we should run,” whispered Caroline in fear.

“Yep,” Lindsay replied as she took off running. The girls ran as fast as they could away from the growls. Each step made it seem like the growls got louder and closer to them. They eventually reached a little house with no lights on.

“Knock or barge in?” Caroline asked. All of a sudden, one huge, dark, deep, disturbing growl let out behind them scaring them both half to death.
“Barge!” Lindsay said as the busted through the door. Caroline closed the door behind Lindsay and they both collapsed.

“What in the heck are we going to do,” screamed Caroline, “we are in some random house in the woods with no food, water, or any possible way to connect with the outside world! We are so screwed!”

Lindsay calmly replied, “I am sorry I got us into this, but yelling really isn’t going to help right now. I think we need to just be quiet and alert for the moment. You can yell later when we are safe.” With that, Caroline sat down next to Lindsay and stopped talking.

All of a sudden, they heard loud footsteps walking across the room. Since there were no lights on, they could not see a single thing. Caroline started to quietly sob with fear as Lindsay said, “I don’t know who you are, but there was something chasing us in the woods and we barged in your house just to escape. We are really sorry for trespassing, but we are vacationing here and we sort of got lost. If you want us to—“ Lindsay stopped talking as a light turned on and she realized it’s the boys they met earlier.

“You jerks,” screamed Caroline, “you scared us to death!”

One of the boys laughed and replied, “that was so funny!”

The other one said with a serious tone, “we had our fun, but now you need to leave. We told you our dad doesn’t like visitors.”

“Look, I will be happy to leave, but my friend Lindsey here insisted we go hiking before we had really learned the area, and to be honest, we are sooo lost. If you can tell us how to get back to our cabin, we will leave, and I promise we—well, I, at least-- will never come back here again.”

“Sure. Follow the tire ruts (our driveway) to the road. Turn right and keep walking until you come to your driveway. You did drive up here, so you ought to be able to recognize it. It will be a bit farther than you expect because hiking you took a cross cut to get here which is far shorter than going by the road, but the road is far less likely to get you lost again. Now I am serious. You need to go before dad returns.” He almost pushed them out the door.

Having been pushed away, Lindsey said, “I thought they might be fun, but they aren’t as friendly as I had hoped. I hope this trip gets better.”

“Look,” said Carolyn, “You are the one who got us into this mess. Be happy we can hike home and are safe. Tomorrow is another day and we can start over.” Lindsey nodded her head in agreement.

The girls walked and walked and walked. Eventually they saw the lights of vehicle coming down the road so they moved to the right and kept on walking, but the truck, when it came closer, swerved, and if both had not jumped off the roadway, would have hit them. Fortunately, at least, it kept on going. However, unfortunately when Carolyn got up and climbed back on the road, all she heard from Lindsey was, “Ohhh. I don’t think I can stand up.”
Carolyn climbed back down, and told Lindsey to lean on her and at least get back up on the road. Once there, Lindsey began to cry. “Alright Carolyn, don’t say a word. I know it’s my fault, but what can we do?”

“We don’t know how far we have left to go. If it weren’t far, I would try to help you make it, but it could be miles yet. The boys said it was a lot longer by road than cross country, and we went a long way there. I think you are going to have to sit here by the road, and I am going to have to walk back and get the car to drive you to our cabin.”

“Leave me here?”

“What else? Judging by the boys not wanting us to stay, and the driver who swerved to hit us, this is not a friendly area. We have only ourselves to depend on. We’ve only seen the one truck on this road this evening. Yes, I have to leave you here. And before you start feeling too sorry for yourself, remember I have to walk back, who knows how far, by myself to find our car. Both of us will be alone; both of us will be scared, but what other choice do we have?”

Lindsey was choked up, but she realized her friend was right. “Then you better get going. The sooner this is over, the better.” Carolyn nodded and started walking again. As an hour passed, she finally made it back to the house and ran inside real quick to grab the keys off the kitchen counter and ran out to the car. As she was backing out the drive way, she noticed that one of the lights in the house suddenly came on. Fear struck through her immediately. She drove as quickly as she could to pick up Lindsey. When she saw her, she ran out of the car and helped her up into the passenger seat of the car. Carolyn ran to the driver’s side hopped in and immediately locked to doors.

She started driving the opposite way from the house. Lindsey confused asked “where are you going? This is not the way back to the house.”

“I know,” said Carolyn “but as I pulled out of the drive way, I saw someone turn on a light inside the house.”

They both had never been more scared in their lives. They quickly went to the next town over to rent a hotel room for the night to get some sleep. As they rose the next day, they had to decide what to do. Should they return to the house themselves and hope who was ever there was gone now? They decided to call the police and have them go to the house first. When they heard back, the police reported that no one was there and then they escorted them back to their house. Back at the house, they surveyed their belongings and it seemed like it was all there. They both went and put their cell phones on the charger, and thanked the police.

When Carolyn checked her phone, she saw that her dad had called her multiple times. When she called him back, he answered in a panicked tone and immediately asked where she was. When she said back at the cabin house, he sounded relieved. He said, “Thank goodness I drove up there last night to see if you had settled in and make sure that the house was okay, and when I got there, you two were both gone.”

A sigh of relief went through Carolyn’s body when she found out it was her dad in the house and not a stranger. She started telling him about taking an adventure in the woods and meeting the two boys and how when she was leaving the house to get Lindsey, a light turned on
and how they decided to stay at a hotel to be safe. The turning of the light made sense now that it was her dad.

Everything still didn’t make sense to Lindsay though; why were the guys so insistent that their dad didn’t like visitors? This was something she was going to have to figure out. But there would be plenty of time to do it.

Cloud Walking

By: Suong Nguyen

I rose up
Above the clouds

Drenched in white light
Walking along the clouds
Like a paved sidewalk

Feeling the moving winds
All around me

Petting the birds
That flew past

Looking down below
Seeing how, the roads
Trap all, like a maze

Each little car
A tiny ant, busy working

And all the people
So tiny, that they show
So diminutive worth

I rose up
Above the clouds

And realized
How little we actually are
You
By: Robyn Lowe

You are pretty much amazing. The way you’re studying
Your eyes intent on staying focused and sharp. Oh how I envy your
study skills. The only thing I ever think about is how I love you.

If I could change anything with you –
Just please don’t call me crazy – it would be that I could be more understanding
of you and your reasoning. You are my everything and

I would probably be lost and heartbroken without you.
My love, you’re all that I’ve ever wanted. I’m lost in a maze
and I’m running as fast as I

Can to keep you, for I am so sorry, and
I am here, begging for forgiveness from you.
This is not just a phase.
I just want your

Love again from the bottom of your heart. If only I can find my way out of this maze
I would be happy and grateful for being with you.
So can we just start taking

More risks and stop assuming the worst? I would do anything for your Love, or just one more day with you.
It sounds selfish, but I know that if I saw you and some other beautiful, amazi-

ing girl together, I would fall into a craze of longing and depression. You’re my best friend, and I love you.
Rachael’s mind went blank as she saw the gun in the inner pocket of his jacket. Her palms started to sweat even more as she tried to concentrate on the road. He kept talking but she couldn’t hear him because her heart was pounding in her ears, and her mind was rushing, desperately trying to think of something to do. It was about two in the morning with no one else on the dark, lonesome road ahead. But the night hadn’t started like this, not at all.

“I hate working nights,” Rachael said to herself as she was walking to her car. She had just gotten off the late shift at Walgreen’s in House Springs. As she was digging through her purse for her keys, she thought to herself ‘I hate this stupid car.’

It was a little blue, 2002 Honda Civic that her best friend Tiffany had given her. The back, left side door didn’t open from the inside, two windows didn’t roll up once they were down, and the stereo didn’t work. It was starting to rust on the back bumper and fenders, and there were scratches along the right side due to a tragic accident involving an evil shopping cart. She finally found the keys and opened the door.

“It’s times like these when I really wish Drew would fix my radio.” She was now pulling out of the parking lot and onto Highway 30. The road was long and frightening, at least to Rachael it was. Even though she was 17, she was still afraid of the dark. As embarrassing as it was, she slept with a stuffed animal and a Transformer nightlight.

She wondered if Rachael was still awake. ‘Maybe I could call her and I wouldn’t feel so freaked out.’ She slowed the car down just a little and reached down and grabbed her purse off the floor of the passenger side. She felt around for her phone; it took a while, but she found it without even having to take her eyes off the road. It was then that she realized the battery was dead. “I must have forgotten to charge it this morning. So much for that ingenious plan, Rachael,” she said out loud while carefully setting her purse on the passenger side seat.

As she pulled up to the red light (which she always seemed to catch), she looked down at her fuel gage to see if she had enough gas. There were no more stations on the way home, so if she needed it, she’d have to get it now. It was a little low, but she decided that she would get it on her way to Drew’s house tomorrow. She couldn’t wait to see him. It was going to be their two year anniversary and he was taking her out to dinner.

‘I hope we go somewhere nice,’ she thought to herself. The light turned green and she gently pressed her foot down on the accelerator. The car started to move forward slowly. She drove for about ten more minutes watching the darkened houses go by. Were they all empty, or had everyone gone to bed already? She didn’t know, nor did she think about it for more than a fraction of a second.

Rachael was about to pull onto Highway Y. This road was much more difficult to drive. It was all curves, had no shoulder, trees lined both sides along the entire road, and most of the way there were no houses at all. She slowed down and made the left hand turn at the intersection.

She started down the treacherous road, carefully navigating around every dangerous turn. “I can’t even imagine how horrible it would be to wreck while on this road. I can’t even call anyone for help because my cell phone is dead. Not even my mom or dad,” Rachael said.
Just as the thought exited her mind, she saw an old truck in the ditch. It was an ’88 Ford Wrangler, painted an ugly tan color, and the camper on the back must have belonged to another truck because it hung off the sides and was a faded red. She couldn’t see all too well, but it looked to be covered in rust. Also the tires, which seemed to be enclosed in the surrounding weeds, were barely visible.

As her eyes moved back to the road, a shadowed figure stepped out into the beam of her headlights. She automatically slammed on the breaks. The car came to an abrupt stop in the middle of the road. Rachael’s heart was pounding in her chest; her breaths were quick and shallow. She looked up to see what had jumped out in front of her car, but there was nothing there. Nothing. She sighed in relief as she looked down and noticed her purse had fallen to the floor due to the immediate halt. She leaned over the console to pick it up.

Just as her fingertips reached the soft fabric of her purse, she heard a loud, sudden noise that made her jump out of her skin. She turned in response and saw an apologetic looking man through her window. He was saying something, but she couldn’t hear him or make out his words. She didn’t want to open the door because she didn’t know what he wanted or what he would do. So instead she rolled down her window, just a crack (making sure he couldn’t fit his arm through.)

“Hey! I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you,” the man said in a rough voice. “My car broke down and I don’t have any way home. You could give me a lift would you?”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” said Rachael feeling a little calmer, but still being cautious.

“Please? The man begged, “It’s just a few miles down the road. I would pay you for it.”

At that moment Rachael though back a few years to when her father had picked up a drunk who had driven his car off the road. He was kind enough to take the guy home. When he got there, the man went inside and came back out with two hundred dollars and gave it to her dad. Nothing bad had happened. So why should this be any different? ‘He doesn’t look like a bad guy,’ she thought to herself noticing his apparel. He was wearing blue jeans, a plain grey shirt, and a black jacket. He had bright blue eyes that she couldn’t help but stare at and short brown hair that looked soft to the touch. Maybe just this once…

“Sure, I would want someone to give me a ride if I were stuck in your shoes. And you only live a few miles down, right?” she could swear she saw a smile cross his face, but if it had, it was gone in a flash.

“Yeah, about 7 or 8 miles that way,” he said pointing in the direction her car was already facing.

“Ok, jump on in.”

He quickly walked around the front of the car. As he passed through the headlights she caught a glimpse of what looked like a scare across his right cheek, but she thought nothing of it. She unlocked her door as he neared the passenger side. He opened the door, climbed in and sat down.

After he did so, he turned to her with a smile and said, “by the way, my name is Phil.” He reached his hand out, like a gentleman, for her to shake.

She placed her hand in his and while doing so replied, “Hi, I’m Rachael.”

Phil turned towards the window and said nothing more. So Rachael started the car and began what would become a very memorable drive.

“So what are you doing out so late?” asked Phil while staring out the window.
Not wanting to tell him too much, Rachael answered, “I just got off work and was on my way home. How about you?”

“I was headed back home from Walgreen’s.”

This shocked her because she hadn’t seen him before, and she had been working since nine. And he couldn’t have been our here that long…

“Oh really..? What did you need to go there for?” Rachael asked carefully choosing her words.

“I had to pick up a prescription.”

At that she knew he was lying because she worked at the pharmacist’s counter and had not seen anyone who even looked remotely similar to him.

“Then where is it?” Her mind was searching for the reason her was lying to her.

Phil’s face appeared shocked, as if he was caught off guard by her question. ”Oh, um…I must have forgotten it in my truck,” he replied a little too quickly.

“Do you want me to go back so you can get it?”

“No, I’ll get it when I come back in the morning. Speaking of which, may I use your phone to call by friend so he can bring me out tomorrow?”

“My phone is dead,” she said, a little thankful that it was.

“Oh, ok.”

Rachael then saw out of the corner of her eye, a smile flash across his face once again. This time, she took it as a warning.

They were getting closer and closer to Rachael’s house and she didn’t want him to know where she lived. She wondered how much further his house was.

“Are we getting close?” she asked trying to stay focused on the road as much as she could.

“Yeah, you need to turn onto Morse Mill though. It’s coming up on the right.”

Rachael knew exactly where it was. The turn-off was about 300 yards ahead. She slowed down and flicked on her blinker.

You could cut the tension in the air with a knife. Rachael didn’t like the awkwardness that was venting through the car, but they were almost there. So she decided to make small talk. She asked him the first question that popped into her head.

“So where do you work?”

“I actually got fired yesterday….” Phil replied barely over a whisper. Rachael could hardly make out what he said.

“I’m sorry to hear that…do you want to talk about it?” she asked cautiously wishing she would have thought of a better question to ask.

“No,” he replied bluntly and rude. She was surprised at the abrupt anger in his voice. “It wasn’t my fault, I didn’t do anything,” he started to ramble. She saw him begin to rock back and forth in his seat while repeating to himself over and over. The rocking of his body caused the side of his jacket to move revealing a hidden inner pocket.

Rachael’s mind went blank as she saw the gun in the inner pocket of his jacket. Her palms started to sweat even more as she tried to concentrate on the road. He kept talking but she couldn’t hear him because her heart was pounding in her ears, and her mind was rushing, desperately trying to think of something to do.
“I didn’t do it…I didn’t do it…” He continued to say. His voice suddenly became enraged, and he started screaming hysterically.

She had to get him out of her car, but how? Rachael’s heart was hammering in her chest. She could hardly breathe. How do I get him out of here?! It was then that she saw the house. It was the first house she had seen all night with the lights on inside. I need to get to that house.

She looked up and then saw the tree. Her mind clicked. ‘I know what I have to do.’

She looked over at Phil. He was still screaming. He was insane! Out of the corner of her eye she saw him reach his hand into his pocket. The pocket where she saw the gun…

She slammed on the gas and the car jerked forward. He flew back in his seat. He was astounded. He gripped his gun tightly in his hand and pulled it out, now pointing it at her head. At that very moment the car impacted the tree. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion as the glass shattered and flew at Rachael’s face. Her head jerked forward and slammed into the steering wheel. Everything went black…

Seconds later she awoke. There was warm liquid running down her face. She knew it was blood. She quickly scrambled out of the destroyed remains of what moments before was her car. She ran toward the house as fast as she possible could. She turned around and saw him climbing out of the wreckage. She ran faster.

She finally reached the porch of the house and started banging on the door and screaming as loud as she could. The people inside were running through the house towards her; Rachael could hear their footsteps getting closer and closer. She glanced back expecting to see Phil running after her, but he was nowhere in sight. He was gone.

Money Doesn’t Buy Happiness
By: Haseeb Wajid

Where was my friend going to school
I hoped he would go to stlcop
But he didn’t want to study there
He was more drawn to easy schools
Though he would not make much money
Because lower degrees get a lower income
Yet, he said money doesn’t bring peace

Fragments
By: Xing Yang

A broken promise
Clear, translucent, and fleeting
The glass rose shattered
Summer
By: Ashley Sutherland

I miss wearing shorts
I miss tank tops
I miss the hot sun beating down on my skin
I miss laying pool side all day
I miss freedom
I miss knowing what it feels like to not have homework
I miss the late nights with my friends
I miss the sand in between my toes
I miss the nights sitting on the beach next to the bonfire
I miss sitting on the dock fishing
I just miss the summer.

Haiku
By: Kristin Hagan

Two lovely white swans
Swimming gracefully at dusk
As the sun goes down.

Haiku
By: Libby Herman

Growing steadily,
Plants saturate the black soil,
Spreading green throughout.

Irreplaceable
By: Tracey Nguyen

Irreplaceable
Most precious and protected
Pure dark chocolate

Daydream
By: Steven Nguyen

A sea of Jell-o
Owning a new Ferrari
Just another dream.
Carly was driving home from Saint Louis on a dark six o’clock morning to see her three-year-old son. She was on the phone arguing with her boyfriend, Paul, who recently became a cadet in the police academy for the city, trying to tell him that it was over. The light changed green, and she drove out to make a left hand turn when, all of a sudden, a police car smashed into her driver-side door. The officer had no lights or sirens on in the dark of the morning, which made it impossible for Carly to see the seventy mile an hour blur. Carly spun out in the middle of the street, and the officer continued until he hit a tree just a couple hundred feet down the road. There was a car behind Carly that saw everything that happened. One of them was an off-duty firefighter and the other one a paramedic named Janelle; they both worked for the city. As other officers and ambulances started to arrive, the two ran up to Carly’s car and pulled her out. The entire time they were trying to revive her because she stopped breathing, the paramedics and over twenty officers went to the aid of the officer who hit Carly, who it was later determined had an injured ankle.

The officer was slurring his words and seemed like he was in a different state of mind as if he were high. While the officer appeared to have only had his injured ankle that all the paramedics and officers were worried about, Carly had a shattered rib that was puncturing one of her lungs and glass cuts all over the left side of her body. Carly went in and out of consciousness, and the only people to her aid for fifteen minutes were the off-duty city workers, who used an oxygen mask to help revive her. Eventually the ambulance picked up Carly and drove her to the emergency room in the city. Carly’s blood was drawn while at the hospital, while the officer was treated and had his blood drawn at the police station. Nearly three hours after the accident occurred, the paramedic that helped pull Carly out of the car called her parents. The paramedic said that she would not be able to talk long, or stay around. The paramedic spent about twenty minutes telling Carly’s parents everything that happened. They were shocked, confused, and couldn’t believe their ears. After rushing Carly’s son to a neighbor’s, they drove into the city to the hospital. They walked into the hospital room and couldn’t believe it was her. She was mangled from the wreck and almost unrecognizable. The doctors informed Carly’s parents that her chance of survival was only five percent, and after hours of surgery, Carly was pronounced brain dead. Carly’s parents were devastated and couldn’t believe this was happening to them. They lost their beautiful, young, outgoing daughter to a cop who was abusing his power. Carly’s parents proceeded to sue Saint Louis Metropolitan Police Department for wrongful death of their daughter by the hands of P. Crowley. They testified that two off-duty Saint Louis workers had seen the accident as well as a few Washington University students. When the names of the witnesses were read out loud, not a single one was present. Confused, Carly’s parents asked their lawyer where the witnesses were. To their dismay, their lawyer informed them that their witnesses had vanished. Janelle and her boyfriend couldn’t be found anywhere. The Washington University students couldn’t even be tracked down. With no witnesses, their case was weak, so they settled with $30,000 for their daughter’s life. They had to give a third of it to their lawyer for his work, which decreased the value of her life to a mere $20,000. Needless to say, Carly’s son wasn’t too happy about all this when he grew old enough to understand what took place that night.
Fifteen years after the accident, strange things started occurring to Saint Louis Metropolitan Police Officers. Officer James Jones, the first officer that arrived at the scene was found dead in his home. There was no evidence as to what had happened, or who had killed him, but the police remained determined to find out who had taken Jones’ life. After a couple months had passed with no leads, clues, or even any information about Jones’ murderer, the police department gave up their search and continued on other pressing matters. Days after the police department gave up their search, another officer was found dead in his apartment complex in Saint Louis. It was the same method of operation that occurred last time, no evidence, DNA, or anything incriminating to one single person in the city. Instead of another month later, it was only a couple more days before another officer ended up dead.

The city was on lockdown, and the crime lab was struggling to find the connection between these officers and why they were being killed. After more officers were killed as well as the now Lieutenant P. Crowley, the crime lab found the connection. All of the officers that were being murdered had aided in the cover-up of P. Crowley’s accident with Carly fifteen years earlier. Each officer from the case was being killed in the order they arrived at the scene. The police department had finally found its suspects, Carly’s mother, father, and her son. Carly’s mother and father couldn’t be the murderers because their alibis were air-tight the day officer Crowley was murdered, Carly’s mother was in surgery, and Carly’s father was receiving the information about the surgery from one of the nurses. Now, Carly’s son was the only suspect the police department could pin the murders on. Once they arrived, her son was nowhere to be found. He had been missing from school for a while now, and no one had seen or heard from him since. With this evidence stacking up against Carly’s son, the Saint Louis Metropolitan Police Department made an emergency broadcast and put her son’s face all over the news. While the broadcast was going on, the two paramedics who aided Officer Crowley the night of Carly’s accident were killed as well.

Weeks later, after seeing his name plastered throughout cities, Carly’s son came forward to be arrested. Unbeknownst to the arresting officers, Carly’s son had just received a DVD in the mail. On it was a confession, shocking to Carly’s son. Paul, Carly’s boyfriend who was a cadet in the police academy at the time of the accident, currently self-employed and no longer a cop, admitted killing all the people involved in the cover-up of his former girlfriend. This was payback for a senseless crime that should have never happened. Paul held up a current newspaper to show that he was indeed alive, but made it quite clear that he was just serving justice as he had taken an oath when entering the academy. He demanded that Carly’s son be released, or those currently involved in the case would be done away with as well as those involved in the cover-up. Paul was never seen or found or heard from again.

**Haiku**

By: Stephanie Chen

Snicker, whisper, talk
Don’t let them take away you.
Be who you can be.
Watch Minutes Fly
By: Boski Patel

Each step another sunrise in the warm months of our lives
Many people decay every time a newborn cries
When it's time for a full moon, rocky are the tides
Into the endless ocean, each cherished memory dives.

Cold winds blow west as we watch the time go by
Heaven counts the minutes until we will arrive
Angels get their wings with every weakened sigh
As gray clouds float past in the red sky

They look down upon us when we start to cry
Spend time with the God some choose to deny
So when it's time to say goodbye,
They spread pure wings, and start to fly.

Worms crawl out of hollowed eyes
While each woman in black sits alone and cries
We don't realize how much time flies
Until the love of our life dies.

The Attic Kwansaba
By: Amanda Syers

No one ever goes to look there
The dark setting makes you the prey
For what is hiding beneath your stare
Things shake and rattle before you move
The ground creaks to welcome you in
Little mice run around unaware of you
The scary truths of the black attic

My Bro
By: Joe Hobbs

I miss you bro.
I am sure you know how many tears I have shed in your name.
We had many awesome times together.
You always made things fun. I cry for you bro.
Spring Break
By: Nathan Dodd, Haseeb Wajib, Tom Reidl and Christina Ranick

It was just another group of teenagers that decided to take a camping trip over their spring break. They had been busy with their college schoolwork and decided to relax a little by getting all of their friends along to party around the campfire for a weekend. It may have not been the ideal way of celebrating spring break because many of their friends were taking trips to Florida and Mexico. The expense for these college students to spend a week across the country was just too steep. The students all met and decided that they would leave the university that Friday.

Michael and Danielle, the high school sweethearts, would be in charge of making sure that everyone had all of their accessories packed, and they would get all of the tents and sleeping bags. Jackson, the college’s star basketball player, gathered all of the alcohol, cigars, and party material. Danielle did not want to be the only girl so she pleaded to Michael and Jackson that her friend Vicky should be able to come. There was just one person left that the boys wanted to try to convince to join them.

His name was Andrew. Andrew was one of the smartest students in the university. He had to work hard to earn his grades, but his hard work put him on the Dean’s List every year. Coming out of high school, Andrew received scholarship upon scholarship, as if he needed it considering his father was a CEO of a major company. Andrew, an only child, got whatever he wanted and was raised as a spoiled only child. He did not get out much after school, even to hang out with his best friends Michael and Jackson.

“Hey Drew! We’re taking a camping trip this weekend down by the lake and were hoping you would come with us,” said Michael.

“No, I have to study for our exams next week,” replied Andrew.

“C’mon man! It’s only one night. Plus, Vicky will be there.”

Andrew sneered. “What makes you think that will convince me?”

“I don’t know, but just come it will be a good time,” replied Michael.

“You really don’t want me to go, trust me,” said Andrew in a monotone voice.

“Yes we do! It’s going to be a great time. Plenty of beer and fun. It will be great.”

“No, you really don’t,” said Andrew.

After five minutes of going back and forth, Michael finally convinced Andrew to come on the trip. Little did they know that they should’ve all just stayed home.

After driving for four hours, it seemed as if they weren’t getting anywhere. It just seemed as if they were going in circles. It seemed as if they were never gonna get off at Elm street, so
then they decided they would find a motel to stay for the night. Vicky and Danielle shared one room, while Michael and Jackson shared one room. Andrew insisted on getting his own since the thought of sharing a room was disgusting.

Michael felt so energetic and ready to party hard. He was actually thinking of sneaking off with Danielle later on in the night so that they could make out. Meanwhile, Jackson was watching the basketball game on TV. Michael said he was going off to look for something he forgot in the car. The moment Michael stepped out of the room, Jackson found himself getting drowsy and instantly passed out. He began thinking about sleeping together with Vicky when all of a sudden his dream began to drastically change. He found himself in a factory with boiling points of Lava everywhere. He could sense that something was wrong and that it didn’t feel right. That was when he heard the noise. It sounded like the sharpening of knives. Curiously, he walked over to the sound of the noise. What he saw struck fear into his heart. He saw a Giant Rabbit sharpening its teeth. Jackson didn’t know what to expect. He totally thought that he was gonna die by Freddy Kreuger or something. So when he saw the rabbit, he didn’t know what to expect.

“Welcome to my lair!” said the rabbit, “My name is Yu Gi Oh and I challenge you to a duel!”

“What kind of duel?” said Jackson.

“A Yu Gi Oh duel!” said the Yu Gi Oh.

“Pshh, that was so 2001. Nobody plays that anymore!” said Jackson.

“What, they don’t?” said Yu Gi Oh.

“No no no, I think being stuck in this dream world here has boggled your mind. To be honest, no one collects cards anymore. They go out of fashion pretty quick and they don’t really get you good resale value” said Jackson.

“Oh ok, well then I challenge you to a game of NBA Live 2k1” said Yu Gi Oh

“God this animal is lame” muttered Jackson to himself, “Look I’m sorry I really got to go. It’s not that you’re not nice or anything, it’s just that you’re basically not cool.”

“Oh, I see how it is. Well if you ever go to sleep again, please come visit!” said the Yu Gi Oh.

Suddenly Jackson was ripped from the rabbit’s lair, his head spinning from such a quick move. He looked around and saw that he had ended up in a field of daisies. It had a very overpowering smell of flowers. Off in the distance he noticed three figures and it looked like they were coming towards him. Then, beyond the figures he saw a white flash and a mushroom cloud rising up beyond the trees. Jackson then became very afraid and started running. He could feel the force from the blast beneath his feet. He turned to run; the three figures were now catching up to him.
He sprinted through the field, panicked. The three shadows were on his heels. He stumbled and rolled down a hill, and the figures rose up from the ground and grabbed onto him. He yelled as loud as he could.

“Whoa man, you okay?” Michael said as he shook Jackson awake. “You were yelling pretty loud and rolling around like something was attacking you. ‘Everything all right?'”

Jackson blinked and looked around him. All of his friends were standing around the bed, and the girls had concerned looks on their faces. He sighed and grinned at each of them, especially Vicky, and said, “It’s all good. It was just a really strange dream.”

A Good Night’s Sleep
By: Xing Yang

It never occurred to me that any force on this planet would wake me up after a grueling journey to Time’s Square, one that involved a restless night, a delayed flight, and hours of walking in the cold while carrying luggage. I was relieved to hear Tyler’s roommate was going to be away during the holiday, in which case he invited me over to sleep at his apartment in Time’s Square.

It’s always nice to have friends, I mentally noted.

I remember a few seconds of haziness as my head made an exaggerated impact against the pillow, and my mind went to where all minds go when one is exhausted. The next time I open my eyes will only be in the presence of mid-afternoon sunlight, I thought, but was confused to see…well, nothing. I couldn’t see the clock on the opposite side of the room, but could tell it was too dark to be any later than early, early morning.

Then what had woken me up?

The sound of the entrance door creaking open came like an answer to a question. And what followed the door opening were the sounds of a couple pairs of feet scurrying to the living room. I could hear a glass bottle and keys being set on the kitchen counter, mingled with some hushed voices (none of which sounded like Tyler, who was happily snoring from his bedroom). To be honest, I was too tired to be on the alert, and laid under the comforter.

Must be some of Tyler’s or his roommate’s friends who have keys to the apartment. If I closed my eyes, maybe the two intruders would vanish.

I was going to go back to pleasant dreams when my breath was knocked out of me in a sudden impact on my back. I blamed it on exhaustion for my delayed reaction of wanting to punch at the dead weight that just sat on me, but some creative cursing did the trick. Apparently, the second guy noticed that I was sleeping on the futon (in which case, some “Oh shit!” seemed very appropriate from him) when the culprit himself quickly got up off of me.

Thank goodness for the little things, like being able to breathe again.
There were some mumbled apologies and cursing, and I think I was able to manage an “it’s alright” before I heard the lock click in place after the door closed on the guys’ backs. Most people would have been creeped out, or pissed. I was too tired to feel anything but exhaustion with a hint of annoyance to add to my ever-growing list since this morning. And who knows, this will probably make for good breakfast conversation when Tyler wakes up later.

Sleep
By: Tia Joseph

At night I like to sleep
To fall into a dream, so deep
Let my mind wander away from real life
As if to swiftly cut reality in half with a knife

I anticipate the moment when my eyes will finally close
Into a deep state I will fall, at a peace from my head to my toes
Before I know it, a deafening sound awakens me
Forcing me to accept reality

Compelling me to sadly part from my dream state
And prepare myself for a day I would most likely hate
A day of treacherous school
Sitting in boring classes, causing me to drool

Finally, the long day comes to an end
Once again, I become excited about the night I would spend
In which my mind could wander off
Into a blissful eternity, that unfortunately would have to come to a stop

Badminton
By: Sarah Oh

Constant movement on the court,
Making sure you don’t hit it short.
Smash, drop, clear!
I stay front while you stay rear.
Hit and swat we do not stop,
Must not let that birdy drop!
Oh so close to winning game,
Last point is ours, we have our fame!
My Dear Friend
By: Kayla Gray

A pair of sapphires for eyes
And teeth made of pearls
You’d think that this kind of person
Would be a Barbie played with by young girls

In fact this Barbie is my friend,
And she is no Barbie at all
She’s best friend of mine
That rocks at playing ball.

A friend who has your back
Even though the bond is new
Today it’s hard to find someone
That is so honest, loyal and true

I still remember the first day we met
We were too shy to say much at all
It's funny to think back to that time
Because now we're having a ball!

Jack in the Box, Parties, Lunch
And Facebook chats all day
I don’t know how to spend my time
With my friends any other way.

We’ve been through so much together
In the little time we’ve shared
I will never forget all the moments
that you’ve shown me how much you cared.

I love that you are there for me
When my spirits need a little lift
I cannot thank you enough for that
You are truly an extraordinary gift.

I can see our friendship growing
With every secret that we tell
Although I cannot wait
Until we get out of this city of Hell.

We are So. IL girls
And we will be until the day we die
That is why we get along so well
It’s a yearned for and priceless tie.
The world could use more people like you
   it would certainly be a better place
   I love that we are such great friends
   You are someone I could never replace.

**Rubik’s Cube**
By: Puja P. Patel

I, who puzzles, but neither see nor know.
My numerous faces are leveled and bare.
   I am artistically structured.
   Squarely set with Multi-colors.
   I click with every touch.
   I fall to pieces when one cheats.
With twists and turns, I become a challenge.
I can defy even the most seemingly intelligent.
   Consistency is the key.
Bringing pride to those who understand me,
   And frustration to those who don’t.
   I require the upmost skill.
Boredom is what attracts you to me.
I help the seconds on the clock pass quickly.
   To be in hand is what I desire.
Alone on a shelf, in a box, a closet,
   Is where I sit.

**“Conquer”**
By: Smit Patel

I feel myself slippin’ again
   I know what’s to come
   I’ve been here before
   Gotta pick myself up
Gotta overcome what’s to come
   Yet if I knew how
   I would have been at the top
Mad Dog  
By: Thomas Riedl

Dawn broke along the edge of the desert, covering the ground in an orange glow. It had been a long night and Jon had been tracking Mad Dog since he left Boxton. Mad Dog had robbed the bank in Boxton and had ridden off toward Sierra Nuevo. Jon could see the town just off of the horizon and he could see the dust trail of something as well. Thinking it was Mad Dog, he rode off towards Sierra Nuevo.

When he finally arrived in the town, it was about noon. It was a small mining town under his jurisdiction. He rode up to the saloon getting stares from the locals; they hardly had any trouble in the town so it was a shock to them to see a marshal in for a visit. He dismounted from his horse, brushing off his duster while adjusting his hat, and he made sure his badge was visible on his bandolier. As he walked up to the entrance to the saloon, he heard a woman’s scream from inside and then a thump. Jon entered the saloon and looked around. It was a rather dingy place, some of the windows were boarded up, the floors had a nice coating of filth and there were no customers.

“Howdy marshal,” the bartender said.

“Afternoon, Willy” Jon replied.

“C-can I get you anything,” the Willy asked.

“I’m looking for a man,” Jon said while he handed him one of the bounty posters he had of Mad Dog. “If you have any information on his whereabouts I’d appreciate it if you told me.”

The bartender took the poster and took a quick look at it. “No sir,” the bartender said, slight fear building in his voice. “We haven’t had any out-of-towners here for a good while now,” then the bartender gestured slightly towards the second floor, pointing out the room at the top of the stairs.

Jon took the hint and gave the Willy a slight nod. He slowly made his way towards the stairs. “Well I guess I’ll be movin’ on Willy.” Jon said, hoping to trick the hiding Mad Dog.

Jon slowly made his way towards the stairs leading up to the second floor. He drew his pistol and tried to be as quiet as possible, but as he put his foot on the first step, it creaked slightly and that gave him away. Suddenly Mad Dog busted out of the room upstairs, his pistols drawn. He locked eyes with Jon and shouted out, “you’ll never get me alive marshal” and let his guns loose. Jon jumped back from the stairs and managed to flip a table for some cover. Mad Dog’s bullets tore into the wood causing it to splinter in several places. Mad Dog had been shooting wildly and hadn’t hit Jon at all. Jon popped up from the cover and fired at Mad Dog three times; his first shot missed but the second one connected with Mad Dog’s shoulder and the other with his knee, causing Mad Dog to drop his guns and fall to the ground in agony. Jon got up from behind the table and made his way up the stairs.

“Well, well, well, Mad Dog, looks like we finally settled things, and I have you, alive,” Jon said with a smirk.
Mad Dog spit toward Jon and replied “you may have me marshal, but you’ll never find that money.”

“Well I guess you’ll have to do,” and with that Jon flipped him over, hog tied him and brought him down the stairs. “Barkeep!” Jon yelled.

The bartender cautiously poked his head out from behind the bar, “Ye-yes marshal?”

“Thanks for your help.”

“Well no problem marshal,” Willy replied. “Say marshal,” Willy said, a nervousness building in his voice, “He… He took my wife up there when he came in. You didn’t happen to see her in the room did ya?”

“No Willy I didn’t.”

Willy then blew past the marshal and sprinted up the stairs. “Isabella!” He cried out, “Honey are you alright!” Willy ran upstairs and into the room.

“Lemme take care of Mad Dog here and I’ll give ya a hand with yer wife,” Jon shouted from downstairs. Jon then grabbed Mad Dog and dragged him out of the saloon. By now residents of the town had heard the shooting and had come towards the saloon to see what was going on.

“Move along folks,” Jon said to the gathering crowd, “it’s just a little justice being dealt; there’s nothing to see.”

Suddenly there was a cry from within the saloon. Willy busted out of the doors with a shotgun in his hand. Tears were in his eyes as he raised the gun, aimed it at Mad Dog, and pulled the trigger. “Willy No,” Jon shouted, but it was too late. Mad Dog was blasted backwards into the middle of the street, landing in the dirt, his blood pooling around him.

Then Willy fell to his knees and dropped the gun, “he killed my wife marshal,” tears ran down his face, “I wasn’t going to let him get away with it.”

The Lion King
By Hannah Renner

The King takes his place
The circle of life turning
Peace again for all
Coach Robinson
By: Birju Shah

Apollo high school was a high school known for all their sports because they had won national championships in almost every sport every year except for basketball. Basketball was the one sport that the school was terrible at. Their head coach for the last 10 years had won only five games. Apollo high school’s athletic director decided to hire a new head coach for the basketball team to change the winning culture for basketball and make it like the other sports at the school. The athletic director decided to hire a tough and strict man named Coach Robinson.

When Coach Robinson first met the players that he would be coaching, the players did not really like him because he kept on making them work hard in practice and made them stay longer if they did not listen to him. He made his players learn defense before offense, and the players were not used to playing defense in the past which may have made an impact on their losing record the past few years. Coach Robinson also required his players to have good grades in order to play in games because he wanted them to not only be successful as basketball players, but also as students because it would help them in the long run. If his players did not maintain good grades, he did not let them play in games, and the players did not like this rule. The team’s top 3 players did not play in the team’s first 3 games because they did not have good grades, and the team started the season 0-3.

The players on the team finally realized that they were making a mistake by not playing the sport that they loved, and they had a chance of making history by making the school’s basketball team good again. They realized that the only way that they would start winning games is by listening to their coach, so the team’s top three players started to do all their homework and study after each practice. The players also made both defense and playing as a team a priority when practicing, instead of just caring about themselves and scoring.

They team’s commitment to defense and teamwork helped them tremendously in the second half of the basketball season. The basketball team ended up winning the conference title and had a successful run in the playoffs. Although the team did not win the championship, the team was proud for what they achieved. After the season, every player on the team thanked their coach for not only making them better at basketball and making the team better, but also making them better students and individuals which will help them all in the future.

I Would
By: Vruti Patel

I would be so proud if love could grant me this wish
to laugh again with no more frowns.
No more pain to throb my eyes and no more tears to drain my confidence.
I would be so proud if you would look at me and see me as your love.
I wonder why you ignore my smile
Maybe it is time to apart and say goodbye.
Six Years Under
By: Justin Patterson

The first year of college
Try and adjust to the work and study time
The second year
It will get harder than the first year
The third year
Halfway there but it is still getting harder
The fourth year
Slightly more difficult and starting to level off
The fifth year
Last year of classes and it is equally as challenging as the year before
The sixth year
Just one class and the rest of the time is field experience

Baseball—4 views
By: Stephanie Hand

First:
It was the lasting inning of the championship game, bases were loaded with two outs. I, the worst batter on the team, was next to bat, no pressure there. I took a deep breath and stepped into the batter’s box. I lined myself up to with plate, took my batting stance, and waited to the pitcher to make his move. The pitcher fired a ball my way; I swung, but completely missed. “Focus” I tell myself. I resituated myself and wait for the ball. The pitcher throws a curve ball. I swing with all my might, and to my surprise I actually hit the ball out to right field. The crowd goes crazy. I and the other runners take off running. I get thrown out at first base, but luckily the runner on third base scored, so we won the game.

Second:
It’s the last inning of the championship game. I’ve had a pretty good game so far. I’ve made the batters work hard if they want to get on base. The bases are loaded with two outs; all I have to do is strike out this final batter and our team can bat again and score again. Lucky for me the final batter for the Bears is Joey; he never hits the ball. He usually doesn’t even swing, so this will be easy. Joey nervously steps up to the plate and situates himself then poses in his stance. I decide to go a little easy on him, and throw him a good pitch. To my surprise he actually swings, but of course completely misses the ball. I kinda laugh to myself, and throw the best curve ball I’ve got. Joey digs his feet into the ground and swings the bat like his life depended on it. The ball makes contact with the bat and flies over to right field. Johnny, the right fielder rushes to the ball and throws Joey out at first base, but he was too late. Another Bears player had already scored. We lost the championship game.
Third:

I went to the championship baseball game last night to watch my grandson, Joey and his team play against the best team in the county. Joey’s not very good at baseball, but I like to go watch and support him, plus his team is pretty good. The game started out kinda slow, no one was getting on base. About the fourth inning, things started to pick up and by the ninth inning, the score was tied 5 to 5. Joey’s team batted last, so if one of the boys could score they would win the game. Shawn was first up to bat, but he struck out. Jeremy was next, and he hit a single. A few minutes later, the bases were loaded and there were two outs. I looked to the batter’s warm up circle hoping to see anyone but Joey there. I knew he didn’t have it in him to try to get the last point for the team. But of course, he was the next batter. Joey bravely stepped up to the plate and waited for the pitch. The first ball looked good; Joey swung the bat, but missed. I crossed my fingers for good luck. I didn’t want my grandson to be known as the boy who cost the team the championship game, so I yelled “Come on Joey, you can do it!” to encourage him. The pitcher grinned to himself then fired another pitch. Joey’s face looked determined and he swung the bat like I’ve never seen him swing before. The ball zoomed to right field. Everyone around me jumped up and started screaming. Josh ran from third base and scored and the Bears won the game. I was so proud of Joey; he will no longer be considered the weakest link of the team.

Home:

Last night Grandma Sally took Jimmy and Sarah to see Joey’s baseball game. Joey’s team made it to the championship game, and Jimmy and Sarah wanted to see their big brother play. As soon as Grandma Sally parked, the kids popped out of the car and ran to the concession stand; they think going to a baseball game means eating nachos and hot dogs. Grandma Sally followed them to the concession stand and bought them some snacks to keep them occupied during the game. Grandma Sally gave Jimmy and Sarah their food and ushered them to seat on the bleachers. The bleachers were packed with excited fans hoping for victory. The national anthem was played and the game started. The game started off with little excitement; no one was hitting the ball. About the third inning, the players were warmed up and were making the crowd go wild with nail biting plays. Joey’s team, the Bears, were ahead most of the game by three runs. In the last inning, the Bears tied up the score. If the Bears wanted to win the game, they needed to score at least one run so the game would not continue. Bobby was first up to bat, he started the inning off with a single. Next, Johnny hit a fly ball to the outfield, but it was caught, giving the Bears one out. Sam and Jeremy both hit singles, which loaded the bases. The Bears’ fans went crazy when Joe, the star of the team stepped up to bat; they knew he would win the game for them. The pitcher, however, had other plans for Joe; he struck him out, giving the Bears a second out. The outcome of the game rested on the shoulders of the next batter, Joey. The crowd sighed because they knew Joey hadn’t hit the ball all season.

“Yay Joey! You can do it!” yelled little Sarah.

Joey nervously stepped into the batter’s box and situated himself into the proper stance. The pitch came; Joey swung, but completely missed the ball. The anxious crowd shook their heads.

“We’re never going to win with this kid’s batting!” Joe’s dad mumbled to himself.
Grandma Sally was infuriated by that comment about her wonderful grandson. “Come on, Joey! Knock it over the fence!” she yelled.

Joey was determined to hit the ball to prove the unsupportive crowd that he was a valuable member of the team. The pitch came, Joey swung and sent the ball flying into right field. The crowd cheered in amazement as Joey ran to first base. Bobby ran home and scored the final point, making the Bears the winners of the championship game.

One won with a click
By: Kheelan Gopal

You can control this with one click
Change everything that you want to see
It will make you want to be there
As if you are a part of the show to
Impress everyone that you know
And make you feel as if you have won

I’ve heard this too much I know
I just want to be there
The place everyone wants to see
The most peaceful place where you are one
With everything around you and can’t hear the click
Of your watch saying it’s two

You feel like you are back at one
Everything changes with the sound of a click
Where everyone tells you no
You just want to see
Before you know it you’re at the age of two
How the heck did you get there?

I wish I could just click
My shoes together and take me back there
Where I was when I once was the one
Looking for what everyone was trying to see

But now I see
That you can find that find what you want to
Be when you know you won
And only you know
When you are there
And it happens so quick like the sound of a click
Time
By: Ashley Werle

I sit and my room and think to myself what will become of me after college graduation? Those were my last thoughts before the nuclear time bomb went off in my city. After the blast no one knew what had happened. The only thing I can remember is the intense whistling sound of the bomb before impact. Then it happened; time was frozen still, and people aged rapidly. I went from being a young girl to a 40 year old women. After the blast the people in my town caught some sort of fever, but only some select few did not. I lost everything in a heartbeat. I wondered to myself, why me? Why didn't I just die? I am the only known pharmacist left on this earth. After the dust settled a group of survivors gathered together in a building to try to survive. This would become our new home, a defense from the outside creatures who had caught this infection. During the day we would gather food like the berries in the bushes in the nearby forest. Some would fish or gather wood. Me on the other hand, I looked for remedies and herbs to find a cure. My last attempt to cure one of the infected did not go so well. It has accelerated the growth of the virus and the test patient has gotten away. I’m sure it has been breeding with the others that are infected to create a new breed that is stronger, faster and bigger. How long can we survive? Will another bomb go off? I guess only time can tell.

Beauty
By: Amanda Syers

What is beauty?
   The way you do your hair and makeup?
What is beauty?
   The latest fashions that you sport to the world?
What is beauty?
   Your body type or petite figure?
What if beauty?
   Wasn’t about the way you did your hair and makeup?
What if beauty?
   Didn’t mean always having the latest fashions?
What if beauty?
   Was more than a size and weight?
But instead, beauty?
   Was about how you showed the world God’s love?
But instead, beauty?
   Was dressing appropriate to honor God and your brothers?
But instead, beauty?
   Was your God fearing personality over your actual weight?
In this world
Much can be said
About dress and
Body type
But we must
Decide for ourselves
What it means to be beautiful.
“Little Chick”  
By: Lisa Kim

Yesterday, in Mrs. Ball’s kindergarten class, we learned that chicks can hatch if they are incubated at a certain, warm temperature. I found this fascinating because I love eggs and eat them almost every day. How could a chick possibly hatch from the eggs that we eat every day? It’s like magic! I told a girl from my class during recess that this was such a cool idea. The girl thought this was so interesting too. I told her I was too afraid to try it out, and she said that she would try it. She said that she was going to sneak an egg from her fridge, put it next to her while she sleeps to keep it warm, and see if a chick hatches the next morning! She said that if the chick hatches, then she would bring it to school and show it to me.

I was so excited, but when I saw her at school today, she looked so sad. She did not bring any chick with her so during recess, I asked her what happened. She said that she snuck the egg from her fridge, put it next to her safely and made it warm, but when she woke up the next morning, the egg was broken and there was egg yolk all over her bottom. Why didn’t the chick hatch? Why didn’t she put the egg in a small container so she would not have rolled over it! I am so disappointed. Since it didn’t work for her, tonight I will try this myself. I’ll put the egg in a small container and make sure it’s warm and maybe, just maybe the chick will hatch tomorrow morning and I can surprise my classmate. Then we can play with the chick during recess! I can’t wait!

Things I wish I Could do  
By Samiha Badwan

I wish I could read some people’s minds
I wish I could discover valuable finds
I wish I could feed all who are starving
I wish I could collect lots of diamond rings
I wish I could bring about world peace
I wish I could spend a whole summer in Greece

Notepad  
By: Anonymous

A pad of notes
A pad of words
A pad of letters
Or a pad of feelings

Nom nom  
By: Eric Suh

Nom nom
Chomp chomp
Glug glug
Crunch
Slurp slurp
Splut splut
Yum yum
Munch
**Ode to My Eyes**
By: Brett Lancaster

O eyes, you are so blue  
Like the daytime sky  
Like the crystal blue ocean

O eyes, what yellow streaks!  
Like lightning bolts gone astray  
Like rays of sun, magnified

O eyes, how perfectly shaped  
Like a symmetric football  
Like a three-fourths moon

O eyes, how bright and shiny  
Like a twinkling star  
Like a glowing candle flame

O eyes, how you make me see  
Like God looking down on us  
Like the mirror looking back at me

O eyes, you are mine  
Like no one else’s  
Like a special object

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**No More Surprises**
By: Mallory Howell

Dear Neighbor,
I have tried to come over and talk about this with you  
However it seems that no matter what I do  
You are somehow never home  
So, wherever it is that you may roam  
I will give you a piece of my mind  
Do you think that I am blind?
I have suspected for a while that it was your dog  
Only a Great Dane could poop something the size of a log  
But why only my garden do you choose?
Can’t you stay in your yard with your dog’s poos?
So now I am saying don’t let it happen anymore  
Or I will set it on fire and put it on your front door.

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**It's Not Okay**
By: Amanda Recchione

Shivering and shaking from the cold  
Significance brings on a warm breeze  
But not as satisfying.

A false sense of hope  
Is not easily forgotten  
When abandoned by a flameless journey.
Today is a beautiful day in New York City. It is February 14, 2011, and this day is significant because it is the launching day of Apple’s new limited edition of the iPhone 4 in a racecar red color. For the past four days, Stephy has not gone home, nor has she even slept once. She has been in line at the Apple store for four days straight, waiting for the release of the special limited edition of the iPhone 4 in racecar red. There will only be five phones released in each state, and only one Apple store in each state will carry these five phones. Stephy found out which store it would be released from and drove all the way from Boston to New York City, to camp out at the Apple store. She had a tent, a cooler filled with sandwiches and water, and her own makeshift Port-a-potty. She waited for four days, and her day has finally come. Stephy was first in line at the Apple store, with a million people behind her, jealous of her spot.

The time has finally come for the Apple store to open its doors. Unfortunately, when they opened, the mob of people stormed right over Stephy because she is so skinny and weak! However, with her last breath, she managed to rush in and find the last limited edition iPhone 4. She grabbed the box at the same time another girl grabbed the box.

“Hey let go, you son of a gun!” yelled Stephy.

“No, I got it first!” the girl replied.

“HAHA, you must be delusional! I suggest you go see a psychotherapist because I clearly grabbed this phone first,” Stephy replied.

“Let go!” yelled the girl as she punched Stephy in the arm.

“YOU PUNCHED ME?? BIOTCH IT’S ON!!” Stephy yelled.

Even though Stephy was weak from waiting for four days and eating only sandwiches, her fight or flight instincts have kicked in and she has gained massive strength from her neurons firing so rapidly. Also, Stephy was on the college basketball team for the past year and suffered rigorous training. Thus, the two girls broke out into a cat fight. Stephy yanked on the girl’s hair while the girl tugged on Stephy’s ears and tried to scratch her face. Stephy then got on top of the girl and had her pinned down as she stuffed the iPhone down her own shirt for safe keeping. Then she gave the girl a few more smacks in the face just because the girl gave Stephy so much trouble. Then Stephy carefully let go of the girl and made a run for the cash register. She did it; she finally purchased the special limited edition iPhone 4 in racecar red! Most importantly, she purchased it at half price because she had a 50% off promotional coupon from Apple that expired today! At half price, Stephy paid $100 even for the iPhone.

Now normally, Stephy would not spend this much money on such items. However, racecar red is her boyfriend Arkin’s favorite color and he had previously mentioned that he would do anything for that phone. Arkin also needed a new phone since his got dropped in the toilet. Stephy thought it would be super romantic to buy him the limited edition iPhone 4 in
racecar red as a Valentine’s Day present. The red symbolizes the love she has for Arkin. It was perfect! However, as she walked out the store, she saw Arkin standing amongst the crowd of people outside the Apple store. Arkin had seen the whole fight between Stephy and the girl. The girl, as it turns out, was Arkin’s younger sister! Not only did Stephy hurt Arkin’s younger sister, but she also showed a side of herself that scared off Arkin! He broke up with Stephy right then and there and she never saw Arkin again. Devastated, she went to Niagra Falls and threw the limited edition iPhone 4 in racecar red into the falls and vowed never to spend over $10 dollars on presents ever again!!!!

**Moon**
By: Samantha Pinkley

Shining so bright in the night sky  
This gift from the heavens above  
A glowing celestial orb to see with my eye  
This beautiful light that I love

You wax and wane til you’re there no more  
You control the waves, the ocean, the tide  
Werewolves are one of your folklores  
Does lighting the night ever feel like a chore?

The man in the moon must live off your cheese  
I would too if I lived in space  
I would eat all the time and remember to say please  
And always savor your moon cheese taste

Moon, moon, what a beautiful sight  
And how you brighten every night.

**How to Have a Good Time**
By: Tom Riedl

A dash of brilliance  
2 teaspoons of camaraderie  
3 moments of resilience  
4 jokes of mockery  
5 shots of courage  
6 hours of revelry  
Mix together for  
1 un FORGETTABLE night
My BMW (Brigid’s song)
By: Nicholas Farrar

There are some things I need to say that you won’t want to hear
Before you make your judgments, please know I’m a different man than I was last year
I’ve made more than my fair share of mistakes; I’ve lost control in so many ways
I never knew you’d be the compass to navigate my broken heart’s seas

There is no excuse for how I used to be
No amount of whiskey can justify the past for me
If I’d known that I would find happiness again
I would have tried my best to be a better man

She couldn’t reconcile my past, but all you do is look past it
Your maturity mesmerized me; now you got me in a transcendental trance
And that night we were so high on all of the possibilities to come
I remember wishing we would get stopped by every red light home

And I hope when you look in my eyes it parallels the beauty of the Atlantic
I’m not the East Coast, but I’ll try my best to be your Boston
Now I’m living in luxury; all my cares, I’ve lost em’
I traded in my heavy heart for a beautiful BMW

And when I look into your eyes, I see the depths of the Atlantic
An indescribable hue that chased away my blues
You’re my Irish queen; you’re my fresh new scene
You’re my resurrection; you’ve helped me learn my lesson

And it’s hard to admit that I thought hers were the prettiest eyes I’d ever find
Then mine fell on yours and that foolish thought left my mind
And I remember when I said that I always plan on missing you
I just hope you feel the same way I do

And I hope when you look in my eyes it parallels the beauty of the Atlantic
I’m not the East Coast, but I’ll try my best to be your Boston
Now I’m living in luxury; all my cares, I’ve lost em’
I traded in my heavy heart for a beautiful BMW

And when I look into your eyes, I see the depths of the Atlantic
An indescribable hue that chased away my blues
You’re my Irish queen; you’re my fresh new scene
You’re my resurrection; you’ve helped me learn my lesson

Yea, now I’m living in luxury; all my cares, I’ve lost em’
With my Irish Queen by my side, there’s nothing I can’t conquer.
Snow White’s Party
By: Maryanne Lee, Susan Lee, Saba Aziz, Kheelan Gopal, Samantha Pinkley

Characters:

EL: Evelyn Longori. Evelyn is a beautiful, petite, young woman dreaming to become famous in her acting career. She is currently single, and all the guys want her, but she has yet to find the perfect man. She hopes that one day, she will meet someone that she will fall in love with. She is one of the most nicest, sweetest girls and is always willing to help those around her.

SW: Snow White is the prettiest girl in her town. She is nice on the outside but mean in the inside. She has a boyfriend named Prince. She would always make him do things that she wants him to do, and the Prince would be happy to do anything for her because he is blinded by her beauty. His stepmother the Queen is worried about her son that he would get bad influences from Snow White, so she doesn't like her. She also has seven dwarfs as her servants.

FK: Fat Kid is a college freshman. He loves food so much that instead of gaining the "freshman 15," he gained 30. He always finds gummy worms or broken crackers in his pockets. He likes to mooch off of other people, but he never does so with bad intentions. He really is a nice person, but because of his unsightly appearance and eating habits, he always seems to find himself eating alone at lunch. He wants to be a chef when he graduates, but his parents pushed him into pharmacy. He didn't want to disobey or disrespect his parents, so he always goes along with what they say. He believes that Ritz crackers have special magical powers, so he always carries a box of them everywhere he goes.

BM: Black Mamba is the baddest man around; every time he passes by someone, you hear them say, MAMA THERE GO THAT MAN. He was the best basketball player on earth. He had to win no matter what at all costs. He hated losing or even being close to losing. He always made the game winning shot in all of the basketball games. Whenever there was 10 seconds left on the clock, he was the guy with the ball in his hand. He might be starting to get old, but it does not stop him from being the best.

E: Enrique. He is a younger Latino man who is a garbage man. He is very attractive and all the women on his garbage route are in love with him. He’s the one who gets out and throws the trash in the back of the truck. He is a Chip-n-Dales dancer at night so he is very fit and sometimes he only wears his little stripper outfit to work. He has scandalous affairs with the stay out home moms on his garbage route. His dream is to be a male underwear model. He’s had several offers for jobs but is waiting for Calvin Klein to make an offer.

Setting: Snow White’s mansion. Snow White is sitting on her bed and the phone rings.

(phone rings)

EL: Hello, Snow White.

SW: Hey, Evelyn.

EL: What are you up to? I’m so bored.
SW: I’m just texting Prince. Bored out of my mind. What are you doing tonight?

EL: Nothing, I want to get super drunk and get all my stress out though!

SW: Well, I was thinking about having a party or something.

EL: A party? What for?

SW: My birthday, even though I had a party for it last weekend. You can never have too many parties or too many presents. The seven dwarves will take care of everything for us.

EL: This sounds great! I can’t wait, Snow White!

SW: Me either. See you later!

EL: Bye!

(SW hangs up the phone)

SW: DWARVES! I need you to get the mansion ready for a party! I want it to be fab-u-lous.

(Later in the evening, during the party)

EL: This party was just what I needed. (stumbles across the room, spilling her drink on people)

SW: Yeah, me too. I looooooooooooove parties!

EL: Let’s dance, Snow White!

SW: Where at? I want all the attention on us.

EL: On this table. Then everyone will see us.

(The girls get on a table and start dancing. Evelyn is super tipsy and begins to fall.)

EL: AHHHHHH! I’m falling! Someone help me!

(She falls into the arms of the Black Mamba.)

BM: I got you gurl.

EL: Oh my gosh. You saved my life. Who are you?

BM: My first name is Black. Last name is Mamba. Who are you, pretty lady? (winks)

EL: Evelyn.

BM: Why’d you fall? Do you have a fever? Because you look hot to me!

EL: I’ve only got a fever for you, hot stuff.

(Black Mamba and Evelyn go out to the dance floor and start grinding.)
SW: They’re hot together. I wish the Prince was as dreamy as he is. It’s hot in here. I need some air.

(She goes outside to the trashcans. A fat kid is digging through the trashcans.)

SW: HEY YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

FK: I was looking for some food, but I found a ticket to your party instead.

SW: I don’t know you. Go away.

FK: But I have a ticket!

SW: Fine, you can come in. We have Ritz crackers inside.

(Fat kid runs inside the mansion and goes to the Ritz cracker table and starts munching down. He is too busy eating to notice that the dance floor is right next to him. He knocks over Evelyn and Black Mamba.)

FK: WATCH OUT!

EL: AHHHHHH!

BM: What do you think you’re doing? No one messes with the Black Mamba and gets away with it. (He raises his fist to punch the Fat Kid, but Evelyn stops him.)

EL: Stop. Don’t fight in here. That’ll ruin the party. Besides, this fat kid is kinda cute.

(Fat kid blushes and looks at Evelyn while eating his Ritz cracker.)

FK: Would you like a bite?

EL: I’d love one.

(Fat Kid hands Evelyn a Ritz.)

FK: Did you know that Ritz crackers have magical powers?

EL: No, I never heard that. What do they do?

FK: I don’t actually know what the power is yet. But when I find out, I’ll let you know.

EL: Do you want to dance?

FK: Heck yes. I’d love to.

BM: B-b-but what about me?

EL: Forget you, Mamba. I’ve got a new man now.

BM: You think he’s a man compared to me? Haha.

EL: Whatever.
(Fat Kid and Evelyn go out on the dance floor.)

EL: So, what do you do?

FK: I’m in pharmacy school. I live in my mom’s basement. You can come by sometime.

EL: Oh, that’s cool… I’m going to be an actress really soon. I’m just waiting for my big break.

(The Black Mamba and Snow White are talking in a corner.)

BM: How’s that punk going to steal my girl? Snow White, you single?

SW: Eww, no. I have a boyfriend, Prince. And he looks wayyyyy hotter than you. (She texts Prince to tell him about what’s going on.)

SW: But, you know, Evelyn and that weird fat kid look too happy right now. You should go break them up. She’s not allowed to be happier than me at my own party.

BM: Alright. I’ll challenge him to a basketball game for her love.

(Black Mamba goes over to the DJ and has him turn off the music and put the spotlight on him. He grabs a microphone.)

BM: Hey, fat kid. Think you can steal my girl? Guess what! You can’t!

EL: What if I like him more, Mamba?

FK: Yeah, what if she likes me more?

BM and EL: Shut up!

BM: We’ll see who deserves your love more. I challenge you to a basketball game. Winner gets Evelyn.

FK: What about the loser?

BM: We’ll decide what YOU get when I beat you.

(Everyone goes outside to watch the game.)

SW: Evelyn, who do you want to win?

EL: I’m torn between the two. Black Mamba is so ruggedly handsome, but that Fat Kid just has something about him. He’s like an obese teddy bear.

(Game is going on. Black Mamba is destroying the Fat Kid.)

BM: Who do you think you are, chubs? This is my game!

FK: I’ll show you! (Eats a Ritz and dunks on Black Mamba.)

(The crowd is shocked. Fat Kid is catching up. The garbage truck pulls in near the court. Enrique, the trash man, gets out to pick up the trash.)
EL: GO FAT KID! GO! WIN!!

SW: Evelyn, you have the worst taste in men.

EL: Snow, shut up… (She sees Enrique and trails off.) Snow White, did you hire a Chip-n-Dales dancer for the night?

SW: No, why did you ask that?

EL: Look at that sexy man. What is he doing here?

SW: That’s the trash man! His name is Enrique and he’s a Chip-n-Dales dancer at night. Sometimes he wears his outfit while he’s collecting trash.

EL: He can collect my trash if he wears that.

SW: You should go after him. He normally has to go for the married women on his trash route. He’ll be happy to have you.

E: Hola, mi nombre Enrique.

EL: What?

SW: He doesn’t speak English very well. Just smile and nod.

E: You is beautiful woman. Me like.

EL: Thanks, Enrique.

SW: I think he likes you!

EL: I think I like him too!

(The game is done. Fat Kid beat the Black Mamba and runs over to tell Evelyn.)

FK: Evelyn, I have won your love! I WON I WON!

SW: How did you win, fatso?

FK: Ritz crackers! I found out what Ritz’s magical power was. I am a pro-basketball player when I eat them.

EL: I don’t want you.

BM: Do you want me, pretty lady?

EL: No, I want Enrique. I love him.

(Enrique is off posing like a model in the corner.)

BM: You want that?

EL: Yes, I do. He has some very nice ass..ets.
FK: Isn’t that the skeevy garbage man? He doesn’t even speak English! How could you choose him over me?!

EL: I really like accent, all right? Get over it. No one will ever love you the way I love Enrique.

E: Vamos, chica!

EL: What did he say?

SW: I think he wants you to leave with him.

EL: I don’t know what to do!

FK: Stay with me! You can live in my basement and I’ll feed you Ritz crackers!

BM: Don’t go! I have a huge mansion you can live in and a big basketball court! You can have it all with me.

(Enrique just sits and smiles.)

EL: I don’t need a mansion or food when I have love!

SW: Umm, I’m pretty sure you need more than love to live.

EL: Enrique, let’s go. These losers don’t understand us.

(He stands there smiling still, not knowing what she said. She grabs his arm and drags him to the trash truck.)

E: Hasta la vista, baby! (Waves at Snow White)

EL: Aww. I don’t know what you said, but you’re so dang cute.

(They drive off into the sunset and live happily ever after.)

My other half
By: Kinjal Patel

I sit here on a rainy gloomy day.
Thinking about the one near and dear to my heart.
He is the only thing on my mind when I am away.
Why do we have to be so apart?
Drake Goodman never really had any friends. That was until he met Johnny. They met ten years ago at the Happy Homes Nursing Home. Drake was a resident at Happy Homes. He was a very caring old man. He treated anyone that came to visit their family like his best friend, but when they stopped talking to him to visit with their family members, he got sad. This is what he called his “terrible luck.” Little did he know his “terrible luck” was about to end.

Ten years ago, Johnny, a young sandy haired, blue eyed boy, was very curious about how old people lived. So he volunteered at Happy Homes. Surprisingly enough, he got assigned to Drake. Drake did not even know about Johnny yet. Johnny really loved to meet new people. He just could not wait to start and get to know his old guy Drake!

The next day Johnny went to Happy Homes after school and met Drake. At first Drake was confused, but then he greeted him like he had known the boy for years.

“How ya doing sonny boy?” said Drake.

“I’m good, sir.” replied Johnny.

“Fantastic! So what on God’s green earth brings you to this forsaken hell hole?” asked Drake.

Johnny looked at Drake confused. “I volunteered to be here, sir,” replied Johnny. Still confused, Johnny just looked out the window to watch the world pass along like he normally did.

“You ignoramus! Pay attention.” screamed Drake.

“Yeah, sorry. I just got distracted. So what do old people do around Happy Homes? Like what is there to do for fun?” asked Johnny.

“Well, old people sit around being old. As you can see, I ain’t old. If you are just here because you want to see some old dude, then get out of here.” said Drake.

“I’m sorry. You just look… well old.” replied Johnny. After he said that he realized he made a huge mistake. He turned around and walked out the door and down the hall. Drake noticed as the kid walked away that he wandered instead of just walking.

“Nurse! I need my pill!” yelled Drake. The nurse walked in to give Drake his pill, but instead he felt her up.

“Mr. Goodman! That is extremely inappropriate! Do not touch my breast ever again!” yelled the nurse.

“Fine, how about that ass of yours?” asked Drake while giving the nurse’s butt a squeeze. The nurse squealed and ran out of the room. “Just more terrible luck.” sighed Drake.

Sitting at home, Johnny thought about what he had done wrong. He realized that he never asked what Drake liked, which was really stupid considering that he loved to ask
questions. He decided that he was going to go back tomorrow and find out what Drake liked to do and what he liked to talk about. Hopefully this would fix things between them. Johnny hated that he hurt Drake’s feelings.

The next day after school, Johnny walked to Happy Homes to see Drake. When Drake saw Johnny enter his room, he immediately turned around and ignored him. Drake pretended not to listen to Johnny talk, but he heard every single word that left his lips.

“Mr. Goodman, I am sorry for what I said yesterday. I know that I hurt your feelings. I also realized that I did not even introduce myself. I’m Johnny. The reason I volunteered here at Happy Homes was to get to know you. I love getting to know people. I also realized that I did not even ask you what you like to do or talk about which was stupid because I love to ask questions. Again, sir, I apologize.” said Johnny remorsefully.

Drake looked up with the hint of a smile growing on his face. “Sonny boy, now this is how you start a conversation.” Drake said as he got up and shook the boy’s hand. “I love to talk history. Best thing in the world. You taken any history at that school o’ yours?” asked Drake.

“Of course I have, sir.” replied Johnny very eagerly. It turned out that history was his favorite subject as well. “What part of history do you like the most? I personally like World War II the best. I find it extremely fascinating.” said Johnny.

“Johnny, is it? Stop calling me sir. It’s Drake. Got it? Good. Now to talk about history, World War II was a travesty. I say that because I fought in it. Being over in Germany fighting and then stumbling upon the concentration camps, seeing the starving Jewish people and even those that had been killed was horrifying.” spoke Drake solemnly as he remembered what he went through many years ago.

The two talked history for hours, days, months, and eventually years. Johnny started going to Happy Homes very frequently after school and would often stay until nine. Johnny loved to spend time with Drake, and Drake loved to spend time with Johnny. Drake had finally fixed his “terrible luck.” The two had become the best of friends.

Now ten years afterwards, Johnny sat in the chair at Happy Homes next to his best friend Drake. He watched as Drake’s breathing slowed down. Drake looked up into Johnny’s blue eyes and said, “Johnny, you have given me the best ten years of my life. I will never forget you or the friendship we have shared. I want you to always remember me by taking this gift.”

Johnny took the gift from Drake’s hand. It was wrapped up in his old handkerchief. He opened it to reveal Drake’s Purple Heart from the time he served in World War II. Drake had been shot twice in the right shoulder during the Battle of the Bulge. Johnny started to cry because he knew he was losing his best friend, but he realized that he would always carry a part of his best friend no matter where he went.

“Thanks, best friend.” sobbed Johnny.

Shortly after Johnny said his final goodbyes, Drake passed away. Johnny attended his funeral dressed in all black and Drake’s Purple Heart. After the funeral, Johnny stopped to look at Drake’s tombstone. He noticed something slightly familiar. The tombstone read:
“You ignoramus! Pay Attention.”

Johnny looked up at the sky, chuckled, and said, “I am, you old man.”

**Yesterday**

By: Carrie Covert

I found your brain yesterday  
I guess that you forgot it  
You left it in the window by the bay  
I don’t think you missed it one bit

I found your heart yesterday  
I guess that you forgot it  
You left it in an awful way  
Such a shame you let it become such an empty pit.

I found your soul yesterday  
Sorry I couldn’t save it  
It was cold and alone the 14th of May  
When you said you were given up, I didn’t think you were being legit

I found myself yesterday  
The day I also lost you  
I realized I needed to be on my way  
Since you just left me too

**I’m Livin’ It**

By: Sujal Patel

Fresh off the airplane, everything’s great,  
I got the whole big world on my plate,  
Hey there Hollywood, here I am,  
Sunshine, movie stars, everything’s glam,  
This is my dream job,  
I’m Livin’ It.
The Pillow
By: Stephanie Chen

Of all the things to write about I somehow chose you.
You’re not that inspiring or unbelievably exciting to me.
But I chose you because you do something I can’t do,
Something that makes me jealous and spill my cup of tea.

On top of your down feathers his tired head lays to sleep.
His chiseled cheek presses against your cotton casing.
And he stays with you until his alarm chimes a beep.
But he always returns at night for another sweet embracing.

If I could trade spots with you for just one day
Then I could cradle his head in my arms,
Support his dreams and comfort him along the way.
But here I am without your therapeutic charms.

How did I ever think to write about a lame, old pillow?
You won’t believe me, but it’s related to an armadillo.

A Better Place
By: Christina Ranick

Dear Reader,

You don’t know me, but that’s okay
You probably have some questions
That I probably can’t answer
I know, I’m not particularly helpful
Or courageous, or confident, or smart
But I hope you’ll like me
Just the way I am.
Sincerely,
The world could be a better place
The Best Vacation Ever
By Birju Shah

The day was finally here, the day when my family and I would be going on a cruise to the Bahamas. My brother and I had been waiting for this day to come for a year. We had not slept the whole night because we were so excited to go on the cruise and meet our other family members from Texas that we had not seen in over 5 years. We finally put our packed luggage into the trunk of the taxi, and we were off to the airport. When my family and I were boarding and sitting in the plane, I could not stop thinking about the cruise because I had heard there are so many fun things to do in there.

We had finally made it to Miami, Florida where our cruise was going to be. When our taxi driver in Miami was driving us to the cruise port, he told us that we would absolutely love being on the cruise, and we would always cherish the memories forever. My brother and I got way too excited when hearing this, and all we kept on saying was we cruise, cruise, cruise! We finally got a glance at our cruise, and my whole family was shocked to see how big it looked. Once we got in the cruise, my brother and I kept on looking at the beautiful designs and decorations inside the cruise. We also met our family members from Texas, which included my aunts, uncles, and cousins.

When we went inside our room in the cruise, we absolutely loved it, including the view of the ocean from the window in the room. The room had the itinerary that included the activities for the entire week. There were over 100 different activities to do for people of all ages. Every night, we dressed up for dinner and ate with all our family members. It was great to chat with each other because we had not seen each other in a very long time.

My brother and I made many new friends from different states and countries on the cruise. We did many different activities everyday with our new friends including playing basketball, soccer, videogames, and talking. We also enjoyed a variety of food everyday which also included a 24 hour pizza and ice cream place. My friends from the cruise and I would eat pizza late at night when we got hungry. When the last day of the cruise came, all of my family members and friends weren’t happy because we had to say our goodbyes and we would not see each other for a while. Although I would not see my friends from the cruise again in person, I got to exchange my email address and phone number with some of the friends that I had made on the cruise. I will always remember this week forever. To this day, I consider this as my very best vacation ever.

Haiku
By: Bre Dunsworth

Kernels bursting free
Buttery smell of one thing
Pop pop pop pop popcorn
Ponytail Girl
By: Stephanie Chen

There once was a girl named Susie. She was in the fifth grade at Rossly Elementary School. She did not have many friends at school. The kids at school thought Susie was weird because she wore her hair like a Native American. Her hair was long, black, and thick. She kept it back, away from her face, in a long ponytail. But the kids at school didn’t know that Susie was actually Chinese. The other kids did not know a lot about Susie, because they didn’t talk to Susie.

One day at school Susie decided to play on the swings during recess. There were other girls playing on the swing sets too. But the other girls had much shorter hair compared to Susie’s. While Susie’s hair was long, black and tied up in a ponytail, theirs was blonde or light brown and worn with a headband. Their headbands were all different colors and designs, some with polka dots and others with bows on top, but the girls all looked almost the same the way they dressed and wore their hair. When the other girls saw Susie playing on the swings next to them they stared at her. One girl whispered into another girl’s ear: “That girl is so weird. I didn’t know Native Americans could come to our school.”

Susie noticed the other girls looking at her and making fun of her. She felt embarrassed, so she got off of the swing set and ran back inside the school even though recess was not over yet. One of the teacher’s told Susie that she had to go back outside because everyone had to be outside during recess. It was one of the school’s rules. So, Susie walked back outside and sat by herself on the bottom of the green, plastic slide that nobody liked to slide down on because it was partly broken near the top. Susie sat in that same spot for recess for the next week. But by the end of that week Susie decided that it was too boring to sit there and just watch the other girls have fun on the swing sets.

The next week of school started and once again, Susie sat on the broken slide. But this time she had her dad’s iphone with her because her dad wanted her to call his work phone during recess to talk so that she wouldn’t be bored or lonely. But Susie did not call her dad. Instead, Susie played around on his phone. She opened up the music player application and found her favorite song by Willow Smith. She pressed the play button and turned up the volume all the way. When the song started to play Susie stood up and whipped her hair back and forth to the beat of the song. The other girls all stopped what they were doing to watch Susie. One of the girls walked over next to Susie, smiled, and said, “Hi, I really like your hair.”

Susie stopped whipping her hair for a moment to look up at the girl. When she saw the young girl’s smiling face she said, “Thanks. Do you wanna whip your hair back and forth with me? It’s really fun!”

“Yeah, but I don’t have a ponytail and I don’t know how,” the girl replied.

“You can have one of mine and I’ll teach you how,” said Susie. Then she removed one of the hair ties from her ponytail and gave it to the girl. The girl tied her hair up into a short ponytail.

Susie asked the girl, “Are you ready?”
“Yup, play the music!”

The two girls smiled and laughed together as they whipped their hair back and forth to the song all throughout recess. The other girls were still watching them having so much fun and wanted to join but they didn’t have anything to tie their hair up into a ponytail, so they just watched Susie and the other girl have so much fun. When recess ended the girls lined up to return inside to their classrooms. Susie and the other girl were still happy and laughing from their recess fun.

The next day at school the other girls wore their hair in ponytails. Susie was shocked to see them with their hair looking like her own. During recess the other girls all asked Susie to play her iphone so that they could all whip their hair back and forth. So during that recess Susie taught all of the girls how to whip their hair back and forth to the music and all of the other girls thought Susie was so cool. From then on Susie had many friends at school.

The End

Recipe for Disaster
By: Malory Toebben

First, add one problem
Then, add one more
Keep adding until the pot boils over
This is the perfect amount
Now just wait and watch
The pot will scream and yell
The ingredients will all boil out
All that will be left is a burnt out pot
With a huge mess of problems
To try and clean up

Transportation
By: Nicholas Tonjuk

Standing in the rain,
Standing in the cold,
I’m always waiting on this train,
And I’m only getting older.

No car first year, this is lame,
This train should get me where I need to go, so I’m told,
Missed my stop, guess I’m lost again,
Pull the map out of my pocket and begin to unfold.

Stress this is causing on my brain,
“Don’t stand on the grey,” the security, they scold,
Just the joys of riding the metro again,
Can’t wait until next year; hope my car does not get sold.
Do You Remember
By: Kierstyn Fornoff

Do you remember when we first kissed?
Do you remember when you gave me a ring?
Do you remember when we went for runs?
Do you remember when we took road trips together?
Do you remember when we would stay up all night laughing together?
Do you remember when you held my hand through hard times?
Do you remember when you held me tight and what it felt like?
Do you remember when you were my best friend?

Beginning
By: Nathan Dodd

The beginning is always the hardest part
Beginning is the preparation
Beginning is will power to proceed
Beginning is the chance to succeed
Beginning has no finish line
Beginning has no glory
Beginning is where most people stop
Beginning is the hardest part
But once you get going
It’s about what is at the end

Recipe for Music
By: Xing Yang

This is my project
A recipe without food
Its notes, a melody that stirs the crowd
And taste as sweet as dessert
Or sometimes fry the soul
The tempo is just right
People’s mouths and hands
Moving and dancing like musical score
The duration is set
The temperature is hot
I can’t hear my own breathing
Mixed to the music
Ready to come out
I Am Fearful and Hopeful
By: Boski Patel

I am fearful and hopeful
I wonder where I went wrong
I hear my heart racing at the speed of light
I see your ghostly shadow slowly slipping away
I want to keep you forever
I am fearful and hopeful

I pretend that everything was just an evil dream
I feel that you exist within me
I touch the moments we've spent together
I worry that things will never get back to the way they were
I cry to the thought of not waking up beside you
I am fearful and hopeful

I understand that the distance is far
I say that where there is a will, there is a way
I dream about the days when we laughed and played
I try to forget that appalling accident
I hope the angel of love will reunite us once again
I am fearful and hopeful

New Year
By: Thuy Tran

Time for every child to come home
Enjoying the festivity of a new year
To honor our ancestors from the past
Never forgetting this fun event
Event that makes a person wiser and stronger
When we all come together and celebrate
Year after year
Each of us will remember this moment
As we watch the lanterns burn
Red as our family blood and blazing soul
Sestina
By: Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

I used to hate
going to school in the morning
I was too shy
I didn’t have any friends
I would almost always cry
or I would pretend that I was

sick. But one day there was
a boy whose name was Nate.
He had pretty blue eyes
He said to me ‘good morning.’
One day he let me borrow his pens
so I was very very happy

but I was too shy.
So there I was
just staring at his deep blue eyes.
I was feeling my heart rate
beating and my face blushing.
One day in a math class he sat by

me and I felt like I could fly
in a deep blue sky
soaring and tumbling.
When he came next to me I was
solving eight
math problems and, of course, he is wise

so he said, ‘I can help you!’ and I
thought he was so cute and I gave him my apple pie
to appreciate his help, and he ate
in front of me and he seemed happy.
Him sitting next to me was
like spring

finally coming,
melting my heart. When I see his smile, I would die
and all around me just pause.
After the math class, it was hard to say goodbye
Because I wanted to have more happy
moments with Nate

I am excited to see Nate
In math class tomorrow
Now I love going to school to say good morning
**Lasting Love**
By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

That night we were together
With laughter and smiles.
I knew our love could go on
For several thousand miles.

We lay on the rocks
With our hands intertwined
Looking up at the stars
With love on our minds

It was the night that I
Will always remember
Because you proposed to me
That warm month of September

We decided to elope
As we were too anxious to wait
So we decided the next day
To go up state.

Twenty-four hours later
The phone begins to ring
I thought it was you on the line
Telling me of all the things I should bring

But oh was I wrong
It was the hospital on the phone
They said you were pronounced dead
leaving me now all alone

I was in major disbelief
As it was the worst phone call of my life
How could this happen to me?
The next day, I was to be your wife.

But here I stand now
At your cemetery site
One year from our proposal
To tell you I still love you on this night
Majo no Takkyūbin – Witches Delivery Service Chinese Folk Tale

By: Xing Yang

The moment she heard the meteorologist mention clear skies and a full moon, thirteen year-old Kiki couldn’t help but run upstairs to her room. She threw her closet door open and pulled out a small duffel bag, where she started stuffing various assortments of clothes. Kiki’s mother, who heard the commotion, knocked on Kiki’s door and asked what all the hurry was.

“Mom, it’s going to be a full moon tonight! It’s the perfect night to start my witch training,” Kiki explained overly excited. At this point, Kiki’s black cat, Jiji, walked into the room and stared at both mother and daughter.

“But Kiki, didn’t you say you were going to wait until summer? It’s just barely spring!” Kiki’s mother exclaimed.

“I agree,” replied Jiji. Of course, only Kiki could understand Jiji. After all, Jiji was Kiki’s black cat.

“You hush,” Kiki replied to Jiji, then looked up at her mother. “I know I said summer. But you know how excited I am to start my training. And it’s going to be a full moon! And clear skies! And the weather is going to be gorgeous!”

Both Kiki’s mother and Jiji sighed. There was no talking Kiki out of this. Afterwards, Kiki’s mother called her husband and explained the change in date. Of course, Kiki’s father was so shocked that he dropped all the important office papers at work. He promised to come home earlier than usual to help see Kiki off.

“Kiki, are you really sure about this?” Jiji whined. Kiki was trying to fit her portable audio player into the duffel bag, but there was just no room left.

“Jiji, you know I have to. All witches have to travel one year away from home to train and let their magic develop sometime during their thirteenth year,” Kiki explained.

“But Kiki, do you think it’s worth it? With the way technology is improving, there is less demand for witches and magic. Don’t you think it would be better if you just stayed home like a normal thirteen year old girl?” Jiji argued.

But Kiki would not hear any of it. Sure, with computers, the internet, cellphones, and such, demand for witch magic has declined. And the blood of a witch has run very thin in the past century. But Kiki was proud of her lineage, and was determined to continue the tradition. If she didn’t train her magic, she would eventually lose it.

Later that afternoon, Kiki’s mother asked Kiki to try on a special dress. It was a one-piece, purple dress that was traditional for all witches-in-training. Kiki thought it was plain, but shoved that thought aside when she saw a slight glimmer in her mother’s eyes. It probably reminded her mother of when she was thirteen herself.
“Mom, did you ever regret being a witch?” Kiki asked.

Kiki’s mother looked sincerely at her daughter. “There were times that life was difficult. After all, many modern day medicines have replaced our potions and such. But there were many experiences I would never let go. Things and people I was able to see and meet because I trained away from home when I was a girl. Kiki, I will be sad when you leave. But I know you’ll come back a better person.”

That evening, Kiki’s father rushed home, out of breath. Apparently, he had called all the family and friends he could to come over tonight to see Kiki off. There was a crowd of them surrounding Kiki and her immediate family. The weather was true to the report: clear skies, a full moon, and spring weather very reminiscent of summer.

“Kiki, do you know where you’re going to go?” asked one of her friends.

“Not yet,” replied Kiki. “I want to find a city along the coast, but we’ll see.”

“Probably to find all the cute boys,” teased another friend.

At this, Jiji pounced onto Kiki’s shoulder, tail in the air like a proud flag. It was time to go, and Jiji would accompany Kiki throughout the trip. Friends and family said their farewells and Kiki couldn’t help but feel the burning sensation behind her eyes.

But she had decided to move on. She wrapped her duffel bag onto her broom stick, which was actually her mother’s. Jiji hopped onto the front end, and Kiki swung her leg over the middle portion of the stick. She closed her eyes, and concentrated her emotions. Suddenly, she felt the breeze beneath her feet, lifting her up every-so-gently. There were gasps from friends and family below until Kiki opened her eyes. The world was laid before her, and she could still hear the cheering down below.

“Well Jiji. It looks like it’s just you and me now.” And off they went, into the clear night sky.

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The Baby Leopard
By: Mallory Howell

The baby leopard is born
His mother is so happy
The baby leopard learns to walk
His mother carefully guides
The baby leopard catches a stink bug
His mother smiles inside
The baby leopard eats the stink bug
His mother is surprised
The baby leopard projectile vomits
His mother needs a bath

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The Lighthouse
By: Kristin Hagan

Sitting high upon a cliff
A solitary lighthouse
With its beacon bright
Shines its light toward the sea
Signaling ships
Which bob amidst the waves.

Oh wayfaring ships
Heed which beams bright!
Steer clear of the lighthouse
As tonight’s stormy waves
Thrust you close to the cliff.
What a dangerous sea!

The flashing light waves
From atop the rocky cliff
“Good evening” ships!
The welcoming lighthouse
The sailors see
Under a night sky bright.

Turn, turn, can you see
What lies ahead for the ships
Whose grave is the cliff?
Lightning streaks bright
Join the furious waves
Which reach toward the lighthouse.

Its flickering signal bright
Glows upon the crashing waves
Illuminating the churning sea
Which crashes in rhythm against the cliff
Upholding the lighthouse.
The refuge of travelling ships.

Sail away from the lighthouse!
Your best friend of the sea
Bids a farewell as it waves
Good-bye to its friend ships
With its beacon bright
Sitting high upon the cliff.

The lighthouse “guardian of ships”
Shines above the sea so bright
Perched safe from waves atop the cliff.
Einstein Bagle
By: Jae-Yeon (Jesse) Kim

Fresh smell of bagels makes my day
Fresh smell of coffee makes my day
Wakin’ up hungry is not that fun
But fact that I’ll have nice meal
Puts a big smile on my face.
Fresh smell of bagels makes my day
Fresh smell of coffee makes my day

The Ocean
By: Xing Yang

It was always this way, the place
I belong. It started with a woman who made
Her farewell; a boat departed and never came
Back. She visited every day; and here
I was. The sand that day weighed heavy with her footprints. Did she mind I was there?
The time

Continued and I stayed; this time
It was two naïve voices who placed
A promise, chucking rocks here and there
Until I took all the rocks away. But the promise was made
And here
I was, minding my own business as those two came

back. Not long after, their sounds came
With one that constantly cried. A second time:
Even more feet on the sand. I felt excited with more to hear.
One wanted to be a sailor, traveling to exotic places.
I played with the sand castles made
By the little people.
But there

Came a time when their
Speech came
Less often. That’s okay, I can always wait. I always make
Time;
Without the voices, I am complacent,
the wind just as eager for the day’s gossip. Ah, I hear
It! A fragile intonation to familiar memories. “Here
Was where mama and papa would take us. And there
Was a huge sand castle!” There
Was some inaudible mumbling. Those voices never came
Back. Eventually, I went back into myself. Strange how time
Seems to make

The sounds change. The voices are interesting. It makes
The stay bearable. I am here
Alone all the time. There
Is no such thing as age. I come
And go, silently intruding. Is it my place

To eavesdrop? This place I made here
Many times ago is my favorite spot.
There are many others just like it, where the voices come.

Love Triangle
By: Vruti Patel

We were best friends just like two peas in a pod.
Until we met him.
He was so gorgeous, as gorgeous as a prince.
We fell in love with him in a glimpse
But he only noticed YOU!
And when he asked you out
You said YES!!!
That day....
I cried and blubbered like a baby.
You were my best friend.
I really loved him as if he was my pet rabbit.
How could you do this to me?
Why? Why did you do this to me?
We were best friends.
But you let some pretty boy come between us
And now...we are not.
CANTAS
By: Xing Yang

Amber waves reach for dawn skies
The intensity colors me red

Opaque tears rain on cloudy days
The sensation colors me blue

Verdant meadows bring happier days
The nostalgia colors me green

Ghastly clouds cast shadows
The fear colors me grey

My apathy is beautiful
and abstract.

Soon,
I will become a COLOR
You’ve never seen.

LET’S PLAY HOUSE
By: Marquitta Martin

I sit at my desk to relax
the kids are having playtime, so energetic
I look at little Bethane in the corner
she always plays with the dolls, always alone
so I walk over….
“CAN I PLAY WITH YOU?”
Bethane nods her head “yes”
“You can be the mommy! I’ll be the daddy”
I notice that she’s drawn black marker over the doll’s eye
“We’re playing house, you’ve been a bad girl!”
I take the doll, and though concerned, play along
“WHY IS MY EYE BLACK? IS THIS MAKEUP?”
“No, I’m the daddy and I polished your eye. But it’s okay, mommys never cry”
I am appalled, worried, afraid…. all of the above
“WHERE IS THE BABY? DO WE HAVE A CHILD?”
“Yes, you can’t see her though, she’s hiding! over there in the corner”
Bethane points behind a table
“DOES THE DADDY DOLL EVER HIT, I MEAN POLISH, ANYTHING ON THE…..”
RINGGGGGGG!!!!

The school bell rings and all the children run out the door
“Thanks for playing house with me Mrs. Smith;
bye Mommy dolly, I love you!”
Bethane stands up, and leaves

Faith or Faithless
By: Jessie J. Um

Faith
Sometimes like a crystal ball.
One wrong move,
It shatters to a million pieces,
Many different ways.

Faithless
Like dust,
The softest breeze will blow the crystal particles
Everywhere into the air.

Limerick
By: Amanda Syers

We headed out to go to the store
Until my face smacked right into the door
I looked all around
Now laying on the ground
I didn’t want to go shopping anymore
Party
By: Kushbu Patel

Party, party, party
How can we live without that?
I am nothing without clothes, shades, and hats
Turn up the music and let’s enjoy
Where’s the party at?
Let me find my boy and pretend to relax

Camp
By: Amanda Syers

Fear begins to set in. The darkness of the sky takes over the night and leaves no room for error. In Colorado the mountains stretch to the sky; at a glance they tower over anything in sight. To my surprise they bring light to the darkness; snowcapped and wet they are my nightlight. A storm begins to set in which gives rise to rain and lightning which causes me to quiver. No longer am I a child; I must grow up and fight the storm. My Girl Scout troop is host to 15 second graders, and I have been abandoned. Once we arrived, I was all excited because this was my first trip to the mountains. But, I never expected the overbearing Colorado mountains would be so frightening. My troop leaders are nowhere to be found and all the other girls are on their own. Looking off in the distance I see a crack of lightning scribble in the sky. Seconds later the bang of thunder pierces my ears. My backpack is soaking wet. It is not waterproof so now it is currently filled with water. This only adds more weight to my back. The ground at my feet is dark and filled with mysterious things. Bugs and small animals begin to shuffle across my feet in search of a place of rest. Darkness continues to hold me back; the wind blowing so loud. I scream for help, but no one is able to hear me through the heart of this wicked storm. I find my compass coved in water from my backpack. Looking at it, I can’t help but feel even more lost. I was never taught how to use it so it lacks any value. Birds start to run across the sky; they aid in the darkness by blocking the lightening from shining some light on the night. I continue to walk but notice that I am very alone; I feel miles away from camp. My tent, how damp it must be, no longer able to sustain a body for a night. Four pathways to choose; which one is correct; do I go backwards or continue ahead? I look for a sign but nothing comes to my attention. All of a sudden out of the corner of my eye a streak of light forms a marvelous arrow pointing in the forward direction. Excitement sets in and now it is an uphill battle. Rocks roll across my feet and I begin to trail up the mountain. Taking a firm step I notice my foot start to slip; the ground has not caught hold of it. Wet rocks are never fun. Like walking on marbles. My hand clenches a tree branch, unaware of its sharp condition which pierces my skin like a knife followed by blood which spreads across my hand. I hoist my body up to continue along the path being extra careful not to fall again. I listen and in the distance I hear a noise. Like the wrestling of leaves, voices trail through the air. Running with diligent speed I see who it is, my Girl scout troop leaders. Frantic, and lost themselves, frightened by the dark stormy sky. Thunder drops like a bomb on us and rain begins to fall harder than ever. Golf ball sized hail meets my head with a hard bang, which covers the already unsolid ground. The thunder is in a battle and continues to pull out more ammunition. Wind picks up which gently picks me off my feet. Scared of what might happen we can’t stay here; we must find are campsite. And it’s my job to find our way back.
The Circle
By: Sabeena Rahman

My life has gone A to Z
I used to be the star you see.
But here I have lost my shine
I’ve lost myself and who I used to be.

A chance is what I need
To bring back my good old me.
To show the world
What I can be

I can be a Pharmacist.

Untitled
By: Steffany Nguyen

At the end of this long and hard journey,
There is a pot of gold that awaits me.
I just have to get through these next four years,
And press forward, attacking all my fears.
Well textbooks, how I will miss you so,
But that’s too bad; it will be time for me to go
As I look into the future towards my graduation date,
I am anxious to be a pharmacist that is first-rate.

Me
By: Bre Dunsworth

Lecture me to no end. Be
my professor. The Experiment in a lab.
Sculpt me. Right out of a book.
Stop.

Now sour. Make it go away.
Rain down and wash this salty
Taste away. Wash me bland. Fresh.

Is it over yet? Do I get my chance to shine?
Bitter sweet. Now I get to grow. Bloom
into me. No help, no drugs. Reborn. Simply
Me.

STLCOP Lecture Time
By: Stephanie Chen

Let me out of this Whelpley prison.
Those girls wearing dresses
Sitting on moldy seats.
Yawn: ooOH AHHH.
No sunshine in here. Just artificial lights.
Zzz...Zzz...Zzz...Zzz.
Snore...Zzz...snore.

Springbreak is coming up.
I dream about lying on a beach,
Stuffing my face with pepperoni pizza,
And watching loads of fun movies.

Oh, how delectable pizza sounds now.
Sprinkled with spicy, hot pepper flakes.
I drool just thinking about it.
Bing! A crunchy roll with shrimp tempura!
Poof! Just in my imagination.

The clock ticks so slowly.
Suspended in time.
Stuck here like I’m stuck in a gooey
substance.
Like a goose stuck in the mud.
Wriggling around, but no escape.
Not until the clock strikes fifty.
Aquaria
By: Christina Ranick

Walls of glass create an enclosed space
Several gallons of crystal clear water
Gravel, two inches thick
Plastic and silk plants for decoration,
Live ones full of vibrant beauty
A filter or two, to keep the water clean
A few spots of algae – because it just won’t go away
Caves, for inhabitants to hide
Rocks, for a natural setting
Now all that’s missing
Is a fishy friend
To capture a child’s heart

Poverty
By: Jessie J. Um

Poverty is a day to day struggle
And a never ending battle
Yet people continue live life freely
And have excuses that they’re too busy
Why don’t people stop this problem?
They toss this idea like a piece of gum
If people came more aware,
We can fix it with their welfare
But they all complain it’s no fair
So they don’t want to even care
We’re left with what we began with: poverty
The world will never be able to get lovely

Thank you
By: Kushbu Patel

I just want to say thank you
Thank you for always being there for me
Thank you for loving me so much
Thank you for having me as your girlfriend
Thank you for taking care for me
Thank you for making me feel like I’m the only girl in the world
Thank you for dancing with me
Thank you for holding my hand
Thank you for everything.
**Sweet advice**  
By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

Julianne had lots of candy and decided one day to bring it to school. She stuffed her bag to the top with goodies and adorned herself in lots of jewels. When she got on the bus, she sat next to her best friend and showed her all the candy. Her best friend became jealous and asked her if the candy was from her granny. Julianne nodded her head and asked her best friend if she wanted some. Soon, all the other children got a glimpse and begged for a chewing gum. Julianne decided it was best that she share with each of her peers. As each one got their candy, the girls and boys would cheer. There was one boy on the bus, however, that Julianne didn’t like. Once she found out that he wanted one, she told him to “take a hike.” While all the other girls and boys were happy and chewing on delicious things, Jacob was sad in the corner and decided candy, he too would bring. The next day, Julianne got on the bus and saw that everyone was munching. With smiles on their faces, she could continuously hear them crunching. She sat again next to her best friend, asking what she was eating. Taylor turned around and pointed at Jacob, saying, “today he is treating.” Jealous of all her peers, she started walking towards Jacob and asking. If she too could have one, but all she heard and saw was Jacob turning around and laughing. Julianne continued following him as he was returning back to his bus seat, Continuing to beg and implore him, until eventually gloomy and downbeat. He said, “the other day, I asked for a candy and you refused to give me one. What makes you think that today, I will share with you,” and Julianne became stunned. Then out of nowhere, Jacob took his hand out and said, “here, take it. Now you know how I felt. My mom always told me, two wrongs don’t make a right. Next time, don’t make my heart melt.” Julianne happy with the piece of candy began to think twice. And the next day, brought him candy, considering his advice.

**TXT Poem**  
By: Spencer Lin

2 say that u luv me  
Wuld be much 4 my hart  
Much 2 contain  
But sweet such a fruit tart  
U c me with u  
As I, me too  
Both us are happy  
2gether at last, mayb 4ever and more
Dream girl
By: Xing Yang

She lay in bed to sleep and dreams
Her eyes closed day and night
No one to hear her silent screams
Skin turned a ghostly white

I saw the girl in brief passing
“What had happened?” I asked
It was a truck, lights not flashing
Her coma unsurpassed

In my dreams I saw that same girl
We played and laughed a plenty
Our dance spun a magical whorl
Time was never empty

When asked, she said she could not wake
The dreams she wished to stay
For kindness is always late
Her past she would not say

Every night we continued to play
In dreams and fantasy
But one day I was in dismay
She did not come as I waited anxiously

Her room was empty and cold
She passed away last night
Many secrets were left untold
And the dreams had taken flight

Haiku
By: Susan To

Chocolate is good
The best tasting in the world
I love chocolate
Office Party
By: Xing Yang

“Sarah, please don’t tell me you said yes,” cried Mary Lou, as she dropped all else and focused her attention on me. I could tell this meant a lot to her, since she was in the middle of lunch. Mary Lou loved to eat, despite her attractive figure that bounced with feminine charm with each step.

“And why not? You know how many attractive guys work for this company? I can count them on one hand,” I replied, slurping away at my slushy. “Dan seems like a nice guy. Even though he doesn’t work in sales anymore, he still answers all my questions when you’re not here. He’s real nice.”

“B-S,” Mary said, while pointing an accusing finger at me. “Don’t try and pull that nice-guy personality stuff on me. I’m sure it’s not his six foot tall stature, broad shoulders, chiseled face, and…”

“Looks like you know more about him than I do,” I said dryly.

“What woman doesn’t?” Mary Lou exclaimed. “But let me tell you something. From one friend to another. No, from one woman to another. Dan Wyman is scum. He’ll use you like a pair of undies and toss you away when it begins to yellow.”

I contemplated this thought. Dan in nothing but underwear was my first thought, but that thought was quickly shoved away. The logical side of me wanted to really consider what Mary Lou was telling me. After all, she’s happily married and has no incentive to lie, not that I think she would in the first place. But Dan’s smile yesterday lifted a weight that had built in the 26 years of my life. After all, I can still hear Aunt Jane asking at Christmas if I’ve found a good man to settle down with. And right then, mom would jump in and ask if Cousin Emily was doing well living in the north east. At first, I didn’t think anything was wrong. I was…am still young. But I’m not attractive like Mary Lou. I’ve lived my life with hair pulled in a pony-tail, t-shirts and jeans, and sneakers. Every morning, I would imagine my thick unruly hair would come to life and shine like the women in the shampoo commercials. When I could face the ugly truth, I was pretty tomboy-ish.

“It’s just that…” I began to say, while looking to make sure no one was around in the department cafeteria. I lowered my voice. “I’m just so…average. What’s the chance of me meeting another guy like Dan in this lifetime?”

Mary Lou looked exasperated. She clasped my hands with her food-stained fingers and said, almost too loudly, “Sarah! You are anything, but average. And you can do so much better than Dan Wyman. There’s uh…um…Derek from human resources.” Mary Lou flinched as she thought of what she just said.

“Yuck,” I replied.

“Okay, maybe not Derek,” Mary Lou said. “What’s that intern’s name? John? Jake?”
“He’s seven years younger than me!” I nearly shouted. I took that moment to glance at the clock. “Geez, look at the time. Break’s over. I’ll see you tonight at the dinner.” I quickly gathered my things and rushed out of the cafeteria, almost sensing the eye roll from Mary Lou. What the heck. Maybe Dan Wyman is scum. But I never said we were going steady. This was just one dinner. A company dinner, no less. And one dinner does not equal dating.

The rest of the day went by slowly. I couldn’t help constantly glancing at the clock in the cubicle until it was time to high-tail it back to the apartment. After doing the whole make-up and hair thing, I decided to put on a one-piece dress. It was Evy’s dress, really. But she let me borrow it during college and eventually forgot about it. Since it revealed a lot of skin I wasn’t comfortable showing, I decided to wear a light matching sweater on top. I’m not a fan of high-heels, but what the heck! Go big or go home.

When I got to the restaurant, I could recognize many of the people in my department, Mary Lou included. Of course, she was stunning: a red, one-piece strapless dress with hair that curled to reach slender shoulders. Her husband was just as equally attractive, with one arm wrapped around Mary Lou’s shoulder. I couldn’t help but be a little envious. But at the same time, I was sincerely happy for Mary Lou.

I looked around, trying to spot Dan. After glancing at my cell phone for the tenth time, I was getting slightly annoyed. While turning around, a familiar shape appearing inside the restaurant caught my attention. It was definitely Dan: his attractive figure and dark-brown hair cropped short. Movie-star handsome was my first thought.

At this point, I was sending mental psychic waves in hope that he would see me. When that didn’t happen, I proceeded through the door where a small line was working its way into the restaurant. The attractive lady in front of me, with her boyfriend no less, was asked for her ID to verify she was old enough to drink alcohol. I had my driver’s license out and ready, but was just asked for my name.

Guess I didn’t look young enough.

When I got to Dan, his eyebrows arched up slightly surprised. “Oh, Sam, you came,” he said while placing his wine glass on the closest table.

“It’s Sarah,” I said, feeling a creeping flush. He could have at least gotten my name right.

“I didn’t realize you would actually come, haha…” Dan was scratching the back of his head as if this was one funny joke. And to top things off, a woman (who probably had back pains from how top heavy she was) walked to Dan’s side.

“Dan honey, who’s your…friend...here?” Of course, she made friend sound about as pleasant as dog turd on the street corner. At this point, half my face was red and my fist were clenched behind my back.

“Melissa, this is Sam. She just had a misunderstanding and thought I was her date tonight,” replied Dan. He wrapped his arm around Melissa, gave me a little wave and turned to walk away.
Somebody, probably me, stuck her leg out under Dan. His enormous figure tripped over the leg and came crashing down, dragging Melissa and several others into a nearby table. There were a lot of gasps and a cursing, with arms and legs flailing here and there from the mass of people caught on the floor.

I would have felt bad, but it wasn’t my fault that Dan tripped over my leg, which just happened to be in that position at that time. Satisfied, I made my way out of the restaurant. Mary Lou caught me on the way out.

“Girl, I saw the whole thing! I just want to say you are awesome!”

“I didn’t do anything. He tripped over my leg,” I replied. I was trying to refrain from grinning like an idiot, but could feel my smile reaching from one ear to the next. “And you were right. Dan Wyman is scum.”

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Sweets
By: Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

I see him walking towards me
So confident and cute
I got my eye candy for free

His eyes are like deep blue sea
His hair makes my mouth mute
His smile makes me fall to my knee

I see him every day for free
Since he would always use the same route
and he would always pass me

Then one day he said hi to me
He was wearing a black suit
He had a smile that was shiny

In my mind I screamed with glee
And it felt like smelling my favorite scent of passion fruit
And it raised my body temperature one more degree

I turned back and shouted hi after a count of three,
But instead of him there was a boy from Boy Scouts
Who was looking at me
And asked, “do you want to buy a cookie?”
By: Amanda Syers

Ones death
Out of love
Our broken
Deep need
Holds tight
To the one
Who came
In order to
Give up his
Life so that
All could be
Precious in
The sight of
God, who is

The Lord almighty creator of the heavens and of earth. It is rare that One man
Would die for someone; rarely will a lowly man die for someone they love but
Jesus died for us so we could have a relationship with him. And his sacrifice of
Love should compel us to realize how broken we truly are. His blood was shed
For my sins
He was hit
Taunted by
Many, then
Abandoned
He suffered
and he died
Was buried
Rose again
In just some
Three days
My life is to
Live for him
Who loves
The broken
Messsed up
People who
Have no one
To look up to
In Gods love
We find rest
And true joy
In one thing
His sacrifice
An unfailing
Sign of Gods
desire for us