Conjure Rings
ConjuRings

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Stacy (Jung Won) Hwang

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**STAR**
By: Saba Aziz

Oh,
Twin-Kle, Tw-Inkle. Lit-Ttle star. I
Really know
Not who you
Are. You shine up in the sky at night, and I wonder how you
Get so bright. Maybe Martians super glued glow
Sticks to your surface, or painted you in
Glow in the dark paint. People say
You’re like a diamond in the
Sky, but I have yet to see
A real diamond that shined
That bright. I hope you know
How much we appreciate
Your diligence and
Beauty 2. And PS
I love You!
My Garden Company
By: Sam Badwan

I went to my garden at six
o’clock in the morning when I saw five
rabbits eating my carrots before
I shooed them away. It’s happened Three
times this week. When will they learn to
understand that this garden is all for one?

I pulled weeds and thought about more than one
of my favorite activities like running six
miles and sewing clothes from five years ago and my caring for my three small puppies before

I remembered what my husband said about the forecast for today. Finally some rain to help my wonderful plants grow more than they have in three months. If only I could pick just six of the tomatoes to use in my favorite five-cheese-spaghetti but I have hope that to day it will indeed rain and I will get to pick some grown tomatoes before those rabbits come back and give me five reasons to put up one wired fence that stands a whole six feet tall. I stay outside until three o’clock in the afternoon when three claps of thunder sounded from the two dark clouds above me made me wish the six furry tailed rabbits knew they were forbidden from my garden until I had just one basket full of tomatoes and bag of five tasty carrots to put into my five year old granddaughters’ lunch with three other foods that I planned to include. Oh what a wonderful thing it would be to have all of the vegetables I had worked so hard to grow for my beautiful grandchildren. All six were someday going to realize that a garden is special and all six will understand what my garden was really for

Autumn
By: Kourtni Blomker

An ocean of bustling warm leaves
Swing on the breeze
As the last of the Sun
Walks, then runs through the trees

Busy, smelly squirrels storing
Dirty acorns til the spring
Loud crickets jump
And sing their last

Listening to seashells by the sand
Now but a fading memory
**Bonding Time**

By: Kourtni Blomker

A boy and his father, on a ship out to sea
The waves high, the water blue
Warmed by the heat of the afternoon sun
The father, a king; the son his knight
Drudging ever onward
Towards what, they know not

For the destination is not
What they find most important you see
But the journey, moving forever forward
Even when the winds blew
And the day turned to night
When the burning of the sun

Became too much. The son
And his father, persisted like a well tied knot.
’Twas the night
That was most terrifying, when the monsters of the sea
Showed their hideous faces, and blew
Water through their monstrous spouts. Father would ward

Them off as best he could. And continue toward

Their unknown goal. Sighing with relief when the sun
Rose again over the never-ending blue.
After surviving such hardships, not
A care in the world. Just the father, the son, and the sea.
Yet little did they know that the coming night

Would be their last night
To sail toward
Nothing but the sea.
For when the sun
Did rise, it was not
Never-ending blue

That met their eyes. For beyond that blue
Was green and brown. The colors of the night
Night monsters. But... this was not
A creature as far as they could see. So toward
This new adventure they did sail, following the sun.
Only slightly hesitant at first to leave that sea

That they called home. The wind blew them toward
This strange new world, the father and his son.
This place held not the same fears as night, as far as they could see.
MISSOURI
By: Ellie Breaux
The show me state. Of which the name
means “river of big canoes.” You can
find them swinging to the tune of the
“Missouri Waltz” with the Bluebirds,
under the flowering Dogwood Tree. The
Gateway to the West lies just beneath the
Arch beside the river where the Paddlefish
Swim. Home to many popular lakes, as well as
President Harry S. Truman. Missourians are proud
of their country music, Mark Twain, Ozark Mountains
Cardinals baseball, and their ever changing weather.

MO.

Love
By: Alicia Crim
The decision to open your heart to love,
The one you know you have to trust.
The one to help support you in the times of hardship
And the one to be there to share memories with
The perfect one you hope to find
Even though it might not be as easy as it seems.

Life
By: Eun Soo Park and Muhidin Grosonja
With every ending
There is a new beginning
The circle of life
**Sonnet**  
By: Nathan Dodd

You have always told me to do my best  
That no matter what, you are proud  
You put me above all the rest  
Thought my peak would be at the highest cloud  

Even though now I’m far away  
I can still count on your support  
I can always call you just to hear you say  
“Stay strong and don’t sell yourself short.”

From tee ball to college you’ve been there  
Cheering me on and watching me close  
Showing that you love me with care  
Without you there I would have froze

So when I need to talk or to stay calm  
I know who to call, I call my Mom.

---

**The Athlete’s Prayer**  
By: Kayla Gray

God let me always hustle,  
so I’ll be at my best,  
and take pride in myself  
in sports and the rest.

God when I help a younger player,  
help me always give praise,  
so they will see you in me,  
in all of my ways.

God please guide our coach,  
to be fair and smart,  
to teach us to be good,  
let it come from his heart.

God let me take a loss,  
just as well as a win.  
to do any less  
is surely a sin.

God as long as I can play,  
let me make my parent proud,  
as proud as I am,  
when they yell my name out loud.

When my games here are over  
and my seasons are done,  
let me play on your team,  
just like your son.

Amen
Morning Rush Hour

By: Jerry Hu

I glanced a gleam in her eyes
a flash
of heart, of arts
of jaunty smarts.

Her air passed
scentless,
silent -
a summer’s dare

Se Wol Ho (Korean Ferry Incident on April, 2014)

By: Kook Hwang

It has been eight hours
Why aren’t you picking up?
I called you eight times
I am still not giving up.

I know you are in there
Please come out
I really miss holding you
Please cry out

I am out here in tears
It is getting dark too
Ocean wave is crashing
I don’t know what to do.

I see your old friends
With their family
I also want to be with you
I love you sincerely

It has been eight days
I am still waiting for you
I left you eight messages
I am still not giving up on you
Heaven

By: Helen Jang

Reminding myself
That I can’t see you anymore
That I couldn’t do something nice when it was the last
Not even realizing that it was the last moment
The thought of how it could have been stopped
And how my small angel could have still been by my side
My head pictures many different ways
That could have saved the little angel, again and again.

So many memories,
Staring blankly into pictures
Now realizing that it was happiness, back then
When I didn’t even know that those were the good times
It’s too late.

This is death

It’s when no matter how hard you try
The life that has once existed is nowhere to be found
Was it a dream?
Why is it that not even the dead can be seen,
For the life that has been taken away
No one can do anything
Nothing can be done
But remembering what was once here.

To not be oblivious of your visit in my life
To comfort everyone else who is still crying due to your death
Will these make you happier, up there in heaven?

I’m sorry we weren’t the best family you could have had.
You were meant to deserve so much more.
You were a gift for us all.
We love you so much, and we miss you a lot,
My dearest baby Rosie.
Planning
By: Abbey Meers

A question commonly asked is who
Shall be here and what shall be there.
But no worries, my mind gets mixed up too.
I look all around me at this unfortunate sight.
“Why must everyone venture from the plan?”
I ask myself as I try to put things back

Where they belong. I turn my back
And hear a loud bang, and with all my breath I yell “Who
Made that noise?” what I see throws my plan
Out the window. Why did that sculpture fall there?
I couldn’t keep my eyes on the sight
Of this tragedy anymore. I screamed at my assistant to

Hurry herself over by my side to
See the broken sculpture before me. This sets us back
Another couple hours. She gazes upon the sight
Of the sculpture and turns to ask “who
Will make another one?” “I have no idea because there
Is nobody in town. I guess we will have to come up with another plan.”

My biggest fear is having to change the plan.
But thankfully I had my trusty assistant by me to
Help me with this upset that lay there
In front of us. Thoughts race through my mind as I arch my back
In exhaustion. First thing was to decide who
Was going to clean up this messy sight

I call the kind janitor Carl to come take away the awful sight.
As he was sweeping up the mess, I was hit with a genius plan
I quickly turn and look at my assistant who
Was looking rather stressed. With a big smile, I held up two
Fingers. First, we should go check the back
Warehouse because I ordered an extra sculpture that I placed there.

She scurried off to fetch it and sure enough it was there.
The most glorious sculpture has just blessed the sight
Of this place. I pat my assistant on the back
And excitingly tell her how the plan
Is back on. She then asks me to
Tell her the second part. I said I know who

Deserves a raise after this sight. She asked me “who?”
I poked her in the back and said I couldn’t give it to
Anyone but her. The smile there on her face completed this fantastic plan.
What Next?
By: Kelsey Toler

So soon did the prodigal son leave
From his earthly realm
Leaving behind a void
Of sadness and despair

But, a girl who bears his eyes
Looks beyond the lonely sea
To a time where sunshine
Will fill her face again

For when the sand sifts away
And she wades across Jordan
She shall hear his beautiful laughter
Echoing around like a memory

As she steps on the shore
The prodigal son will be found
And a lifetime of questions
Will have an eternity of answers

Here we are
By: Trey Weishaar

And now here we are,
Beyond what once was.
The memories fade,
Will you forgive me?
We once were something,
And now here we are.

yet I try to remember.
I am the one to blame.

TIME
By: Jessica Woosley

What once was?
Back in our history
As time marches on, things do change

How did we get here?
I wonder what life would be if it was as
What once was

New town with a new home
New people pass me on the streets
As time marches on, things do change

I don’t see you in my bed
I don’t see you in my life like
What once was

I miss your smile and your gaze
I miss the past
As time marches on, things do change

I guess it wasn’t meant to be
It will never be
What once was
As time marches on, things do change
Carpe Diem

By: Arnesia Terrell

No more of this sitting like a glass on a shelf
No more fear of being broken and shattered
   Will we break when we fall?
   Will we ever get back up again?

   No more being scared of fading
   Nor the ideas of shedding unceasingly
We don’t have enough hands to hold our petals together
   When our petals fall, will they ever grow back?
What if we have the brown effect?
The effect that that infects our perfect crimson skin?

   I will not be afraid
   I will finally jump from the top shelf
   I will free myself of my lose petals
   And no longer fear my brown casings

No more of this sitting like a glass on a shelf
No more fear of being broken and shattered
   No more being scared of fading
   Nor the ideas of shedding unceasingly

Seize the Day
Calpurnia
By: Kourtni Blomker

My pet and companion, my dearest friend, my pseudo-child. I love to watch you play and pounce upon wicked forces and invisible intruders. Protecting your household from all harm. You sit upon your thrown in its various forms and look down on “your kingdom” with a regal air. Though often distant, you still show occasional affection to your “pets” even if only to remind them of ever important food time. What would my life be like without you my dear? I hope that question is never answered. At the end of a long day all I need is to watch you be you, and you do it so well. Live long friend, of this I beg you. For though you may have nine lives, I have but one to spend with you. My baby made of fur.

Life
By: Sabeena Rahman

It goes up and down.
We go through different phases.
Kids, teenagers, and adults
We go through it all.

We make mistakes
and learn from them.
We hide our evil and share our good.

We get mad at life
and sometimes we love it.
We can’t escape it
so we learn how to live it.

Snowball Fights
By: Brenda Kim

I have never seen so much snow.
I see all the children prepare
Hiding in their forts, getting ready to throw
Choosing a target to snare.
School
By: Tia Joseph

Class was quite a bore
Causing Sara to snore
She dreamt of Grandma’s delectable sugar cookies
Simultaneously crunchy and gooey
Her mind moved on to summer
Making her sad to be in school, what a bummer
The sandy beach, glorious sunshine, cheap movies
Riding in her jeep, passing by the tall palm trees

Suddenly, the bell rang
The mass of students fled out the room as if they heard gun shots go “bang, bang”
The smell of spicy pasta in the lunch line made Sara drool
She impatiently stood in line, behind an obnoxious boy, who was quite the fool
In a matter of seconds, a moldy sandwich hit the boy in the face
Sara let out a stifled laugh, holding back a little bit, just in case
She did not want to upset the crazy boy
For she could not handle that, with her personality, so shy and so coy

Distracted by this scene, Sara’s soda dropped and away it rolled
She went to pick it up, feeling a sudden surge of cold
House of the Rising Sun

By: Laila Kuziez

House of the Rising Sun. The writer in you finds it to be an interesting name, even poetic. Their ‘Come in, We’re Open’ sign, caked with grime, sways a little as you turned the doorknob. You think the doll in the window is somewhere between the nastiest or creepiest-looking piece of voodoo filth in New Orleans, but your daughter thinks it’s pretty. And so, like any good mom, you let herself be guided by her sweaty palms into the dingy little shop.

“Hello?” you call out. A tiny lady, older than the antiques in the shop, answers.

“Ah! The doll. An interesting choice, my dear,” she tells you, in a quivering voice as spidery hands wrap it up.

A few hours later, you sit there with your daughter gone off to a friend’s house, facing the tiny typewriter (an antique item you’d bought in hopes of inspiring your writing) but the page remained dry. Nothing. What you imagined would be a time of furious productiveness with the gothic romances flying out faster than you can type just isn’t happening. Your thoughts ran dry as the necklace of little bones you keep around your neck (another bit of antiques you’d bought to “get in the mood”). Finally, exhausted from futile thinking, you resort to a desperate method. The middle-of-nowhere drive. And so you grab your jacket and storm out to the car, thinking of what roads will create the best atmosphere for creativity.

It’s raining outside and the bright red stoplights pulse instead in a quiet, muted color and the car hums along, movement slicked by the rain and the rain itself patters lightly on your windshield and you stop, your left turn light blinking. You turn on some music and on comes House of the Rising Sun. And so you turn it down a little, afraid to break the poetic atmosphere you suddenly find yourself surrounded in and, as you listen to the undulating music, begin to hum along. And you lean your head back lightly and stare out of the window and suddenly they’re there. The words have returned. You can see your character, breathtakingly beautiful of course, wan face lit up by candlelight and hear the rustle of her hair and listen to the intrigues pursued in whispers within the dark, looming walls of the gothic castle. And she is singing a high note, a haunting cry torn from the soul, yes, that was it- no, wait, wasn’t that from the movie you’d seen a few days ago?- anyways, and you beg to be at your typewriter now, pounding out the words that smoldered away in your mind.

“Quite the pretty voice you’ve got there”
You jump and scream “Who’s there!” but the mocking, girlish voice—quite like you’d imagine one of your gothic ladies’ voices to be—cAME back again.

“Look here, on the floor, passenger seat, almost there, aaaalmost there, there you are.” And you find yourself facing your daughter’s stupid voodoo doll.

“W-what?”

“Your voice, I think it’s pretty” and, like the fool you are, you continue conversation with a doll.

“Really?”

“Of course not,” a mocking giggle. “But you would think that, wouldn’t you?”

“Whaa-“

“Dabbling for so long in music. Trying to impress with your screeching harpy-voice. And then your artwork, ha! As though your hyper-conceptualized, eye-achingly colorful designs could have allured anyone.”

“Shut up! Shut up!” you cry because, deep down, you know it’s all true.

“And then came the writing. You really think you’re something, don’t you? Quite the artist, eh? With your poetic air and thoughtful glances and writer’s moments.” She especially stretched those last few words.

“And you really think you’re going somewhere, that you’re going to write the book of the century everyone’s dying to read. And you think you’re gonna do that with your borrowed plot lines and wanna-be style?”

“Why you little” and you grab the doll, preparing to bash it into the dashboard only, in the spur of the moment, your foot somehow leaves the break and you roll out into the intersection. And you hear the final, drawled out “And Gooooooood, I know I’m one.” of the song as the airbag blooms before you and darkness follows.
Her Baby

By: Laila Kuziez

Her drab gray dress was an eyesore on the jaunty red of the bench. A sigh, followed by the crisp ruffle of leaves and cheap cloth. A screeching bus pulled to a halt. The bright autumn trees, blazing youthful, fiery hues, clung to their leaves overhead. She paused, foot halfway in, announcing her commitment to the ride ahead.

He would love it if he had been here. No, she shouldn’t think about it as wispy tears came to her eyes.

Let’s go find him! The thought appeared as sudden as the desiccated acorns fell from trees to frantic, eager squirrels.

“Liam!” she called, half crazed with excitement.

“Liaaaaam, sweetheart, come here, mommy wants to show you something pretty.”

Her calls were absorbed by the dew-dampened grass. Like the angel that he was, he appeared, peeking the brown-fringed head behind the suddenly unimpressive line of trees behind her. He dashed off to an alleyway.

Heart racing, she followed. Hide and seek: his favorite game. Just don’t hurt yourself, her mind raced frantically. Dashing off behind him, arms flailing, she let her gasping dissolve into wild, incoherent laughing.

“Liaaaaam, I’m coming to find youuuuuuuuu.”

She finally reached the mouth of the alleyway. No Liam. No Liam??? The darkness had swallowed him. Swallowed her sweet, her precious….

“Liam,” she cried hoarsely, voice cracking, body ransacked with sobs. Then, she smiled. Ha! What a clever little boy! He sure knew how to scare his mommy.

She got up, smearing the dirt further into her dress, her muted gray flats touched against an object.

A misshapen, half folded – half crumbled note on the ground. She opened it. A small yellow sun with a wide smile splitting the pastel yellow. Two disproportionate figures, a woman with intemperate hair, spilling off of her white head in all directions and a tiny child next to her, gripping her hand. Orange tulips embedded in the unnatural green around them. A brief image flashed in her mind: an ancient sheet of paper with similar messy crayon marks still clinging to a filthy fridge with colorful magnets.

“Liam,” her voice was now an expectant whisper. The orange tulips! Of course! How clever her little baby was. She had to find orange tulips. So Liam wanted a scavenger hunt, after all.
“Planet under attack”

By Trey Weishaar

We are here fighting for our planet back. Planet Vegtar is under attack and we need to setup defense bots at each mountain. The human race is trying to take over the surrounding planets including our own and we will not allow the humans to dominate. They are over populating this side of the galaxy. Back in the year 2340, the humans planted Macro locating systems into the core of each planet. We have only tried to locate that and destroy it, but now we think they could be able to hear everything we say and watch everything we do by using this system.

BOOM! We’ve been hit! We’ve been hit!

An unidentified object was launched from the human space base, HH22. Half our planet is now destroyed, casualties are evident. We need to take our ship over to Planet Zesk and ally with them. These humans are the real aliens. Okay once we land at Planet Zesk, we will talk to the correspondent and tell them what needs to be done in order to save us all.

“Sir, our ship has been attacked mid-flight. There is something attached to our ship with what seems to be humans inside of it.”

“Get on the relay now and communicate with them fools! See what they want.”

….chrrr “This is sergeant general Leeroy Whiteside the 27th. You must surrender your people and the ship over to us now or you will die.”

“Sir, I think they are saying now that we have 10 seconds to live. They say they injected lethal toxins into our ship and that eventually we won’t be able to breath and will die.”

“You’re kidding me, 10 seconds? That leaves us no t-….
By: Alexandra Morgan, Kourtni Blomker, Jessica Woolsey, Melissa Stutz

Sipping her coffee, Heather stares out the window at the crowd passing on the sidewalk. It has been an hour since she arrived in town. Instead of heading straight to her parent’s house, she stopped at the café to gain her courage before going to see her family. Her mom wanted to pick Heather up at the airport, but she said she would take a cab to avoid the hassle. Heather can’t believe it has been over a year since she has been home to see her family. The last visit was horrible after their argument over her father’s health. His health was failing by the day while he still insisted on smoking and drinking to the aggravation of his wife and daughters. Ever since Heather left for college, her sister has had to look after their parents. Heather really did plan on moving back into town, but receiving a job offer she couldn’t refuse, she ended up moving to another state. Glancing at her watch and realizing her mother would be expecting her, Heather picks up her luggage and walks down the block to her childhood home.

At 272 East Waters Drive sits the small, brick house where Heather grew up. The house has a long, flat driveway that was perfect for riding bikes and a tall, branchy tree in the yard that was wonderful for climbing. The front door bursts open as Heather’s mom calls, “We are so glad to have you home,” grinning from ear to ear. She is a large woman with short gray hair. In old pictures, she was quite the beauty; Heather has never known that girl but only the frazzled woman who took care of everyone’s needs over her own.

Something seems different, but Heather can’t quite figure out what. Her mom seems happier that’s for sure, and she suddenly is overcome with guilt for staying away for so long. Heather realizes she shouldn’t have let the arguments with her father get in the way of her relationship with her mom. For a moment Heather feels like a little girl again. “Mommy,” she whispers as her mom pulls her in for a hug. “It’s good to be home.”

Heather carries her bags inside, and up to her room. The house is quiet, which is strange. Usually the sound of her father drunkenly yelling at the television is the first sound to greet anyone coming into that house. “He must be out gambling or something,” she thinks to herself, “using all the money he should be using on his medications.” She drops off her bags in her old room, it’s still decorated like she had it in high school. “Way too much pink,” she murmurs to herself. She’ll definitely have to redecorate now that’s she’ll be back awhile.

Heather’s mom waddles in carrying a plate of what were once Heather’s favorite cookies. “Sweetie, I have news.” Heather is a bit thrown off once again by her mom’s laid back demeanor. “You’re father and I are getting a divorce.”

Heather’s jaw drops as she involuntarily plops down on her bed. “How... what... why?” she blathers.

“Well dear, I know this is going to be hard for you to understand,” her mother begins, “but your father and I were miserable together; I just couldn’t live like that anymore.” Heather wanted her mom to be happy, and clearly she was much happier, but she had never known a life without her mother and father together.

Then, Heather realized she hadn’t seen her dad yet in the house. “Where is he?” she blurted out.
“He’s living in an apartment across town” her mother explained. Heather was afraid to go visit him; she knew without her mother his drinking must be worse than before.

Heather’s mom gave her a hug and left the room. “I’m making your favorite meal for dinner!” she shouted as she toddled down the steps.

Heather immediately grabbed her phone and called her father. After a few rings, a familiar voice answered. “Hello” a man answered in a clear voice.

“Who is this?” Heather said.

“Heather! It’s your father” the man claiming to be her dad sounded so excited, but it didn’t sound like him. Heather hadn’t heard this voice since she was a child; instead she’s used to her dad yelling, stammering, and drunkenly mumbling when he talks.

“Oh, hi dad” Heather replied.

“Well, since you’re calling me, I guess that means your mother told you.”

“yeah, dad” Heather uttered in a depressed tone.

“Don’t be sad sweetie, your mother and I still love you very much, and we still love and respect each other. Being together just wasn’t good for either of us anymore” her father explained to her.

Heather heard her mother call for dinner from the kitchen. She said goodbye to her father and told him she’d see him soon and she loved him. As she walked down the stairs she the smell of her mother’s famous lasagna hit her nose. “She hasn’t made this in years” Heather thought. She quickened her pace and practically ran into the dining room, where her mother was smiling. “I haven’t seen her this happy since I was a kid,” muttered Heather.

As Heather ate the slice of lasagna her mom plopped down on her plate, she let her thoughts run. Her parents’ divorce had her dumbfounded; she didn’t even know what to think about it. Heather’s sisters didn’t seem to be astounded by this news, although they must have known about it for weeks. Everyone in the house seemed so content now that her parents were not together. Everything really seemed peaceful without her father here, as painful as that was to realize for Heather. She was still surprised that when she called her dad, he seemed to be fine. She would have expected him to be a drunken mess. Heather began to really worry about her dad. As angry as she was towards him for not taking care of his health in the past, she felt truly sorry for him. She knew he was probably the one to blame for the marriage failing from being a drunk, but she still worried about him. Heather ate the rest of her lasagna in a hurry. “I’m going to run over to see dad at his apartment,” she told her mom.

When Heather arrived, she didn’t know whether to knock or just walk in. It was strange to her that her dad had his own place, one that was felt so much more unfamiliar then the brick home he raised her in. She decided to knock since he probably wasn’t expecting her to come over. Her dad opened the door swiftly. When he realized it was Heather, a huge smile spread across his face. “Hi honey, it’s great to see you!” He gave her a big hug and welcomed her into his apartment. When she walked in, she was surprised at how well he had the place decorated.

“Do you want anything to drink?” he asked.

“Just water is fine dad.” Heather was stunned at how different her father’s demeanor was from what she had once known. He wasn’t the drunken person she had known growing up her whole life. He was sober and he was acting completely out of what Heather knew as the norm.

They both sat on the couch. Her dad asked her details about her life and how things were going. She caught him up on everything and about the job offer she received. She then thought she would bring up the topic of the divorce.
“So...whose idea was it to get the divorce?” she asked him. She waited for the rage she always knew her dad to possess to begin washing over him for bringing up such a touchy subject.

“Well, it wasn’t either your mother’s decision or mine. We both decided on it together. And it really was for the best Heather. I’ve never been happier in my life. And I think your mother feels the same way. There’s no bitterness resulting of the divorce; we are both much happier apart. Since realizing this, I’ve really changed for the better. I quit drinking and smoking. I have a clear head. Work is going great. I couldn’t ask for a better life. The only thing I really want now is to see my girls happy and to be on good terms with them. That’s why I was happy to hear you were coming into town. Although I wasn’t sure if you were going to talk to me after hearing the news.”

After chatting with her dad longer, Heather finally felt the peace that she observed in her old home. She was amazed at her father’s turn around. She never knew why he drank and smoked so much, but maybe the roots were somewhere planted in the beginning of her parent’s marriage. She never thought that divorce would be such a good thing for their family, but it had definitely been a pleasant surprise. Heather stayed at her dads for a few hours and talked.

She hugged her dad bye and walked out to the parking lot towards her car. Heather finally felt content with her life. She was glad she had reestablished her relationship with her parents. She finally felt peace with her past and her current life. A smile spread across her face. She never would have thought this trip back home would have made her feel so whole, but she was glad it did.

What I Crave
By: Robyn Lowe

A day to relax and spend time with my best friend
Warmer weather so I can wear dresses
Sushi

A better relationship with my parents
Understanding of organic chemistry
Sushi

Lazy summer days spent on the beach with my girls
An opportunity to dance my heart out again
Sushi
Rose

By: Razan Rajab

Waking up to a beautiful rose,
on my bed. He left it there before
he left. He was always busy
with nothing to do besides work
and never have time for me,
his family, or even his kids.

The morning of our second wedding anniversary was busy
with nothing more than helping the kids
get ready for school. He was at work
for already four hours now. He did not even call me.
It was not like this before,
But as his love died, so did the rose.

Another morning arose,
with him gone before
the sun even came up. Me,
well I was cleaning up after his mess and making the kids’
their lunch for school. It was normal for him to leave all of the work
in the house up to me. He was too busy.

Days, months, years, flew by me,
and our relationship needed more and more work
as more anniversaries came, which was such a pain for the kids
having to see us never together, always quiet, him busy,
me crying. Where was the rose
he used to always give me before?

That rose
on the side of my bed never showed up like it used to. Work
took over his life. It’s been years. The kids
lost their love towards him. Being busy
was one thing, but losing family is not worth it. If only things were the same as before
maybe I could do better to make him love me.

It’s been over ten years since our busy
lives of no love started. He did not know I still had the same, one rose
he ever gave me, the one from our second wedding anniversary. It was dead of course, but mostly
because he killed it, the same way he continues to kill me.
Lives

By: JulieMarie Nickelson

After six long years, the end was finally in sight for pharmacist-to-be Sami Vaughn. As she walked down from the stage with three of her fellow students, she couldn’t help the bright smile on her lips. They had just finished their final presentation; now there was just graduation and the dreaded Boards, though she tried to comfort herself with the knowledge that it was just another test.

Sitting down with the rest of her group, she turned her attention to the next presentation, fingers tapping restlessly against her leg.

“You have cancer.”

Lauren stopped attending high school months after the news had finally settled in, when the Our Lady of Grace Hospital became her home and treatments, drugs, and therapies filled up the hours she managed to stay awake. Her parents alternated coming when they were off work, giving her all the support they could. On a rare occasion, she had the treat of seeing her dog or of an old friend stopping by. One of her friends had even shaved her head like Lauren’s to show her support. It was the little things that made it bearable.

A light knock on the doorframe brought her tired eyes up from the book on her lap.

“Lauren?” the man in the white coat inquired. She nodded, trying to remember his name. There were so many doctors, but this one was the liver specialist. It didn’t help that they all carried around those identical silver laptops that they typed stuff into. When he moved closer, she managed to read his name off of his nameplate – Dr. Kevin Powers. With how all the doctors and nurses came and went, his arrival didn’t faze her until her parents followed him into the room.
“Now, before any of you start worrying too much, I want to say that I have good news,” Dr. Powers started with a small smile. “Lauren, your scan yesterday showed that the tumors haven’t grown any larger or spread outside of your liver. We also believe that there will be a matched transplant organ here shortly.”

She couldn’t believe her ears. Her parents started asking him question after question, hope finally restored to their expressions after the last couple months of sorrow. The surgeon was supposed to come meet them later, but all she caught was the name Dr. Rei. Honestly, she didn’t care who it was as long as it worked.

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“Don’t worry, ma’am, it was just a little virus. Your computer should work just fine now.” Yet again, one of the young secretaries at Washington Pharmaceuticals, Inc., had managed to get some little bug on her computer and proceed to thoroughly freak out. Mike was rather certain it had taken him less than two minutes to fix it after he managed to get her to stop telling him what had happened and actually look at the machine.

He took her thanks with a polite nod before turning away, having to shake his head to himself as he noticed her promptly return to surfing the Internet on the computer. It was no wonder he had to fix her computer constantly.

Returning to his little office in one of the back crevices of the first floor, he settled in to read his email as the clock ticked toward noon. At seven minutes till the hour, he gathered up his jacket to head out to lunch. As he headed out of the office, the sound of the computer behind him shutting down made him turn, raising an eyebrow and adjusting his glasses as he headed back over to it.

However, he didn’t even get to press the power button before his cell phone rang.

“Hello, Trusty speaking,” he answered.
“Mike, get up to my office now. We have a problem.” The voice of the CEO was deep as always, but for once it held something Mike had never heard: fear.

He didn’t hesitate in catching the next elevator up to the eleventh floor, slipping past the secretary there and going straight into Mr. Washington’s office.

“You called, sir?”

“Close the door.” Mike did so before turning his gaze back to the businessman. “There seems to be a problem with the records of our products.”

“They were all intact this morning, sir.”

“I’m aware, I checked myself. However, all of the computers over in the research center went down just a few minutes ago. One of the researchers was able to get them to reboot, but all of the information is gone.”

Mike tried to swallow the lump building in his throat. With all of the precautions he and the others in his department had taken to protect the information, it wasn’t easy news to take.

“Of course there’s the backup files,” he said uneasily after a moment. He almost couldn’t believe it when Mr. Washington shook his head.

“Wiped clean.”

The young technician paused for a long moment before he could find his voice. “I’ll get right on it, sir.”

“That’s what I like to hear,” Mr. Washington said with a dismissive nod.

Heading back to his office, Mike crossed his arms, his mind racing and sweat beading on his forehead. He sat at his computer, managing to reboot it and frowning as he looked through the files. All
that remained of the databases were a few instructional files on how to use the system and a couple of e-mail logs about meetings.

On a hunch, he opened an Internet browser to Google, typing in the name of one of the drugs the company made, then another, then another. Each time, the search engine asked him if he meant some obscure word that happened to have a similar spelling. As his heart rate steadily increased, he typed in “Tylenol.” There were no results. “Asthma” had the same response. He went through all the diseases he could think of to no avail. All searches of the computer systems themselves proved unhelpful, showing no activity other than what he had found earlier.

After an hour of unsuccessful attempts to find any more information or to track the events, Mike turned off his computer and headed back up to Mr. Washington’s office, waiting outside and trying to ignore the raised voice of the CEO inside as he argued with the telephone.

“Yes, I’m aware, Mr. President, but—

“No, we don’t have—

“Have you heard anything from—

“Trust me, if we figure out anything, you will be the first to know.”

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During the second to last graduate presentation, the computer on the podium turned off. Sami tilted her head as the four onstage did their best to keep from panicking. Of course, the professors in charge of the event promptly called the IT office, which sent down a worker. However, the office quickly became swamped by calls from students and professors, all complaining about their school files having disappeared. Eventually, they turned off the phone and set it to an automated message saying that they were working on the problem.
After a restless hour, the final presentations were done using only the posters the groups had and their notes. The graduates were released and the professors anxiously convened at the front of the auditorium, keeping their words to whispers.

Sami followed the rest of her graduating class out of the auditorium with a nervous glance back to the stage. Just a few hours ago, everything seemed fine, but now everyone was on edge. When she got back to her apartment, she flipped on the news.

“—interrupt this story to present breaking news. The President has just announced that the sudden disappearance of medical information on the Internet is accompanied by other loss of information across the board. Though he has refused to make a statement on the matter so far, it is believed that this is a terrorist attack on all of the known developed countries throughout the world. We will continue to update you on this as we get more information.”

After a long moment of staring at the television as it went back to normal news, Sami slowly sat down on the couch and turned her gaze to all of her notes for her licensing examination, both new and what she had compiled over her years of study.

As nurses made rounds to check on the wellbeing of the patients at the Our Lady of Grace Hospital, the doctors and surgeons on duty made their way to the largest meeting room in the hospital. The disappearance of all of the medical records on the patients had caught all of the staff by surprise. Hiding their worries behind closed doors, doctors and nurses paced or bickered amongst themselves. Some bit their fingernails, others nervously tapped their feet on the floor or whispered prayers to their respective gods. There were people all throughout the building who needed medicines to stay alive or to not be in pain, and there were no records of what they were supposed to be given.

One of the head doctors eventually managed to call the others to attention before beginning. “I believe it is of the utmost importance to begin collaboration of paperwork denoting any medical care
given to the patients that can be recalled. It is not the most complete route, no, but until this information can be restored we must continue on with our work to keep these people alive.”

A few exchanges between the staff occurred before they dispersed into small groups to go and begin putting together paper records. Dr. Powers finished speaking with the anesthesiologist in charge of preparing Lauren’s IV for surgery before another man tapped him on the shoulder. Shorter and older, the surgeon’s nameplate said “Dr. Y. Rei.”

“We are still planning on going through with the transplant, yes?” he asked simply. Dr. Powers nodded in return.

“As long as you feel it’s safe. The information had been printed off before the deletion so it should still be possible to go through with the surgery.”

“I have no doubts,” Dr. Rei answered. He wasn’t young by any means, well into his sixties, but he was well-known in the hospital for having the highest rate of successful surgeries. Sometimes, a practiced hand was more important than youth.

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Prompted by a string of e-mails exchanged between various members of her graduating class and a few dedicated professors, Sami returned to campus with her notes in tow. With the other students, she began to copy pages, write out more detailed notes, and discuss the material. Soon enough, one of the professors contacted the nearby medical school and the effort progressed. Slowly but surely, the young pharmacists and physicians began to combine their knowledge in hopes of being able to continue on past the disappearance of the information.

However, the drug shortage in the nation was ever looming in their minds. Already there wasn’t enough, and now they knew that there was no way to make more until all the methods could be recreated.
With the reliance on computer programs to run the machines that made the drugs came the problem of having to figure out the steps from scratch or from dated notes.

After finishing the surgery, Dr. Rei went out and spoke with Lauren’s parents as she was whisked away to Recovery.

“Doctor…. What is all of this stuff on the news about all the medical information being gone?” Mrs. Mason asked nervously after silently rejoicing in the fact that her daughter was still alive.

The surgeon shrugged slightly. It worried him, but what else could they do but continue their work?

“The truth, sadly. But we will rebuild,” he assured. After quelling what questions of theirs he could, he returned to the offices and sat down at the dated typewriter in the corner and his years of records on the shelves.

The days passed slowly, with the number of ailing patients increasing as the amount of help that could be provided decreased. Lauren groaned softly to herself after her parents had left to go eat. She had understood when Dr. Powers had asked her if she would be alright dealing with a bit of pain so that they could give the morphine to other children who were struggling.

Her parents had not been so keen, but she forced herself to smile whenever they were around. Still, it was hard to ignore the crying she heard from down the hallway and the aching in her abdomen. Trying to distract herself from the pain, she thought back to her conversation with Dr. Rei after the surgery had finished. She didn’t notice when the beeping of the monitors she was hooked up to accelerated, her thoughts getting hazy as the pain intensified. She never saw her parents weeping as a nurse covered her body with a sheet.
“Why do you get to choose who lives and who dies?” she had asked.

He shook his head. “I would choose the first for everyone if I could, but I cannot control how each person will react to each attempt. I simply do what I can. With so many people needing our so limited help, it’s only about saving as many lives as possible.”

Chicanery
By: Josh Sui, Abbey Meers, Trey Weishaar, and Kook Hwang

“Where am I,’” echoed the thought in the deep crevasses of my brain, as I lowered my head, attempting to shield myself from the blinding white lights. A gargantuan shadow loomed in front of me, and a pair of pristine pointy boots appeared. A deep and malicious voice questioned me, “Do you know who you are?”

“Yes, I’m Derrick, who are you?”

The man began pacing, walking in a circle around me. “The sedatives we gave you might make you a little disoriented. Do you know where you are?” I looked around and was lost in translation.

“…No? You’re in an asylum,” chuckled the towering shadow “Welcome to my humble abode.”

“What… what is this?” I panicked, finally recognizing the straps binding my body.

“Straight jacket—for your own safety, of course. You have to trust us, Derrick. Will you trust us?”

“An asylum?” My mind raced, as a pounding headache formed.

“Yes. You were brought here last night. Tracy Weisberg is in the hospital. Do you remember her?” The man’s voice cut into my thoughts, dissipating any ideas I had formed.

“But… Why am I here?”

“It’s entirely for your own safety. You can trust us, Derrick, listen to me. Don’t be afraid, Derrick.”
“But I’m not. I’m not … what’s going on? Where’s Tracy? What did you do to her?”

“Listen to me. You have a mental illness. I’m here to help you.” A frightening sound filled my senses, overwhelming me in its sharpness.

“Don’t be frightened. You seem frightened.” Screams echoed, reverberating against the walls of my brain. “Here, let me calm you down a little.”

“Wait, hold—“ as a needle struck my arm.

“You are sick, Derrick. Trust me.”

I woke up an hour later not knowing where I was. I realized that David was standing in front of me. David was my old roommate back in college, and we used to pull pranks on each other on a daily basis. I haven’t seen him for almost six years. I still had no clue what was going on, but I assumed it was another prank. I remember my last prank, because I almost ruined his relationship with his girlfriend. They are happily married now, but I had a feeling that he wanted to get back at me ever since. As soon as he turned on the light, I realized that several of my few college friends were here. I had no idea what this occasion was, but it was good to see them. I finally felt safe.

‘Click!’ I was pretty certain that it was the sound of a gun. “What is that?” I asked.

“Don’t worry about it, Derrick. We will let you know in a bit.”

“What do you mean don’t worry about? What the hell is going on?” I yelled. David simply turned around and started to whisper to one of his friends.

As I was laying there with my heart still racing, I looked up to get some idea of where I was at. None of this looked familiar to me. Even some of the guys surrounding David didn’t seem all that familiar to me now. Where on earth have they taken me? This gave me a weird feeling in the pit of my stomach, but I couldn’t show it in front of David.

Still, I couldn’t get the strange screams out of my head. That couldn’t have just been a recording because it felt all too real. “So are you guys ever going to take me out of this straight jacket?” I laughingly said to David as I began to sit up. He got this confused look on his face that slowly turned into a scowl I had never seen before. I looked away to one of his buddies whom I noticed was holding a gun pointed right at me. This was no prank.

The meds they gave me must still be messing with my head, because there is no way David would let it get this far. I know the prank I did to him was wrong and almost ruined his relationship with his now wife, but I thought he had gotten past that and forgave me for it. All of a sudden I heard that sharp scream again and looked up to see my fiancé, Tracy, standing in the doorway. Out of nowhere, she grabbed the gun from the burly guy’s hand and began shooting. After running out of bullets, she took a shovel and hit David in the head with it, knocking him out. She ran over to me and began to undo my straight jacket. This whole time I was looking at her in total shock, but I trusted her more than anyone else in the world, so I grabbed her hand and
we ran as fast as we could out of there. We finally made it to this bench along the river front and sat down to assess the situation.

Tracy had known David for a while so I turned to her and asked why she had shot all his buddies and knocked him out with a shovel. She gave me this confused look and told me to lie down. She informed me that that was not the David we knew anymore, but now a serial killer that she had seen on TV who recently killed his wife. She said he had drugged us and was going to torture us, until she found a way to escape her bondage and run to save me. All that mattered though was that we were safe with each other. We called the cops and told them where this evil man and his buddies were and eventually they got caught.

Christmas Day

By: R.J. Shaw, Justin Patterson, Ashley Sutherland, and Samila Badwan

It was Christmas Day 1994. The Wakefields had been up since 6 o’clock because their youngest daughter Lucy had to see what Santa had brought her. Kathleen and Douglas, Lucy’s elder siblings, were simply enjoying watching their sister open her presents. Everything was peaceful for once in the Wakefield house. Christmas had stopped all of the family’s bickering. One could simply see the pure happiness nestled upon Rose Wakefield’s face. She got up to hand Lucy her final present, and a gut-wrenching pain shot through her stomach. She collapsed to the ground.

“Mom! Are you ok?” screamed Kathleen while Douglas ran to grab his father, Charles. “What happened?” Kathleen looked so confused and scared. She didn’t know what to do. She then looked at Lucy who started to cry. She was only four years old. She definitely didn’t know what was going on with her mother. “Come here, Lucy. Let’s go see if Santa hid anything in your room.” Kathleen looked back at her mother lying on the floor in pain as she was taking her little sister out of the room.

Douglas returned to the room with his father. “Honey, what happened?” asked Charles. He looked so genuinely scared. Douglas had never seen anything like this before. “Douglas, go to your sisters and check on them for me. Ok, bud?”

“Honey, I can’t get up. I have this horrible pain in my stomach.” said Rose. She looked into her husband’s eyes, as if sending him all the information he needed that way. Charles stared back. Then he stared to cry.

“No, not the baby. We were so close.” cried Charles. As he said that, Kathleen stepped out into the living room. She had heard all that she needed to hear. She ran to the phone and called 911.

“Honey, what are you doing?” asked her father.
“I’m saving the baby! We can’t just let mom lay on the ground while the baby dies, dad!” screamed Kathleen as the 911 operator answered the phone. “I need an ambulance! My mom thinks she might have lost her baby! Our address is 367 Fiftieth Street! Hurry!” yelled Kathleen at the top of her lungs. The ambulance took no time to reach the Wakefield’s house. The paramedics rushed in with a cart and hoisted Rose up onto it.

Charles said, “Kathleen, watch everyone while we are gone!” as he climbed into the ambulance with his wife. The ride to the hospital emergency room was long and scary for both Charles and Rose because they weren’t sure if their baby was okay.

“My stomach isn’t hurting so much anymore, I think I’m doing better!” Rose said with a smile.

“We still need to get you an ultrasound immediately just to make sure everything is okay,” said Charles softly. As the ambulance arrived at the hospital, Rose was wheeled to get an ultrasound before anyone could act. The room was dark and gloomy, and as the ultrasound technician walked in, she didn’t say a word. She knew the room was full of suspense so she did her job as quickly as she could.

“Aha! Your baby is perfectly fine Mrs. Wakefield, but he was kicking and pounding on your stomach hard,” said the technician.

“It did not feel like kicking and pounding!” yelled Rose. “It was excruciating and unbearable!” she went on. “I want a doctor to check out what’s wrong with me right now! Ahhh!” Rose yelled in pain. “The pain is back again,” she said as she started to sob.

“Nothing is going on with the baby, Rose,” the technician reassured. At that moment, Rose coughed up some blood onto her shirt.

“Well this doesn’t look good,” spoke Rose.

“I believe you might have an ulcer, but we will get a doctor to check it out immediately,” the technician responded. The technician paged a doctor to ultrasound room one with a code blue. “Code blue means that a person’s life is in danger,” she explained; “your baby could be put under stress from your ulcer so we need to figure it out right away.

Rose was wheeled into another room where a physician and several nurses began running tests to see if they could figure out what had happened. Blood and urine samples were sent with haste to determine what lab results they could quickly obtain. Others that take longer were started.

“Take deep breaths, Mrs. Wakefield. I don’t want to give you any medications until I know what is wrong. I want to be especially careful because of the baby.” The nurses took gentle care of Mrs. Wakefield, who didn’t seem in as much pain for a while. After what seemed like ages, the first set of lab results came back. One of the nurses paged the physician, who re-entered after a few minutes.

“Let’s look these over and see if we have any useful results yet.” He searched through the results, and a frown deepened on his forehead. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wakefield watched him carefully. “Well,” he finally said, “It might be a lot better than we feared—or it could be a lot worse. Think very carefully and tell me everything you ate or drank yesterday.”

As they each listed what they remembered Mrs. Wakefield ingesting, a nurse kept a list. After completing this list, the nurse began listing other complications that Mrs. Wakefield remembered
occurring within the last week. The nurse passed her notes along to the doctor, who then confirmed that Mrs. Wakefield did indeed have an ulcer.

“I don’t want you to panic,” the doctor began, “but after examining the lab results with the list of foods you ate yesterday, I can confirm that you do in fact have an ulcer. There is so much pressure on the baby right now that the best thing we can do is deliver the baby immediately.”

“Yes, go ahead, Doctor. Please, just do whatever it takes to save this baby,” Mrs. Wakefield frantically replied. Her husband kissed her forehead and said “Everything’s going to be just fine.” The doctor induced her right away and arranged for Mrs. Wakefield to have a C-section.

In the meantime, Douglas and Kathleen were trying their hardest to stay strong in front of their little sister. The last thing they wanted was for her Christmas fun to be ruined by the loss of their unborn sibling. “When is mommy coming home?” Lucy asked Kathleen.

“She’ll be home soon; she just needed to go in for a checkup to make sure Baby Luke is okay in her tummy.” Kathleen managed to keep Lucy distracted, but she couldn’t keep her own mind off of what could be happening at the hospital.

After hours of waiting and standing by his wife’s side, Mr. Wakefield let out a deep breath, as the doctor said, “It’s a boy!” Finally, they had delivered their baby boy, and he was healthy as could be. “Oh thank goodness,” Mr. Wakefield said.

The nurses took precious baby Lucas to get washed up, when Mr. Wakefield asked a question he was afraid to know the answer to. “Is my wife going to be okay, doctor?”

Doctor paused for a moment and finally let out a smile to say, “Yes, she’s going to be just fine. Once we delivered your son, we could tell that the ulcer was much more minor than we anticipated. She will just need to stay medicated for a few days to heal her pain.” Mr. Wakefield couldn’t have been more relieved and happy to hear this news.

He stepped out into the waiting room and called Douglas to fill him in on the news. “Looks like you’ve got yourself a new baby brother, son!”

“Oh dad, that’s great! Is mom okay too?” Lucas asked.

“Yes, son, the doctor said she’s going to be fine, but she needs to stay in the hospital for a few days to heal.” Mr. Wakefield told Douglas he was going to stay at the hospital that night and that he wanted the kids to come surprise their mom later that day.

An hour or so after talking to Douglas, Mrs. Wakefield had woken up from a nap, a bit confused. “How’s our baby boy?” she asked.

“He’s fine; you’re fine; I’m happy to say that we’re all going to be fine after this crazy Christmas morning!” Mr. Wakefield held her hand as the nurses brought their new son into the room.

Mrs. Wakefield began to weep as she held her new child, and asked “Where are the kids? They need to meet their new brother! Oh, and Lucy, poor Lucy I must have ruined her Christmas morning!”

She began to feel guilty, when right on cue, her three other children walked into the room. “MOMMY!” Lucy shouted! “Kathleen was right- you came to the hospital to see if Baby Luke was okay.”
Kathleen winked at her mom when Mrs. Wakefield said, “That’s right sweetie. I had to make sure I got your last Christmas present to you in time.” Her older children giggled as they got closer to give their mom a hug.

“I’m so glad you’re okay,” Kathleen whispered.

Her mother smiled and said, “Thanks for keeping Lucy in the Christmas spirit, Kathleen.” They ended their Christmas much differently than they thought they would, but the Wakefield family was as happy as they could be with the newest addition to the family with them.

THE CAT LADY

By: Daniel Hemann, Daniel McGraw, Kelsey Toler, Todd Pieper, and Razan Rajab

“Hey Johnny, remember the day we went swimming before freshmen year?” Troy asked. I chuckled because I knew exactly what he was referring to. We were now in our 40’s with families of our own, but anytime the guys got back together, that day always came back as one of our most profound memories.

It all started on one of the warmest days of July 1976. We were all about 13 years old and like any teenage kids we roamed the town on our bikes daily and did whatever we felt like really. This day was like the rest, except we decided to go to the community pool for a few hours of bliss in the excruciating heat. On our walk we threw a football back and forth. Running passing routes in the road, going long, and just having a great time on our trip.

Troy threw a heave to me and I ran as fast as I could after it. I leaped and tipped the ball as it sailed over my head, but when I stopped, I looked up. We had come to the tee in Pine and Cemetery road. At the end of the tee was a house that no one ever went into only no one ever came out of.

Our football had skimmed off my hand over the ragged picket fence and onto the unpainted porch. We all stopped in shock, looked at each other, and dove for cover behind the fence. Ben, Darryl,
Troy, and I all sat there catching our breath. In our panic we threw out every thought we had of the house. Stuff about the crazy cat lady that lived there, how one time Ben saw a face in the front window peering out at him, how nobody has ever gone in that house and come out alive, and worst of all, how Darryl’s beagle came back all torn up after her wild cats attacked it.

It was clear that we had a situation here. Should we abandon the football, or risk our lives?

As we sat on the prickly, dry grass in front of the run-down Victorian mansion; the fellas and I put our heads together and tried to decide what on Earth we were going to do. Darryl’s normally ruddy, chubby face had turned a sickly shade of green, and his voice shook and broke as he mumbled out his opinion

“G-g-g-guys, I-I-I don’t wanna be here. Let’s go to the pool already, or better yet, LET’S JUST GO HOME!”

“Awww, stop being a big mama’s boy,” said Troy, the biggest and bravest of our group, “that football was a present from my old man, and I’ll be dammed if I’m going to let some ‘crazy cat lady’ story scare me!”

With those words out of his mouth, Troy straightened and leaped over the rotting picket fence in a single leap. He bolted toward the front door, bounding up the rotting steps as quick as a jackrabbit. Not wanting to be outdone by our brave friend, the other boys and I hurtled over the fence and jogged up to where Troy was standing on the run-down porch. Poor Daryl, however, got stuck in the fencing and was bellowing like a baby calf to try and deter us from our mission. We, like always, tuned out his bellyaching and began our quest in search for the missing football.
“Hey guys, over here! I found it!” I yelled and let out a celebratory whoop whoop! Just as I was starting to perform my signature “end zone dance,” a shadow moving across the front of the house froze me in my tracks. Apparently all the other boys saw it too, because they stood stock-still in the brittle grass of the mansion’s yard, mouths open like fish trying to breathe on land. The only person who didn’t notice it was Troy, whose back was facing the ramshackle home.

“What are you guys staring at, you big dummies?” Troy said as he crossed his arms. But before I could let out a yell, the front door of the mansion creaked open. A cold blast of air gusted out; so cold that it seemed to chill my bones, even in the scorching summer heat of the yard. Troy must have felt it too, for his face showed fear and horror as he met my gaze. As he slowly turned around, he let out a blood-curdling scream, and was pulled inside the house before any of us knew what had just happened.

With complete shock, we all looked at each other startled, our faces more pale and blue than ever before. How on Earth were we going to save Troy? He was already the bravest and strongest out of all of us; what chance is there that he will come out of the house alive? Ben, Daryl, and I walked hopelessly down the road away from the mansion, thinking of every possible way to save our best friend. Ben chuckled a little, “Well so much for getting that football back,” trying to make our pain much easier.

I told them we could not just leave Troy like this. We could not go home without one of our brothers; that just cannot happen. Daryl, with every inch of nervousness, told us, “I-I-I don’t know about you two, but I almost peed in my pants watching him get pulled inside. Why can’t we just go home and have someone else try and do something about this??” I pulled him up by his sweaty, sticky shirt. “Listen, buddy, if you were the one in that mansion, wouldn’t you want us to save you? We can’t give up!” I roared in his face with such anger and frustration. It was time to come up with a plan before it was too late, and we never saw him again.
We lay on the grass, a rather far distance from where the incident had happened. Suddenly, with such power and amazement, an idea struck me stronger than a lightning bolt. “Get off your butts, guys! We’re going back to get him!” I ran ahead of them, down that dusty, broken street, toward the Victorian mansion, determined to pull my best bud out of there.

We propelled ourselves through the wind it seemed back to a safe spot behind an ornamental bush. “What’s the plan?” Ben asked eagerly. I believe he was willing and ready to go any mile for his comrade.

“I believe that I have seen the crazy cat lady walk outside each day around 12:30 pm to feed her cats which mostly live in the back yard.” I said as I cleared my throat a bit. “It seems as if we could get into a nearby window when she is outside and distracted. We then can infiltrate the mansion and retrieve our friend back. Later, we will enjoy a celebratory snack at my house.”

Daryl and Ben both then saluted me with a smile.

At around 12:25, we saw movement inside. There seemed to be no struggle and no sign of Troy. Perhaps the food she was feeding her cats was Troy. I needed to get those images out of my head and focus. She wore a silky bathrobe and slippers. Her wrinkles made me quiver in my shoes. The profound smell of her ancient perfume wafted over to my nostrils. My eyes rolled in the back of my head and I sneezed. Ben and Daryl instinctively put their hands over my mouth a little late. The cat lady perched up from her bowl on the sidewalk. The cats were coming from all over.

When I gave the signal to my buds, we crawled around the home. We then took advantage of the targeted window and opened it slowly. The wood scrapped against each other and gave off an ominous sound. I jumped in first and then Ben. Daryl hesitated for a moment, but after a few seconds of persuasion, he followed in.
It seemed as though we were in the parlor. She would have been able to spot us from the driveway. So, we ducked and quickly moved to the kitchen. “So, what’s the plan?” Ben inquired.

“I will tell you, but you will not like it.” I said.

“What-t-t-t do you m-mean?” Daryl stuttered.

“We must split up and find where Troy is. He has to be nearby. If the cat lady spots one of us, she will not get us all and compromise the mission. I figured that you Ben should check the upstairs, you Daryl will man the main floor, and I’ll check the basement. It was my idea to be in the house in the first place. So, I should go in the basement.”

Daryl and Ben wished me luck quickly and searched the mansion. I turned around and noticed that the basement door was behind me the whole time. With a large gulp and gathered pride, I travelled into the basement. The floorboards creaked under my footsteps. For the one time in my life, I was deeply afraid. The basement smelt like moth balls and old people. I flipped the switch at the bottom of the staircase and opened my eyes. What I saw was of utter surprise to me. There he was, sitting in a recliner that had to be as old as all four of us combined. He didn’t seem injured in anyway and was just sitting there watching TV and drinking a Coke.

“Come on Troy we are here to bust you outta here,” I said as I walked towards my friend.

The words that he said next are ones that I will never forget. He turned to look and me and he calmly said, “I don’t wanna to leave; I think we were all wrong about this lady. You guys can go and I’ll see you guys at the pool later. I’m gonna stay here and talk with this lonely old lady. She’s lost everyone and now all she has is the cats. I’m gonna try and be friendly with her and pleasant.”

I couldn’t believe the words that reached my ears. However, I honored his request and turned to leave. As I turned, I stopped dead in my tracks; there at the top of the stairs stood a slim and fragile
silhouette. She was standing between me and the only way out of here. Suddenly she spoke and it startled me so much that I almost fell back down the stairs.

“Would you like something to drink young man,” she asked me in a soft and frail voice. I took a moment to glance back at Troy; it was if he couldn’t hear what she said. I nodded hesitantly, and she turned and went toward the kitchen and returned not a minute later with a Coke that was so cold I thought it had to be frozen. We walked over to where Troy was sitting and the three of us began to talk. I had a quick thought at the beginning about Ben and Daryl and if they had made it back outside.

We talked for what seemed like hours and then excused ourselves. She let us go without a scene. The look on Ben and Daryl’s faces when we explained our adventure to them at the pool was amazed and in disbelief. Troy and I usually went to visit her one day a week if we could. We did this until we turned eighteen and left for college. She passed away sometime while we were away because when we returned there to say hi, we couldn’t believe how the house looked. It was painted with a new fence and a family playing in the front yard. Our only regret was that we never got to say goodbye to that sweet old woman who had been so kind to us as thirteen year old kids.

**Home**
**By: Daniel McGraw**

Home on the Hardwood
The wood beneath our sneakers,
was fresh and nicely polished.
The bounce of the ball and the squeak of our shoes,
Not to be out done by the rasp of a blowing whistle.
This mix is my favorite time of the year
I now feel at peace. I’ve come home
Gone and old were those Days
By: Khushbu Patel

Gone and old were those days
Trying to forget and trying to live
Still every minute can’t stop thinking about you
Can’t stop my mind from getting into you
Want to go miles away
Never let anyone come in my way
You didn’t just disrespect my feeling
But taught me not to ever have any feelings
My friendship didn’t mean anything to you
My care my love meant nothing to you
Mentally prepared myself not to care
But heart is still there can’t stop to care
Don’t know what I’m doing
But can’t believe what you are doing
Was called a fool by friends
Getting nothing but the pain
Just want to run away in rain
No one ever understood the feelings
You all crushed n’ killed my feelings
I don’t see any point to survive
Living like this? I don’t think I deserve to live
Want to run away sit in dark by all myself

Walking alone feeling lonely
Want someone by my side truly
Want someone to guide me on my way
Hold my hands say this is the right way
Can’t even trust anyone
Can’t let my heart break again by someone
Just so heartbroken and lonely
Hope I go away from you slowly
**Closer**  
By: Puja P. Patel

As I Gaze at the sky,
I feel  
The breeze on my face  
The sunlight on my back  
The chill of the air

I see  
The wind blowing the treetops  
The clouds floating by  
The variety of colors in the evening sky

I hear  
The birds whistling a tune  
The breeze whispering a song  
The distant sound of cars passing by

I smell  
The freshly mowed grass  
The blossoming flowers  
The refreshed earth after a rain shower

As I Gaze at the sky,  
I lean forward  
Thinking it will get me closer to spring

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**Mistake**  
By: Vruti Patel

At times it feels like  
our biggest mistake is  
making promises  
and assuming they won't break.

But this occurs often  
in the name of love,  
which in the beginning  
feels like a gift from the above.

But this precious bond,  
our true treasure,  
will end all too soon  
along with all the pleasure.

Then there is no choice  
but to snap back to reality,  
get your mind right and don't  
let it screw your mentality.

This is all a game played  
with us in our very own heart  
and it hurts a lot when  
everything just falls apart.
All The Years

By: Justin Patterson

College is not what I thought it to be
Year one is difficult but it gets worse
Is college almost over?

Second year is terrible
Next year, at least, I get professional
College is not what I thought it to be

Year three is here, it’s worse than two
I’m ready to be done already
Is college almost over?

Fourth year is not so bad
The classes are a lot less dull
College is not what I thought it to be

Fifth year is here thank goodness
Last year of classes before rotations
Is college almost over?

Last year is here and I’m on rotations
All that’s left is paper after paper
College is not what I thought it to be
Is college almost over?

Ballad

By: Christina Ranick

Fire, Wind, Water, Rock and Shadow
Bound together by the chains of war
What purpose do these powers serve
What is this Battalion fighting for.

Boldly charge into the fray
Across the plain you’ll fly
Sword drawn, wind whipping all around
Bullets silence a far-off battle cry

I’ve always wondered if one day
That pistol would be aimed at me too
Pull the trigger or stop it all
But even deep down, I already knew

Shoot someone and you’re a murderer
But set foot on a battlefield
Kill that same man – you’re a hero
By that sword of hypocrisy you wield

Sitting on your crumbling throne
Blindly throwing darts
Crimson dripping from the wound on your side
As you mourn the one on your heart

Is this the cost of power
To oblivion sanity will go
What is this Battalion fighting for
Those who survive may never know
Super Bowl Sunday

By: Alexandra Morgan

“Dad, is it alright if I bring Lane to the Super Bowl party?” Michael asked.

“That’s absurd. What did I tell you? You will never bring a boy into my house.” I answered as I slammed the phone down on the receiver.

It has been a long, hard couple months thanks to that boy. When Michael came out of the closet to me and Lisa, I didn’t have any idea how to react. With his mother in tears, I ran to his room and began throwing all of his belongings out the window. I told him how selfish he was to share this information with his poor mother. I tried everything thing I could to help him understand his sinful ways from trying to reason with him to yelling. This family was not going to tolerate this way of life he had chosen. As he packed his things and drove away, I screamed after him that he was not allowed back until he repented. Since then he has keep calling trying to convince me I am wrong, but I know who’s right. I always end up frustrated and hanging up the phone. He can’t get it through his head that I am not going to budge. I keep asking God to bring him out of this mess, and I’m sure this will all be over if I continue to teach my son what is right.

“Was that Michael again on the phone?” Lisa asked me walking through the kitchen and joining me at the table. “You know you are going to have to move on from this and accept him. He is our son after all.”

“Lisa, if we don’t show him the right way to live, we are at just as much to blame as he is. We are supposed to raise our children to follow the LORD, even if it is hard for us. Plus, you know this is your fault that he is gay, don’t you? You made him a sissy when you let him help you cook and let him join the choir. I told you we should have made him play football like the other boys!”

“Jim, that isn’t true and you know it. I’m done having this conversation. What was he calling about anyway?” my wife asks as she begins to put away the groceries for the party tomorrow.

“He wanted to come to the party with that boy.” As Lisa puts away the food, I begin to contemplate how this could have happened to us. Michael was always a good boy; he did everything we asked and was at church every Sunday. All the girls love him. I don’t know how he could pick anyone over Hannah. She was so funny and beautiful. She cared for him so much and fit right in with the family. I should have seen this coming when Michael said he didn’t want to be with her. God-willing he will come around soon and will marry Hannah after all.

I get in such a horrible mood every time Michael calls. Trying to put it out of my mind, I think of tomorrow’s party instead. It is my favorite time of year when everyone gathers around for the big game. I get to sleep in, wake up to the smell of my wife cooking all my favorite foods, then spend the rest of the day eating and drinking beer. I’m glad Josh and Luke can both make it home from school to watch the game.

The next morning, I wake up just before noon. I remember what day it is and jump right out of bed. I go into the kitchen ready to admire the trays full of appetizers, dips, and desserts. I unexpectedly find the
kitchen empty. I run downstairs to see if Lisa took the snacks down to the living room, but don’t find anything there either. I check the boy’s rooms to see if they are home yet. As I walk back toward the kitchen, I get there just in time to see my wife walking out the front door, purse in hand. I run after her to ask what is going on.

“I’m sorry, Jim. We can’t do this anymore. You are tearing this family apart. I need some time away to think. The boys are all meeting me at Michael’s. I called everyone else to cancel the party,” Lisa sobbed as she shut her car door and backed out of the driveway. I can’t believe Lisa would do this to me. Can’t she see she is enabling this sin further and ruining my favorite day of the year in one fail swoop?

**Christmas Time is Here**
By: John (Cheongmyeong) Park

It is Christmas time  
It is time to buy presents  
But I have no cash

**The Ball**
By: Sagar Patel

The bouncing ball  
is a great child’s play toy  
that is used for hours of entertainment  
it is a wonderful time and even helps a child  
to learn of the ways of hand and eye coordination for motor development  
so much fun they are  
bouncing ball  
enjoy

**Coffee**
By: Justin Patterson

Coffee  
Delicious, Strong  
Awakening, Uplifting, Morning  
Morning wake up drug  
Caffeine
Snow
By: Todd Pieper

For if there were no snow, I wouldn’t have needed snow boots,
For if there were no snow boots, I wouldn’t have dallied,
For if there were no dallying, I wouldn’t have had tardiness,
For if there were no tardiness, I wouldn’t have disappointed my professor,
For if there were no disappointment, I wouldn’t have failed my essay.
And all for the reason of snow.

The Night before Christmas
By: Josh Siu

‘Tis the night before Christmas and I was making my final deliveries to all of the boys and girls. I flew over my last house to see that not a creature was awake and moving about, not even a mouse. I could see through the window that the children’s stockings were on the chimney very delicately and with great care. They hung there hoping that I would fill them soon. The children slept snugly in their beds and looked to be dreaming of sugarplums and Christmas morning.

I landed my sleigh too hard on the roof and created a large clamor. I thought I heard someone spring from a bed to see if something was the matter. A light shimmered on the snow from the downstairs window as if someone had just torn open the shutters and thrown up the sash. It was nearly mid-day judging by the look of the moon shining on the fresh snow. “Ah sleigh bells! I’ve been spotted,” I muttered as I saw from the window a man staring at my sleigh and my eight reindeer. Just to show off I called off my reindeer by name. I knew the man could hear all of the reindeer hooves on his roof and I knew I had been spotted. I decided to not skip the house yet anyways because I was in a hurry to get back so Mrs. Claus could massage my feet.

I was very warm, at least, because I was covered in my fur from my head to my foot. This guy really needs to start cleaning his chimney though, I thought, because I was now covered in soot. I carried my bag filled with all of the toys down the chimney with me. It was so cold outside, my face was red. My cheeks were probably red as roses and my nose like a cherry. I saw in the mirror how old I was getting and saw my beard was as white as snow. I started to chuckle, I don’t know why. But I realized I needed to go on a diet because my stomach seemed to shake like a bowl full of jelly.

I knew the man saw me and was spying on me at the moment. I even heard him snicker in spite of himself. I turned and gave him a smile and a wink to ensure him I was there. I turned back to fill the stockings and set out the presents. I turned to man and put a finger over my lips and nose and went back to the chimney to go up to my sleigh. With a slap of the reigns I was off to finish my night. I left with a “Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.”
The Dismantler

By R. J. Shaw

One cold winter night near Christmas in Chicago, Jenna Smith was walking out to her car after her shift ended at the Dine N’ Dash Diner. As she was walking, she slipped on a sheet of ice. A shadowy figure, dressed in all black, appeared to help pick her up. The figure reached out a hand to lift her up, and she took it. The figure pulled out a knife and sliced her hand off. Jenna screamed but the figure didn’t want any witnesses or cops to show up, so the figure reached down and grabbed her tongue slicing it out. Jenna squirmed trying to get away. The figure stabbed her to keep her within reach. The figure continued to sever all of Jenna’s limbs until nothing was left but a puddle of blood. Once the job was done, the figure left.

Officer Johnson was doing his morning rounds and came across Jenna’s body in a pool of blood. He proceeded to call it in to the station:

“This is Officer Johnson. I have a body in the back of the Dine N’ Dash. It appears to be a female. All parts of the body have severed off. The car here is registered to a Jenna Smith. She works here at the Dine N’ Dash.”

The room was filled with deep breathing and Paxil was scattered across the floor. There were knives, spears, shanks, scythes, scalpels, and swords lining the walls. The figure stood at the sink cleaning the tools that were used from the night’s escapade. The figure laughed as the blood washed off the tools, knowing that tonight would be a new adventure.

The figure sat down at the computer and logged in. Facebook was the first thing to pop up. It was the profile of a man named Donald Nickels. The figure checked the messages on Facebook and saw that a young college girl had messaged Donald. The message read:

“Donald, I just love talking to you. You just get me. Can we meet up?”

The figure replied back requesting to meet her tonight at 10:30 by the Highland Park Theater.

“What do you have for us, Tina?” asked Reece.

“There was a young lady by the name of Jenna Smith that was chopped up limb by limb in Chicago, Illinois behind the Dine N’ Dash Diner where Jenna works. This has been the second murder like this within a week’s time and within the same region. The first murder was a Stacy Calhoon.” reported Tina

“Sounds like the un sub knew the work schedule of the victim.” stated Tom.

“The victim could know the un sub. That could be why the un sub was able to track the victim so easily.” said Callie.

“Is there any connection between these two girls?” asked Lisa.

“Yes. They both attended the University of Chicago and were in the sorority Kappa Alpha Theta.” said Tina.

“Our un sub could be tracking them for the sole purpose that they were sorority girls.” Bryce commented.

“Guys, I just got a report of a Georgia Wakeland being murdered in the same fashion that the other two were murdered.” stated Tina.
“Let’s head out in thirty.” said Reece.

The team went and gathered their final few things. James collected his phone charger, Callie called her husband to tell him that she was headed out, Lisa ran to the restroom, Tom grabbed a book, Bryce grabbed a snack for the flight, and Reece called the babysitter to watch his son until he returned.

Lucy Cauldwell heard deep breathing behind her behind the Highland Park Theater. She didn’t have time to turn around before she heard the laughter.

“Donald? Is that you?” asked Lucy, fearfully. She just heard more deep breathing and quicker footsteps. Lucy just stood in place.

“Donald?” Lucy asked. Lucy continued to stare in the direction of the noise. In the blink of an eye, Lucy’s head was gone. It fell to the ground and rolled over to one of the nearby dumpsters. The figure continued to chop the rest of her limbs off. Once the job was done, the figure disappeared.

After returning to the house, the figure continued the normal routine of washing the weapons used from the murder. In the dim light of the house, a few long blonde hairs fell out of the beanie and hoodie that the figure was wearing.

Once all the blood was washed away, the figure sat down and examined the Paxil scattering the floor. “What am I going to do with all this shit?” the figure wondered aloud.

Once the team landed in Chicago they went directly to the Chicago police department to get filled in on the murders that had happened. “The three murders that have happened have all been college girls at the University of Chicago. The college is closed, and we are working on sending students home until this matter is resolved.” said Police Chief Klien.

“Chief Klien, I wouldn’t do that. What if the killer is a student at the college? We can’t just send a murderer home.” stated Reece.

“I’ll make the call then.” said Chief Klien.

“Ok, Callie and James, you two go to the college and talk to the friends. Bryce and Tom, you two go check out the bodies. Lisa and I will talk with the families.” said Reece.

While walking across the University of Chicago campus, Callie and James thought that they were looking at a ghost town. Everything was deserted. They had turned onto Greek Row, which is where all the fraternity and sorority houses are located. They reached the house where Jenna, Georgia, and Stacy’s friends all lived.

“This looks like a sorority house. This gives me the feeling that these murders were not an outside job. I think that these murders were done by someone inside the college.” stated Callie.

“Why do you say that, Callie?” asked James.

“I know how girls treat each other in sororities. They are bitches. They strip you down to your bra and underwear, circle all your flaws, and embarrass you in front all the frat guys. Now hazing is illegal, but I just have a gut feeling that if it’s just girls being murdered on a college campus that it has to do with this. Just call it woman’s intuition.” said Callie.

The phone rang. It was Tina. “Hey baby, what’s the scoop?” asked James, flirting with Tina.

“There’s been another murder. Lucy Cauldwell was murdered the same way as the other three. She was found three hours ago by the owner of the Highland Park Theater.” reported Tina.

“Did she attend the University of Chicago?” asked Callie.

“Yes, she did.” replied Tina.
“Ok, thanks baby.” said James.

“James, let’s get in there and get a list of names of girls that they turned down for sisterhood. Then we can call Reece.” stated Callie, bluntly.

While Callie and James were getting names, Bryce and Tom were with the medical examiner looking at what used to be three female bodies. “The way that the cuts are on the body look so professional, like the un sub was studying to become a doctor or is a doctor.” stated Tom.

“The only odd thing I noticed was a few blonde hairs were lying in the cuts.” said the medical examiner.

“Did you run them to find out who they belonged to?” asked Bryce.

“I tried but nothing came back. That was the odd part.” replied the medical examiner.

Lisa and Reece were talking with the families at the Chicago Police Department. “Do you know anyone that might want to harm you daughters?” asked Lisa.

Stacy’s mother was the first to give up any information. “My daughter loved college. She found great friends by joining Kappa Alpha Theta. She would call me and tell me how glad she was that she chose to pledge. But she talked about this girl who was going through chemotherapy while trying to pledge.”

“Georgia said the same thing to me.” said Georgia’s mother. Lucy’s mother and Jenna’s mother just nodded in agreement.

The figure was at the house listening to the TV when a special announcement came on that said:

“Please be on the lookout for anyone suspicious. We believe that the murderer is a female who is seeking revenge on the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. The murderer has been tracking her victims and even using fake social media accounts to lure the girls in so she can brutally kill them by severing all the limbs off. We want to make the public, as well and the college community, aware of this attacker.”

The house filled with screams. She had been found out. They knew it was her! She had to get away. But not before she killed the Queen Bitch, the one who made her life a living hell. Penelope Lopez must die!

She gathered all her materials and set out towards the Kappa Alpha Theta house. She knew there would be cop cars there, but she didn’t care. She wanted Penelope dead. Once she reached the house, she was able to just walk right in. She found Penelope in the bathroom shaving her legs. Go figure. She locked the door. Penelope looked up and saw her.

“Myrtle? What are you doing here? You are not a Kappa Alpha Theta sister.” said Penelope.

“I know. All because of you. Now it’s time for you to feel as ugly as you made me feel.” retorted Myrtle.

“What do you mean?” asked Penelope. Myrtle pulled out her scalpel and started cutting open Penelope’s leg. Penelope screamed, but Myrtle grabbed her tongue and cut it out.

“We don’t want to draw attention to that hideous feature, do we?” smirked Myrtle. Penelope recognized what Myrtle had said. She had said that to Myrtle when she was trying to get into Kappa Alpha Theta.

Myrtle continued to cut all over Penelope’s body. Police sirens sounded outside.

“Damn it! Who in the hell called?” screamed Myrtle.

Through the door, someone yelled back. “I did you, psycho bitch!” yelled Alice, who used to be Myrtle’s friend back in college.

“Alice? How did you even get accepted into Kappa Alpha Theta? Why would you change yourself to become one of them?” asked Myrtle.
“Because I knew if I didn’t I would start becoming like you.” stated Alice.
When Myrtle tried to become a part of Kappa Alpha Theta, she was going through chemotherapy. She had leukemia, and the treatments caused her hair to fall out. Penelope was the one who circled her head and said, “We don’t want to draw attention to that hideous feature, do we?” Myrtle tried to explain why it was like that, but they said, shave it off and get a wig or no Kappa Alpha Theta sisterhood. Myrtle just couldn’t shave her head so she left. She sat alone in her room, depressed. She was prescribed Paxil, but she just threw it across her floor in her house. After a few months, she dropped out of school. She disappeared until she finally found a way to get revenge.

The team arrested Myrtle, and got Penelope to a hospital. Finally classes were going to be allowed to resume again on campus.

“You were right, Callie.” said James.
“I told you. Girls are evil.” said Callie. The team flew back, and Reece told everyone to take the next day off. He wanted everyone to enjoy their Christmas holiday.

Michael Shan

best of times
worst of times
tale of 2 cities?
Not rly.
GEICO commercial?
Not rly.
Holding an a+ and a c- in both of my hands?
Not reall- oh wait, yes!

ANGELIC WINGS
By: Suong Nguyen

Wings in heaven lay
In solar disarray
Gracing light and air above
Let floral petals fall below
Fluttering like the first snow of winter
Flapping on the back of saints
Death is Life
By: Jeremiah Choi

Death brings sorrow
Death also brings life
As life fades away another yet is created
Life and death are two sides of the same coin
Life and death are inevitable

By: Merlin Thottathil

Thanksgiving is here
The smell of making stuffing
And laughter around

Food
By: Mengjing Chen

I like to eat food
Food is such a fat filled tease
When you are hungry

Hockey
By: Ashley Sutherland

Hockey
Fast, Puck
Skating, hitting, shooting
The best sport invented
Fight, score, pass
Quick, winning
Blues
**Winter**
By: Amanda Syers

Throwing the ball on the green turf
Reminded of last nights bitter loss
I dream of something sweeter
A kick through the field goal
Blanketed with success

Home after practice
The spicy aroma coming from the kitchen
My wife is playing with the kids
My son runs and jumps in the air
Daughter kicking a football

Running outside in the snow to play
The children love the snow
It pillows the ground so nicely
Freshly poured salt easy to find
Until I fall flat on the driveway

My wife gets an ice pack
The kids help me out
I get into the house
The welcoming bed a waits
Snoring while trying to stay awake

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**The Final Mile**
By: Kelsey Toler

My eyes grow heavy each day that goes by.
My mind seems foggy, overworked, and tired.
I rise from my bed with a groan and sigh.
For it is time to chase what I aspire.

Finals are here, there’s no doubt about that
Late night greasy food is keeping me alive.
My hair isn’t washed, so I wear a hat.
I don’t know if I will ever survive.

The end is so close, I can taste it now
Relief and rest will be a gift.
So I push through, though I don’t know how
Through my notes and papers I will sift.
Outside the snowflakes fell ever so quietly as Bob looked out his study. With glazed eyes, he looked across the street to see the Williams family through their living room window. The kids looked excited as they were about to open presents with whom, Bob assumed, were their grandparents. Gathered around the Christmas tree, they all seemed so happy, so at peace. The Williams had lived across the street for several months, but Bob had never made any effort to befriend them. Twice they had come knocking at the door, but Bob remained in his study, not wanting to open the door. They seemed like nice people and it appeared Mrs. Williams was expecting their third child. Bob could feel anger beginning to build as he thought about their new baby. His clinched fist began shaking as his face turned a dark shade of red. A tear pooled in his eye just as a car driving past caught his attention. It was a nice car, one Bob had never seen in his neighborhood before. It must be here for the holidays, Bob thought. It was a new model year 1968 Ford Galaxie. The bright red paint made the car shine in the falling snow. Bob wondered how the car handled in these conditions. See, Bob was an avid car enthusiast and often dreamt of buying a new car, one with an AM radio. He watched the car drive down the street before it turned into the darkness. The presence of the car had calmed Bob down. No need to get worked up, especially on Christmas Eve, he thought.

After closing the blinds, Bob made his way to the living room where he could watch television. This was the first year Bob owned a color television set. He was proud of himself for being able to buy it. It did not come cheap. Bob sat down in his armchair and turned on the television. The evening news was on, something that could relax him. As he watched, he could hear Liz in the kitchen putting dishes away from dinner. He wondered how she was feeling. She hadn’t said much at dinner and barely touched her food. Bob knew this time of the year was going to be tough for her. It was tough for him too but he’d never admit that to her. The news ended. As commercials played, Bob couldn’t help but let his mind wonder to James. He wondered if James would have liked football. What his favorite flavor of ice cream would have been. What his first girlfriend would have looked like. He tried to feel how happy he would be if James were still there, but feelings of happiness had been gone since this time last year, when James had gotten sick.

Bob made himself refocus on the television. No need to get worked up on Christmas Eve, he thought again. Now the Christmas special was playing. Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer, one of Bob’s favorites as a child. As he watched, his chest became tight and his breathing labored. For the second time tonight, tears pooled in his eyes. The children’s program had brought back painful memories and even more painful realizations. Quickly he turned the television off and made his way to the liquor cabinet. Fighting back the tears, Bob poured himself a brandy and turned to face the fireplace. Will the pain ever stop, Bob asked himself. He twirled his drink as he watched the fire slowly burn out. What was once a magnificent, roaring fire had gradually dwindled down. All that remained was one little flame, trying to hold on to life before slowly it too was gone. The glowing red embers still emitted warmth but Bob knew he needed to get another log in there if he wanted a thriving fire again.

When they first bought this house a little over a year ago, Liz had said she was really excited about having a fire place. She dreamt of them cuddling by a warm fire on cold nights, telling each other how their day went or dreaming of the future. That never happened. She explained how excited she was to hang James’ stocking on the mantle. She said she knew where to buy the perfect yarn to make the cutest stockings. That didn’t happen either. She also said reading to James by a warm fire sounded more comforting than watching color television. She never got to do that either. In fact, Bob couldn’t remember one other time the fire had been lit during the time they lived there. Bob hoped Liz would appreciate a fire, especially tonight, so he trekked outside to fetch another log. The crisp air refreshed him. The snow blew all around as he searched for a dry piece of wood. Ice and snow covered most the
logs, only leaving a couple at the bottom of the pile to choose from. Bob mulled over which one looked best. Once he found it, he returned inside to the fireplace. The heat of the embers warmed Bob’s hands and face as he positioned the log down in the embers. He expected the flame to reignite, but nothing happened. The embers continued to glow and the log remained stone cold and flameless. Bob blew on the embers, trying to kindle a flame. He wanted the fire to be perfect for Liz when she came in to crotchet for the evening. The more Bob blew, the more upset he became. Tonight was not his night. Trembling, Bob got up and guzzled his brandy down in one gulp. The bitter taste of alcohol making its way to his stomach didn’t alleviate his anger. In fact it just made it worse. Now that his brandy was gone, he didn’t even get to enjoy it and he was beginning to feel nauseous. Frustrated, Bob kicked over the fireplace toolkit. With loud clattering and banging, the tools scraped their way down the bricks to the floor. He again told himself to calm down just as Liz walked into the living room.

“Do you want to talk about it,” she asked.

“No,” Bob said, “I’m just having trouble getting the fire started again.”

“Are you sure,” she asked, “because I’m having a hard time tonight. I don’t know what to do. I feel numb and angry at the same time and there had to be more I could do,” she said as a tear fell down her cheek.

“There was nothing more we could do,” Bob explained. “The doctors did all they could. You can’t blame yourself.”

“I have to blame someone,” Liz snapped as she walked over to the Christmas tree. She picked up an ornament with baby James’ picture in it. “And you go on about your business like nothing happened,” she said in between sobs. “Christmas will never be the same for me. I can’t replace what I lost with cars or work like you can.”

“Like me,” Bob said. He could feel the anger building again. “You don’t think I feel the same way as you? I couldn’t even watch a cartoon earlier without crying,” he yelled.

“Then why can’t you show any emotion to me,” Liz asked.

“I.. I can,” Bob said. Bob did not want the night to turn out like this. All he wanted was to relax by the fire with his wife on Christmas Eve. And worse yet, the fire hadn’t started again. “I wanted to be strong for you. I wanted the pain to stop. I wanted the memory of that night to disappear. I just want my son back,” Bob said. Suddenly Bob was crying too. Liz walked across the room and put her arms around him.

“I know,” she said. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have snapped at you.”

“Don’t worry about it”, Bob said. “I knew tonight was going to be rough, for both of us.”

Bob thought back to last Christmas Eve. James had been in the hospital for couple weeks but had seemed to be getting better. He had been battling a terrible infection. The doctors called it meningitis and seldom let Bob and Liz close to baby James, except for special occasions. But on that day, they were at the hospital, celebrating what would have been James’ first Christmas. Liz had crotched him a red stocking cap to wear for the festive times. Over the course of the day, James became sicker and took a turn for the worse. Bob wondered how a bubbly, happy child could have gotten so bad so fast. As doctors and nurses rushed frantically around trying their best to cure him, Bob knew what was to happen. James passed on Christmas Eve night around 6 p.m. He was 4 months old. This was the first time Bob had truly relived the memory of that day. He usually tried to blur it out as best he could and for good measure because usually he found himself becoming angry, having nightmares and questioning his faith. He tried to remember the happier times and the joyful James. When Bob’s mind had come back to the present, he noticed Liz had sat down and was still crying.

“I know it’s tough,” he said to her. “But we can’t be mad at each other. That doesn’t help anyone. We should celebrate James’ life. He taught us that we could love more than we thought possible. He showed us what pure bliss was. He was a blessing to us, even if it was short lived.”
Liz agreed. She got up and walked over to the fire place where Bob still stood. Standing behind him with her arms around his stomach, she looked over his shoulder at a picture of baby James resting on the mantle. In the picture, he was grinning from ear to ear, laughing at some silly face Grandpa Harris was making. He had the brightest blue eyes and crazy peach fuzz. Remembering James brought smiles to his parents’ faces. Bob made his way to the record player, turned on the Doris Day Christmas Album and wrapped his arms around Liz. Slowly they began to dance in the center of the living room, swaying back and forth to the sound of Silver Bells. Bob held Liz tight as she quietly cried into his shoulder and he watched the snow fall outside the window. He smiled, knowing they were going make it through this. Just then, a small flame ignited in the fireplace.

**Euphoria**  
*By Kelsey Toler*

White light, blinding and warm,  
Caresses my face like an old friend  
I step from the car, blonde hair curled and twisted  
Ready for the main event today

Smoke curls through the Indian summer air,  
Lacing it with tantalizing smells that makes my mouth water  
But I press on, through the gates, onto a wide grassy field  
The cheering of the crowd deafens me

Boys turned into monsters, testosterone and adrenaline  
From gentle giants to vicious warriors, they have been groomed  
For this day. They have waited and trained to be ready  
To face the opponent; a life or death match to them.

The clock ticks down, slowly and forcefully  
And with each pass of the ball, the warriors grow  
Tackling, tumbling, running, jumping  
Chasing a small, oblong object

Finally, as the Armageddon approaches  
And time comes to an end  
Our warriors stand victorious, and let out a victory scream  
We match their triumph, and stand beneath the reddening sun in wonder.
Marco
By: Jessica Woolsey

“I can’t wait to move into the new house!” Emma exclaimed.

Ray peered down at her and responded, “Just a few more days. Then it’ll be all ready for us to settle in.”

Ray recently lost his wife due to a strange autoimmune disorder. He had been having a hard time over the past year since it happened. Emma was too little to quite understand what had happened to her mother, but Ray made as best of the situation as he could. He decided the best thing for him and Emma to do was move to a new house in a new place. While still cherishing the memories of his wife, he felt relieved to start over.

The house was of older decent on the other side of South Carolina, about four hours away from where they lived now. It was built over a century ago. The house was white and had a wraparound porch with a swing on the front. The shutters were black and it gave off a Victorian vibe. There were two levels to the home and lots of yard for Emma to play in. While Ray knew the home was old, he didn’t figure he’d research into the history of the house. He was a handy man, so he knew he’d enjoy fixing up whatever was wrong with it.

A few days passed. Ray’s parents helped him and Emma move into their new home. The furniture was all placed in the right spots, Emma’s toys were set up in her own room, and their beds and small belongings were all put exactly where they were supposed to go.

“Thanks for your help,” Ray said as he hugged both his parents.

“Anytime. We’re always here for you,” his mother responded in a loving-tone.

Ray watched his parents pull out of the drive and down the road. He gave Emma a bath and tucked her into bed. Afterwards, he stood in their new living room and observed his new house. He felt content and happy. This place really felt like home to him.

Suddenly, he heard a loud noise coming from the porch. He ran to the front door hoping to stop whatever was making the noise before it woke Emma. The sound alternated between a high-pitched squeak and a deep thumping. Opening the door, Ray saw a flash of light followed by a shadow running past him to the back of the house. He rushed to look out the kitchen window into the yard and turned on the outside light. He didn’t see anything but heard the neighbor’s dog barking.

“Daddy, what was that sound?” sleepy Emma asked rushing down the stairs to her dad.

“I’m sure it was just some older kids from the neighborhood playing. Let’s get you back to sleep,” Ray replied willing himself to believe this explanation. He carried Emma back to her room, tucked her in, and turned on the night-light. “I’ll sit right here until you fall back asleep. There is nothing to worry about,” Ray reassured his daughter.

Once Emma was soundly asleep, Ray tip-toed out of the room and back down the stairs. He went out on the front porch to look around but didn’t find anything out of place. Following the path the
shadow took earlier in the night, he walked to the back of the house. Nothing seemed out of place, so Ray went back in the house and locked all the doors.

The next morning Ray was making breakfast when Emma walked into the kitchen. “Daddy, Marco wants to know if we can have French toast.” Ray quickly turned around to see Emma standing there in her nightgown with her hand held out into the air, like she was holding someone’s hand. “Sweetie, who’s Marco?”

“I met him this morning, he’s my friend.”

Ray didn’t know what to think. Maybe the move was too much for Emma after all. Coming to a new place where she didn’t know anyone so soon after losing her mother. This must just be an imaginary friend, nothing to worry about. But Ray couldn’t help but think of the weird noise he had heard on the porch the night before, and that strange light. He tried his best to push the memory from his mind. He convinced himself “Marco” was just an imaginary friend that Emma made up to cope with the stress, nothing more.

“Sure sweetie, we can have French toast.”

After Emma returned from her first day at her new school, things seemed to be back to normal. She talked about the new friends she made and what activities they did. They enjoyed a nice dinner of mac n’ cheese together. Emma did the little homework she had and then got ready for bed. Rays sighed with relief; everything seemed to be back to normal. But when Ray went to tuck her in at night she sais, “Daddy make sure to leave the door unlocked; Marco promised to come back tonight.” He tried to ignore the slight feeling of fear, and went downstairs to watch some television to ease his mind.

Around midnight he heard it again. The same high pitched squeak followed by the deep thumping. Despite it being locked, the door flew open, and he saw the same flash of light followed by the shadow. This time when he followed its trail, he found an orange cat sitting on his kitchen sink.

Ray quickly opened the back door and shooed the cat into the yard. Then, remembering Emma’s “imaginary friend,” he quickly tip-toed up the stairs to Emma’s room. As he approached her room, he noticed the door is shut, even though he left it open like Emma had asked. He slowly reached his hand forward and turned the door knob. He barely opened the door before it was slammed shut again. He heard two voices, Emma’s and another child. “Emma!” Ray screamed, as he struggled to open the door. “Emma, are you alright?” Finally, what had possessed the door seemed to have given up, and Ray fell through the now open door.

He ran over to Emma’s bed and hugged her tight. “Hi, daddy!” Emma said, as if she did not notice her father’s struggle with the door. “Who was in here with you Emma? I heard another voice.” Ray questioned.

“Oh that was just Marco, I told you he would come back.” Ray’s body filled with terror as he listened to his daughter’s explanation. If Ray had heard Marco’s voice, that meant he wasn’t just imaginary, and if he was trying to keep Ray out of Emma’s room, he might be trying to hurt her. Ray quickly scooped up his daughter and carried her to his room for the night.
The next morning Ray awoke to his daughter peacefully sleeping. As he was brushing his teeth, Emma walked into the bathroom. “Good morning Emma, so did your friend come back last night?” Ray inquired. She wiped the sleep from her eyes as she shook her head “no.”

For the next few nights, Emma slept in Ray’s bed, and it seemed “Marco” had disappeared. That night, Ray had set up surveillance cameras all over the house. After he placed Emma in her bed, Ray went to watch the cameras. He was awoken hours later to the sound of a door slam. He jumped up and sprinted up to Emma’s room, where the door was shut again. Ray threw open the door only to see Emma on the floor playing with her dolls. “Daddy, you scared him off!” Emma cried. Again Ray scooped his daughter up and carried her downstairs. With Emma in his lap he sat and watched the surveillance tape from moments before.

For a few moments the entire house was quiet, but then, the front door crept open, and a shadowy figure stepped inside, and sneak ed up the stairs. Ray watched intently as the figure slowly opened his daughter’s bedroom door, and without a sound, woke her up. He watched as Emma warmly greeted the figure, and crawled out of her bed. She walked over to her toy chest and grabbed two dolls out of it. She handed one of the dolls to the figure, and it was as if the doll was floating in air. Just then, the shadow stopped, as if it had heard a sound. It reached over and slammed Emma’s door shut and the video cut off.

Ray sat up, carried his daughter up the stairs and packed an overnight bag for the both of them. He drove to his parents’ house just out of town and explained the past week’s happenings to them. The two stayed in their home for the next few nights and never returned to their new home again. The next week, Ray and Emma moved in to an apartment, and were never bothered by “Marco” again.

**Rock**

By: Haseeb Wajid

Tough
And really hard.
Stays that way throughout life.
Only to be melted by magma and really hot liquid.
but sits through rain and mud and water.
Only to be everlasting. And remain
Tough in life.
Short Lived
By: Shawn Thomas

I can feel it deep down, I know it’s coming
Blood pulls ‘round, the engine still humming.
I was crossing his path, back from the jungle,
When suddenly I was struck with his right, front axle.
I see the flat tire, the car is a wreck,
Hair stuck to the grill, blood more than a speck.
He slowly walks toward me, kneels on the road
Starts paying his respect, the apology I’m owed.
I get real scared, panic says to attack
I try to growl, but my head falls back.
I’m ready to fight, showing my teeth and claws,
But I really can’t move, it’s a lost cause.
I remember the forest, in all her glory
As I turn numb, I can only worry.
Did I do enough, would my mom be proud,
To be my best, I always vowed.
And here it doesn’t matter, ’cause no one will know,
Why I was killed, by our enemy, foe.
Speeding along, he was out for a drive,
Not looking for me, and he gets to survive.
Burning rubber I smell, from the skid of the wheel,

I’m getting nervous now, I beg for a deal.
I know it’s not long, I begin to weep,
As I close my eyes, to fall asleep.

Cinquain
By: Thomas Riedl

Space
Cold, heartless
Exploring, searching, expanding
Looking for other life
Endless
Civil War

By: Kelsey Toler

The boom of the cannon echoes across the rolling grasslands that separate my family’s fields from the steep banks of the Mississippi River; sounding like the thunder of some distant storm careening out of control. Our plantation, Enchanted Rose, with its tousling wheat fields, shooting stalks of emerald cornstalks, and white-washed Colonial mansion, is my father’s pride and joy and has always felt like my sanctuary from the world around me. Now, it seems, nothing is safe from the destructive power of men and guns and fire. The thought of my Papa brings fresh tears springing to my eyes, and I wonder how he is faring out there in the heat and dirt of the Louisiana summer. I try to think about all of the wonderful times me and my Papa have spent together, riding horses, picking flowers from my mother’s garden, and the sweet, somber sound of him playing the violin at night as I drifted into peaceful dreams of sunshine and smiles. However, the brilliance of these memories is shattered by another volley of cannon fire. *It's all this stupid war's fault,* I curse in my head as I lift up my brown taffeta skirts, tossing my waist-length auburn hair behind my shoulder, and begin trudging back toward the manor. Ever since President Davis declared the South to be its own country, men have been lining up to throw themselves into the jaws of the beast that is the Union Army. Even my father, strong and proud and daring as he was in his older age, was one of the first men to sign up. I can remember the day he left Enchanted Rose like it was yesterday; kissing my mother full on the mouth and telling her to be strong for us children, grasping onto the hands of my younger siblings and telling them he loved them very much, and brushing away the tears falling down my porcelain cheeks as he turned to mount his horse. Three years has passed since I last saw my beloved Papa, and I fear as though I will never see him again and feel his warm, strong embrace and his tender lips on my forehead. Papa writes to my mother as often as he can, telling her that he is faring well and where exactly he has been, but what mother doesn’t tell us children is that the war is going very poorly for the South. I see the worried look etched on my mother’s face every day, carving lines and wrinkles into her once flawless face. I catch her, and myself, glancing more often out the window in our sitting room, waiting to hear the clatter of hoof beats and see Papa riding back into our lives, safe and sound.

Suddenly, the sound of hoof beats draws me out of my thoughts as I turn to look at the red dirt driveway leading up to the house. I am overjoyed, thinking my Papa has finally returned, and start to sprint as fast as my hoops and skirts will allow me to go, but I freeze in my tracks. The cloud of dirt seems too large for just a lone rider, and my keen ears pick up on the sound of multiple hoofbeats thundering up our drive. I glance toward the house and see my mother sweep out of the front door, to greet our sudden and unexpected guests. However, the gracious, welcoming smile that is normally plastered on her face is replaced by a look of anxiety. Her hand flies up to her mouth, and she lets out a scream that I can hear even out here in the fields. With that, I take off flying toward the house, my adrenaline pumping and chest heaving against my stupid corset. As I skid up the front steps, I notice the black stains trailing up to the front door, and smell the iron scent of blood. I see how the horses tied up in the front yard look spooked and are frothing at the mouth, their eyes lolling back and forth in their skulls. But beyond all of this, I notice the seal emblazoned on one of the leather saddles of the horses. Two crossed keys surrounded by a laurel wreath send chills down my spine as I run my fingers across its raised surface. *This was on father’s letter that he received when he enlisted.....THIS IS HIS REGIMEN!*
tear up the grand staircase leading to the front door, flinging it open in the most un-ladylike manner that would have earned me a stern scolding when times were better. However, I instantly wished I would have stayed out in the yard.

The smell of dirt, sweat, and blood is stifling in the summer heat, and screams and moans of pain echo throughout the house like the ghosts from the stories Papa used to tell me on rainy nights. Twisted, mangled bodies lay everywhere; some as still as death, others with legs or arms missing, and some with their heads twisted at odd, unnatural angles. I see the gray wool underneath all of the blood and mud, and realize that these are Confederates, our own brothers, neighbors, and friends. Suddenly, I hear a high pitched wail from my mother coming from the kitchen. I stand against the doorway, and it seems my worst fear has come true.

My Papa lies on the kitchen table, crimson blood gushing out from a slash across his stomach. His jaw is set in a grimace of pain as he looks at my mother with sadness in his eyes. A choked sob escapes me, and I run to my father’s side. I grasp his hand in mine and press it against my cheek, feeling the warm wetness of blood on my cheek. I see my father’s pale blue eyes trying to focus on me and he draws in a ragged breath. “You see what the world has become, my dear daughter? Brothers fighting brothers, killing and murdering the innocent without a second thought, and using force instead of love to gain power. Please never forget what I have taught you all your life, dear daughter: that peace and love can always conquer the most evil, sinful things of the world. Do not be angry with people you face in your life, but offer them kindness and help in their time of need. That, my dear Clara, would honor my memory more than anything else.” I start to cry out, to tell him not to leave me here, but his eyes roll back in his head and blood dribbles from his mouth. I see his chest fall for the final time, and my heart begins to break.

As I wipe the tears from my eyes, I vow to keep my dear Papa’s dying wish, and make sure that I do everything in my power to stop people from hurting one another once and for all.

**Desert Dream**

By: Christina Ranick

A city illuminates the night
A warm breeze caresses the valley
The sunrise marks the beginning
Of another hot day
The wind which was gentle before,
Now blows dust across the land
The fiery sandstone valley,
Attracts attention with red dust
Sands shift, moving hills
As you climb the lone mountains,
Beware of the sharp cacti
At the end of your journey
Rest at a bright blue lake
Made by an incredible dam down the river
Santa

By: Melissa Stutz

It was a cool, sunny day, Craig and his two beautiful daughters, Emma and Ellie, were in the backyard of their Florida home playing on the brand new swing set Craig had just built for his little girls. With Christmas right around the corner, their mother was out shopping for presents for the girls, but Craig didn’t mind, he loved these times he spent with his daughters alone.

As he watched his daughters laugh and play, his mind drifted to six years ago when his oldest daughter, Emma, was born. His wife insisted that they keep the sex of their baby a surprise, but Craig wanted a little boy desperately. He dreamt of their little boy becoming the high school football star, just as he had. However, at 3:15 A.M. on August 8th, 2008 Craig’s dreams had changed. As he held his daughter for the first time, he instantly fell in love. He had new dreams of watching his daughter’s ballet recitals and nervously sending her off on her first date. Needless to say, a year later when Craig found out he was having another little girl, he was overjoyed. Emma and Ellie had become his whole world, they had him wrapped around their tiny fingers from the moment he first met them, just as their mother had.

Craig was pulled away from his day dreaming by the sound of Emma asking, “Daddy, is Santa real?”

“What?” Craig replied, “of course he is, who told you he isn’t?” Craig really cared too much about keeping Santa alive, but his wife was adamant about it so he humored her.

“Well, Patrick told me that Santa isn’t real, and that I’m a baby if I believe in him!”

“What’s Patrick?” Craig questioned.

“He’s a boy in my class” Emma replied.

“Well, he’s wrong. Santa is as real as I am; you’ve seen him at the mall plenty of times”

“Yeah, but Patrick says that his dad said there’s no way that Santa can deliver all those toys to all those kids in one night, and that it’s too cold in the North Pole for Santa to live”

“What kind of man must Patrick’s dad be that he ruins the joy of Santa for a six year old?” Craig thought to himself. “Well Emma, Santa has—uhm—magical powers, and he can travel really fast with his reindeer.”
“But it’s too cold for him up there!” Emma shouted.

“Well that’s why Santa is so fat, all that extra fat keeps him warm” Craig was coming up with whatever he could to keep the mystery alive for Emma, plus his wife would kill him if he told her Santa wasn’t real.

The next ten minutes seemed like an hour as Emma and Craig debated back and forth about Santa’s existence. Finally, Craig heard his wife walk through the front door; he watched as she walked through the sliding glass door to the backyard. The girls dashed over to give their mother a hug. Immediately Emma asked her, “Mommy, is Santa real? Daddy says he is but Patrick’s daddy says he isn’t”

“Well of course he is Emma, who else would know what you asked for in your letters to him?” Craig’s wife made it a point to ask the girls to write a letter to Santa, asking for something they hadn’t told either of us about, and after she pretended to mail him, she would go out and buy exactly what was in their letter and leave it out on Christmas morning with a special gift tag from Santa.

“Oh I guess that’s true! Thanks mommy” Emma exclaimed with a smile and a kiss.

Craig was shocked. “What?” Craig’s wife asked.

“How did you... why... but... it was that easy? I’ve been debating with her for twenty minutes about this!” Craig’s wife giggled and kissed his cheek, leaving him puzzled as she walked back into the house. He never understood how his wife was so much better with the girls’ debating with her. “I guess it’s just a woman thing” Craig mumbled under his breath as he walked back towards the girls.

The Storm
By: Justin Patterson

The sky is black
The rain is falling
Thunder will crack
The wind is calling

The storm rages
The lightning blazes
Freezing cold
The street is empty
**ABC Poem**

By: Razan Rajab

A long way ahead in life,  
Battle after battle, and  
Challenge after challenge,  
Directing one toward a downhill tackle.  
Even in the pain,  
Favor the happiness,  
Give others your hand, and  
Heal yourself from the sadness.  
I wasn’t like this before, but  
Just took everything and moved on,  
Killed the bad memories,  
Left it all, now it’s all gone.  
Made myself stronger,  
Never losing hope,  
Opened my heart for God,  
Praising Him for teaching me to cope.  
Questioned life as it got stronger,  
Running away trying to escape, but  
Stopped to look up for a while, and  
Take time to reshape.  
Under the skin,  
Volcanoes were erupting,  
Wind blowing hard, with  
X amount of pain disrupting, but I  
Yelled to the world and cried to God,  
Zoned myself into faith, with nothing but life abroad.

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**I am going to write**

By: Vruti Patel

I’m going to write away my pain  
I’m going to write away the rain  
I’m going to write till the world notices me  
I’m going to write till the world is on its knees  
I’m going to write the words that everyone is going to read  
I’m going to write the words that will become a beautiful song  
I’m going to the words that will bring peace  
I’m going to write the words that will bring about change  
I’m going to write the words that will comfort the sick and the heart broken  
I’m going to write the words will make everything better
Just Keep Swimming

By: Christian Ranick

Swimming in circles. This was the daily life of a fish. But not just any fish. A pretty little orange one, with a big, round head and long, elegant fins. He danced to his own rhythm. He was alone, all by himself in the large aquarium, but that didn’t seem to bother him. He was happy where he was, gazing out at his surroundings outside, playing with the rocks and plants inside, and waiting for someone to walk by.

A door clicked, a sigh came from the end of the corridor, boots thumped down the hallway and the little fish waited anxiously. A girl emerged from the threshold, dressed in a leather jacket and jeans. Her hair was shoulder length, and tied up into a ponytail, her bangs hanging in front of her eyes. She smiled as her family came to greet her, and she glanced over to the goldfish and smiled even wider.

An air bubble shot out of the fish’s mouth, as if he was shocked to see her. He scooted across the length of the tank, and danced in the corner, more excited than ever that she had come back. No matter how much time passed, he always longed for her to come home, and couldn’t contain his enthusiasm when she did.

“Master’s back! Master’s back!” the little fish thought as he flew back and forth across the front of the aquarium.

Remember

By: Khushbu Patel

I remember when my mom first yelled at me
I remember when my sister and I first fought
I remember when I made my brother first cry
I remember when I first cleaned the bathroom
I remember when I first shared a room with someone
I remember when I first cooked
I remember when I first kissed someone
I remember when I first had a boyfriend
I remember everything
Salem

By: Todd Pieper

A light streaked through the sky. Thunder rolled in and crashed throughout my home. The women held their young close to them. The storm seemed endless for my brother and I. Crash! He shuddered next to me. The rain made it difficult to grip onto the branches. Other families were chanting to end the night. Their screams and cries were battered against the hollowing wind and piercing rain.

One of the lights approached very close and struck my home. A roasting flame began to arise from the inferior portion of the trunk. I commanded my brother to climb. We came to find vine that was near our reach. From that point, I let my brother grasp it while I started to run the length of the branch. When we put our weight together on the vine, it started to break. The fibers snapped one by one until the whole vine was in two. I lost my breath. We sored and landed on the next tree. The fires seemed unsatisfied and encased the tree. The families around us were picking up their young and travelling to safer grounds. At that moment, a snapping sound rattled the skies. My home started to travel closer to me.

Abigail was a bright girl. She was under the care of her uncle at the time. A lack of a mother was probably the reason Abigail was so obtuse. Abigail needed her mother to direct her in the correct way. Abigail seemed to have no morals and ethics. Her lifestyle resonated throughout the town. For this town was very small and young. It barely consisted of 100 people. Gossip was easily disseminated because of the religious ties everyone shared.

Abigail, unfortunately, placed herself outside of the moral girls around her. In fact, she joined her friends out in the woods and began to dance. The dancing and chanting Abigail did with her friends were almost satanic. She and her friends commanded to the sky certain men would love them. With lust being the only thing in mind, she claimed the young traveler John Proctor to be hers. She wanted him for his body and drank the blood of a calf they sacrificed. Now, the other girls were startled at the sight. Abigail only laughed and moved her hands around in a sadistic way over her exposed bosom. The girls eventually left upon the voice of a man.

The next day, news spread the town of witchery in the woods. People could not imagine the women of Salem to be claimed by the devil. Abigail would not have it though. She would not want anyone to find out about her plea in the woods. She would be banished if the people found out. The wild would be too much for a young girl, and the deprivation of lover John would be too much for her mortal body. To her surprise, the town eventually got each of the girls to unite in front of the Town’s judge. He was one of the major religious leaders of the town as well. He asked the group if they knew of any witchery. Abigail denied any claims against her. She would never let anyone know about the awful thing she did in fear of her life.

Somehow, the judge found Abigail suspicious of witchery. Abigail broke a sweat. The whole courtroom leaned in to this pitiful young woman. She moved her hands around and flailed. And, she claimed that certain people were controlling her. She and the rest of the women started
to act hysterical. The town gave into the fear of Satan. Abigail started to scream out names of people were later accused and hanged because of witchery.

The one thing Abigail overlooked was the possibility of real witches. She never believed them to be any harm for a second. They were too harmless. Unfortunately for Abigail, her life was about to flip. Later one evening, her uncle’s home began to shake. Abigail grabbed her garb and ran outside. Her head weighed her down. As she tried to support it, it began to ache. The village around her seemed to twist and tangle around each other. With her hands clamped to her skull she gave out a shear scream. She felt the pressure over her cerebral begin to grow even more. People began to notice her distress and walked towards her at her aid.

They were monsters to her. Abigail swatted at them. She began to curse and pluck their eyes. Two of these monsters grabbed her by the upper arms and dragged her. She was lifted up in the air and she passed out. When she awoke, she noticed the former monsters crowded around her. She heaved and with a distraught look noticed orange light. Tears ran down her face as her head hanged low. Close by, the town’s leader was reciting a crime. She smelt the crispy odor of scorching flesh. Wood and mesh was on fire at her feet. At that moment and at death at her lips, Abigail Williams peered up at the smoky sky. She noticed all of the accused souls above. They were laughing at her demise. They were smiling at the death of little Abigail, the girl who cried witch in Salem.

**The Letter**
By: **RJ Shaw**

He laid quietly listening to the sounds of the bombs
As they blasted around him,
Was he safe? would he return to his wife?
As her perfect smile flashed across his mind
A bomb pierced through the night before him,
Would he live? would he die?
Were the questions that haunted his wife
As soon as he was deported.
She received a letter,
It said “Baby, I love you to the moon and back.
Take care and I will be back before you know it.”
She sat there with the letter and cried,
Because she then saw that black car
Pull up her driveway.
The officer explained to her what had happened,
She fell to the ground in tears,
And all that was left of her husband was
The letter and the precious baby in her womb.
**The Diamond thief**

By: Daniel Hemann

It was a warm summer’s night and a robber was running away from the local diamond store after stealing a million dollars’ worth of diamonds when he became surrounded by rabid dogs in a dark alley. He had to use his recently learned ninja skills to escape to safety.

The thief, currently exhausted from running, had no idea what to do. He looked for help; there was currently no one in sight. The sweat started to roll down his neck as the dogs’ eyes turned dark with focus, and their lips curled to expose their jagged teeth.

Lavern, the ninja thief as he called himself, jumped onto the dumpster to try to escape. There was plenty of garbage around to allow the dogs to begin climbing towards him though. He again looked around in panic. Then, last second before the first dog got to him, he jumped straight up to reach for the fire escape directly above him. It was a long jump, an all or nothing effort.

He grasped the bottom rung of the ladder with his left hand and held on for dear life. He swung his weight to get his right hand up and began climbing. He got to the window the escape went to and began fiddling with the latch.

Just then a large man came to the window. Lavern freaked out, and took a step to run and then realized the dogs were still waiting for him at the bottom. The large man stood by the window and showed Lavern the phone as he dialed 911. Lavern waited.

He wasn’t sure which was the lesser of two evils so he sat on the steel fire escape until the cops arrived. They arrested him for the attempted break in, and escorted him down stairs after finding nothing substantial on his person. As they walked towards the police car, Lavern looked down the alley where he had been sometime before, and saw a lonesome looking homeless man pick up a small black bag randomly lying next to the dumpster. Lavern dropped his head as he realized why the cops didn’t find the diamonds in his pocket.

**RED**

By: Daniel Garrison

Drinking red Coke can

As scarlet rose perishes

Crimson blood spills on fresh soil
The year was 1945, and the United States was still recovering from the worst recession of all time. Americans were all suffering in their own ways. Some families were still under devastation of losing loved ones in the war, while others had not been affected in the least. Those grieving families were just trying to make ends meet to keep their families alive, while the higher class families were having luxurious parties and celebrating each other’s awesomeness.

Cari Harrison was a nineteen year old that ran off with her childhood sweetheart, Jordan, just before the war had started. The two had planned to marry as soon as the war was over, but Jordan had not yet returned from the war. Cari’s father was a minister in a rural Massachusetts church, and when she had run off with the town bum’s son, he did not hesitate to disown her. Luckily, Cari’s aunt Lucille lived just outside of Boston and that was where she stayed until Jordan came home from war.

Lucille was a stylish and sophisticated women, and very well known in the Boston area. She was very wealthy, and lived a completely different life than Cari. She had a very strong personality and was very chic.

The last time Cari had seen Jordan was almost six months ago, before he was deployed to Europe. Until then she had been working in a bakery in downtown Boston. She developed some sort of illness, and had not left her aunt’s house in several weeks.

Her aunt suggested maybe she should see a doctor. Without any other options Cari went to see the local doctor.

Later that afternoon, Cari returned to her aunt with exciting, yet life changing news. Cari was 25 weeks pregnant, and her baby was completely healthy. With all the excitement Cari had, she also was nervous and could not wait until Jordan came back home.

To celebrate this wonderful news, Lucille decided to take Cari out for a night. They went to a friend of Lucille’s for a dinner party.

Cari had never seen a house like this. It was so fancy, down to every detail. It was so posh and elegant, a typical 1940’s home.

When they entered the party, Cari felt like she was the star. Everyone asked her about her pregnancy and how everything was until there was a
sudden knock on the door. A cry came out from a man with a desperate need for Cari.

And just like that Cari’s world came crashing down. Jordan wasn’t going to come home.

The Art Show
By: Nathan Dodd
The Show

One time, two years ago, before I was in first grade, my parents took me to the art museum with them. At first, I did not even know what a museum was until my parents told me that it was a building with many different kinds of statues and paintings on the walls. I told my mom that a museum sounded boring and that I would rather go to the Chuck E. Cheese’s down the street. She said that I had to go to the museum because there was a special art show that dad wanted to see and that if I was good, they would take me to Chuck E. Cheese’s.

When we got to the museum, I was already bored. We walked around that place for like a year and it was cold in that museum too. When the art show started, I had to go to the bathroom so I left my parents because I knew that they liked the art and I did not want to bother them.

I walked down the ginormous hallways and went to the bathroom. On my way back, I stopped to look at a painting on the wall. It was a picture of a girl. I could not tell if she was smiling or if she was sad. So I got a chair to stand on and I took the picture off of the wall. I set it on the floor so I could step off of the chair easily. When I went to step down I slipped and fell straight on the picture and ripped it. I tried to hide it behind a plant but everybody would see it. I did not know what to do so I left it there because I thought that if it was such a nice picture somebody would have it at their house.

As I got back to my parents, they were ready to leave and the rest of my day was spent at Chuck E. Cheese’s until we got home and dad turned on the news. “Breaking news! The Mona Lisa has been vandalized!”

1. The Lost Page

Hello my name is Leonardo Da Vinci and I am writing this letter so that anyone who may find it can follow my one wish. I am currently finishing a project so wonderful and so unique that I believe it may be the most successful work of art that the world has ever seen. I call it the Mona Lisa.
My painting depicts a woman in a black robe with long straight dark hair who may wear a face with a smile or a frown. The passion and desire is lacking in this poor woman’s face, and her ordinary style is exactly what makes her unique. I plan to reveal this painting very soon which is why I am writing this note. If anyone is to find this page, they are granted full ownership of my painting no matter where it may be in the world or the price of it. There will be rumors of this page’s very existence but no actual evidence until you, the lucky finder of this lost treasure, has found it.

Lost Page 2

It has now been five hundred years since the death of my idol Leonardo Da Vinci, and miraculously I found yesterday the Lost Page of Da Vinci. Today is the day that I plan to claim my masterpiece, the Mona Lisa.

As I walk into the museum, I see that there are many police cars there and an alarm system going off. I find where the Mona Lisa rests in the museum and ask the police officer what the problem is. “Haven’t you heard the news man? Some four-year-old kid came in and ripped the painting off of the wall and ripped it. We got it all on surveillance.”

**Epistolary**

By: Josh Siu

Medusa reared an ugly head,
Didn’t mean to freeze you like that,
Didn’t mean to swear,
Didn’t mean to cast you away,
Didn’t mean to leave you forever.

You had no response,
You didn’t yell back,
You took it to heart,
You never talked to me again,
I miss you.
Beautiful Planet

By: Ellie Breaux

I wake up to loud voices in the corridors outside my window. As I open my eyes, the daily announcements flash one by one, branding themselves into my memory. Today there are only a few. The Command is solely preoccupied with the anniversary. Today is the 17th anniversary of joining our people and this planet. I look out the window at the people in the streets and watch the celebration begin. We have hung the history of our people all over the city and incorporated this planet into every piece.

To put it plainly Planet #374 is beautiful. Among our people we refer to it as “The Beautiful Planet of Ours” because compared to the past planets, it is very beautiful. Everything grows in perfection. If it is damaged, it heals without flaw. Even the rain is beautiful. We are a traveling people, skipping among passing planets, perpetually moving into deeper space. But we all like it here, on our 374th stop.

After dressing for the celebration, I enter the VATT (voice automated transportation tube). “The Town Garden” I say. In front of my eyes flashes my personal information and then I am standing on the VATT located at the center of Town Garden. Others are also appearing on nearby VATTs ready for celebration to begin. The day is beautiful, as usual, and everyone is in good spirits. Seventeen years has passed quickly, but no one shows any more age than when we landed. Another side effect of this Beautiful Planet. I make my way to the harvest table where we gather to hear the presentation from our Command Officer.

“Today marks the seventeenth year of our people inhabiting Planet #374.” The Command Officer begins. People all around us cheer as Officer retells our history and begins the feast. At the end of his speech he pauses, followed by silence from the crowd. “I am, however, afraid I have some unfortunate news.” The crowd’s voices rose in a hushed whisper. “It looks like we will be replanting on planet #474 a week from today. This planet has served us well, but a new opportunity to continue our journey into deeper space is headed our way and we must take it.”

My stomach turns at the thought of moving to another unknown planet. This Beautiful Planet of Ours has changed our people. We have become more beautiful people, more connected than ever. Happier even. The planet itself seems to have flourished since we arrived. Like it was grateful that we are here and therefore is providing the best possible life for us. But there is no arguing with the Command. We must stick together as a people.

The day of replanting has come. The announcements flash in front of our eyes that we are to be stationed at our VATTs at sunrise. Our belongings will be planted on planet #474 when we arrive. I enter my rooms VATT and stand there gazing out the window awaiting for sunrise. It seems like forever. An announcement flashes, “DUE TO UNEXPECTED DELAY OF SUNRISE WE WILL BE TRANSPORTING IN 5 MINUTES.” Delay of sunrise? What does that mean? The sun rises at the same time every morning. I look out the window again, and still no sign of sun. 29, 28, 27... the second’s countdown to transport. “Planet #474” I say. I imagine all of our people saying that at the same time. After my information flashes, I am standing in my same room with all of my belongings, but looking out the window I realize this is not planet #473 anymore. It is barren and scarred. I walk out into the corridor with the rest of my people to
explore our new planet. We are quiet, as usual when we have just been replanted, but this time it is different. This planet is no longer beautiful like the last. We all look to the sky to see the Beautiful Planet that was Once Ours in the distance. It is glowing as if the sun has finally risen in the horizon. We can see the green and the vibrant colors of the planet, but it keeps getting brighter and brighter in the sky until we can no longer make out the beauty of the planet. Suddenly the planet is so bright we have to turn our eyes, and it seems that the planet is burning up. We stand in stunned silence on this barren new planet and watch as fiery flames extend from the Beautiful Planet. I can’t help but think that it looks angry, as if us it needed us as a life source. The flames and combustion continues on into the day and night as we adjust to our new life. Our people are not the same here; it is an effort to go about our daily duties. It is a shame I think. It seems we needed the Beautiful Planet as much as it needed us.

Romeo and Juliet’s Son

By: Kourtni Blomker

“I’m sorry Marcus you’re….. “

I sigh. I know where this is going.

“… you’re just not what I’m looking for.” I just watch as she walks away.

Right on schedule. Believe me, being the son of Romeo and Juliet definitely helps when it comes to getting dates... not so much for keeping a relationship. In my defense there are certain expectations girls have of the son of a man like Romeo, and I manage to fall immensely short every time. I am thoroughly average, not charismatic and, most disappointingly, not remotely eloquent.

My parents’ relationship is known around the world, I mean it was reported in magazines like everywhere. Young lovers effectively end a minor civil war. (Though trust me, when the whole family meets up on Thanksgiving, still super awkward.) Once you mix in knife fights, strange drugs that make you appear to be dead, and the forbidden love aspects...people just can’t get enough it. Their love has been heralded as the greatest of our age by several big names in news. And every few years we have reporters come by wanting the scoop “Romeo and Juliet: Are they still in love?” Spoiler alert: they are... disgustingly so. Lately I’ve been featured as a side story on these articles with titles speculating if I’ll be the next most eligible bachelor. History indicates no. I’m often surprised word hasn’t gotten out, or maybe it has and girls just hope our love will unleash my inner Romeo, or whatever. Most of my relationships only make it about 3 weeks; I guess that’s how long denial takes to am-scray.

In those girls’ defense, I have high expectations too. I want a love like my parents that changes the world, makes people remember my name for generations. But that’s apparently a lot for the thoroughly average to ask for. Nevertheless, I continue on in my never-ending search for world changing, immortal love... uncertain if I will ever find it.
My Beagle

By: Amanda Syers

It was Christmas day and my excitement was building. Christmas is always a time where my family is able to come together and just enjoy the holiday. No stresses from work, and the day moves forward as it pleases. Even though I enjoy getting sleep, Christmas always starts at 7:30 AM. My brother ran into my room anticipating all the gifts he hoped that he had received. This year I only wanted one thing. A puppy. My brother and I already had a poodle, but she was already older, and I wanted a beagle. The dog I had in mind fit perfectly with the beagle from the book Shiloh. Combined with the many movies, I had high expectations for what I wanted in a dog.

My parents didn’t want a new dog. One dog was plenty to handle on its own already. I ran down the stairs with my brother to see what presents I got and wasn’t surprised that there were at least 50 boxes under the tree for my brother and I to open. (This was expected so it didn’t surprise me). We both got into our present opening locations and began to open the various gifts we had received.

My parents cleaned up all the wrappings and took pictures while my brother and I continued to open the last gifts. I noticed that there was no dog to be found. Sadness filled my heart, longing for a beagle who was nowhere to be found. My mom told me that I wasn’t getting a dog which only made me more sad. But, the day wasn’t over; my cousin’s family comes over and gives us more gifts. The thought of the possibility refilled my heart with excitement.

We were headed off to brunch. This was pretty normal for Christmas. We get all dressed up and go to a nice hotel where we can get omelets, salads, meat, and the like. It seemed as if the brunch would never end. The anticipation of getting a dog was killing me. I tried to hurry the brunch along so that I could get home. After about an hour we headed back home.

During this time my aunt and uncle brought all their gifts in our house. This was when I looked around to investigate my chances for getting the gifts I wanted. Looking around I was confused. No boxes looked fitting for a dog. Again, disappointment filled my heart as I began to wonder if I was ever going to get a dog. My mom and dad continued to reassure me that I didn’t need a dog, how much work it involved and the time commitment. But I had done so much research; I had even made a book to explain to my parents why I needed a dog. (This was when Google wasn’t around, so I would type in random websites hoping to find one that came back with good results).

After a few more painstaking hours it was finally time to open up my gifts. As I began to open them, I was getting more and more nervous. I had reached the last gift and no beagle was to be found. I got a few stuffed animal beagles but they weren’t the real thing.

Then out of the corner of my eye I saw a box that my uncle brought up from down stairs. Excitement filled the air. He placed it in front of me and I slowly lifted the lid. Out jumped a beagle. Not just any beagle but my beagle. I couldn’t help but embrace her. She was my beagle, Ginger, and I was so excited.

Nothing could have prepared me for the 12 years that have passed since she came into my family. She has been both a blessing and a burden. But a burden to my parents to say the least. Being off at college I am reminded daily of her burden to my parents when they call telling me they want to get rid of her. The emotions I felt when I was younger have drifted, but my beagle is still my dog. But I am consistently saddened by the reality that she is no longer wanted.
And that was the day that leads up to right now. My beagle is still alive after almost 12 years. The sad fact is that she doesn’t live with me and she still lives at home with my parents. Daily I am reminded of the pain that she is and how they wish I never wanted a beagle in the first place. But I still love her.

The Walk to the Train
By: Alexandria Morgan

I’m going to see my love
It has been so long
I miss her so
Can’t wait to hold her in my arms

Rain has been trickling all morning
I’m late
I’ll have to rush to make my train

Head down, ego lower
Dodging carriages and people all around
Don’t make eye contact or umbrella contact
Get back where you belong

Passing fancy men with fancy wives
I rush to the train to get back to my plain life
And my plain girl that I adore
Christmas Carol
By: Emily Carroll

It’s that time of the year
You just need a pinch
Of some holiday cheer
Don’t be a Grinch

Christmas
By: Brenda Kim

It is time to put up a tree
And place many holiday lights
The looks on children’s faces are full of glee
This season is very bright

Winter
By: Jessie Um

A
Snow
Mystical
Wonderland
Freezing weather
That brings joy to others
And 2 others it’s just whatever
It’s the time to be delighted & joyful
This season
Is for you all