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Memories of Morgan Ciota

By: Melissa Stutz

It is all still very clear to me,
Your long brown hair blowing out the window,
As we drove down the interstate, toward your hometown.
I was so excited to see where you grew up,
To see the town that made you who you are.
Silly, confident, fun-loving,

Beautiful.

In the passenger seat of your beloved Yaris,
Our road trip became a three hour therapy session,
Singing “Irreplaceable” as we reminisced on lost loves,
Laughing about the strange looks from cars passing by.
We talked about life, love, and our futures.
We talked about our weddings, how we would both be there,
We talked about how our future children would become best friends,
Just as we had.
How no matter how far away, we would remain close to one another.

God had different plans.

On January 6th, he took you from me, from your family and friends.
How? Why?
You were my support, my anchor, my best friend.
How could the car we shared countless memories in, be your demise?
How could someone, beloved by so many, be taken in an instant?
I had just seen you three days before.
“I love you, drive safe”
Were the last words I spoke to you.

Now what?

You will never meet my husband, or my children
You won’t be right behind me as I say my vows

You aren’t here to cheer me up, like you always did
You aren’t here to share a cranberry and vodka, when I’ve had rough week.
You aren’t just a phone call away,
You were the one who would help me through this
And now…

When I talk to you,
you don’t talk back.

I miss you more than you will ever know
I will never forget your bright smile
I was so blessed to have you in my life
I am so thankful to have known you.
I know you are my guardian angel, watching over me
I love you Morg, more than you could ever imagine

Thank you for these precious memories
**In Memory of Nick Kapusniak**

By: Daniel Hemann

You were light of heart as a feather,  
Carefree as a breeze in summer.  
We spent the summer of ’12 together,  
Although physics was more of bummer.

We weren’t the closest of friends,  
But we always greeted each other.  
Now our whole class has to mend,  
Because we have all lost a brother.

We don’t understand, Nick,  
Why God made this pick.  
But no matter what the case,  
The class of ‘17 knows you’re in a better place.

**Gone too soon**

By: Daniel McGraw

He is gone too soon  
We just became oh so close  
Life is never fair
Giving Back

By: Samiha Badwan

Charlotte was excited for her birthday that was coming up in a couple of days. She was going to turn 8 years old. She knew that she wanted a new pink bike, a princess dress, and a sparkly necklace for her birthday. She went to school and bragged to all of her friends about the awesome presents she was planning on getting for her birthday.

One girl, Amelia, frowned when she heard Charlotte. “That’s not fair. I never birthday presents for my birthday. Mommy and Daddy said they can’t buy me presents.” Charlotte was confused. How could someone not get presents for their birthday?

That afternoon, Charlotte went to the bakery with her mom to pick out a birthday cake. She was quiet the whole time, when her mom asked “What’s the matter Charlotte?” “Mommy, a girl at school got really sad when I told her about my birthday presents. She said that she never gets presents.” Charlotte’s mom bent down and said, “Sweetheart, some parents can’t afford to buy their children a present for every occasion. That’s why you are very blessed to receive presents for your birthday.”

Charlotte thought about what her mom said to her. She always thought that everyone got lots of new presents on their birthday. Charlotte decided that she wanted to give Amelia a present since she has never had one for her own birthday.

The next day, Charlotte’s friends were waiting for her at the bus stop to ask her about her birthday. “So did you pick out a cake yet?” Amelia asked with big eyes. Charlotte smiled and said “Oh yeah!” Lunchtime came quickly and Charlotte was eager because that was the time that her mom said she would bring in the surprise.

Right on the dot, Charlotte’s mom came to the classroom with a big birthday cake. Oohs and Ahs filled the classroom, as everyone was excited for the treat. “Charlotte, how come you didn’t tell us you were bringing your cake to school?” Joey asked her. “That’s because I’m having my cake at home. This isn’t my cake.” Everyone looked confused when Charlotte carefully walked the cake over to Amelia’s desk. “It’s for Amelia since she’s never had a real birthday party before.”

Amelia’s big blue eyes lit up and she said, “REALLY? A birthday cake for me? It’s not even my birthday though. It’s your birthday, Charlotte.” Charlotte gave Amelia a big hug and said, “Really! Yesterday I decided that I didn’t want those other presents for my birthday. I decided that I wanted to give someone else a present this time.” Charlotte’s entire class cheered because they were so happy about how kind she was to their other classmate. From then on, Charlotte always remembered how fortunate she was as well as how great she felt about helping those who are less fortunate.
Pharmacy

By: Samiha Badwan

Tons of patients fill the waiting room
I count them one by one
And hear nurses call out their names
As the room empties out, I look out of the window and observe
I’m fascinated by the sky
The clouds are gloomy and the stars are hidden
What will happen?
Will there be a storm?
Some snow?
I wonder about the forecast when they call my name
Doctor says I still have a long way to go
The comet I thought I’d see will no longer show
He gives me another prescription
To the pharmacy we go, and the clouds are still gray
A mortar and pestle sit on the counter hand in hand
I stare some more before I get my compound of pills
I look up at the sky and realize the sun will come out soon

A mashed Potatoe

By: Eric Suh

I can't move, I’ve been stored away in a sack covered in dirt.
Since taken from my home I’ve always been alert.
Others are with me, some have already been taken.
Nobody’s going to help us, our lives are forsaken.
There is a bubbling we hear far into the background.
There's a screaming soon after that will always resound.
No! It's the light! It's someone's next turn,
Me? No! Why me! There will be no return!
This water is like lava, my insides are cooking.
Two eyes are peering down and at me, they are looking.
I'm done, my skin is peeling to the touch.
I’m naked and exposed, this feeling is too much.
A large fist came down, it beat, it bashed.
My life has new purpose, just a potato now mashed.
Moments in Life
By: Susan Bao

It was a beautiful morning in Sunshine, California. Today, Stephy woke up extra early at 7:00 am to wash up and wait downstairs. Today was no ordinary day. Today was Christmas! Stephy had longed for Christmas for so long and now it was finally Christmas! Stephy waited until 9:00 am when her parents woke up so they could all open presents together and then eat breakfast. Finally, at 9:00 am sharp, Stephy’s parents woke up and came downstairs.

“It’s time to open presents!” Stephy’s mom said.

Excited, Stephy went straight for the big red box that had her name on it and began carefully unwrapping the wrapping paper, making sure to not tear the paper so that she could reuse it next Christmas to wrap more presents. After she carefully took off all the wrapping paper, she opened the box to find exactly the present she had been waiting for. Inside the box was a Nikon Digital SLR camera, the best camera on the market today and the one that Stephy had begged her parents for. Stephy was ecstatic. She was so ready to learn how to use her new camera and take awesome photos.

Two weeks later, Stephy had mastered how to use the Nikon Digital SLR camera. The pictures that Stephy took were of professional quality, with superb artistic finishes. Stephy was born with a special gift. Her gift was the ability to capture photographs of ordinary things and make them look very artistic. But Stephy had other things planned for her new Digital SLR camera. Stephy wanted to use this amazing camera to capture every moment in life so that she would always have the memories on camera. With this goal in mind, Stephy began taking the camera with her wherever she went. When she went to school, she brought the camera. When she went to the mall, she brought her camera. When she went to the movies, she brought her camera. The Nikon Digital SLR never left her side. Every day, Stephy took pictures of her and her friends doing even the most mundane of tasks such as studying.

“Oh my goodness, will you put down that camera?” Stewie asked.

Stewie, a girl, was Stephy’s best friend and they had known each other since high school. Stewie was already getting really annoyed of Stephy’s constant picture-taking.

“Why?” Stephy asked. “I want to capture every moment on camera so we can look back and reminisce in the memories when we get older! I don’t want to miss a single moment!” Stephy said.

Annoyed, Stewie went back to her studying while Stephy continued taking pictures. Suddenly, Stephy’s crush walked past Stephy, and she instantly recognized it was him from the back of his body. It was Aardvark, one of the brightest students in school and the one that Stephy has admired for the longest time. No one knows why his parents named him Aardvark, but luckily people at college are nice and they do not make fun of his name. Aardvark went towards Stewie and Stephy’s other friend, Moofasa. Aardvark was RSVPing to a party that Moofasa was hosting tomorrow at his apartment.
At the party the next day, Stephy only drank sparkling water while everyone else drank other mixed drinks because she wanted to capture every moment on her camera. She also did not want to risk getting the mixed drink on her expensive Nikon Digital SLR. Stephy took pictures of people dancing, people eating, people drinking, people playing games, and even people sleeping. As Stephy looked through her camera, getting ready to take a photo of Stewie sitting on the couch, she saw Aardvark walk into her field of vision and sit down next to Stewie. Through the lenses, Stephy watched as Aardvark gave Stewie a peck on the cheek and asked her out.

CLICK! Stephy took the picture of that exact moment, the moment when Aardvark kissed and asked out her best friend Stewie. This picture will forever be burned onto film and the memories of this exact moment will never go away. Aardvark asked out Stewie because he got a chance to talk to her and get to know her. Since Stephy was always holding a camera, busy taking down the moment, Aardvark never got a chance to approach Stephy, even though she was way more beautiful than Stewie. Because Stephy was too busy “capturing the moments,” she never lived in the moment. She was a bystander, watching from afar. Ever since that day, the day when Aardvark asked out Stewie, Stephy stopped trying to capture the moment and began living in the moment. She finally realized that it is more important to live the moments than to capture the moments because by living it, she will always have the mental image of it in her memories.

Moral of the story: LIVE EVERY MOMENT AND STOP WASTING TIME TAKING PICTURES!!!!!!

Summer

By: Alicia Crim

The glistening water
The swimming fish
The smell of the mossy lake coming out and in from the bank
All a part of a day at the lake
Jet skis, boats, and tubing,
The country kinda party.
The best season to me,
The reason I love summer.
Training
By: Kourtni Blomker

Despite the odds, we have somehow managed to make it to the last day… the last hour even. That doesn’t necessarily mean we’ll make it to the end. We are all exhausted, and a handful of groups were able to make it this far only to fail in the end. I try not to dwell on it too much; it’s paramount that we stay focused now more than ever.

Today’s arena is a dense forest. We’ve already fought off bears, snakes, and another small army of around 5 soldiers. We know there could be another handful of obstacles in this final hour. Just as I think this, I hear a low growl. We all immediately jump into a formation that allows everyone’s back to be covered; all of our heads whip around trying to find the source of the sound.

“Mountain Lions!” I hear John yell. Isabell is able to immediately take one of them down with her bow, and then moves near the center of our formation, trying to save arrows for later adversaries. There are now 2 left, and they’re pissed. Byron and Kyle lunge forward on opposite sides of the second beast, each striking a blow with their weapons (an axe and knife) and then backing up while the other takes his turn. After a few minutes I can see them begin to tire out; their blows come slower and do less damage. I and another member take their places, as they head to the center of the circle to rest. It goes on like this with several other members, but the strategy is eventually successful. Tammy, Lee, and John execute their trap for the other mountain lion as Byron and Kyle start their fight. They’re clever, and their trap takes down the third lion before the second goes down.

I wish I wasn’t here, but I really had no choice. I had been convicted of money laundering and several other white collar crimes. The government gave me a choice: 5 years of my life in the military or spend the next 50 years in prison. Sounds like an easy choice in theory, but if I chose army, I would have to get through army training just like any other volunteer. 100 hundred years ago that wouldn’t have been a big deal, but the training now was different. The army had decided that being able to work as a team was of the utmost importance. So important in fact that it threw 24 volunteers together, let them train and get to know one another for a week, and then the arena for 5 days. The arena was brutal; the scenery changed daily. We’d had a tropical beach, a dessert, a snowy mountain top, and a swampy marsh before today. The catch was we HAD to keep one another alive at all cost. If even one member died before the 5 days were up, we would all be killed.

I still don’t know why anyone volunteers for this. Sure the pay is better than any other job out there, but I’m always surprised that people are that desperate. I guess I can count myself lucky; my crimes weren’t too horrid. Many groups are comprised of 24 prisoners given the same sort of deal I was, army time and then freedom instead of jail time. But they only put all prisoners together when their crimes are horrible (homicidal maniacs, rapists, even some serial killers). Very few of these groups
manage to make it through training…but some do. Being with volunteers is definitely better; you get people from all types of occupations which really expands your strategies.

I think back to training. One week of learning about weapons and formations, watching tapes of previous groups in order to learn from their strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, getting to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Byron was our strongest; it’s why we’d given him the axe. When properly motivated he could kill almost anything with one blow. Kyle was nimble and fast, his power coming more from wearing down his opponents. Lee and Tammy were in the medical field; they weren’t as good with weapons, but they could set a mean trap and gave great advice that had definitely saved our lives on numerous occasions.

I feel the saddest for Isabel. There’s such a rush of volunteers; it can sometimes take months to find out if you were chosen. But once you’ve volunteered, you’re committed to training no matter how your circumstances may change. Even pregnancy. It’s why we’d given her the bow, our only long range weapon (lucky for us we’d had no archers and she knew how to use it pretty well, and had only improved over our time together.)

Lucky for her, for all of us really, we’re in the last few minutes. We’re all beginning to sigh with relief, and unfortunately let our guard down thinking ourselves safe. Out of the dark one last mountain lion pounces on Tammy. Byron manages to kill the beast in a furious rage with one strike of his ax. She’s losing a lot of blood. Lee tries to compress the wound. If we can just make it another minute, we get all the medical attention we need, and we’ll all be allowed to live. We just need her to hold on 45 seconds.

Myself

By: Saba Aziz

It wasn’t too long ago
That I went on a mission.
Hoping to grow,
And in my life, find a position.

I went to libraries
And looked through shelf after shelf.
I learned all about the seven seas,
But nothing about myself.
In hopes of an answer, I went online
Because I was told you could find everything there.
So I pulled apart networks deeply intertwined,
But, about my life, I found nothing to compare.

So, I went back home, disheartened, of course.
But then, realizing something, I stopped to think,
What it was that gave me life and force.
It was prayer that was the missing link.

“A Diamond in the Rough”

By: Ellie Breaux

It’s the summer of 2013, the day of my half birthday before my eleventh year. It is a blistering hot day to be exploring near the stream that runs through Millbrook Park. I like coming to this place because I can go exploring, pretending I am on an adventure uncovering fossils of dinosaurs or remains of ancient peoples. Also, there are not many people in this area of the park to bother me. Not that I don’t like people, I just don’t like being treated like a child. When I left the house this morning, I barely had my shoes on and was slipping out the door when my mother yelled from the kitchen, “MILLIE, please brush your hair dear, you look like you don’t have a family.” I glance at my reflection in the stream and see my tangled ashy blonde hair brushing my shoulders. It doesn’t seem to bother anybody when I’m out here exploring, and it sure doesn’t bother me. The water of the stream is icy around my ankles while I gather unique stones from the bed of the stream. The water is splashing up against my rolled up jeans but it doesn’t bother me. I sort through the stones that I am pulling from the water, rolling them around in my hands to examine each one. I toss a few to the bank to add to my collection, but one shatters as it hits the others. Wading to the bank to gather the pieces, I notice I have not just found an ordinary unique rock here in Millbrook Park. I have found a geode. This rock has exploded to reveal an inside covered in bright crystal. My heart swells with pride and excitement at what I have discovered. “A diamond in the rough,” I think to myself.

Later in the afternoon, the sun has risen directly overhead and I decide to take a break from digging around in the stream. I’m walking along the elaborate Millbrook stream bridge, dragging a stick along the fence posts, listening to the beat it makes as I walk. I pause to notice a man walking toward me in an odd way. He seems to be bent over, and from a distance I imagine he’s been in a sword fight, and
this man has walked away wounded but nonetheless the victor. As he approaches the bridge, I am now standing on the crest of, he is not so much bent over, but he is just stooped and staggering my way. It seems to me he is homeless, seeing that he hasn’t had a haircut in who knows how long, and he had a beard that would put Si Robertson to shame. He seems peculiar and I think of turning around to avoid him on the bridge. Instead, I lean over the bridge and concentrate on trying to nail fish with some pebbles from my pockets. From my peripheral vision the man seems to have only made it one fourth the way up the bridge. I turn back from the fish and just stand there watching this man. Step, shuffle, step, shuffle, step, shuffle. It begins to infuriate me the way he is ever so slowly, not making any progress across the bridge.

For the next five minutes I stand, leaning up against the bridge, as this man slowly shuffles on. I hear a soft voice coming from his direction as well. It seems to be singing some unintelligible song I cannot understand. I look around for who the voice is coming from, but no one else is within a reasonable distance besides this man. This man, he is the one singing. I listen to the softly sung words, trying to decipher the song, but I cannot.

“Mister,” I say. He stops and attempts to straighten as he recognizes me standing there. “What is your name?”

“Lou,” he says so softly I find myself straining away from the side of the bridge to hear.

“Lou, what are you singing?” He never really focuses on me, but he answers my question like it is obvious.

“A song.” he continues to shuffle along. The way he said “A song,” with a slight speech impediment, reminds me of a student I know at school who has a learning disability. I look the man over again, between his scraggly hair, to his walk, to his speech, and conclude that this man is not scary, or homeless, but instead has some sort of mental disability.

“Well my name is Millie, and I’m exploring.” The man stops again and smiles so bright he looks like a child. He begins speaking passionately in a broken but soft voice about an unintelligible adventure he is on as well. I squint at him through the sunlight coming through the trees, into clear blue eyes like they were made out of the Millbrook stream itself. They are honest eyes, eyes that see beauty in everything.

“Would you like to see what I found in the stream today?”

“Yes, yes,” Lou says clapping his hands. I pull out the exploded geode, holding it up to the sunlight for him to see. As if he has been given a gift, Lou is beside himself with happiness. He takes the geode from my hand and holds it alternately close to his heart, and then up to the sun, marveling at the display of sparkle coming from its epicenter. The childlike way he is taken with this geode is unlike anything I have seen coming from a person of his size. He is similar to this geode in many ways I think. A
little scraggly on the outside, but on the inside he is beautiful, exploding with joy and appreciation for life.

And then he says, “A diamond in the rough.”

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**Brothers**  
*By: Varun Chakravarthy*

*A picture can only show half of the story  
The memories make up the other half*

*A brotherly love can never be compromised  
Not 300 miles and a 4 and a half hour drive*

*What is a brother’s place in a family?  
To a younger brother,*

*He may be a guide  
He may help travel the complicated path of growing up.*  
*He may conduct  
He may be the connection between you and your parents*

*A picture can only show half of the story  
The memories make up the other half*

*Glasses, wet hair, old clothes, a collared full sleeve  
By the way, that’s actually his*

*Still an arm around the shoulder  
And a smile on his face*

*To show the connection  
To show the friendship  
To show the compassion  
To show the love*

*A picture can only show half of the story  
The memories make up the other half*
Camping alone
By Nathan Dodd

“There goes my flashlight,” I said to myself. I had been out here for almost 6 hours. I was stranded alone in the woods. At this point, I would rather be anywhere than here, even if it meant going back home. The sun set nearly fifteen minutes ago and I have no way of finding my campsite. “Great, no service on my phone out here either.” I was in a panic. I regretted more than anything arguing with my parents. Was I really that upset that I had to run away to the woods alone? They don’t even know where I’m at. I just want to go back.

Another hour has passed and there is still no sign of camp. “What was that!?” I heard something in the bushes. “Calm down. Calm down. You’re in the woods; it’s just a rabbit or a squirrel. Look at me. Seven hours alone in the woods and I’m already talking to myself.” I was starving at this point. I hadn’t eaten anything since the breakfast I had at McDonald’s earlier. All of my food was back in my tent at the camp. I continued on my way and heard a noise similar to the one I just heard. I once again dismissed all irrational ideas from my mind and continued along the path I had found to try to find my camp.

After walking along the same path for what seemed to last hours I heard the sound again. At this moment I felt like I was being followed, like my scent was being traced. I realized that the sound was too loud to be something small like a rabbit. I began picturing all these possibilities of what could be following me. Was it a bear or maybe a killer? What if I was stuck alone in the woods with a killer? I began to sweat. I was frozen with fear as I heard the sound become closer. There was only one thing I could think to do. Run.

I ran down the clear path for nearly a mile. I saw a red and blue glow back behind a few trees so I went to check it out. As I approached, I was amazed to find out that the path led me straight out of the woods. I realized it was a police car. Were my parents really that worried that they actually called a search for me? The driver’s side door was open and the back windshield was shattered. I walked up to the car and looked in. I felt the vomit begin to rise up inside of me. What I saw in the passenger seat was terrible. A policeman sat there, covered in blood, dead. A pair of loose handcuffs sat alone in the backseat. I was not alone.
My Summer Break
By: Susan Bao

The sun is shining bright
The skies are glistening blue
But nothing makes me happier
Than knowing I get to see you

Summer school is a chore
But you make it all better
I wish I could tell you how I feel
Written nicely in a letter

You’re the one that makes me laugh
You’re the one that makes me smile
Even with your disgusting habits
I seem to like that style

You visit me late in the night
Needing my help with school
I always enjoyed those visits
Just like a love-struck fool

For two years I’ve liked you
Which sometimes makes me sick
You are just the perfect guy
And we really seem to click

Summer school comes to an end
The new semester is about to start
I want to tell you how I feel
That you have stolen my heart

During my crisis I hear word
That a close friend is also in love
With the man of my dreams
These feelings I have never heard of

She hid these feelings from me
I felt like such a clown
To think I shared all my feelings
I can’t do anything but frown

So I withdraw from the triangle
To make things less crappy
Who am I to be the one
To make three people unhappy

Do not think of me as the bigger person
Because I most definitely am not
Rather, I am quite selfish to withdraw
To keep my heart from being shot

It is time to move on
I keep telling myself this
Hopefully I will be able to
And finally live in bliss
Snow Day? No Way!

By: Bre Dunsworth

Being stuck in St. Louis during a winter storm is never fun, especially when your parents are enjoying themselves on the beaches of Mexico. My sister, Alyssa, had decided to have a friend spend the night since inches of snow accumulation was expected and school was sure to be called off. The three of us woke up extra early to watch the news just to make sure we could go back to bed and sleep in. As we scanned the screen, Parkway was not on the list, which meant we had to go to school. We trudged back up to our rooms to get ready for the sloshy mess outside. The plows had not even made it up our huge hill yet, leaving the road covered in a thick blanket of snow. Parkway officials were so dumb; this was not safe for us to travel in.

Walking outside, we had three options of vehicles. The Lincoln LS that I normally drive is rear wheel drive, aka really bad in wet, messy weather. My dad’s Pathfinder seemed like the better choice over my mom’s Eclipse convertible, so we climbed in. Now, my house is at a top of a large hill and we were faced with two options: going straight down the steeper hill or go up a little hill that took us to a less steep track down. We thought going down the less steep hill sounded better. There would be a smaller chance of losing control and slamming into a parked vehicle. We backed out of the driveway and headed up around the hill. However, once we pulled out and I put it into drive, the wheels started to spin. I kept trying to give it gas or move the steering wheels, but nothing worked.

We were stuck in the middle of the road. I told the girls to go get shovels and try to shovel snow out from under the wheels. As they went into the garage, I noticed in the review mirror a large yellow object coming towards me. A bus. Of course a bus would come up a hill as I am stuck in the middle of the road. Great, I thought, just great. The girls stared at me wondering what I was going to do. I tried the gas again, unsuccessfully. Putting the car into reverse, I tried my best to move to the curb so the bus could make it around me. I parked the car and got out. I grabbed the keys to the convertible and decided since it is smaller, it would have a better chance if getting over the little hill and making it down. Wrong, again. I ended up stuck in the street and almost hit the Pathfinder. I had the girls try to dig at the snow while I tried the gas over and over, but no success again. I tried reverse to back it to the curb and to avoid the other cars. Luckily, I made it.

We all stared at each other. We now had every car in the street and the bus had already gone by. Why did my parents have to be gone on this crazy morning?? School was too far away to walk and our
parents were out of the country and therefore unable to call the school for us. We sat for a couple minutes, clueless what to do. Suddenly, I had an epiphany. I could go down the steep hill in reverse. Duh!!! I hopped in the Pathfinder since it was behind the Eclipse. I threw it into reverse and slowly crept down the hill. I backed into a neighbor’s driveway and turned to go down the hill forwards. I yelled back to the girls to get in. As we took off, we all laughed wondering why we hadn’t thought of this to begin with. As we reached the bottom of the hill and made it out of the subdivision, the roads were all cleared and plow trucks were abundant. They just had to ignore our hill so we could get stuck. We eventually made it to school where everyone was already in class. I guess we were the only ones getting stuck in the snow and coming late.

**Desire**

By: Helen Jang

I swoon from desire of words from your lips.
It feeds my fire,
Which smoldered on the day that we met.
It flames anew,
To fly into my heart,
And like the sunset's silent roar,
It thunders ever nearer,
The vision so much clearer,
Than it was right from the start.
I tremble in the presence of your love
It was always more than enough.

**Words**

By: Helen Jang

Powerful
When used in a certain way
You believe them
Even when they speak of lies
You believe them
As long as they are fair to the ears
You believe them
Even when they destroy others
You believe them
You act according to them
You believe them
The truth you know isn’t true
You believe them
They become your reality
Words are terrifying.
Statuesque

By: Tia Joseph

Finally school was over, which meant it was time for the trip my three friends and I had been waiting to go on for so long. We boarded the plane to Europe and were incredibly excited to backpack through multiple countries. Our first stop was Paris, France, which I was super ecstatic for.

I couldn’t wait to have unlimited crepes, get a taste of the different types of fashion, and most of all go to the Louvre museum. I was highly anticipating the moment I would get to finally see the Mona Lisa as I had learned much about it in my art class at school.

We arrived to the Louvre and walked around there for what seemed to be an eternity, amazed by all of the ancient art we saw. As we were passing through a room with multiple statues, my friend Sarah noticed a statue of a man sitting on a platform. We decided he looked slightly strange as we couldn’t figure out why exactly the artist would’ve possibly positioned him the way in which he was sitting. The texture of the stone looked incredibly soft and slightly different from the other statues. The shade of stone also seemed a little off, and we noticed a lot of creases in the piece, quite impressed by this particular sculptor’s skill, as it must have been hard to make an art piece so realistic.

Though we all knew the basic rule of museums, to never touch the art pieces, my friend seemed drawn to this art piece and held her hand forward slowly and gently touched the piece. Suddenly the piece moved, and we all jumped a little startled. The piece was certainly no piece, and was actually an elderly man who had been sitting there taking a nap resting his head in his hands. He glared up with a look of bewilderment. He was wearing a grey jacket with very distinct features, and his hood had been up over his head. Sarah awkwardly apologized to him as we all attempted to suppress our inevitable giggling. We sped away quickly as it was extremely difficult to stifle our laughter for too long. Needless to say, that was undoubtedly one of the most humorous experiences of the trip.

Summer

By: R. J. Shaw

Summer
Hot, fun
Tanning, swimming, playing
A good break time
Changing, raining, gusting
Rainy, wet
Weather
Mirrors

By: Kayla Gray

Last summer my family and I went for a getaway weekend in Branson, Missouri. It was an interesting time, because my father was in a wheelchair. He had just had surgery to have a pin placed in his foot the previous week. It had been several years since my family and I had been to Branson so we decided to be the typical tourists and check out all of the shows. We went to the Titanic museum, the Dixie Stampede, and other various exhibits over the course of that weekend. Surprisingly enough the best time we had was at the most unusual place.

Our last night in Branson, we decided to go to the wax museum. When we went to buy our tickets, they told us we could buy tickets for the wax museum, putt-putt golf and a maze of mirrors for a pretty good price. There happened to be a long line for the wax museum, so we decided to go into the maze of mirrors first, because it would probably be the least exciting and we wanted to get it out of the way. Boy, were we wrong.

When you enter the maze of mirrors, you soon discover that this place is definitely a dark maze with only mirrors surrounding us. When I looked forward, all I could see was hundreds of myselfs looking back at me. It was very creepy. I had to feel my way around because you never knew if it was a door to the next hallway or just a mirror. We all laughed and giggled as we all felt as if we were never going to get out of there. It did not take too long for us all to get separated throughout the maze, but we could still all hear each other’s voices echoing throughout the giant room.

I had been walking along with my younger brother and my boyfriend, Allen. When suddenly I turned around and I could not see either of them. I remember thinking to myself, ‘Oh funny guys, now please come out.’ With the eerie darkness and the different lights schemes I was becoming frightened. Subconsciously I knew my family was not going to leave me behind, but I kept thinking to myself am I ever going to be able to get out of this place?! As other tourists started to come my way, I was worried I was just going in circles. This is when I started to develop claustrophobia, which under any other circumstances I never had. I started to panic; why had I not just hung onto Allen? I panicky turned to my right, and almost toppled over a little boy who was standing next to what was probably his mother.

I had started to become jumpy wishing I could just get out of this place! What a horrible idea it was to come here! I turned back around and there he was. “Allen! Allen!” I shouted. His back was to me; he turned his head as he was trying to see me too. With his back still to me, I broke out into almost a sprint. I was so frightened and with all the adrenaline I had going I just leaped onto his back. SPLAT! That wasn’t Allen; it was one of those blasted mirrors. I hit the mirror so hard, I have no idea how it did not shatter. Allen was actually standing just to the right where I had landed on the ground. Allen and my
brother were laughing so hard, but I was not laughing. I was in some kind of shock and pain all at the same time.

I could not believe I had just done that; finally my heart lifted and I burst into so much laughter that it brought tears. I was rolling around on the ground so hard that I thought I was going to wet myself.

Allen helped me up; we walked around one corner of mirrors and there was sunlight. We had finally gotten out of that place, and my mom and sister were waiting at the end for us.

We all laughed about what happened, because my mom and sister could hear what happened inside the room also. It was one of the highlights we had on our vacation, and we went back to that maze of mirrors three more times on our vacation.

Men’s Folly

By: Muhidin Grosonja and Eun Soo Park

What a beautiful day
Gentle breeze over the bay
Birds nested—here to stay
And I am here texting it away

Those dreams

By: Puja P. Patel

Beneath my eyelids,
Inside my head,
Among my thoughts,
Around my mind,
Concerning the world
Around me,
Within my brain,
Through every second,
Beyond the things I understand,
With reality
It is mixed,
Until I wake up
And the truth dawns
Upon me.
When One Door Closes

By: Kourtni Blomker, Jessica Woolsey, Alexandra Morgan and Melissa Stutz

Margo wondered what she would find when she opened the door this time. She didn’t know why, but for the past month any time she opened a door she would be greeted by the view of another world entirely. She had yet to muster up the courage to actually enter these other worlds, but their random appearance had certainly made life considerably more difficult. She had to leave her bedroom door open even when she wanted privacy, occasionally had to leave places via the windows, and at school always had to wait on someone else to open a door first. It was certainly annoying, but Margo also loved the mystery of it all. She took a deep breath and opened the door to what was supposed to be a towel closet, but instead she looked out on a tropical paradise. All the colors were more saturated than most natural things on Earth: there was a serene blue-green body of water that looked like it would be the perfect temperature. There were 3 suns in the sky, all at different levels and she briefly wondered how long the nights were here. A rainbow arched perfectly over the water. She saw various colorful birds and equally colorful fuzzy animals scurry about in the trees that looked like a mix between palm trees and Christmas trees. Everything about the world was so warm and inviting that Margo instinctively stepped into the strange land, and without thinking closed the door behind her.

Margo turned around; the door she had entered through was gone, but she was not scared. She did not think of how she would get home, or if her parents would worry about her, she was at peace in this strange and beautiful world. She walked across the beach of bright orange sand, and as it surrounded her toes, she felt as if she were walking on a cloud. She approached the blue-green water and a gentle wave slowly came towards her and embraced her feet. The water was warm, and as it touched her, she felt more comfortable than she ever had before. As she continued to walk down the beach, she saw a man approaching her. The setting sun made his tan skin glisten; he had dark brown, wavy locks, and his sweet smile was very inviting to Margo. This mysterious man intrigued Margo, and she skipped toward him. He stopped in front of her and offered his hand in friendship. In a deep, calm voice, he introduced himself as David, and welcomed her to his island. Margo thanked him and told him her name. David explained that once the last sun set, the island becomes very dangerous, and asked Margo if she had a place to stay. She shook her head, and without another word, David grabbed her by the arm and began walking down the beach. Margo did not ask him any questions, she did not fight him, she simply followed him down the beach. She wasn’t sure if it was his light blue eyes, or his perfect smile, but Margo trusted him, and so she went. After a few minutes of walking Margo could see a small yellow house in the distance. The wall facing the beach consisted entirely of windows, with a single glass door that led onto a large grey deck. David explained this was his house, and that he had an extra room Margo could stay in. They walked in
the glass door and a rush of cold air hit Margo’s face. The old house was very well preserved; all the furniture was dark cherry wood, and in the center of the room was a large stone fireplace that stretched all the way to the ceiling. Just then, she heard David call her from another room. When she walked toward his voice, she saw him in the kitchen.

He asked her what she liked to eat. She didn’t know quite what to respond. She told him it didn’t matter, she liked everything. David pulled out of the glistening fridge a food that looked very different from anything at home. She assumed it was a type of fruit, but she couldn’t identify it with anything she had seen before. It was shaped like a pear, but was bright fuchsia with speckles of purple sprinkled on the outside. He handed it to her. She held it in her hand and rolled it between her palms. She wasn’t sure how she was supposed to eat it. David could see the confusion on her face and gave her a little smirk. He showed Margo how to properly peel the fruit, leaving the bottom most layers. Under the fuchsia covering, the fruit was a baby tropical blue. He slowly pulled off a strip and held it out to Margo, ushering it into her mouth. She held it up and plopped it in. At first, she let it sit between her teeth. Once Margo’s tongue tasted the flavor, her eyes got brighter. This was the best fruit she had ever tasted. Much better than any fruit at home. It had a rich and sweet taste that Margo couldn’t explain in any English words. She quickly devoured the fruit and David gave a sort of chuckle. After eating, they went into the common area. David pulled out a funny looking metal thing and began playing beautiful music.

Busy laughing and dancing with David, Margo didn’t realize that the last sun was about to cross the horizon. Howls began to drown out the music. Outside the window, Margo saw giant, hairy creatures with sharp teeth roaming the beach, enormous, scaly lizards crawling out of the sea, and dark, monstrous birds circling in the sky. She was glad David had warned her of the danger and brought her inside to safety. David told her that the land used to be dangerous for mankind. The creatures and man had been at war, but the elders had made agreement; while the suns are over the sky, the creatures stay hidden and cause no harm but at the last sunset they wake from their slumber to rule over the land. David told Margo that since the creatures were out, it was their time to sleep. David showed Margo to her room and told her to get her rest.

As soon as Margo woke up, she ran outside to explore. She rolled up her pants to wade into the water. Glowing seaweed of all colors wrapped around her feet. Under the plants, shells of gold, opal, and crystal sparked in the sun. She scooped up a handful and headed across the beach to show David her glorious find. Margo ran up the stairs to the house and burst through the door. Landing on a bed, Margo realized that she had just entered her own room. She quickly turned around to the closet door though which she came, grasped the door knob, and pushed open the door hoping to go back to the magical land. Instead of beaches and jungle, Margo was met with a dusty winding road leading to a town at the apex of
a volcano tucked in a blanket of stars. She quickly put her shells up on her book shelf and stepped onto the road ready for her next adventure.

Change

CJ Harkrader

The time has now come
As the leaves begin to fall
Dark and cold await

A Second Chance

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

Oh dear. I could not be in any more of a pickle. All I could remember about the outdoors was the blue light of day. I can still hear the birds singing and chirping. I thought about how I was going to be kept away from the beautiful sun for a very long time. Each day that I am stuck here in this hellish institution, I reflect on my life. Was I ever crazy? I could not be because I did everything right and I did not provoke anyone. They locked me in for no reason. Oh, if I could have them at my fingers right now, they would see real crazy. The wrath of Dr. Auschwitz will be the first treatment they would receive.

I remember again the feeling of control. I could not recall a happier time then I was when I was at my workbench with the newest patient. She was a fine young woman, had to have been someone’s beautiful daughter. I chuckled and thanked the parents for such a fine specimen. Fools come in just like her and expect a checkup while I hold the cards. This patient especially was a thrill to work with. Once I sedated her, her muscles grew weak. One of her arms fell daintily from her side and looked to the floor. I watched it for a moment. It was arm to cherish. The features in the hand were breathtaking. Not a trace of imperfection from the tip of her rouge nails to the smooth elbow above. I caressed it with my hands and eventually lifted her arm and placed her hand on top of the other. I like to act as though they were being prepared for a coffin. The corpses always seem more beautiful from death. That’s what I was going to do with this woman. Send her straight to heaven. The world would have been so cruel to her. I began to mark my specimen to create a proper cadaver.
I inserted an IV into her. There was nothing fetching at the nearby store other than rat poisoning. I diluted some the material and administered it to the patient. Her body slowly gave in after a few minutes. At that time, I polished my materials and went upstairs. I welcomed the new secretary. Jill was her name, I believe. I needed at least one every week. They were prone to be nosey. If what I did was to be kept secret and I was to continue on with my rituals and urges, then a new secretary was one of the bare necessities for me. After running over the basic rules with whatever her name was; something with a J, her name is not relevant after all because she will be gone within a week’s time. There was one rule that I stressed to her more than any of the others, do not EVER come into my office. That was the reason for my needing of so many secretaries; most of them let their curiosity get the better of them and that shot them up to the top of my list for new patients.

As I returned to my work, confident that the poison had time to run its course, I got that giddy feeling in my stomach that I have come to love and let drive me to continue with what I do. I can imagine that this is the feeling that Dexter Morgan gets every time that he is about to carry out his beautiful ritual. He is my role model and I owe what I am to him, not his father though because I don’t have a “code” to work by. I know he is not a real person, but the idea of him and his dark passenger is completely plausible to someone like me. Is that the reason I am what I am? The answer to that question has never presented itself to me; probably because I haven’t gone searching for it, or just simply that I don’t want to know the answer. Not knowing is the best way for my work to mean something to me.

I snapped back into reality after my quick digression into thought; it was now time to add this girl to my collection. She would be my center piece seeing as she was the most beautiful I had ever worked on. From the back door of my office I slipped her into the trunk of my Ford Escort and drove to my house.

We arrived and I opened the shed and pulled the car in, certainly no one would see that way. I gently caressed her body as I lifted her out, but I was interrupted by vibrations. I removed her phone from her pocket; it read “INCOMING CALL: MOM.” I let it go to voicemail. They’d never figure out where she was, no need to worry. When the cops came in two or three days, I would just tell them she left my office like a normal patient. I would have no idea where she was. Normally, I didn’t risk patients with families who would get involved, but she was so pretty I couldn’t resist. Plus, as long as I kept it subtle, no one would find out.

I went back to my work of laying her down on her bench in the back of my garage among the other 4 bodies. Just then I heard cars pull up on the gravel outside. There was a knock and a shout, “Police, open up.”

I began to panic. How could they find me so fast? Then I realized it as I looked down at her cell phone in my hand; they hadn’t found me, they had found her. I dropped the phone and ran out the back of
the building. I had a chance since they didn’t even know it was me. Then something like a truck hit me from the side, and I was on the ground. It was a cop who quickly handcuffed me.

As I came out of reminiscing about the day that I got caught, I concluded that I really wasn’t crazy. It wasn’t my fault that I got caught. It was that girl’s. She’s the one who messed up her perfect existence by letting her phone track us. Now she was buried and I was in the penitentiary. I hated her.

I decided right then and there that I would never again be fooled by a pretty face. That was the weakness of man in the end, wasn’t it? Wasn’t it Eve who was seduced by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and who tempted Adam to eat the forbidden fruit and damn the race of mankind from God’s love? Women were the weak link in the human race; a viper behind a painted mask. Right then, I pledged myself to rid the world of their wickedness forever. As I sat stewing in my padded cell in the penitentiary, the door creaked open. My head snapped up, for no one ever came into my cell. In stepped a woman in a business suit and slacks, perfectly tailored to her trim, athletic body. Her long blonde hair was tied back into an efficient ponytail, but I could barely take in her face without remembering the woman who put me here in the first place. She had full red lips, thin pointed nose, and emerald eyes that seemed to scorch my very soul with their passion and seduction. As she stepped closer, I cringed away and scuttled to the edge of my cell, wedging myself in the corner to hide her beauty from my face. She hesitated, but slowly strode toward me and knelt down to my eye level.

“Don’t be afraid of me, Dr. Auschwitz,” said a voice like the song of a bird. “I won’t hurt you. I’m your new counselor, Jillian. I’m here to help you and talk through some of what’s been hurting you in the past.”

I finally turned my gaze to her, my face radiating the heat of hatred. “What makes you think that you could ever decipher what is going on in my twisted head? You have no idea the situation you are placing yourself in, my dear.”

Her body was just inches from mine, her sweet, floral perfume enveloping me like a cloud of toxin. Every inch of her face was set in a mask of kindness, but even then I could see the disgust and fear she had of me.

“Because, Dr. Auschwitz, I know how lonely it can be with no one to talk to who doesn’t feel the same that you do. If you just open yourself up to me, then we can work toward getting you healthy again.”

Staring into that beautiful face, I knew that she was the epitome of all the disgusting characteristics of women: proud, beautiful, confident, charming, and seductive. And suddenly, an epiphany came to me, and I smiled at the thought of it.

“Well, see now Dr. Auschwitz, I knew that I could get you to talk to me! Why don’t we sit in the counseling room and you can tell me a little bit more about yourself?”
As Jillian led the way, her heels clacking like some foul machine, I was escorted out by two hulking brutes of nurses toward a small meeting room. As we entered the room, Jillian asked if we could be left alone in the room, so I could “open up more to her.” Dumbly, the nurses agreed, and finally, I was alone with my prey. *Oh, my dear,* I thought slyly with a smile, turning to face her sitting form, *if you only knew the real reason for my smile. For I never wish to tell you about my past or present, but to make you an example of how my hatred for women will never cease.*

As the door closed so gently as the two nurses had left, I decided to lay on the nice, puffy couch they had placed at the far end of the room, and Jillian chose to sit right in front of me on the smaller couch. What a beautiful decision. She gave me a radiating, poisonous smile. Her eyes were gleaming from the sunlight projecting into the room from the window. Her hair shimmered, her face glowing. The words coming out of her precious, red lips were nothing more than the sound of Heaven and my calling to do what is right.

“Dr. Auschwitz, are you listening to what I’m saying? I have asked you already two questions, but you seem to be ignoring them,” she informed me.

“My dear, I apologize. Would you do me the smallest favor? I cannot pay attention because the sunlight is hitting my face. Would you mind closing the curtains please, so I can focus more?”

She plopped herself off of the couch, slowly moved towards the window, her heels clacking with the smallest of sound. The window was extremely large, and the curtains to match were perfectly long enough, yet very thin. As she placed her right hand on the curtain to pull to the other side, I grabbed her waist with my left hand, tugged on the curtain with my right hand, and pushed her against the window with my body. She was scared; trying to scream yet couldn’t. Her body was stuck against the window, so very close to mine. Squirming in every direction, she finally quit. I tugged on the curtain I had grabbed with my right hand and wrapped it around her beautiful, skinny neck. Stronger and stronger, I continued to pull on the curtain. She was losing all of her power. With nothing to do but surrender, her body became so gentle, her arms flopping to the sides.

It was a beautiful moment. She was my prey, her soul lost in the world. I lay Jillian on the couch I had been on, kissed her cold, blue forehead, and wanted to complete the job. But, weirdly, I felt as if the window was screaming for my attention: *USE ME AND LEAVE. ESCAPE. GO FAR. NEVER COME BACK.*

And that’s exactly what I did. Unlocking the locks and pulling the window doors to open, I saw I was only one floor from the ground. Without any fear, I jumped. I ran and ran, far where no one will ever reach me. At that moment, I remembered the feeling of control again.
**Patient**

By: Youngjoon Kim

Live a life like a patient.
a patient who feels excited
to see whom he or she loves
after a long surgery.
Live day by day like a patient.

Don't forget that
every single day of life is
new days to come
new times to thread as treasures.
new possibilities to love.

**Killer**

By: Peter Ho

I lay there, quiet as a mouse, still as a vulture, carefully not to move an inch of muscle. Chills run down my spine. From above I hear clatter, doors being slammed, and yells of frustration. The killer was on the first floor, looking for me, checking all the obvious hiding spots with a bloody machete in his hand. It’s been two hours since he first broke into the house and went after me. My right shoulder is oozing blood, blood flowing down my arm and side. Its not long until he realizes that I’m not on the first floor, and begins to check the basement. I wasn’t just gonna lay there waiting to get slaughtered. I look around the dark basement, looking for anything that will prolong me getting chopped up. I see a large bucket, a couple reels of thick rope, and a can of kerosene. An idea pops up in my head. I tie a string of rope horizontally three quarters down the stairs leading to the basement and place the large bucket at the bottom of the stairs. I fill it to the brim with kerosene from the can. Everything was set but all I need was a spark. I suddenly realize that I can use the spark from an empty lighter that was in my pocket. Everything was set and good to go. I lay at underneath the stairs so he cannot see me. I wait for a few minutes then all of a sudden I hear the basement door slam open. The killer yells, “I know you’re down here!!!” He sprints down the stairs, trips on the rope and falls head first into the large bucket full of kerosene. Immediately I get up to lignite the spark and he instantly goes to flame.

**Crows**

By: Christina Ranick

Crows
Black, feathered
Flying, Flapping, Cawing
Blending into the night
Omens
Haiku

By: Brenda Kim

Calculus
Waking up at ten.
Just to learn more calculus.
These moments I dread.

Tests at STLCOP
It is time for bed.
But I have too many tests.
All on the same day.

Naked Juice
It is my breakfast.
The best source of nutrition
So yummy and good

Smartphone
Smartphones are so cool.
Technology has improved.
The future is bright.

The Anastasia Sweater

By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

I used to follow my brother around when I was little. I was his little entourage, waddling behind as fast as my legs would take me. We would tease each other, talk to each other, laugh with each other, and everything else a brother and sister might do.

One morning, my mom decided to take us shopping. My brother and I would not let the silence invade the air, as we continuously filled the car with roaring laughter. My mom, seeking a moment of tranquility, gave us permission to wander aimlessly by ourselves as my brother was approaching that age of “independence.” So instead of shopping, my brother and I played along the escalators, going up and down, telling each other stories and playing games. As scorching hot as it soon became inside the mall, I would not take my favorite purple Anastasia sweater off. I wanted to show the world, or at least the people in the mall, how great my fashion was, sporting a Disney princess on my sweater.

Our normal routine was as follows: get on the escalator, sit on the steps as we moved up to what felt like the top of the world, get off the escalator, and repeat. We continued to do this until we were too engaged in a hand game, that we forgot that we were even on an escalator. My bent legs began to straighten as we reached the top. My brother jumped up, telling me to jump as well. But I was too slow, and my sweater slowly began to get eaten by the teeth of the escalator stairs.

At first, I was numb to the idea that I was stuck. I tried to get up, but I couldn’t budge and would only fall back down. I looked back wondering what was holding me from standing, only to find part of my sweater stuck inside. I tugged and tugged, but the escalator refused to give back my sweater, winning this simple tug-of-war game. As the thought of a stuck sweater began to barrage my mind, fear began to
simultaneously creep in. I could only think about how I would never be able to leave this place, that my parents would have to come visit me at the mall, that I would have to stay overnight in the dark, sleeping at the top of an uncomfortable, ridged escalator. Tears started rolling down my eyes and I began to whimper, soon letting out a loud cry. My brother tried to get me out of my sweater, but the escalator had consumed too large of a portion, disallowing me from squirming out. He soon gave up and simply sat right next to me, trying to console me.

“Just think how cool this is. No one has probably seen such a thing happen. And all the attention is on you. You’re just that cool,” my brother stated.

I could only let out a small giggle against the streaming tears of how silly my brother was. But, as much as my brother tried to calm me, I was too terrified with the thought of never sleeping in my own bed with my stuffed animals. Time continued to pass until I could blurrily see through the tears in my eyes, the outline of my mom and another figure rushing towards me.

The security mall cop had a pair of sharp scissors dangling from his right hand, and he began to make movements towards me, gripping the scissors tightly. I covered my sweater, preventing the sharp point from making an incision in my favorite Anastasia sweater, but my mom pushed my hands aside. I watched hopelessly as the scissors began to rip apart the cloth, and strings of thread began to hang from each slit. I suddenly felt no restraint from the escalator’s pull, and I ran into my mom’s arms, tasting the joyous ride of freedom after being held captive. She picked me up and I looked down at the escalator, finding a ripped piece of purple cloth hanging along the escalator step. I reached along the back of my sweater with my left hand, crushed to find a missing piece. And at that moment, I came to the realization that I would never be able to fashion my sweater again in exchange for my freedom.

…and it felt so utterly bittersweet.

<3
By: Madhuri Patel and May Le

S(---s r yellow
L(---s can b teal
My words may b short
But they’r e full of feel

D(---s r white
P(---s r blu
Lyke all ths flwrs
My <3 4 u gru.
Razzy

Susan (Soo Yeon) Lee

It was a dark, eerie night. No moon, no stars. Everything was silent except the sound of the icy cold wind slashing through the trees. No one was brave enough to step outside and fight against the deep black hole.

In spite of the darkness, Lauren Allison Lee was joyful. She was a gentle and lovely girl who’s always willing to help other people. Tuesday was a cleanup day so Lauren was mopping the kitchen floor. It was almost the end of dinner time and, all of the sudden, she heard a knock on the door. When she opened it, a pale-faced old lady was standing in front of the door with a black cat on her arms. The old lady said that she was in a hurry and she needed someone to take care of her cat Razzy. Lauren was little hesitant at first but the old lady seemed like she needed help so she decided to take care of Razzy. When Lauren took the cat into her arms, no one was there anymore. The old lady didn’t even say her name or when she would be back to pick up Razzy. Lauren felt something odd but she was also happy that she was able to help the old lady.

Razzy was a black cat with bright golden eyes. His tail was little bit shorter than normal cats. His teeth were sharp. Razzy was just sitting on the sofa and watching Lauren cleaning the house. Whenever she took a glance at Razzy, he was staring at her with his bright golden eyes. She felt something strange but she didn’t feel suspicious.

After Lauren cleaned the house, she sat on the sofa next to Razzy to watch TV. She flipped through the channels but nothing was interesting for her. Right before she was going to turn off the TV, a movie was just started. The movie happened to be about a black cat killing his owner. The black cat in the movie also had bright golden eyes, sharp teeth, and short tail. Lauren got goose bumps. The black cat reminded her of Razzy. She started to think that Razzy was the same cat that was in the movie. She slowly got up from the sofa. Razzy slowly got up too. She slowly stepped back. Razzy stepped toward her. Lauren had million things going through her mind. She didn’t know what to do. The only way for her to live was to run.

Lauren slowly stepped towards the door and started to run. Razzy started to chase her too. Lauren was horrified because she believed that Razzy would kill her. She didn’t know where to go so she went inside the woods. She couldn’t see anything in front of her because it was so dark. But she saw bright golden eyes following behind her.

As she was running, Lauren couldn’t see a big rock so she tripped and fell. Lauren couldn’t get up. Razzy was coming closer and closer. She cried and screamed for help but it was no use. Finally Razzy
jumped over her. Lauren screamed. Then she saw a beam of light shining on her face and heard a voice saying, “CUT!”

Then the whole stage became bright. There were no real trees. There was no Razzy. And Lauren complained that she had to run again. Apparently the beam of light wasn’t supposed to be there for this movie scene, but one of the staffs accidentally turned on the stage light.

Yes, it was one of the movie scenes for “Razzy: the Murderer Cat.”

SIP

By: Marquitta Martin

Ess
Eye
Pee
Ess
From the straw in my cup there sits a pool of yummy delight. Juice, so da, maybe even water. But who doesn’t prefer flavor. A cup an d a straw. 😊!!
I’m thirst free

Sushi

By: Robyn Lowe

More time to study for my exams
Healthy hair with no split ends
Sushi
A stronger faith
More endurance
Sushi
I must be really hungry.
The Traveler
By: Laila Kuziez

The tide rises, the tide falls
A long distance relationship? Of course they would work it out. What was a few miles’ distance compared to the commitment they’d made before the eyes of the masses? What was a mere drive in comparison to everything they had built together over the past few years? To the investments, physical and emotional they’d thrown in; the growth together as individuals and as a couple. He needed this, a chance to finally pursue his passion. She just knew it.

The twilight darkens, the curlew calls
He’s found a few of his old friends in New York. All a part of the elitist academic society he had once aspired to. Cornell graduates. She was glad for him, finding some acquaintances in that vast, impersonal city. Although, she thought apprehensively, weren’t those the very same ‘friends’ that had avoided him only a few years earlier. Flinging him back and forth from one member of the group to another? Never mind, he knows who he is. And knowing someone is always better than none, right? Right?

Darkness settles on roofs and walls, but the sea in the darkness calls
He’d finally come back. Some overtime during the week and a few strings pulled and here he was, once more at her side. But where was he? Something had changed in him. He evaluated her and their life together with a different eye, as though he’d attempted to erase some small part of their history together, leaving an eraser smudge where sharply drawn lines once existed. He now left to take calls from that group of friends wondering why he’d suddenly canceled their ‘cultural enrichment’ plans for the weekend. She listened quietly, hearing the slight leer every time they said “Oh, you went home.” But still, she knew that, come what may, he would return. Nothing, not even the most elite of friends, could truly blot all they’d shared.

Soft white hands efface the footprints in the sands
Three days. It had been three days since he’d truly spoken to her. Their video chats over coffee in the morning and tender goodnight calls had been reduced to a quick ‘hello, how are you’ and what little else he said was riddled with ‘Sorry, gotta go’s He seemed in a perpetual hurry, desperate to get the unfashionable wife off the phone and turn his attentions to that suddenly far more exquisite society.
The steeds in their stalls, stamp and neigh as the hostler calls

Another visit. This time, no tearful hugs or abundant conversation. Only a quick embrace and curt speech. Going out to dinner has become a burden as he appraises the humble restaurants with ‘In New York’ s’ and ‘I once went to …’ and, most importantly, ‘Me and my friends…’ Friends. How she grew to hate the word. To hate the people who had sucked out the cheery honesty that had once defined him until one night, she yells in an attempt to churn the memories he’d inexplicably buried. But nothing stirs. Her yelling and tears cannot shake the torpid block in front of her.

The day returns, but nevermore, returns the traveler to the shore

A few months later, a strange man with a strange voice will call her before she goes to bed. He will tell her that he has finally found a suitable apartment for them to inhabit. She will be neither happy nor angry, merely surprised. She will have been transferred to the New York branch of her company. And they will both be privately thankful they do not have children because both know that it will be only a matter of time before their investments burn out and they grew once more as separate entities, each independent and unheeding of the other.

Mid-Autumn Festival

By: Xue Chen

A full moon lingered in the sky, the night sky brightened. Colors of lanterns painted the night, Immersed in the sound of thundering drums and the sight of warm color lights. Those days are gone, the bright lamp intensifies, heavy stacks of books, scattered piles of papers, introduce an endless night.
Armageddon
By: Kourtni Blomker

Tendril of smoke floats deftly through space
Marking the end of being, of knowing
We no longer have a place here
On this earth, our home and refuge
The place still exists, but not man
Mother Nature pleased by our continued absence
A chance to finally heal her scars

Yellow
By: Ellie Breaux

I squint at the sun, who is beating down yellow orange on my bare arms.
My green eyes slide to the ground, temporary blinded by the rays.
I feel comfort from the sun on my back, like a warm hug kissing my skin, protecting me.
The ground is cracked and thirsty as I crouch over it, tracing the scales of my home turf.
It reminds me of the copper pennies my dad keeps in the jar on our kitchen table.
I feel a breeze play with my hair, carrying with it the sweet smell of apples from the Apple tree.
This is the endless summer of 1997.
My feet are dirty, my hair is tangled, I am not bothered by my clothes brushing the dirt beneath me. I don’t see anything but the yellow of happiness and contentment.
I only think of right now. Who thinks of tomorrow in an endless Summer?
Four years old and all I know is now. All I know is smiles of my parents, sunshine, apples, kittens in the barn, sprinkler in the yard.
This Is home, safety, the yellow rays of the sun blinds me to the black evil of the world outside of my mind.
I hear the screen door open and look up from the dirt, smearing dirt along my brow as I push tendrils of my hair out of my eyes.
My mother stands on the porch above me, rays of sun framing her, smiling, giggling at me, holding lemonade for us.
I wish I knew I could wish to stay this young forever.
I Care

By: Keaton Wall

“Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something” (Author Unknown). I truly believe in this quote. I cannot volunteer 24/7 but I can do something to make a difference and so can everyone else. Volunteering is about helping others. I believe strongly that people have a responsibility to help one another. Volunteering for different organizations throughout my life has taught me many things. First, volunteering for my community encourages interaction between me and other community members. I feel connected to my community because I am participating and helping others within the same town. This is the perfect way to give back what others have given to me. I take pride knowing that I can help someone improve his or her life. Second, volunteering has taught me about myself. Volunteering is about helping others but it is also about understanding others and gaining a sense of compassion. Volunteering has taken me outside my comfort zone and taught me that life is not easy for many people. I have met a wide range of people from all walks of life. I have been able to develop new skills that will ultimately make me a better person. Thirdly, volunteering has given me a sense of achievement. I know I cannot solve all the world’s problems but what I can do is make a community just a little bit better. Lastly, volunteering has given me many great life experiences. Whether I am mucking a horse’s stall, teaching a 5 year old how to fish, or grocery shopping for a handicapped person, I am experiencing the real world. Volunteering has definitely taught me to appreciate what I have. I also realize that something as simply a raising a little money for a worthy cause can go a long way in improving a community. People do not expect me to be able to build a house in a day; they simply want me to pound in a few nails. Even though I do not have a ton of time to volunteer, the little bit I do volunteer impacts not only my life but also the life of others in a positive way because I care!

Haiku

By: Stephanie Chen

Look to stars above
That’s where your sprit should be
High up and shining
Elmo was sick and tired of Big Bird. He couldn’t take it anymore. Big Bird’s cocaine addiction was ruining the show, and he began to realize that it would end up ruining his Hollywood career. He decided he would get Big Bird some help. He checked Craig’s List and found a man by the name of Jerry Springer to be someone who could help. Eventually Elmo got a letter saying to bring Big Bird to a certain set. Elmo walked onto a strange set that said “The Jerry Springer Show” and saw a bunch of skinny black people and fat white people in the audience. Once he got on, everyone cheered. He took a seat and Jerry began asking some questions.

“Hi Elmo, so how long have you lived on sesame street?” said Jerry.

“Elmo has lived there for 25 years. Which reminds me, this program was brought to you by the number 25”, said Elmo.

“No, no, this show is actually brought to you by NBC. But lets not focus on that Elmo. Tell me have you been wanting to be a Hollywood actor for a long time now?”

“Elmo has been wanting to be an actor for a long time. Elmo would like to play Bruce Willis’s grandson in the next Die Hard movie”

“And do you feel that Big Bird and his cocaine addiction is wearing you down?”

“Elmo thinks that once Big Bird started hanging out with Oscar the Grouch near trash dumpsters, Big Bird has become one hell of a junkie. Elmo thinks that Big Bird is doing a bad job on the show”

“Well you know what Ladies and Folks, let’s bring him in!”

As Big Bird walked in with bloodshot red eyes, the crowd immediately started booing him.

“Oh F*** Y***!” Said Big Bird while holding his middle claw.

“Hello Big Bird, how are you feeling,” said Jerry

“Whatever. You can’t tell me what to do! I’m a big bird. I can handle myself”

“That’s true, but don’t you feel like these drugs are affecting your career? Elmo really cares about you and wants you to continue to be great on Sesame Street”

“Oh ya! Where was Elmo when I found out about my first STD’s! Where was Elmo when we needed help with Cookie Monster’s binge eating! Elmo lives in his own little world and cares about no one but himself!”

“That’s not true!” said Elmo and he began weeping. “Ever since you started hanging out with Oscar you’ve changed!”

“Let’s see what Oscar has to say about this! Let’s bring him out!” yelled Jerry.

At that moment Oscar came out hopping in his trash can.
“Oh hell no!” screamed Elmo as he got up. Then he got up and rushed towards Oscar. The security guards stood in the middle and blocked the two of them from hitting each other.

“HOLD ME BACK!” screamed Elmo, “HOLD ME BACK!”

Everyone in the audience started yelling, “JERRY! JERRY! JERRY!” Once everyone calmed down, Jerry asked Oscar why he started doing drugs.

“Cuz I live in a F***** trash can, man!”

“Elmo thinks that you could’ve moved out if you wanted to but you remain a slob and a grouch!” said Elmo

“Don’t tell me what I can or can’t do! You have a nice white house, some nice crayon fish, your life is perfect, and everyone loves you. How many kids do you see with a tickle me Oscar the Grouch!”

“Well time is short and I think we could all learn a lesson from these muppets. But in the end, I think we all agree that family is important and we should all look out for one another. Isn’t that right everyone?” said Jerry.

“Shut up Jerry. Your show doesn’t even work.” said Elmo as he got up. “I should’ve gone with Maury.”

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**Rain**

By: Samantha Pinkley

The rain pounded down
Thunder boomed and the lightning flashed
All while driving home

It fell from the sky
Like a glittering diamond
A gift from heaven

Colors of the earth
Rich purples, muted greens, red
So many colors
The Worthy Will Rise

By: Kelsey Toler

“Heart, don’t fail me now. Courage, don’t desert me...” sang Olivia in her head as she sprinted her way down the winding corridors of Mercy Hospital. The song in her head came from her favorite movie, Anastasia, and the swirling white snow outside of the floor-to-ceiling windows reminded her of the scene where Anastasia sang about choosing which way to go in life. Olivia thought it was perfect for this moment in time, because she needed all the bravery and courage she could muster today. The hospital sent out a desperate page over the intercom system for all available medical staff to report to the ER. Olivia, being an occupational therapist intern through a program at Mizzou, qualified as “medical staff,” but the blood, guts, and gore of the ER made her knees weak and on the verge of buckling beneath her. But, pushing that thought out of her mind, she willed her trim legs to pump faster and faster and propel her down the slick linoleum floor. Ever thinking, Olivia tried to remember all of her training in undergraduate school about anatomy and physiology. She tried to go over terms she had overheard some of the doctors using in the cafeteria to discern what they meant, but that made her head pound like her blood was trying to escape the vessels in her brain. Yeah, sure, they’re never busy on a Sunday, thought Olivia sarcastically; it’ll be great for your first day on the job! Well, Professor Dale, you sure didn’t give that memo to whoever pissed off Mother Nature! However, she pushed these thoughts out of her mind, rationalizing that complaining about how sucky her first day was going wasn’t going to help all of those poor souls down in the ER. The slick driving conditions and frigid temperatures made for a deadly combination, and the ER was overcrowded with injured, sick people and not enough doctors and nurses to tend to them.

As Olivia rounded the corner, her senses were overwhelmed by the overpowering, iron odor of blood mixed with the sickly-sweet smell of the chemical antiseptic solution the janitors used to clean with. Trying to filter the smell out, Olivia clamped her hand over her nose and mouth. After the onslaught of the smell came the horrific sight Olivia beheld, like the images out of scary movies she refused to watch with her friends. Mangled, torn bodies caked with blood covered half of the ER’s available cots, while the other half seemed occupied by victims with skin cracked and bleeding, some almost black and split away to the bone. Frostbite! Olivia exclaimed in her mind, feeling pity and sorrow for each soul trapped within the pain and torture of the human bodies she saw before her.

As soon as she entered the ER, a physician in a blood-spattered coat came up and grabbed her arm. With no introduction or formalities, the doctor guided her to a bed nearest the door. The doctor explained hurriedly that the patient on the gurney, a 22-year-old female, was the victim of a five car pileup on the side of Interstate 70. Olivia’s eyes roved over the emaciated girl’s body, where tears and
lacerations criss-crossed her skin and left her looking like raw hamburger. As Olivia pushed aside her resentment and squeamishness, she dived right in and immediately began to help the “crash” team in any way she could. Running to get gauze, handing tools to the nurses, even using her own hands to try to staunch the flow of blood from a large laceration across the girl’s abdomen; she felt as if she had been transported back in time to a hospital on a Civil War battle field. As the doctors stabilized the patient, Olivia was given the charge of sitting with the patient until her family could arrive and so the doctors could move on to other patients. As Olivia settled back into her chair, she began mulling over what all she had just witnessed on her first day on the job.

Suddenly, a shrill beeping sound pulled her from her thoughts. One of the various monitors the girl was tethered to by cords and wires was flashing red and emitting a mechanical *Beep! Beep! Beep!* Olivia began to feel a sickening drop in her gut. She had watched enough medical shows in the past to know what this unwelcomed beeping meant. The flat line on the monitor confirmed it: the girl’s heart had stopped beating, and Olivia was the only person within a hundred yards that could do something about it. Olivia began to feel the panic rising up like an ocean swell inside of her, but then her mind reached a clarity she had never known, and she realized worrying about her abilities to save this girl would only decrease her chances of living. Instincts then kicked in, and Olivia ran out into the tumult that was the ER waiting room. The first person she locked eyes with was a dark-headed man with the brightest neon colored sweat suit she had ever seen. She ran up to the man and said, “Buddy, I’m not going to ask you nicely or beat around the bush, but you need to come with me. I need your help!”

The man turned to face her, cockily raising one thick eyebrow, a questioning arrogance in his dark eyes. “Girl, what makes you think I could help you, whenever I can’t get anyone to help my mom? We’ve been here for over 2 hours!”

Anger bubbled up inside Olivia as she glared at the man, but she grabbed his arm and hissed, “Well; now you’ve got a way to pass the time. Come on!”

As Olivia and this stranger dashed to the injured girl’s bedside, Olivia immediately began telling the man what to do. “Okay, you’ve got to hold her head like this and tilt it back to open up her airway, and whenever I signal, you’ve got to pinch her nose and breathe into her mouth twice.”

The man tried to shy away from the scene, saying, “Dang, girl, I don’t do well with blood! Imma pass out! Go find someone else!”

Olivia immediately closed the gap between them and locked her hazel eyes with his dark ones. “Listen, this girl’s life is at stake, and we’re the only two people who have a chance of saving her. So you better listen up, and listen good, because we’re going to bring her back.” The man’s cocky demeanor vanished as he realized the gravity of the situation, and he nodded enthusiastically as he followed Olivia back to the cot. She immediately began pumping up and down on the girl’s chest, doing compressions...
like she learned back in one of her summer training sessions at Mizzou. At her signal, the man followed her instructions and breathed fresh air down into the girl’s lungs. This process kept repeating: pump, signal, breathe, repeat, for what seemed like an eternity. Just whenever Olivia was about to give up, she heard the machine faintly *bleep, bleep, bleep*. She looked at the monitor, and saw the welcomed sight of peaks and valleys that meant life had returned to the girl’s body. At that moment, doctors and nurses rushed into the room, frantically trying to stabilize the girl once again. They congratulated Olivia and praised her quick-thinking. But, one doctor came up to her and asked how she managed to do it single-handedly. Just as she was about to explain how she grabbed a man from out of the waiting room, she realized that he was gone. As she explained what the man looked like, the doctors said they hadn’t seen anyone fitting that description that day in the hospital at all. Shocked, Olivia realized she had just been given a test of faith, and realized that she was, maybe, cut out for this work after all.

**I will remember**

By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

Do you remember when
Your eyes twinkled against my gaze, smiling at me
Do you remember when
We were on our walk and inscribed our names into a tree
Do you remember when
You took me on a boat and slipped a ring on my finger
Do you remember when
You waited endlessly for me at work and lingered.
Do you remember when
I ran from our first fight and then you followed and embraced me
Do you remember when
We had our first kiss while the waves crashed against the sea
Do you remember when
I tripped and you placed a band aid from where I bled
Do you remember when
You picked and gave me all the flowers from a rose bed
Do you remember when
We walked down the aisle, awaiting our future together
Well, I’ll always remember
And how we promised to share our love altogether.
California Sunset

By: Abbey Meers

The flowers had finally begun to blossom and I could see the colorful variety of their petals flood the hills surrounding us. I knew that the instant my father saw the first flower bloom, we were going to pack up our things and journey on to discover more of this unknown country people call “America.” Hopefully in this summer of 1750, my father’s dreams will be fulfilled. He has a mission to travel to the coast of California from Missouri and claim a big chunk of land for myself, my one sister, two brothers, and my parents to live on safely. Thankfully we travel light and are all old enough to take care of ourselves.

Things had been tough for us in the past few years. The food was always scarce so we had to turn to hunting as our main source of food. Occasionally, one of us would become ill and spread it to the rest of our family which would slow us down for a couple of days, but thankfully it has not taken any of our family’s lives as it had so many other people we have come into contact with. Worst of all, there is always the constant fear that scary Indians will attack in the middle of the night. However, I have a strong feeling in my gut that during this summer we will make it to our future home in California safe and sound.

The most I have seen and heard about this unknown land in the west is that it lies right against the ocean. I picture in my head how majestic the sunset must be every single night. Splashes of fiery reds, burnt oranges, and soft yellows painted throughout the sky with a gentle hint of soothing purples and pinks that accent the clouds surrounding the sun. This grandiose sea of colors would reflect perfectly into the jagged waters below. As I sink my toes into the white sands on the beach, I will close my eyes and listen to the waves crash onto the shore; feeling the cool waters rush along feet and ankles. I can only imagine how perfect this moment will be. It gives me the strength to move forward everyday know that this awaits me at the finish line.

This passage we are on right now has spectacular views. We have travelled through deserts, hiked across mountains, and even walked along rivers. It is much hotter than I have usually felt which means we have probably ventured pretty far south. I have always loved the warm air brushing against my face and warming my skin. So far we have seen traces of Indian, but we alter our route every time to stay as far away from them as possible. Also, with this warm weather, none of our family has gotten sick and we have kept a steady pace so far. However, the food has been pretty hard to find. We have come into contact with good fruit trees, but since we are in much hotter areas, the animals here are different than what we have usually seen. They hide in strange places so even when we go hunting, we have no idea where to
begin looking. Thankfully, we have captured enough food to keep our energies up every day, but I must admit that it is becoming exhausting.

We don’t know specifically where we are because there are no maps of this area, but I trust that my father knows the exact direction we are going. My father says we are so close that he can almost taste the salt in the air. Summer is coming to a close, and if we don’t make it to our destination and begin building our future home, then this winter will be a very tough one. We keep pushing forward and the food keeps getting less abundant. On top of all that, my brother started complaining about a sore throat which meant he would become ill very soon. Luck seems to be no longer on our side. I could tell the mood of our family has slowly declined over the past few days.

As I was walking along today, some strange scent made my nose tingle. The further I walk the stronger the scent becomes, and this salty taste began forming in my mouth. It finally hit me that salt was the air, meaning that we were close to the ocean. I stopped in my tracks and looked over to see my father standing still with the biggest smile on his face that I have ever seen. Our family is silent and our pace begins to quicken. We make our way over the grassy hill ahead of us and lying before us is the infinite waters of the Pacific Ocean reflecting the most beautiful sunset I have ever seen in my life. My heart is at peace knowing that we have made it.

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**Tick Tock**

By: Trey Weishaar

As the clock ticks,  
I wait impatiently.  
As the clock ticks,  
I grow old.  
As the clock ticks,  
Time gets wasted.  
As the clock ticks,  
People come and go.  
As the clock ticks,  
Memories fade.  
But as the clock ticks,  
New ones are made.  
And as the clock ticks,  
I will find happiness.

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**Ocean**

By: Sabeena Rahman

I float in the ocean  
as free as can be  
the endless sky  
the vast sea.

I float in the ocean  
as free as can be  
the waves calm  
the fish below me.

I float in the ocean  
as free as can be  
the water salty  
the wind on me.

I float in the ocean  
as free as can be  
no worries in the world  
im free free free.
Seasons of My Life

By: Jessica Woolsey

The rays came through the window from the sun
Oh how marvelous this season can be
Hot temperatures, warm wind
Suntans, flip flops, and bright green grass
Eating watermelon, drinking beer, making memories
Swinging from the rope swing, basking on the boat out at the river

The weather has frozen over the river
Behind the clouds is where you’ll find the sun
This season doesn’t have any good memories
Oh, I just wish they’d let me be
The white snow covers the brown, dead grass
I get slapped in the face by the cold wind

Clear, fresh, and chilly wind
Brown and orange leaves float down into the river
Pine cones cover the grass
The rays still shine bright from the sun
Boots, pumpkins, and jackets can be
I can’t recognize these memories

New beginnings, new memories
The weather is warmer, but fresh still is the wind
This is how happy everything can be
The water begins to warm up in the river
The earth is lit up by the sun
Baby chickens and rabbits sit in the grass

I lie on my back in the grass
This is the best way to recall memories
I am blinded completely by the sun
I am comforted by the blanket of wind
I can hear the rippling sounds coming from the river
Oh how precious nature can be

It’s funny how life can be
When I was a toddler, playing in the grass
That day when I was eighteen, with my friends swimming in the river
A flood in my mind full of memories
With my thoughts comes the wind
Thinking about it all was like staring at the sun

My life is now only memories
I am deep beneath the grass
I am way above the sun

Soccer

By: Josh Siu

When the whistle blows,
The butterflies swarm
When the whistle blows,
The sun peeks out from behind the clouds
When the whistle blows,
The coaches holler
When the whistle blows,
The players’ sweat drips onto blades of the freshly mowed grass
When the whistle blows,
The rumble of the crowd rises to a roar
When the whistle blows,
The flurry of feet attack the black and white sphere

When the whistle blows,
The uniforms are gifted grass stains
When the whistle blows,
The parents howl at the referees
When the whistle blows,
The When the whistle blows,
The keeper drops his head to the dirt
When the whistle blows,
The players hang their heads
When the whistle blows,
The coaches bark at their troops
When the whistle blows,
The team bathes with success
When the whistle blows,
The winners are crowned
When the whistle blows,
The losers are served their cold dish.
Sestina

By: Kook Hwang

Stuck and lost in time,
I stop the time to gaze your beauty
It has been almost four weeks
But I feel as if I met you yesterday
Your longing fragrance and lovely smile
I love you more than yesterday.

Five hours gone by like yesterday
I still yearn to stare at you one more time
Your tinted red lips make me smile
Because you are very pretty
All of the things we did yesterday
I will never forget for weeks

My life without you makes me sick
I will never go back to those days
It’s been hard and lonely everyday
I stare at the time
I look myself with pity
Back then, I couldn’t smile

Four weeks ago, I started to smile

Week after weeks
I was lost in your genuine beauty
Our first kiss yesterday
Couldn’t have been more true at time
I won’t forget it for many days

I have been thinking of us since yesterday
The way you make me feel, the way you smile
I don’t want to lose you any time.
I look forward to hold your hand for many weeks
I want to remind you everyday
What you have defines beauty

I look forward to embrace your beauty
I can’t wait to see you each day
Because I missed you today
I remember your pretty smile
That makes me weak
Smile for me just one more time.

Your beauty makes me smile
Yesterday, today, and tomorrow, even when I am weak
Just like yesterday, would you smile for me just one more time?

Suspended In Air

By: Zachary Wainwright

Mountains rise, and the snowflakes fall.
Glittering powder lay on the mountain side,
More still than the mountain itself,
Softer than feathers,
And moves more easily than water.
Boots are strapped to skis,
More secure than a baby in a car seat.

We, who are held by chairs, who are held by cable, who are held by poles,
Are moved up the mountain by gears,
Both big and small.
Gears grind, movement stops, and big gears break.
Small gears take over, and movement begins,
Slower than a crawl.
Peaceful day, perfect weather, and stuck in a chair,
Suspended in air.
Thank You
By: Jessie Um

Remember the first time we met,
I didn’t know you that well yet
At first, you were very withdrawn
But came out of your shell as time went on
Who knew we’d be together
Despite our fight and bicker
I know I’m difficult and stubborn many times
But you always give me my favorite bedtimes

So, thank you for staying next to me
Even though you wanted to walk away & let it be
I am really thankful for that
With you, time goes by fast
Can’t believe you’ll eventually go on
I’ll be sad that you’ll be gone
Do not forget me
Or I will be angry
Good luck in life
Will miss you dearly

To Catch a Bird
Malory Toebben

I grew up in a small little house in Warrenton, Missouri. My mom stayed home with my brothers and I until we were in school, and my dad has worked as a drywall taper since he graduated high school. We didn’t have the glamorous life, but my brothers and I didn’t mind. We loved to play outside and enjoyed playing in rock piles or just in the driveway. So when the weather was nice, we were outside doing something all the time.

One day my oldest brother, Andy, decided that he wanted to catch a bird. My other brother, Alex, always did what Andy did and I followed behind both of them. So we tried to sneak up behind a bird in the bushes and grab it, but it always flew away. We attempted to do this for hours, and before we knew it, mom was calling us in for lunch. Mom asked what we were playing outside, and we told her that we were trying to catch a bird. She looked at us and kind of laughed and gave us our lunch.

Then my dad came in from working on something in the garage and mom told him to ask us what we were playing outside. So he did and we told him the same thing. He got a big smile on his face and said that he knew a trick. My brothers and I got real quiet and waited for him to tell us what the trick was. He told us that if we could sprinkle just a little salt on the bird’s tail that it would stay there and let you grab it. We all looked at mom and asked if we could have some salt, but she said that we had to eat our
lunches first, then we could. So we all scarfed down our lunches and waited for mom to hand us each a salt shaker.

My brothers darted out the front door and I followed. We were all so anxious to catch a bird, and I wanted to be the first so I could beat my brothers. Well while me and my brothers were running around the yard shaking salt shakers at birds, mom and dad were sitting on the front porch laughing hysterically. Then, one of the neighbors came over to see what all of the salt was about, and my dad told him what we were doing and he just sat there and watched and laughed too.

Andy got the closest to getting a bird and said that he even got salt on its tail, but it flew away. By the end of the day all of the salt was gone and nobody had gotten a bird. We all decided that we just were too young to catch them and we would have to be older to get one.

About ten years later, my family was sitting around the dinner table and we were talking about all of the good times we had as kids when Andy brought up the bird attempt. Dad started laughing and mom smiled really big. My brothers and I looked at them and then thought about what dad had told us that day. Andy realized that dad had played a joke on us that day. We all look back on it and laugh about the good times we had as a family and how gullible we were when we were younger.

**Hot Cappuccino**

By: Vruti Patel

A cup of cappuccino that Cuckoo Christian chugged cutely.
mmmmmm……slurp
ah-ah-ah that’s hot
ffff….ffff…. (blowing)
hot, hot, hot….
Give it some time
before drinking some soda lime
that’s next to the wine.
Tick-tock-tick-tock goes the clock
while time passes by.
Mmmm….Yummy!
That’s more like it…
A cup of cappuccino that Christian chugged cutely.
Little Max

By: Sagar Patel

One day in the slums of NYC, young Max had just finished up with his larping tournament and was carrying home a large trophy that was almost as large as he was. It was very difficult for him because his small stature and lack of muscle made it difficult for him to be able to lift that much weight over his head. Even though he was only 16 years old, he dressed like a man that was well into his 40s. He looked up to his father so much that he dressed just like him to do his best to impress him.

This little white boy with perfectly parted hair was wearing high water pants with bright white knee socks, a Hawaiian shirt, and bright orange crocs. All of a sudden he saw the most beautiful woman he had every laid his eyes upon in his life walking before him. She was dressed fancier than any model he had seen and looked twice as gorgeous. Her hair sifted in the wind as she stepped, and all of a sudden he woke up with her standing over him asking if he was okay.

Little Max had tripped and fallen over the curb as he was entranced by the beauty of this woman. She stared into his eyes with the brightest smile on her face and teeth so white it was almost blinding. She helped him up and began to ask him about his fancy trophy and his clothes and where he was trying to go. “How rude of me,” she said. “I haven’t even introduced myself; my name is Emily, and I am lost; could you point me in the right direction to get to the subway?”

Max wanted to tell her how gorgeous she was and how she looked like she was an angel that has lost her way from heaven. He wanted so badly to take her by the hand and walk into the sunset when suddenly he realized that it was 3 AM and it was pitch black outside. The street was only lit by the moonlight and the flicker of a dying street lamp. All that arose from Max’s mouth were mumbles and sounds that could not even be excuses for words.

Emily began to hear voices and a conversation getting closer to them and told Max that they should probably get moving because this was not the safest part of town. The local street gang was attempting to score some hard drugs, when all of a sudden they saw these kids. It was not in their best interest to have witnesses, so they began to walk towards them and yelled out random things. “Hey honey buns” and “Hey sweet cheeks, why don’t you come say hello.”

Emily became bewildered at the thoughts of the intentions of these foul mouthed men. All of a sudden, as if this moment had been his calling and what he had been born for, Max rose
and yelled back, “You stay away from my Angel Princess, you dirty mouthed jackass!” Emily immediately realized that this was definitely not the best statement to make in this situation, but it was too late…in a moment they were surrounded seven large men with knives and bats. “Hows about you gimme that there trophy and we let you live?”

All these two innocent by-standers were armed with was their wits, her smile, and his large golden trophy. Max began to reassure himself that this was the moment that his training was about to become worth it. As if he were granted the strength of Hercules himself, he lifted the trophy up with one arm and struck it against the cheek of one of the men and sent him flying through the air landing on the other side of the road. He used the trophy as if it were his larping sword and fended off the assailants.

He grabbed Emily in one hand and the trophy in the other, and they began to run as fast as they could. All of a sudden, Emily stopped and exclaimed, “Wait, why are we running? Why don’t we just drive out of here?”

Max was so confused and asked, “what car, do you have a car?” Without hesitation, Emily ran over to a broken down car and popped the hood, began to move things around and then ran to the steering wheel and hotwired the car as if by instinct. Max was so surprised that this girl was so experienced with vehicles. The engine began to roar, Max threw the trophy in the trunk and put the pedal to the metal and floored it out of there.

**Family Picture**

By: Justin Patterson

Seeing it brings a smile to my face  
It reminds me of how beautiful and happy you were  
I look often so I don’t forget it  
Looking at it makes me miss what I never knew  
And it brings up feelings that make me blue  
But then I realize I’m doing all right  
This brings the smile on my face back to life
You Which I Now Know
By: Thuy Tran

I saw you from long ago
As you walked past me.
Never really thought of anything,
Except you are you and I am me.

I saw you again
During our class graduation.
You walked out of the gym with your diploma
While I receive lots of congratulations.

As time went past us
You went there while I went here.
You never said anything to me
For the past half year.

And then you decided to talk
On that so popular network known as Facebook.
You seemed different than what I expected.
But that’s all it took.

Three days gone by
As we get to know each other
You never asked
But it’s okay since we’re now together.

I didn’t know how hard it would be,
To be your ideal girl.
You said however that everything is fine
And that I make your world.

But there are fears that you must know.

That It scares me when we fight.
Cause it leads to many doubts
If this love is really right.

Though we argue and dispute
And we scream and yell,
You said that everything will be okay
That everything will be well.

But honestly, I sometimes fear
If your words are even true
You can really read my face
But then again that’s why I love you.

You can tell my fears and worries
That you try to become the best.
You really try so hard
That it really hurts my chest.

You have done everything I could ask for
While I do nothing but sit and stare.
You’ve deserve so much better
That my heart breaks in despair.

And yet you stay beside me
Through all the happy and sad events.
You really are the perfect man
And I’m nothing but content.

It’s my time to return the love.
The love you’ve given that I couldn’t see.
You’ve been waiting all this time.
And now I know that I love you as much as you love me.

The Journey

By Christina Ranick

Waiting for the wind to call – go back home
Walk alone on this road
Find the bright light at the end
To see life so wonderful
The Adventures of Mark Sawyer

By: Shawn Thomas

Living in the shadow of someone can be pretty boring, especially someone who used to be somewhat of a local celebrity. It can be even harder in a small town, where everyone knows everyone. St. Petersburg, nestled in the north of Missouri along the Mighty Mississippi River, was nothing special; just a river town with nothing to look forward to but church on Sunday. So that’s where this story starts, one particular Sunday at church, just after service had ended. Mark and his parents were chatting with a few other people out on the front sidewalk of the church.

“Did you hear about that new family in town?” Mark’s mom asked.

“Yeah, I heard they moved here after their son was kicked out of school for fighting,” Mrs. Robinson said, nervously.

“That’s exactly what I heard!” Mark’s mom, Becky, said back.

“Ha, just what we need, another trouble maker running around this old town,” Mr. Robinson said as he jokingly nudged Mark’s dad, Tom. “We’ve seen enough of that.”

“Oh, I’m sure he’s not that bad,” Tom said with a laugh.

Mark knew what they were talking about. His dad used to be a bad kid growing up. He ran away once to a river island and then showed up to his own funeral, scaring everyone. He was also chased for several months by a murderer. He was no stranger to trouble.

“At least your boy Mark has a good head on his shoulders. Come to think of it, I’ve never heard of him getting into any trouble,” Mrs. Robinson said through a smile.

“That’s exactly what I heard!” Mark’s mom, Becky, said back.

“Ha, just what we need, another trouble maker running around this old town,” Mr. Robinson said as he jokingly nudged Mark’s dad, Tom. “We’ve seen enough of that.”

“Yeah, you’ll never be as bad as this guy was,” Mr. Robinson said to Mark as he pointed to Tom. “You think of it, he did it.”

Great, Mark thought, just another person to tell me I will never live up to the reputation my dad has set for me.

Mark was tired of hearing how bad his dad was in his youth. What did it matter to him? Why did what his dad did 20 years ago have to shape what kind of person Mark should be now? Mark had said long ago, if one more person compares him to his father, he was going to do something so bad, he would for sure get his name in the history books, right alongside his dad. It was an empty threat, but he meant it now. He was finally fed up. He wished they would stop talking about him. Just then Pastor Ben walked up to the group.

“What’d y’all think of the service today?” he asked.

“Oh I thought it was lovely. We were just talking about how Mark here has been such a good boy and is turning into a fine young gentleman. The word of Hebrews you spoke of today is so fitting: Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16,” Mrs. Robinson answered.

“Ahh, if only Mr. Sawyer here had been a man of God in his youth. Could’ve spared this town a lot of headache, you know. But it looks like you’ve raised your son right, with the word of Jesus and smart discipline. And you’re right, he is turning into a fine gentleman,” Pastor Ben said.

That was it. Mark had it. He was never going to be Tom Sawyer, why couldn’t people understand that.

“May I please go,” Mark asked. “I have plans with Will down at the creek.”

“Go ahead,” Tom said
Mark turned on his heels and made his way down the lane as his mom yelled behind, “Be careful and be home before dinner!”

“Such a fine boy,” Mr. Robinson said.

A few hours later, Mark found himself sitting under a shade tree up on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. He didn’t really have any plans with Will, he just wanted to get away. Mark was lying in the grass wishing people would just let him be his own person. He was starting to get angry again, when a boy walked up from the bush.

“Hey, who are you?” Mark asked as he got to his feet, startled. “I’ve never seen you around here before.”

“What does it matter to you, who I am? I just moved into town, looking for something to do. This place is so boring, never been to a more boring place in all my 12 years. The name’s Jesse by the way.”

“I know what you mean. My name is Mark. I come up here ‘cause I was mad at my parents. I’m so tired of everyone in this town,” Mark said.

“What are you going to do about it? Sittin’ here pouting won’t get you anywhere,” Jesse said.


“Well lucky for you, I have these here matches. I was thinking of settin’ some hay bales on fire. Wanna join?”

Mark’s eyes lit up. He had never actually thought about doing something like that, but the idea seemed so exciting. “Sure!”

“Good, I’ve already scoped some out. Follow me,” Jesse said as he began walking down the hill toward the farm lands.

The two quietly made their way through the woods until they found themselves at a dirt road.

“So where are you from anyway?” Mark asked

“Down around St. Louis. I had to beat up some nerd because he was talking about my family, so I got kicked out of school. But I say he deserved it.”

Mark got a little nervous, the rumors were true. He decided to play along, just to be safe. “Yeah, stupid nerd,” he said.

“Look, there are the hay bales,” Jesse said pointing out into a field. Mark could tell Jesse was getting really excited. He really must be a bad kid, to get this excited.

“These are Pastor Bens’. We can’t light these ones!” Mark said as he realized where they were.

“Sure we can. Stop being a baby. I thought you wanted to get back at your parents. This would be perfect,” Jesse said, angrily.

“Oh ok sure,” Mark said. He was too scared of Jesse now to back out.

Jesse pulled out his matches. He struck one against the box as the two boys watched a flame ignite. Mark’s heart was pounding now. This was not who he was, he was not a bad kid, he was not young Tom Sawyer. “Stop!” he yelled, but it was too late. Jesse had already thrown the match onto the hale bale. Slowly the fire grew bigger and bigger. The bale erupted into a giant fire ball so big, the boys had to move back several yards to avoid their eyebrows being singed off. After what seemed like ages, the hay bale finally burned out.

“See, I told you it would be awesome,” Jesse yelled as he hooped and hollered.

“No it wasn’t,” Mark said. “We just cost Pastor Ben who knows how much money and we could’ve set the whole field on fire. And for nothing. We gained nothing from it.”
“Oh stop whining. Nothing happened. You’re such a goodie two shoes. You’re never going to be anything but a suck up.”

“So what if I am? I like how I am. You need to get out of here, and if I ever see you lighting hale bales on fire again, you’re going to see just how much of a good two shoes I am,” Mark said.

“Whatever, baby,” Jesse said as he ran off back toward the woods. Mark was so upset with himself, he didn’t know what he was thinking. He decided he had better go tell Pastor Ben what had happened. He began to make the long trek up to the farm house.

Mark told Pastor Ben what had happened and how upset he was and how he was just mad from being compared to his father all the time. Pastor Ben was upset but seemed understanding. He decided they had better tell Mark’s parents and decide a punishment for him. Mark agreed, although he knew he would never attempt something like that ever again; he had learned his lesson.

“Well Mark, what do you think your punishment should be?” asked Pastor Ben.

“I don’t know, I’ve never been punished before,” Mark said.

“Keeping with the theme, I think I know the perfect punishment. You will paint the fence outside the church white, just like your father had to, back in the day.”

Mark sighed, maybe he was more like his father than he thought.

**Buttercups**

By: Kourtni Blomker

The first sustained feeling of spring in the air  
A sea of yellow buttercups  
Sisters, friends pick the blooms  
With joy  
And abandon  
Freedom at last  
A chance to explore the outdoors  
On this land which, unknown to them, will one day hold their home  
Without the runny noses, red cheeks, or exhales swirling like dragon’s breath in the air  
Moods matching the weather  
Light, crisp, refreshed
Summer Camp

Breanne Dunsworth, Kristin Hagan, Joseph Kang, Mitul Gandhi, and Mike Feller

It was another camping trip with the crew. Every summer, Jim, Tom, Kim, and Monica, would go on a weekend trip in the woods near the river. They always had great stories to tell when they came back. But this year was going to be one that they would never forget.

When they got to the spot they wanted to set up camp at, Jim started to joke around with Tom. “I hope you don’t get scared like last time. Ha Ha it was only a deer, and you ran like it was a lion or something.”

Tom said in his defense, “Well it’s better to be safe than sorry. We always stay at this very location. You know that this is a known Red Zone. It is dangerous here.”

Jim said with confidence, “Yeah I know, I live for Danger. And beside of the five years we have been here the most danger we have seen was you running away from the pike because you thought it was a piranha.”

At that Jim started laughing hysterically. Monica and Kim stopped setting up the tent to see what all the commotion was about. From the instant they saw Jim’s face they knew what he was joking about.

All three of them simultaneously yelled, “PIRANHA.” They all started laughing uncontrollably.

Tom threw his backpack down and glared at them.

The laughing stopped, but not because of Tom’s mad stare. It was because of something else. Jim turned around and there it was. He was just staring into the eyes of the beast. He didn’t know what to do. He just realized his worst fear: Getting eaten by a bear. How could he be so stupid? He knew that this was bear country. He knew the inherent risk of setting up camp here, but he did it anyway. And now he was staring death right in his eyes.

Jim stood there frozen. He thought that if he could stay still, the bear would think he was a bush or something. But he and his friends knew this was not likely to happen. He tried anyway. The bear, still about a foot from Jim’s face, started to breathe heavily. Jim could feel the vicious animal’s foul hot breath as it flowed past his cheeks. He closed his eyes praying to god for the first time in his life.

Meanwhile Tom and Kim were watching from the side, frantically trying to figure out what to do.

The bear leaned towards Jim and all of a sudden he yelled, “GOTCHA!!” The bear started laughing as his paws held his stomach. ‘What the hell?’ Jim thought, ‘This bear can talk?’ Jim slowly backed away from the giant furry creature and slowly turned around. At that point he started running away and screaming. Tom walked up to the bear and gave him a high
five. The girls stared in astonishment. “What is going on???” Kim demanded. “There is no way you and a bear are all buddy-buddy and there is no way a bear can yell ‘Gotcha’.” Tom turned towards the direction where Jim had run away screaming. He put his hand to his forehead to block the sun, but he still could not see where Jim had gone.

“He runs pretty fast. I bet he doesn’t come back till night fall,” Tom said. Just then, the bear put his paws on his head and lifted up. The bear head disconnected from the body and suddenly a young man’s head was visible.

The guy in the bear suit said, “I bet he doesn’t come back at all. You should have seen his face as I kept leaning closer. It took everything in me not to bust up laughing!” The two guys started giggling again, feeling completely satisfied with their payback scheme. Monica and Kim were astonished. Their mouths hung up a little wondering how the hell these two had pulled off such a great prank. Jim was not easy to scare, especially because he was the one always pulling the pranks. Another thing about Jim and his jokes was that he NEVER let anyone hear the end of it. He would taunt till the end of time if a prank of his had gone over well.

Tom turned towards the girls and started to apologize. “I’m sorry if we scared you girls; I just could not tell anyone about this to make sure it would work. This is my friend Zach. Well, actually, he’s my cousin. Ever since the whole piranha incident, I’ve been trying to think of the absolute perfect prank to get back at Jim. I think I did pretty well, eh?” He turned towards the girls, who both were nodding. The look on their faces was not that of anger, but of utter disbelief.

That night, Jim finally returned, and seemed a bit calmer about the situation that had happened earlier that day. He found Tom with the girls sitting by the campfire roasting marshmallows. “Hey, guys, way to look for me. What did you guys do about the bear?” Jim questioned. Tom turned around, and told him they all tried to look very big and it took off running. The girls giggled in the background. They all knew the joke was too good to use just once. The girls and Jim planned to use the bit one more time before Zach had to return the suit back to his job at the amusement park.

To change the subject, Tom said, “Speaking of, where did you happen to run off to? It seems like you picked yourself up a box of chocolate.”

Jim took some chocolate and marshmallows as he began melting them into a smore. “Yeah, at first I was worried about the bear, but I kept running and bumped into a Ma & Pa store, and guess what? I found hunters who would be up here first thing tomorrow to find the bear!” exclaimed Jim. At that exact moment, Tom freaked as the girls realized why a second later. It was indeed bear season. He had told Zach to come back first thing tomorrow morning to execute the final practical joke before they left in a couple days. He had no way to contact him because reception never came in while camping. What seemed to be harmless fun had just turned insanely risky for not only Tom, but Zack as well.
Tom frantically paced back and forth across the campsite. “I have really gotten myself and Zach into some trouble this time,” Tom said to himself. Tom went to bed, thinking that he would be able to wake up with a plan to prevent a disaster.

The next morning, Tom awoke at 5 am. He still had no plan. “You would think that I have watched enough episodes of Survivor to come up with some sort of escape route,” Tom quietly said to himself, hoping not to wake anyone up.

“I got it! I will just have to wait for Zach to arrive this morning and tell him what’s going on….this is really the only possible way to avoid a disaster.”

Tom thought to himself that as long as he could tell Zach the plan before Jim got up, then nothing bad would happen. With a plan in mind, Tom sat down to enjoy breakfast before everyone else woke up. As soon as he began eating, he heard a rustle in the bushes and two men walked out carrying rifles. The elder of the two men introduced himself as the park ranger and asked for Jim. Tom said he was at the right camp, and then explained the prank and the fake bear costume to the two men. Not amused at all by this prank, the park ranger told Tom that he would be on the lookout for his cousin, but warned that two other groups of rangers had been sent out to clear some of the bear out of this area so that no campers would be harmed. This news frightened Tom even more; he knew that Zach was in serious trouble. Tom tried to call Zach the entire morning, but his phone never worked.

The day wore on and still no sign of Zach. Tom and the girls were jumpy all day, and Jim tried to calm them down by explaining that there were professional hunters searching for the bear and that there was no need to worry. This just made the others more frightened for Zach. Around dusk, the same park ranger walked back into their camp. He explained that there had been an accident today and that his youngest ranger saw a bear in the distance and shot him. At this, Jim told the others that there was no reason to worry anyone that the bear had been killed. The rest of the people in camp began tearing up and the park ranger said he was sorry for their lose and walked away. Jim acted completely stunned, and Monica and Kim explained the whole story to him and how it had all been a prank. Jim apologized to Tom and continued acting the part well. Tom was inconsolable, and after about thirty minutes Jim felt bad so he explained that he saw Zach at the store yesterday. Then Zack jumped out of the bushes and yelled, “Gotcha.”

Tom was elated that Zach was not hurt, but he was furious at Jim. “Jim you went too far with this prank,” screamed Tom.

“Well, Tom I just wanted to show you no matter how hard you try you will never be able to pull a good prank on me.” replied Jim.
A Lion

By: Erik Suh

Day after day, the kingdom is yours;
If anyone thought otherwise they'd be lyin'.
Your cubs can't wait for the day they'll grow old,
And rule after you, O' great lion.

A Funny Trip

By: Ashley Sutherland

Katie and Nikki called and asked if Sarah and I wanted to go to the river and go canoeing. We said yes, and they were on their way to pick us up. As Nikki was driving us out there, we made it almost there and her car broke down. We were all sitting on the side of the road like bums. Katie and Sarah were complaining like crazy saying it was too hot out and asking what the heck was taking the repair man so long. It was too hot to sit in the car so we were sitting on the curb. Forty minutes later we saw a man in a bright blue work truck pull up. We were all so thankful, and stood up as he walked over to us.

He walked over and asked what happened to our car. Nikki quickly told him that we were driving, then all the sudden it just stopped moving. He asked her to open the hood so he could take a look at it. Nikki gave me funny look, then walked over to the hood with him. Laughing, Nikki said, “I don’t know how to open the hood.” The man looked at her, trying to decide if she was kidding. Then he walked to the driver’s door and showed her where the lever was on the inside of the door. He quickly looked and didn’t see anything wrong. Then he checked the oil and there wasn’t any. He went to the truck and poured in a bottle of oil and asked Nikki to try and start her car. After a few tries her car started; she also noticed that we needed gas. We pulled off at the next exit, and since it was nearly one, we decided to get lunch and use the food we packed for dinner.

When we finally got to the river, we jumped out of the car grabbed all our stuff and made our way down to the water. Sarah went and rented a canoe for the day. Three of us got into the canoe, and Katie was outside pushing the boat deeper in to the water. As she was trying to get into the canoe, she lost balance and not very gracefully fell into the water. We were laughing so hard. She finally made it into the boat and we headed down the river. Nikki stood up and went to grab a soda from the cooler, but before she reached the cooler, she tipped the canoe, and we were all in the water. Everyone started scrabbling to grab all our stuff and pull it up on shore. Nikki thought this was so funny and was laughing like a hyena. The rest of us didn’t get it but stared laughing because she was laughing so hard. We saw a
rope swing hanging off one of the trees. Sarah was the first to swim over and try it out. She gracefully splashed into the water. I was the next one up there to go; as I started swinging, I lost my grip and flipped into the water and my top went up. I quickly fixed it and decide I wasn’t going off that anymore.

We decided to get back in the canoe and keep moving--this time it was Sarah and I paddling. She dropped her paddle into the water, and as she leaned over the canoe to get it, she tipped the canoe again. This time it was not so funny. Clearly we were not meant for canoeing; we should have rented a raft. We still had 3 more miles left to make it back to the take out place and it was already 4:00. While we were canoeing down the river, Nikki screamed and pointed into the water. There were four snakes in the water swimming right next to the canoe. I quickly told her to not make any sudden movements or we would be swimming with the snakes. We started padding as fast as we could to get away from the snakes. We thought about stopping but realized that it would be pointless because none of us was getting back in the water the rest of the day because of the snakes. I just couldn’t wait to get home.

**Daiquiris By: Tasha Shea**

I like Daiquiris very much for they are so delicious. That is why I love them. I like when they are frozen and like when they are in pretty glasses. They make me feel like a very fancy lady, who knows what she likes when it comes to a good time.

I love daiquiris so much. They are great. But I only like how tasty they are. I like them in the morning. I like them at night. How about we all get daiquiris tonight?
Poems By: Kushbu Patel

Love That Man

Love that man,
Like a monkey loves to eat bananas
I said I love that man
Like a monkey loves to eat bananas
Love to call him in the morning
Love to call him
“Hey there, my love!”

All I want

All I want is someone to hug me
Someone to kiss me
All I want is someone to hug me
Someone to make me feel that I’m the only girl in the world
Someone to be there for me whenever I need them
All I want is someone to hug me
Someone to trust me
Someone to talk to me everyday
Someone to keep me happy
All I want is someone to take me on a long drive
Someone to hold my hand
Someone to take me on a date
Someone to make my dreams come true
Someone to give a rose
All I want is someone to love me

I Am

I am always happy and caring
I wonder people are so nice
I hear bells ringing
I see roses everywhere
I want everyone to love me
I am happy and caring

I pretend to be mean at times
I feel butterflies in my stomach
I touch the sky
I worry that people will start hating me
I cry when I see other people cry
I am always happy caring

I remember the day I met you
I remember the day you first smiled at me
I remember the day we went out on a date
And how much that day meant to me
I remember when you first touched me
I remember when you hugged me
I remember when you kissed me
Even in the cold weather
I remember how much you loved me
But my favorite memory’s yet to come.

I Remember
System Failure

By: Alexandra Morgan

My hover jet jolts to a stop, waking me from my nap on the way home from work. I turn off the show playing on the screen so I can see what the matter is outside. The entrance to the garage hasn’t opened, leaving the jet floating in the front of my house. As I begin to search the manual from the glove box for my override code, my husband Liam glides up beside me. After a second of confusion, he jumps out and begins to type in the access box on the side of the house. With no luck, we turn off the jets and walk to the front door. Grasping the door handle, I push forward expecting to step into the house, but the door will not budge. “The door isn’t opening for me,” I tell Liam. “This is the strangest thing. It always recognizes my hand and opens right up. You try.” He grabs the door without any success. Peering into the window, we see the kids sitting right inside and begin to knock and yell for them to let us in. Zolan scampers over to grab the door knob then window latch with no avail. Panicked, Zolan begins to yell for us causing his sister Tally to cry crawling toward the door. Without another choice, Liam picks up a rock, breaks the window, and climbs inside. Following, I am greeted with an unsettling stillness. The wall screens are all black. I only hear the children crying, not the normal hustle and bustled of the vacuum in my room and the dishes in the washer; I only smell Tally’s dirty diaper, not dinner and candles on the table.

“Mommy, we have been lonely.” Zolan screams as he rushes to my arms. “No one played with me all day and lunch wasn’t made. Right after you left, the computers all went away.”

How could I not have worried about this? I wondered. It has been years since technology has failed, but I should have known it could happen again. Why did I ever trust Liam to leave our kids alone with machines? It was a good investment, he had told me. We upgraded the software of the house to be kid friendly. Since the update, the house is able to provide for every need of the children while we are at work. We replaced the pantry with the new Food Master which is so nice. I don’t miss the days of making a list weekly to send the machine to the store to get groceries. Now ingredients are automatically sent to the Food Master once I pick the menu from the daily options. Promptly at 7, noon, and 6 the meals are ready to go and the dishes are cleaned. All of the walls are computer screens set up with programs to entertain, teach, and protect the children. We were able to set up the rules for the kids allowing the house to discipline and report bad behavior. The system makes sure our 5 year old Zolan completes his preschool classwork and our 2 year old Tally is put down for her nap and her diaper is changed by the Bots. The reprogramming of the house cost a lot of money, but in the long-run it was less than years of childcare. Our system was becoming outdated anyway.
I begin to move around the house to see what all has failed. Nothing will react to my touch and turn on. The lights around the room stay dim, and the Bots remain stationary as I try to place Tally in their hands to get her diaper changed. I search around the room for a diaper and finally find one by the crib. I haven’t changed a diaper since I babysat in high school, but I complete the task and snuggle Tally in my arms as she finally calms down. Liam and I have no idea if we will be able to get food out of the Food Master. We push several buttons before finally finding a lever at the bottom. Opening the machine, we find the ingredients for lunch on the shelf inside. We can’t eat the uncooked noodle for the macaroni, but we do find a couple apples, carrots, slices of cheese, and some bread to divide between us and the children.

“Why is everything off, Daddy?” Zolan questions, eating his piece of bread.

“We don’t know.” Liam replies. “I’ll try to find out after we eat. Back when houses first started installing systems, things like this happened on occasion. I’m sure it is nothing to worry about.”

I turn to the living room as I hear footsteps in the hall. Our neighbor Mrs. Jones is marching toward us with Mr. Jones following behind.

“Our system is down too. So crazy. I was going about my afternoon fitness and everything stopped. I couldn’t get out of the house or call anyone. It was terrifying, I tell you. I had to shimmy down the porch rail. I didn’t even think to break a window like you. We were awful glad to see a way in to talk with you guys,” Mrs. Jones declares.

Rolling his eyes, Mr. Jones interrupts his frantic wife. “We just saw an engineer working on the house next door. He said that the whole neighborhood is out of service, but they will try their best to have everything fixed by morning. The Patrick’s new house expansion is to blame if you ask me. We just wanted to stop by and let you know. We are headed into town to get a hotel for the night as long as everything is open and running.”

“When we were in town for work, nothing was wrong. I bet a hotel will be open. Thanks for the information about the neighborhood. We will see you later. Be careful,” I reply, helping Mrs. Jones out the window.

Left alone, my family finishes up the meal then wonders what to do. Normally after dinner the house provides our entertainment including shows, games, exercises, and lessons. When the kids bedtime comes around, the Bots get the children in bed while Liam and I are filled in about their behavior and lessons for the day as well as pertinent news from around the world. Zolan runs to his spot in the family room and waves to the wall. When he is greeted with black silence instead of the normal cartoon animals to play fetch, he slumps to the ground in tears. As Liam tries to console Zolan, I have an idea and run to the basement to find my childhood board games.

“What is that, Mommy?” Zolan asks forgetting about his tantrum as he sees the box in my hands.
“This is a game called Candy Land that I played when I was your age. Help me get everything out of the box,” I reply. Zolan and Tally rush over to the game and begin pulling out the pieces. “Pick a man and put him at this starting space,” I instruct the children. With excitement, they choose their pieces and I show them how to play. Each time one of us reaches the candy castle, we start again until we can no longer see the cards in the darkness.

“Come on everyone,” I say turning to my family. “Let’s just go to bed since there is nothing else we can do right now without light.”

“I doubt the drawers will open, so we may just need to sleep in our clothes from the day, and I know our tooth brushes won’t work without power,” Liam says as we pack away the game.

“Can we sleep in your room?” Zolan asks. “I’ll be scared to sleep without the lights and music from the walls.”

“Sure,” I answer, following my family to the bedroom. I cover up the children with a quilt on the floor at the foot of the bed, kiss Liam goodnight, and lay down. The bed is so uncomfortable since it normally measures the tension in your body and adjusts accordingly. Without power, the bed and pillows are hard as a rock. I don’t know what we will do tomorrow if this isn’t fixed. I guess I will have to take the kids to work. We won’t have any food without the delivery system, so we will have to eat out. I grab another blanket and move to the more comfortable floor with the children. I give them each a kiss and close my eyes deciding to wait to worry anymore until the morning.

Monsters
By: Samantha Pinkley

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my
Clawing and gnashing and growling and roaring
Look at this fearful sight
We acknowledge these beasts but what of the ones we’ve been ignoring?

Bigfoot, aliens, Nessie, and werewolves
These are the monsters in our lives
These monsters have fangs, claws, and hooves
And can usually break people out into hives

Vampires, witches, dragons, and mermaids
Some monsters are scary while others not so much
But sometimes it’s easy to see the fear that’s conveyed
Tell a ghost story and see how everyone goes hush

Monsters you say aren’t really real
But how do you explain why you’re so fearful?
Timeless

Nalda Nguyen-Brics

The sun arouses itself from its deep slumber,
Rising slowly from a bed of mountains.
Its scintillating orange light reveals a budding landscape:
Wildflowers, slightly bent from the weight of dew,
Branches, with leaves eagerly bursting from their buds,
A chick, peeking its beak out of its shell.
The bird chirps harmonizing with the soothing ring of temple bells,
A Buddhist monk’s robe reflects the orange sunrise
Wooden beads, fingered one by one in his hands.
Snowflakes falling in a sudden whirl,
Descending mercilessly with no end,
Masking the beauty of spring,
With a barren, desolate white.
Lifeless, blinding, a defaced landscape.
When will spring return?
Regrets, time melting away like snowflakes on the monk’s orange robe,
Spring day blurs into winter night.
When will memories return?
Morning arrives again
The sun peers over the mountain tops,
Its aureate glow unveiling a familiar landscape framed by glistening frost
Wooden necklace forever circling in his hand,
The monk smiles to himself.

I LOVE YOU!

By: Vruti Patel

I love you more and more each and every day
I cannot forget the first day I met you
The way you were gazing into my eyes with not one blink of the eye
You are so perfect in every way
I promise to never let go
Promise to be by your side each and every moment till the very end
I still remember the day we kissed
It was a beautiful day I will never miss
I will never tear your heart in two
I will always do my very best to see that cute smile on your face
My love for you will never lessen
Because I will always love you more and more each and every day!
A Cycle
By: Todd Pieper

Dream of despair amongst hollowed trees,
The forest of pain and isolation brings to knees
The time of life’s great triumph to the down of a fall
That dares for light and life amongst the branches dull
Don’t despair for good can come after every autumn
As winter removes the seed of malice and taught ‘n
Thresholds of cold and bitter realization
Due to the feel and loss of sensation
Come the seedlings of a new thought at hand!
Remove the rotting corpses in the soil of the land
For earth can be reused, renewed, revitalized, and returned
To a state of happiness and better tranquility that was once reassured
For every day is a new day
And life can always seem short,
So, look upon you bounty and say,
“Give it all a good snort!”

Silent Assassin

By: Justin Patterson

Running through the day and night
Running to stay out of sight
Running and jumping to stay alive
Running and climbing to survive
Running to escape the red cross
Running and fighting like a boss

China, My Dream

By: Susan Bao

To go to China is my dream
Since I was a very young child
I have loved to watch planes fly
So elegant as they glide through air
And the smell of the foreign land
Makes my body tremble as I wait
To explore the ancient land of China.
The Captain’s Log

By Thomas Riedl

Captains Log

This is Captain Teldarin of the Federation ship *Velocity*. It is grim times for the federation. The Rebellion has gained vast amounts of support throughout the capital sector and they have successfully turned on us. Their flagship, *Deterrent*, holds the entire high command for their forces and it just so happens to be right on our tail. The plans for the *Deterrent* have been entrusted to me. In them we hope to find a weak point to exploit. My crew consists of myself, and two other fine soldiers of the rebellion, Felicity and Bob. Felicity is our gunner; she runs all of the weapons on the ship, and Bob is the master mechanic; if we have any engine problems, he can fix it no problem. It is our job to deliver these plans to the remaining Federation fleet in hopes to mount a counterassault against the *Deterrent*. With luck we can avoid detection by the rebellion using our faster than light, FTL, drive and stay ahead of them. May God’s speed be with us. This is Captain Teldarin signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 1

Our first jump took us to the outer rim of a small planet. It was rather barren except for a small refueling outpost which was being attacked by an automated rebel drone. Having picked us up on its sensors, the ship turned to face us. Felicity made quick work of its shields and took out the remaining vital points without issue. We did not escape unscathed though. The drone hit our oxygen supply and we were rapidly losing oxygen throughout the ship. Luckily Bob rushed into the supply room and patched it up, bringing our oxygen systems back online.

We salvaged some fuel and valuable scrap from the remains of the drone. While in the process the outpost hailed us offering their thanks. In their gratitude they sent over fuel and a small amount of ammunition. We gave our thanks, and after minor repairs, we are now on our way. This is Captain Teldarin signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 2

There is nothing of note in the new subsector. A small trader by the name of Zak was in the area and we picked up some fuel in return for some scrap; then we jumped to the next area. Captain Teldarin, signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 3

We picked up a distress beacon coming from within a small asteroid field. As we approached, we were hailed by the ship’s captain. Their shields were down and they were stranded within the field. I quickly flew the *Velocity* into the asteroid field in hopes of protecting the other ship. Things were going well until a lone asteroid came in from underneath their ship and snapped them in two. Unable to save any of the survivors, we salvaged what we could from the debris and moved on to our next subsector. My heart goes out to those poor souls of that ship. Captain Teldarin, signing off.
Captains Log FTL Jump 4

This jump brought us dangerously close to a star. Needing to get out of there as fast as we could, I powered up the FTL drives. While waiting for the drive to charge, a small rebel scout came around from the backside of the star and it was prepared for battle. The scout was no match for Felicity’s weaponry and was gone in a matter of seconds. We salvaged supplies from the remains of the ship when the ship’s alarms went off. There was an incoming solar flare. As it lashed out, it washed over the entire ship and managed to start a fire within our shield generator. Rather than order my crew to take care of the fire, I opened the outer bay doors and evacuated the oxygen from that section of the ship just as the FTL drive was powered to jump. I picked our next subsector and we were immediately removed from the dangers of the star. This is Captain Teldarin, Signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 5

Luckily this subsector was filled with civilians and we had a chance to blend in without being disturbed. The fires caused by our previous solar flare extinguished themselves, and as oxygen was restored to that part of the ship, the three of us repaired the shields. As soon as we finished, the beginnings of the rebel fleet thought it would be nice to join us for a while. Narrowly avoiding confrontation we were able to make an FTL jump unnoticed. This is Captain Teldarin, signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 6

We jumped into a quiet subsector, and thinking that we were safe for a moment, let our guard down. This was not a smart move however because I checked our short range scanners and discovered a forward scout for the rebel fleet. As soon as I spotted them, they began to power up their FTL drive. I ordered Felicity to open fire in hopes to stop them from jumping off to warn the fast approaching fleet. Felicity targeted their engines and their weapon systems making sure that they could not jump away. A few salvos were fired between us and many hit their mark on both sides. Our ships med bay was hit in addition to our engines. Luckily Bob was managing the engines at the time and averted a reactor meltdown. They had nearly sliced us in two but our shields were still online, protecting us from further harm. The rebels were quickly dispatched. Until this point none of us realized the gravity of our mission, for if we are destroyed, so is the Federation. In the aftermath we repaired our med bay and prepared for our next jump. Captain Teldarin, signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 7

We jumped into a rather empty subsector and found what seemed to be an abandoned science vessel. After scanning the ship, we picked up a faint life signature and decided to investigate. Once docking with the vessel, Felicity, Bob and myself prepared to board. I opened the main docking bay doors as Felicity prepared for whatever could be behind the door. The doors creaked open and we were immediately covered with the foul stench of decay. Bob checked the scanner again just to make sure it was reading a life form, but the signature had disappeared. He determined that the scanner must have malfunctioned, and we sealed up the docking bay and returned to our ship to move on to the next sector. Captain Teldarin, signing off.
Captains Log FTL Jump 8

We came across a small planet this jump. After trying to hail any surrounding ships, we received no response and decided it was best to move on to the next subsector before the Rebels caught up with us. Captain Teldarin, signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 9

We came across another rebel AI ship and made a preemptive strike against it. Nothing else to report this jump; we will soon be moving to the next subsector after repairs are made. Captain Teldarin, signing off.

Captains Log FTL Jump 10

We have reached the long range beacon for this sector. A small settlement still loyal to the Federation came to our aide and offered to repair our ship’s hull. As we were about to jump to the next sector, a federation cruiser appeared at the beacon. We jumped just as it fired at us. When we came out of the jump, we found ourselves in uncharted territory.

Captains Log Jump 11

*Sirens*

This is Captain Teldarin of the Federation ship Velocity! The rebels have turned, caught up to us and are releasing salvo upon salvo upon our ship! They teleported their boarding parties onto the Velocity. We are fighting off as many as we can, but this looks like it might be the end.

“Captain, they have breached the helm’s blast doors!”

Cut them down Felicity

*gunfire in the background*

“AAAAahhhhhghghghh~”

FELICITY! YOU BASTERDS!! AAAAAaaa!!!!

*white noise* *screen flicker*

“you Federation scum. You thought you could outrun us. HA!”

uunnnhh, this…. this isn’t over. You can destroy us, but you will never defeat the Federation.

“Look around you fool! Your fleet is scattered, and your loyalist planets have turned; there is nothing left of your precious Federation. And with you, its last hope will be extinguished. Good bye Teldarin.”

*gunshots heard*

“Scrap the ship, and be prepared to find the remainder of these Federation fools”
Intercom sounds:

“Ha….ha……ha…. *panting* you fools missed one.”

Explosions echo throughout the ship:

“Enjoy Hell you bastar...”

*blank screen*

Love Escapes All Darkness

By Paige Minx

Seemingly impossible, the quest for love and yet, I have found the answer
In dreams and love alike, selflessness is key
the inner being must reach into darkness
you must try to grasp the farthest infinity
give your soul to another to see
It is difficult at first to see
a thing so scarce as love
some reach into infinity
and cannot find the answers
they try to get out of the darkness
but they have not found the key
But what is this key?
how can I see?
How to get free of the darkness?
where is the love?
I need the answers
I will search into infinity

And into infinity
I will search for the key
I seek out the answers
to open my eyes and see
the secrets of selfless love
that will escape the darkness
And out of the darkness
I emerge into infinity
for I have found my love
I have found the key
I can finally see
true love’s answers
Clear are the answers
found in the darkness
that I am now allowed to see
No longer will I wander aimlessly in infinity
I have the one true key
to selfless, everlasting love
For love does not ask questions, it provides answers
It gives you the key to escape the darkness
It allows you to experience infinity; it allows you to truly see

Ladybug

By: Samiha Badwan

A tiny red creature crawls
I count all nine black dots, and
It scurries away.
Freedom?

By: Christina Ranick

I don’t like my family. In fact, I could sometimes say I hate them, even though deep down I probably don’t mean it. I’m just tired of them always telling me what to do. Especially my dad, who knocks on my door and raises his voice when I don’t get up for school in the morning, or if I’m not on time to leave for a school event. I don’t understand why he gets so mad and frustrated! I’m doing what I want to do and I won’t listen to anyone because I feel like they’re oppressing my freedom. My family thinks they’re acting mature by telling me what to do. Even my older sister can be mean. My family doesn’t understand that my life is hard and stressful, and that I want freedom to choose what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and how much effort I’ll put in. I don’t need anyone to interfere or influence my decisions. I can make my own choices, and I wish they’d all leave me alone!

One morning, I woke up to find sunlight streaming through the gaps in the blinds, leaving bright gold stripes on the carpet. I glanced sideways at my alarm clock. 9:45. Today was a school day. Why hadn’t someone woken me up? Why hadn’t I heard anything from my dad, who always came to knock on the door at 6:45? This was strange. I was absolutely sure it was a school day today. Could it possibly be a snow day? No, that doesn’t make sense; It’s early fall. So what was going on?

I cracked open my door, and the house was silent, except for the jingling of the bell on the cat’s collar. I listened for other noises, but there was no sound. No TV, no laundry machine, no computers. Nothing made a single sound. It was far too quiet in here. I walked into the hallway and the house appeared normal. Could my family have gone somewhere? Surely they would have told me or left a note. They would’ve woken me up, gotten me to school, and then left. I’ve never been on my own like this before. And honestly, it scared me a little. The stairs creaked as I descended, and the only sounds in the house were from my footsteps as the hardwood cracked and creaked. The cat looked up at me from her perch and meowed a greeting before putting her head back down again. I looked around the kitchen. Where were my sister’s aquariums? Where’s the goldfish? Oh lord, if something happened to him, my sister would kill me…I looked around. No one was home. This was extremely strange. I cooked some eggs for myself and went about my day.

Several days went by, and still no sign of my family. Just me and the cat. All I’d eaten was eggs. The dishes were stacking up, and my laundry was clustered in dirty piles around my room. I was running out of things to wear and things I like to eat, but I had no car to go to the store, and no money to buy anything. I was starting to think this was some kind of hell. I went upstairs to my room, curled up on my bed and shut my eyes. Hoping, praying, that my family would come back. I sat there for I don’t know how long.
I heard a loud knock on the door. My eyes opened and I shot up. I looked at the clock. **6:45.** It was a dream after all…Thank god.

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**Memory**

By: Maryanne (Jiyoon) Lee

"Hey, will you talk to me? You haven't spoken to me all day. It's like you have been just ignoring me." Andrew said as he attempted to reconcile with a kiss on her cheek.

"To be honest, I have nothing I have to say to you." With that, Missy turned her cheek away, brushed her shoulder, and walked off with one of her friends.

Andrew, unsure of what he did, stood as the distance between Missy and him grew. Missy's attitude had changed within a span of one day, and the thought of his girlfriend being mad at him was a concept that wouldn't stop pestering his thoughts. His mind kept pondering, and he soon began to retrace his steps back.

_Yesterday, there was a party. At this party, everyone was dancing and drinking. Missy and I danced together. My frat dad came up to me and we chilled. I went back and met up with Missy again. We hung out and then my friend drove us home._

Nothing in his thoughts revealed what single scenery had sparked a sense of lightening between the once blooming relationship. He had recalled spending time with Missy all night, laughing their heads off and smiling until their mouths hurt. As Pat was walking across school campus, Andrew called out to him.

"Yo, Pat. Question. Did I do anything wrong yesterday? My girlfriend is mad at me for something that I might have done," Andrew inquired.

"No, dude. I don't think so. Weren't you with Missy for most of the night?" Pat answered back.

"That's what I thought. But, I guess I did something. I wish girls would just say something instead of putting it aside or acting all passive-aggressive, making guys wonder what it is that they did wrong." Andrew replied.

In the corner of his eye, he saw his beautiful girlfriend walking with one of her friends. Her dark hair shimmered against the bright autumn sky. Andrew told Pat that he would catch up with him later and ran over to his girlfriend, pulling her aside.

"Missy, talk to me. What's going on? It's bothering me that you have been irked with me all day. I want to know what is going on in your head instead of being slapped aside," Andrew begged. As he looked over at Missy’s best friend Janet, she had an expression of "uh oh" written all over her face.
Missy sternly asked, "Do you know what today is?"

Andrew thought in his head. *It wasn't her birthday. It wasn't my birthday. It wasn't Valentine's day or any other holiday involving love. I didn't break any promises recently to do something today.*

And then Missy shook her head while scorching the words, "It's our one year anniversary." And again, she walked off. All Andrew could say was let out a small *oh*.

**A Spark amidst Despair**  
By: Jake Jarvis

What hue doth fire hold?  
  to be so beautiful,  
yellow, orange, red, and gold?  
  to spread like a plague,  
  to stick to a wick?  
to lie deep in the heart of lies untold?

A spark is all that's needed there,  
  deep within brush dry and bare,  
to spread throughout like dust in the air.  
  To ravish the land and leave it black,  
  to turn souls so dark they can't turn  
back,  
is needed but a spark amidst despair.

An innocent beginning it doth seem,  
to strike a match across surface rough,  
to watch the once-red head begin to gleam.  
Then ashes fall and rise in smoke,  
and evil prods and pricks and pokes,  
at the passion burning brighter than any  
sun-sent beam.

It appears no mystery why Satan chose,  
to punish sinners as he does,  
with fire, heat, and red-hot coals.  
To be extinguished means relief,  
of pain and torture and sorrow and  
grief,  
but fire leaves only ashes to its victim's  
souls.
New Beginnings

By: Daniel McGraw

It was a snowy day in December when Johnny was awakened by the strangest sound he had ever heard in his entire twenty-three year existence. He lived on the outskirts of the city, so he wasn’t too terribly far away from anything that was important; such as the grocery store, shopping mall, and most of the fast food restaurants. However, he was just far enough away that he still had an immense amount of privacy and freedom to basically do his own thing without the fear of irking any of his neighbors, who lived at least half a mile away at the closest. Johnny’s house was located in Iowa on the outskirts of Des Moines. As he tried to shake the sleep from his tired body, he searched his room for the first few pairs of clothes that would protect his body from the bitterly cold temperatures and the biting wind that he had become so accustomed to since he moved to Iowa. Eventually, after a few minutes of scrounging he found an Iowa Hawkeye shirt, his favorite pair of blue jeans, a pair of wool socks, his brand new dark black Carhart, and he threw on his boots; then he rushed outside. It took him a few seconds to realize what he was looking at. Initially he thought he was hallucinating from his sleep deprivation; he had only grabbed a few hours from the night before, but eventually he had to accept that what he saw was just as real as he was.

Not too far from his door there was on singular track of some kind that went off towards the woods for about a quarter mile. Whatever it was that left the track had to be of colossal size, but whatever it was, the hill managed to conceal it from Johnny and required him to walk the little less than quarter mile distance to the top of the hill. Johnny slowly made his way towards the hill, ever so cautious to ensure that he didn’t get too close to the actual track, yet still close enough to make sure that he wouldn’t lose the track from the previous day’s snow. A million ideas bounced around inside his head as too what could’ve left such a track; each just a far-fetched as the next. These thoughts ranged from giant sleds to some sort of construction equipment. Living next to the city, it was never uncommon for contractors to be building something.

This was nothing like that though. He’d never seen the likes of what he was staring at. He started to shake as he reached for his phone, but his pocket was empty. In his slumber he had forgotten everything. He turned and ran back to his house. Once there, he found his phone, and first called his brother. He, who lived about a mile away in the same area, reported hearing a loud noise and slight vibration during the night that woke him, but he had no justification for what it was.

“I’ve got an answer for you Bert, but I’m not sure what it is,” Johnny said with panic and confusion in his voice. “Come here immediately, and bring dad’s rifle.”
John’s brother arrived in less than five minutes and they approached the hill together, Johnny with his dad’s old 30-06 rifle in hand. When they crested the hill, concealed by shrubbery, his brother gasped, shocked by what he was looking at.

“I’ve never seen anything like it; hell, I don’t even know what it is,” Bert said.

Just then figures started moving around the structure; they hushed and shrunk low to the ground. As they watched, they noticed something was peculiar about the shapes moving around in the early morning dawn. Johnny took the rifle, and laid it on the ground for a clear view through the scope; he gasped.

Through the range of the rifle scope, the figures seemed to be tinted a sickly shade of green. They were quite small, about the height and size of his four-year-old nephew. They had enormous, bulbous heads, bald on all sides except for a tuft of hair, white as snow, on the very apex of their skulls. Their skin seemed to be stretched too tautly over their faces, and large eyes, deep and vast less as black holes with no pupils or irises, occupied most of the real-estate of their faces. Their thin arms ended in long, probe-like fingers and drug along the ground as they moved about. A thin torso gave way to short, stubby legs, which caused them to waddle to and fro as they walked. The creatures were moving about a solid, saucer-like object; the likes of which Johnny had seen only in cheesy, ’50s Sci-Fi movies. Johnny could discern no entry or exit to the craft, but he felt a deep vibration in his bones, and a faint hum reached his ears that seemed to be emanating from the structure, indicating it was a machine of some sort.

Johnny turned to his brother, and let him take a turn looking through the scope. Johnny and his family had never been a truly “religious” family or a family that believed in fairy tales or supernatural encounters, but tonight, after what he had seen, he was beginning to rethink everything he thought to be right in the world. As Bert hands lowered the rifle, Johnny could see the disbelief and fear etched into the lines of his brother’s face.

“Johnny, what are we going to do, man? Should we call the police or something?”

“I don’t know, Bert, but I got a bad feeling about this place. It feels like we’ve just intruded on something pretty important. I say we get the hell outta here and—“

But before Johnny could finish his sentence, blackness enveloped him; so deep and consuming that he felt as if he were drowning in ink.

What seemed like hours were only a matter of minutes. Johnny and Bert were inside what seemed to be another world, somewhere where light had no existence. Looking right, left, up, and down repeatedly and trying to reach out to make sense of their surroundings was impossible. The atmosphere was too frigid, reaching into the depths of their bones, as if their bodies were paralyzed in some way.

Afraid to speak aloud, Johnny nudged his brother. No reply. He nudged him harder, and still no response from Bert. With an intense blowing of wind in his face, suddenly, the lights were turned on.
What he believed as Bert to be next to him, turned out to be one of the creatures: small body, yet enormous head and eyes, with the longest and narrowest of arms by his sides. Although he had no pupils or irises, his head was turned toward Johnny. Scared for what was coming his way, Johnny spoke up.

“Who-o-o-o ar-r-r-r-e you-u-u? Wher-r-r-e is-s-s Bert?” he said with a shake in his voice.

A gruesome, loud, raspy voice answered Johnny. “You are here because you have what we need”

“What-t-t-t-t do you need-d-d-d?” Johnny asked him. He started to get a better grip on reality.

He noticed the unique lines on the faces of these creatures. They almost did not seem threatening at all. In fact, they did not have any weapons. Johnny could not feel his body or make any movements. It seemed as though he was in a state of induced paralysis. “Wha-a-a-t do you need?” he inquired more aggressively.

The creatures looked at each other and just laughed. Their voice seemed non-threatening as they looked back at Johnny. One of the men at pushed what seemed like a button on a master control panel. Johnny was then released from this immobile state and regained all of his cognitive abilities back. The first thing he did was look around. He did not want to make any sudden movements. When he finally turned his head three-fourths of the way around, he noticed that it was dark out still. He frankly thought it should have been day time by now.

Upon a closer glance, he started to see planets and stars of colors he has never seen before. They were so beautiful. He knew at that instant that he was not on planet earth any more. “We are in space?!?” His voice squeaked.

“Yes, yes you are as well as your brother. You are safe from the world you once knew and loved.” One of the green men explained. “You are safe now, children.”

“I was never in any danger.” Johnny stated. He felt like he was now in the gravest danger of his whole life. They all moved aside and formed a path between Johnny and another alien. This one wore dignified attire that was contrary to the others. He walked with more clout and prestige as well. When he was a comfortable distance away from Johnny, he started to speak.

“You were very close to danger.” The stranger said.

“Who are you?” Johnny asked back.

“I am this great ship’s captain. These men here are my crew and we are travelling through space at light speed in order to get back home on Alderan. This will be your new home now. And, you will be safe. The reason why we chose you is because we need a human on our planet. Your species feel and act differently than we do. We were instructed by our ruler herself to bring you and your brother to our capital where we can celebrate. She hopes that Earth and Alderan will eventually be able to communicate and trade. You are basically what the earthlings call our ‘guinea pig.’”
Johnny was puzzled; he could not believe that this was happening. His body could barely take this experience and he stumbled to the ground. The men gasped around him and backed away. The captain walked closer now. His hands were linked together behind his back. With little strength, Johnny asked, “Where is my brother? I need to see him now.”

The starship captain leaned in closer and said, “Bert is safe. He is enjoying the many amenities around the ship. I suggest you do the same. The starship has many things to enjoy before we dock at base.”

“Sir, I will leave if you answer me this question. What is the meaning of your crew telling me that they saved me? I deserve an explanation.”

“We saved you from your demise. This very day on earth, you would have perished in a fire. The appliances in your apartment were the blame for it. Since you were not going to have a fulfilling life on Earth, we chose you to enjoy a peaceful one on Alderan with us. Our higher intellect and technology allowed us to pinpoint you from light-years away. Please agree to stay with us. We mean you and your brother no harm.”

Johnny thought about going back to Earth. The one thing keeping him from the planet was his yearning for adventure. Travelling to a distant planet would be much more fulfilling than his old life. Still on the floor, Johnny put an arm on his knee and propped himself up. He then held out his hand and agreed to travel with these creatures. Upon that, he embarked further into the ship in search for his brother. The creatures were still celebrating with a clash of whoops and hollers. After all of the other green men left, the captain faced the vast emptiness of space.

“Metraid,” he said in a surprisingly intimidating voice on his voice box. “Tell queen Cleptsii that the mission was inconclusive and unsuccessful. We did not save the boy Johnny. Also, direct the target course to Babakose.”

At that moment, Johnny and Bert were lost inside the ships’ compartments. Poor things would never realize what terrible events awaited for them. But, they never chose to be captured for the benefit of a mysterious and unknown race. Naïve and hapless were the Johnny and Bert whom should never despair at the sight of new and distant lands. This journey is far from over. In fact, it’s only the beginning to a life that will leave them controlling more than they would ever dream of. They might even handle their bestowed responsibilities better than any average human would believe. All we on planet Earth can do is hope for a better existence. Rely on the past for wisdom, for there are never endings but new beginnings.
**Ice Breaker**  
By: Emily Carroll  

The ice is broken  
Now my breath is minty fresh  
Bright white and blue dots  

**St. Patrick’s Day**  
By: Emily Carroll  

Shamrocks from head to toe  
What’s the occasion?  
Everyone knows  
Green, white, and orange are waving proud  
Irish blood everywhere in the crowd  

**Less Dramatic Kitty Cat**  
By: Stephanie Chen  

My soft, furry, and cute orange-kitty-cat  
Is the subject that I will write  
all about. Because her four  
little legs walk close beside me,  
keeping me company whenever  
the world is harsh and unkind.  

She’s what I call one of a kind.  
It may seem odd that a cat  
and a girl are best friends forever.  
How could that sound right?  
People perplexed stare at me,  
Wonder what they’re searching for.  

It doesn’t matter that she has four  
legs, and I two. Truth is, her kind  
of life is less dramatic. To me  
She won’t whine, lie, or complain. Instead, my  
cat  
rubs against me, asking if I’m alright.  
‘Cause I know that if I should ever  
cry she will be there right by my sunken side,  
but never,  
I know, will any of one of her four  
paws stab me in the back. Other people write  
about it too, how lovely and kind  
and nourishing a pet cat  
can be when you’re sick or lonely like me.  

So, I’m happy to have my cat with me.  
She’s not catty. She’s actually clever.  
So what? My title may be crazy cat  
lady. But you won’t understand what friendship  
is for  
until you have met a soul as kind  
as hers. When I slip into bed, after I write  
I see her lying peacefully to my right.  
That warm, fuzzy feeling she evokes in me  
makes my heart smile. She’s so kind  
to me. But it won’t last forever,  
this friendship we have. For  
I’m a human, and she a cat.  

But while we are both here, fated to die, it’s ever  
so silly for me to write complaints of mortality.  
Our time is for living, so that’s what I’ll do.  
Anything for you, my kind kitty-cat.  

**Senses**  
By: Bre Dunsworth  

Hear smell taste touch see  
My senses for exploring  
The world around me
A Tale of Two Cities

By: Daniel Garrison

Over the summer I set out on two trips, 
One was fantastic, the other; a miss, 
Oklahoma City was the location of my first destination,
It was the better of my two vacations, 
Although the trip was full of thunder and storms
The fans of the city all loved where they were born,
I visited the spider terrarium one stormy day, 
And saw an amazing spider that was worth the pay,
A tarantula that could shoot his web, 
And hit a target up to twenty three and three quarter feet away, right on the head
This spider was much more respectable and fun to watch,
Then the man I met at my second vacation spot
My other trip was to Miami, Florida,
And I guess you could call it bad, sorta, 
People only liked the city because of its fair weather,
The fans of Miami would leave once they meet the cold air of displeasure,
I didn’t much care for the heat or south beach,
The city was inconsiderate to say the least,
People would flop down and take up huge amounts of beach,
Miami got even worse when I met the King of the Flop,
Someone needed to tell him how ridiculous he looked so hopefully he would stop,

Three Haikus

By: Kheelan Gopal

I went to the park
Sitting down on the park bench
Was stung by a bee

I like to eat food
Spicy is only the best
Just do not get burnt

Lab early morning
But I did not do so hot
Only desire: sleep

You don’t know me

By: Josie Millard

Understanding me
Mom gazes into my eyes
Nothing more is said.

Kitten, Summer, and Spring

By: Shelby Robinson

Kitten
Small paws and warm fur
Playful and adorable
The true love of a kitten

Summer
The sun’s brightness
The warmth upon my skin
Proof summer’s come

Spring
A soft breeze blowing
Smell of flowers in the air
It is time for spring
My Sunshine

By: Razan Rajab

It was the year 2068: my husband and my 50th wedding anniversary. It was such an exciting day; the night before, we planned on going on a picnic during the afternoon, taking a long, nice walk on the beach right down the street from our loft, and ending the night at our favorite restaurant for dinner. Our four kids lived far; if only we could spend the day with everyone together. My oldest son works as a lawyer in Michigan, my oldest daughter works as a doctor in North Carolina, my youngest son works in New York as a chain-restaurant and store owner, and my youngest daughter works in Florida as a pharmacist (just like her mother). In short, they’re all too busy with their crazy lives and their own families to come visit us.

The morning started off with the scent of omelets, olives, cheese, and bread floating throughout the house. I grabbed my robe and headed downstairs to the kitchen where I saw the love of my life setting breakfast on the table. What a sweetheart. It was always the same routine. “Well it’s about time you woke up, sunshine! I woke up about two hours ago,” he told me. He was always in such a hyper, happy mood. He never changed. Only problem was: his health was beginning to get to him. He’s been trying to ignore it and reassure me that everything would be okay, trying to show himself always strong in front of me, but I knew the truth. I knew day by day he was struggling to get out of bed and starting to have trouble with his usual routines. But we always carry on our days as if we just had gotten married.

After breakfast, we both got dressed and went out to shop for a few things. We then headed to the park for our romantic picnic date. Lying under the sky was just beautiful. The warmth of the sun and the nice breeze that would comfort us every little while, and just sitting there with my best friend was beyond perfect. It reminded me of our first date together. After the picnic, we strolled over to the beach and walked along the shore. The day was spent the same way we spent our most important days together: the picnic from our first date, and the walk on the beach to when he asked me to marry him. Throughout the entire day, he would give me a certain gaze, the same gaze he gave me on our wedding day fifty years ago. He repeatedly told me, “I love you,” everywhere we went and after everything we did. I could not be more thankful.

As he grabbed my hand to kiss it, he suddenly squeezed harder and pressed his other hand on his chest. My husband fell on the beach sand, in so much pain, while I just went into shock.

After the ambulance rushed and took him to the emergency room, I was waiting outside of his room for news from the doctor. I called my children and each of them took a direct flight to us, to come see their father. We waited anxiously for what seemed like hours. The doctor came to us, and informed with a strong breath, “he’s really struggling, so please be prepared for anything. You guys can go inside, but one at a time.”

My kids went in first, one by one. I was afraid to go in, afraid to see my husband in pain, afraid of having him leave me. I walked in and tears ran down my face before anything else was
said or done. I lay beside him in his bed and he reached for my hand one more time. He gave me the same gaze again, the same one I said “I do” for. Raising my hand up to his face, he kissed it. He smiled his cute smile, showing me his dimples.

“I never wanted to be weak, I’m sorry,” he told me. I didn’t know how to reply. “I love you, sunshine,” he then said, and the machine gave out one continuous, long beep.

My last day with him was the same day I started my life with him over fifty years ago. Simply amazing.

Love?

By: Marquitta Martin

YOU’RE IN LOVE WITH HIS SMILE
BUT THAT SMILE CAN BE A KILLER
HIS PRESENCE MAKES YOU HOT
WHILE HIS TOUCH MAKES YOU SHIVER

HIS GAME HAS NO WEAKNESS
AND HIS STYLE IS PRETTY FLY
HIS STARE CAN MAKE YOU MELT
THAT’S WHAT REALLY CAUGHT YOUR EYE

HIS VOICE GIVES YOU BUTTERFLIES
BUT WILL LATER CAUSE YOU PAIN
HIS KISS IS THE MOST GENTLE
HIS LOVE FOR YOU, INSANE

HE HOLDS YOU WITH SO MUCH POWER
YET THE EMBRACE IS SO SOFT
TO YOU HE WOULD GIVE THE WORLD
NO MATTER WHAT THE COST

HIS FEELINGS FOR YOU ARE TRUE
BUT HIS LOYALTY IS A LIE
YOUR HEART WILL BE SHATTERED
WHEN YOU FIND OUT YOU’RE THE CHICK ON THE SIDE

HE WAS SO GOOD, SO BAD, SO PERFECT
MESSING WITH OTHER DUDES JUST PROVE ME RIGHT
WHY CAN’T HE LIKE ME THE WAY THEY DO?
WHY CAN’T HE DREAM ABOUT ME TONIGHT?

I WISH I HAD THE COURAGE TO ASK
DO YOU STILL LIKE ME, DO YOU STILL CARE?
BUT AS I LAY HERE FALLING ASLEEP
I THINK ABOUT HIM, AND IT ISN’T FAIR!
Hope

By: Susan Bao

Hayden Choi is a 29 year old Chinese American, born to Ping Choi and Fu Yu Choi. Ping and Fu Yu were first generation immigrants. They were both from Beihai, China, a very small city near the South Sea. Hayden was born in Seattle, Washington. Hayden has always been very obedient to his parents, listening to whatever they say. He always got good grades in school, and graduated valedictorian from his high school. After high school he attended Yale and got his bachelor degree in business. Later on, he attended the Business school of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. After graduating from business school, Hayden moved back to Seattle where he was hired to be the CEO of Chery, a Chinese car company that has made their way to the United States market. Hayden was very well off, and bought a large mansion for him and his parents to reside in. Hayden was everything that Ping and Fu Yu could have asked for.

However, everything changed within the time span of a week when Hayden flew to Hong Kong for a business conference. There, Hayden met April, the regional sales manager of Chery who worked at the branch in New York. April was also a Chinese American and she was born in New York. However, April did not speak any Chinese. A term commonly used to describe people like April is “white washed,” meaning she does not observe any of the Chinese traditions and cultural values but rather, she is just like any other Caucasian American. Hayden fell in love with April the moment he saw her. However, she did not reciprocate his feelings. She thought he was just another man of high position that wanted to fool around with the lower position people such as herself. April rejected Hayden’s invitation to dinner that Friday night. However, Hayden was very persistent. The next day, he asked her to breakfast. She refused. He then asked her to lunch, and she refused once again. He then asked her to dinner. As she was getting ready to cross the street, he followed her and tried to ask her to dinner. She refused once again, and began crossing the street. Suddenly, a car ran the red light and went straight towards April. Hayden saw the car coming and ran and pushed April out of the way, but had no time to run away himself. He got hit by the car and flew forward 100 feet. April finally saw that Hayden was a genuinely nice and caring man. Tears streamed down her eyes as the ambulance drove away with Hayden. She went to the hospital where they took him and asked the doctors about his situation. They told her that his left femur was fractured and his right elbow was broken. Other than that, he should be ready to go in a few days. During those few days, April never left Hayden’s side. The two were in love.

Hayden flew back to Seattle with April, whom he had transferred to work with him at the Seattle branch. However, Hayden’s parents did not like April at all. They blamed Hayden’s accident on April and said that she will bring bad luck to the whole family. They also believed that April was only with Hayden for his money. Hayden did not believe anything that his parents said. He insisted on marrying April. This was the first time that Hayden ever disobeyed his parents’ wishes. They would not allow April into the family. Hayden threatened that if they did not let him marry April, then he would quit his job and run far away with April and never see his parents again. Defeated, his parents allowed April into the family, but they still harbored ill feelings towards April.

After getting married, Hayden and April lived happily in the mansion. April was a very good daughter in law, and tried to learn more Chinese customs to please her in-laws. Despite all
her efforts, Hayden’s parents never changed their minds about April, for they are both very stubborn. Not long after they were married, April got pregnant. Hayden was ecstatic! He was spending time talking to her stomach, buying baby clothes, a baby crib, and even picking names for his baby. They decided to not find out about the sex of the baby until after birth. Ping and Fu Yu finally decided to lighten up a little bit on April, since she was carrying their grandchild. Everything was going perfectly.

Three months later, when April was six months pregnant, Hayden decided that there was no need for her to continue working and being stressed. He did not want the mother of his child to have to work, so he told her to stay at home and rest. At home, April was really bored since she had nothing to do. She began to learn how to cook and decided that she would cook a meal for her in-laws. She had prepared steamed fish and rice for Ping and Fu Yu. April thought that after this meal, her in-laws would finally accept her into the family. What April did not know was that the plate used to plate the fish was previously used to hold rat poison. Fu Yu had used the plate to hold rat poison but forgot to wash it and just put it back in the cabinet. April happened to have grabbed that plate, since it looked perfectly clean. After eating, both Fu Yu and Ping had to be rushed to the hospital to have their stomachs pumped. The two were convinced that April had tried to poison them so that she and her baby would never have to deal with the two of them.

“It was her! She poisoned us! She is so evil!” Fu Yu screamed.
“….Is this true?” Hayden asked.
“No no no! I didn’t do anything! I was only trying to make a nice meal for mom and dad!” April cried.
“Don’t call me mom, I’m not your mom!” Fu Yu said. “I don’t have a daughter in law that is as evil as you! You are the reincarnation of an evil fox!”
“Please, I didn’t try to poison you guys, you have to believe me!” April said, crying.
“You believe me, right?” she asked Hayden.

Just then, the doctor came out. He told Hayden that his parents were poisoned with rat poison and that they were admitted just in time. Had they been admitted any later, the both of them would have died.

Hayden turned and looked at April. “How can I believe you now?” he asked.
April was staring into his eyes as tears streamed down her face.
“Leave,” Hayden said, “I never want to see you again, LEAVE!”

Despite his love for April, Hayden could not allow anyone to harm his parents. April was speechless. She tried to hold in her tears, but they were heavy. The tears kept falling as she turned her back and walked away. She went back to the house to pack her things and moved to a hotel nearby. She booked a plane ticket to fly back to New York. April’s friend, Jessica, took April to the airport. It was snowing outside. The skies were gray.
“Your’re really going back to New York?” Jessica asked.
“What else am I supposed to do?” April replied.
“But what about your baby?” Jessica asked.
April looked down at her swollen stomach, and felt the tears coming again. She cried, and said “I guess the baby will just not have a father.”

Back at the house, Hayden was cleaning up the dinner that was left over from the poisonous meal. His parents were both resting in the living room. They were glad that they finally got rid of April, but they were mad that they wouldn’t get to see their grandbaby. When Hayden picked up the plate that held the fish, he instantly recognized that it was the plate his
mother had used to hold rat poison. He asked his mom if she had used that plate to hold rat poison, and she was shocked.

“That…is the plate that I used to kill the rats! How did I not know? April didn’t try to kill us; she’s innocent!” his mother exclaimed. “Hurry and get back my daughter in law and my grandchild!” His parents had finally accepted April into the family.

Hayden was instantly relieved and ran to call everyone he knew to ask where April was. He called Jessica, and she told him that April was getting ready to board the plane back to New York. Hayden ran to his car and sped down the highway to the airport. He got there just as April was getting ready to board the plane. The plane was a small plane that was going to fly to the bigger airport in Seattle where they would switch to a bigger plane and fly to New York.

Hayden was running towards the runway where they were boarding, screaming April’s name the whole time. However, she did not hear him because he was too far away. She walked up the steps to the plane. As she stepped onto the last step, she slipped because of the snow that had melted on there and she fell to the ground. Hayden saw this, and ran even faster towards April.

“APRIL! CALL THE AMBULANCE!! WHAT ARE YOU ALL STANDING THERE DOING? CALL THE AMBULANCE!” Hayden cried.

April was bleeding, which was not a good sign since she was six months pregnant. She looked up at Hayden.

“Are you okay honey? Sweetie I’m so sorry; it wasn’t your fault! I should’ve trusted you! I should’ve believed in you!” Hayden said.

April smiled and said, “It’s okay, I love you.” She fainted as the ambulance arrived and rushed her to the hospital. After two hours in the emergency room, the doctor came out.

“How’s my wife doctor?” Hayden asked anxiously.

“I am so sorry. When your wife was brought in, we could’ve saved her but the baby would have to have been terminated. Your wife refused and wanted us to save the baby instead. I asked her if she should consult you first, but she strongly insisted on saving the baby. I’m sorry, there’s nothing more we can do for her.”

Hayden fell to the floor in disbelief. He slowly got up and went into the room with April. She looked weak.

“Hayden,” April whispered, “that’s our baby.”

Hayden went over to the incubator and saw the baby. It was a girl, and she was only a little bigger than his hand. She’s a tough one. Hayden went over to April and laid next to her.

“Why?” He asked. “Why did you do that? What will I do without you? How am I going to do this without you?” he asked. He began to cry.

“I knew I wouldn’t make it, Hayden. I had to give our baby a chance to see this world, to see her father and what a wonderful man he is. I know you will love her, Hayden, and I know you will be a great father.”

“But it won’t be the same without you, April! How could you do this?”

“I’ve already named her, Hayden. Do you want to know her name?”

“What’s her name?”

“Hope.”

“I love that name, I love any name that you choose. I love you so much April, so much.”

“I love you too Hayden,” she cried, “I wish I could be with you forever.”

“Don’t ever leave me, please!”

As Hayden held her, he felt her getting colder, and colder.

“I love you Hayden,” April whispered as she passed away.
Hayden held onto her. He stayed there until the doctors called her time of death. April was gone. All that Hayden has now is Hope.

**Diseased**

By: Kourtni Blomker

Roses are inflamed  
Violets are asphyxiated  
Daffodils are jaundiced

They say give a man a hammer  
The whole world becomes a nail

Give a man a medical degree  
The whole world becomes diseased

**Kingshighway and 44**

By: Shawn Thomas

He has long hair and dirty clothes.  
He is missing most of his teeth.  
He has no home or close family.  
He gathers change in a tin cup.  
He sleeps in the rain and snow.  
He eats food he finds in garbage.  
But it doesn’t stop him from smiling.

**Imagine**

By: Kook Hwang

Listen! Listen very carefully.  
People are busy walking hastily to work.  
Kids are jumping and bustling around in the playground.  
Criminals are running for their lives.  
Nice people swing by and drop a few change.  
Everyone is constantly moving here and there. But, I am stuck here near a loud construction area.  
It is dirty and smelly.  
I have nowhere to go.  
I am fragile to move. But, I wouldn’t mind being stuck on a beach, enjoying the breeze and sun.  
I imagine there would be a large ocean.  
I imagine many seashells on the lucrative sand.  
I imagine. I imagine.
Being Saved

By Amanda Syers

Looking back at life I was dead
Nothing of this world would make me alive
I was on a sinking ship, I wanted to be saved
Confused, broken and like all other men
But I was nowhere to be found, lost
My heart was heavy with no love

I searched for years for that love
Could it be that I was just dead
Left in the dark, crying and lost
Wanting a human to make me alive
Putting my trust in a lowly man
Men tried, but I couldn’t be saved

I pursued guys with the hope to be saved
There had to be someone with love
Willing to stand up and be my man
A man that didn’t want me dead
But saw me for who I was alive
A guy who was looking for a lost

Girl. Who really looks for the lost?
Not when man thinks he is already saved
But why do I feel as if I’m not alive
Like no one can truly show real love
They spend more time reconciling the dead
What a sad way for a man
to live his short life. One man
Came into my life, he wasn’t lost
He had been raised from the dead
He didn’t have to worry about being saved
I couldn’t comprehend his unending love
I didn’t see him but he was alive

I knew that I wanted to be alive
In him. It was this man
Who wanted a real relationship, love
Like I hadn’t experienced. Lost
In the chaos of life, I was finally saved
No longer a resident with the dead

I am alive in Christ, no longer living dead.
He uses me, Amanda, to lead the lost
By showing his love many more will be saved
The Battalion, Ch. 26 – Do the Impossible, Part 1

By: Christina Ranick

I slammed the door to the barracks on my way out. Headed to daily training, I didn’t know what to expect. Every day was different, so there was no guarantee I would be prepared. The gravel trail crunched beneath my feet as I walked through the woods, and I heard the soft rustling of grass as I came to a clearing. I’d been here before - every day for the last few months. And in the middle of the clearing, the Lieutenant was always waiting for me, and he always wore some sort of frown – especially if I was late. Today he had was staring off pensively into the distance. Which was never a good sign. A little sword – that I’d seen only a few times – lay sheathed amidst the grass. It glinted silver in the light as I approached. He heard me coming, glanced in my direction for a second, then whistled. A cry came from the direction in which he was staring, and a shadow appeared in the sky. He held out his arm, and within a matter of seconds, a large red hawk landed on it. It chirped at him as he lowered his arm and stroked its side. With one last squeak, the hawk took off and flew back into the distance. The Lieutenant sighed and turned to me. “You didn’t need to come today. There’s no training to do.”

My eyes narrowed for a second. “And why is that? Nothing? Usually you have some sort of plan to throw me across the field and call it training,” I scoffed at him. That’s usually what would happen. He’d send some giant gust of wind my way and I’d go flying, whether I wanted to or not. I spun around on my heels and started heading the other direction.

“Not so fast,” he called after me. I whirled back around to face him again. “I didn’t call you here, but there is something you should know and be prepared for.” I gave him a confused expression and he continued. “Today is a rather strange occasion. You, your brother, and your friend have been chosen to participate in a challenge tonight in the arena.”

I glared at him, and growled, “Oh? Tell me…” I paused for a moment. “…was it you that volunteered me for this challenge?”

He nodded grimly and looked away, reaching into his pocket and pulling out some little electronic thing. “I did just that. This challenge isn’t like any of the others. It’s extremely difficult, and no one has accomplished that feat. But I’m sure that it can be beaten. And you’re the right person to do it.” He tossed something into the air and I caught it. It was the small thing he had pulled out of his pocket minutes earlier – a communication device, much like a Bluetooth for a cellphone. “I believe you know what that is. Use it during the challenge,” he muttered and then disappeared in the blink of an eye along with all of his equipment. I looked around me and sighed. He really was gone, and I was hoping for more instruction than that. Oh well…

A few hours later, I was summoned to the arena, where I was greeted by my brother and best friend. The three of us stood in the center of the arena, and glanced around us. For once, I was glad we were wearing boots. The red dirt we were standing on shifted underneath our feet, and it made me feel even more uneasy. We weren’t given any details about what we had to do, or any information about the challenge. We were going in blind.

Suddenly, the floor rumbled, and a door several meters in front of us opened. Five large, stone figures glided out from the darkness. They stood in a tight formation, and advanced on us. We had no weapons, only our wits. The stone warriors rushed at us one at a time, sending us skittering across the dirt to avoid it. I sucked in a breath and flicked my wrist at the one closest to me. A burst of wind shot from behind me and hit the stone soldier dead center. I groaned as it recoiled back momentarily then continued advancing. It didn’t work. Of course not.
“What the heck are these things,” I called to my brother. He was in the engineering, strategic and information division, so it made no sense to me why he was here.

“They’re demon dolls,” he called back, and I shot him a Huh? Look. “They’re spirits. Evil ones. They’re very powerful and can inhabit inanimate objects.”

“How are we supposed to beat it? We don’t have any weapons and our skills are useless!”

For minutes on end, we jumped and flipped around the arena, staying on the defensive and avoiding the attacks. A commotion came from the officers’ seats, but I was far too busy dodging the onslaught to look up and find out what was going on.

More minutes passed, and we were starting to get tired. A popping sound snapped me out of a momentary trance, and a voice spoke from the device in my ear, which I had completely forgotten about until now. “You guys seem to be doing well,” the Lieutenant said as I narrowly avoided the sharp, swinging arm of one of the stone figures. I could feel a tingling on my cheek and small red beads began to form, sliding down my face and dropping into the dirt. “Never mind.”

“I don’t have time for your nonsense right now. What do you want?” I snarled at him.

“Look up.” I glanced to the sky and saw something silver dangling from a tall pole, nearly 75 feet in the air. I squinted and tried to focus my vision. “See it?” I rolled my eyes, though he most likely couldn’t notice that. “That’s my sword. It’ll help you win this fight.”

“You crazy old man,” I barked. “How the hell is that supposed to help me? It’s 75 feet in the air!”

He sighed and laughed a little. “That’s just it. I said it would be difficult, didn’t I? Be thankful I’m helping you at all.”

At this point I was getting irritated, either with his smugness or my inability to do anything against this challenge. I shouted at him “How the hell am I supposed to win? This is impossible! We may be Aero users, but there are limitations! This is insane! The only way to retrieve it is to fly-“

“Exactly,” he cut me off.

“You’ve got to be kidding…” I dodged another attack and made my way to my brother and friend. They looked at me with panic in their eyes. All I could do was point up at the sky. “There’s our solution.”

To learn more about The Battalion:

Englyn:

By: Amanda Syers

Looking up at the dark sky—looks so sad
Raining dry very mad
Why does the weather look so bad
Running while the rain plays tag
Memory Lane

By: Elizabeth Lemma

It had been a long time since I’d been here. The area looked different than I remembered. There was still a cluster of apartments that were organized along the main road. Yet, the design was different. What was once a red, vibrant set of apartments had been painted over with a dull, beige tone. The pavement was cracked and the tree branches hung low. Yet, not everything had changed. The trees, though their branches had grown far too big to carry their own weight, still maintained a similar shape to what I remembered as a kid. I then recalled a time when I celebrated my fifth birthday right below this particular tree. All of my neighbors and friends were there and it was a time of joy and peace. Up ahead there was still the big hill where I would run up and down during the winter and go sledding. The concrete road not too far from this place was where I learned to ride a bicycle. This place had changed. But, the fundamental aspects of this place, the place I used to call home, had not.

After a trip down memory lane, I headed back to my car. Just as I was about to open the car door, a man appeared to be headed toward my direction. I stopped, mildly concerned that I would be in some sort of danger. But, as he drew closer, and closer, I noticed he seemed friendly and harmless enough. His face was relaxed and his posture seemed welcoming. He stopped just a few feet before me and said, “I hate to bother you, but can you tell me how to get on I-70 from here?”

I replied, “I haven’t the slightest clue.”

“Oh. You’re not from around here?” He asked.

“No. I mean, yes. But, not anymore.” The man smiled, confused. I laughed pointing to the now beige buildings, “This is where I grew up. Just in the area and thought I would stop by.” I thought the man might live in one of the apartments and pointed out the no trespassing sign posted in the grass behind him, but he just smiled. I guessed he was around seventy years old, well dressed and he wore a wedding band. He glanced over his shoulder at the apartments and smiled again.

“I’m sure they were a beautiful place to grow up. These days they’re renovating everything ‘modern’ taking the life out of once beautiful homes and making them all uniform.” He said.

“Yes.” I agreed. “They are no longer what I remember them to be. Do you live here?” I questioned cautiously.

“No, no. I was passing though and got lost, now I’m looking to get back on I-70. Going to visit family.” The man seemed distraught looking around his surroundings.

I suggested, “Well I am about to go look around that building that I used to live at…If you want to come with me, there will probably be somebody there that we can ask for directions.”
“That sounds great; let’s do that.” We begin to walk towards the building and discuss the dissipating scenery as we walked. I tell him about the places that I used to walk around during the day and visit during the nights. The parks where I used to love to play as a kid and how my father used to take me out every weekend to play catch there. He agreed that it is very difficult to leave a home town when you really do not know anything else. Everywhere else you go is never really the same and it becomes increasingly difficult to find something that will even relate to it.

We finally get to the building and walk in. We are greeted by a doorman and are able to ask him for directions. The old man thanks me for the pleasure of my company and help and is on his way. I continue to walk around the building and have a strong sense of nostalgia for the town in which I used to live.

After walking around for a short time, however, I again ran into the older gentleman. “Well hello again,” I said. “Were you able to get directions to I-70?”

“I-70? Why would I want to go there?”

Now I was thoroughly confused. “When I first met you, that’s where you said you wanted to go.”

“Oh, yes, I remember. My wife said we were going to take I-70 to see our daughter. We went to the grocery store to get some snacks for the trip, and I don’t know where she went after that. So I thought if I could find I-70, I could find her.”

“Ohhhhh. Uhhhh. Do you know what grocery store you stopped at?” This seemed unlikely, but it was all I could think of.

“Yes, it was less than a block from where I met you.”

This sounded better. “Well, let’s walk back there.” Was I responsible for him now? I thought the apartment house manager would figure out what to do. Why was he back to me? However, we walked along and actually I was following him. And it turned out, he did lead me to a grocery store—the one that actually was there when I was a child. I was delighted. I used to buy nickel candy there. Yes, that’s true. Nickel candy. For a bar that was about one-half the size of one they charge a dollar for now. It was one of the few businesses that hadn’t been torn down and outsized by the new big box stores. I was surprised, but thrilled to enter and see it still had wooden floors, and short counters. They didn’t look as full as I remembered, but this was a piece of my childhood.

However, first I had to do something about the man. “Is this where you lost your wife?” I asked.

“I didn’t lose her.” He laughed. “But yes, this was where we stopped.”

I went over to the cashier, who looked like an aged version of the woman who used to be there, and I told her my story. “Do you remember this man and wife?” I asked.

“Oh yes, his wife was just frantic. I told her not to panic; he couldn’t go far on foot. He would come back—as he just did. But instead of waiting, she had to rush out looking for him.”
Darn, I thought to myself. This was going to be trickier than I thought. I thanked the kind women for the information and went to find the old man in the back of the store.

“The cashier lady said your wife was here a short time ago, but left to look for you. I can help you find her, but first, can I ask what your name is?” I asked the old gentleman.

“Oh, please excuse me. My name is Harold. And you are?”

“My name is Michelle. Ok, so about your wife. She must’ve ventured this way,” I said as I pointed down the street, “because we came from that way.” We began to walk down the street. Harold told me all about his wife; how beautiful she was, how she always made his favorite dinners, how she had cancer back in the 70’s. For forgetting where she was, he certainly remembered a lot about her. We had made it around the first block with still no luck. “Let’s keep looking, she couldn’t have made it far,” I said.

As we walked further on, nostalgia began to sink in. I remember this street. I used to come here with my mother to get haircuts. And down a little further on the left was the hardware store my father visited frequently. I also remembered the time a young boy was selling kittens in front of the fabric store. I really wanted one of those kittens, but mother said no. Harold’s talking brought me back to reality.

“Still no sign of her. We might have to search the whole city!” he said with a laugh.

“She probably didn’t make it this far. Let’s head back to the grocery store,” I said. “Maybe we can call your daughter from there and see if she has heard from her.” Harold happily agreed to the idea. He no longer seemed as concerned about his wife. I think I was more worried than he was. We made small talk as we walked back toward the store. Harold began to get winded, but he continued on with his stories of the Vietnam War. I listened while keeping an eye out for his wife, although I wasn’t even sure what she looked like.

“Harold? Harold!” Someone was yelling his name. We had just made it back to the grocery store when a woman came running toward us. “Harold, where have you been? I’ve looked everywhere for you.”

“Well I was looking for you. I would have been lost had it not been for Michelle here. She spent her whole afternoon helping me look for you.”

“Oh Michelle, how could I thank you? You wouldn’t believe, but this isn’t the first time this has happened with Harold. His memory is starting to go,” the old woman said. “You should come to dinner with us at our daughter’s house. I don’t think it is too far from here.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’m just glad I could help. I really must be going, but I do appreciate the offer for dinner. I’d love to listen to more of Harold’s stories; he really has a lot to say!” I told the woman.

“Oh, ok. Well thanks again. Hopefully we will run into each other again. Bye for now,” the woman said.
“Bye Michelle. Thanks for spending the day with an old hoot like me,” Harold says as he shakes my hand.

I watch the two of them get into their car and drive off. I’m going to miss Harold. He helped remind me of why I love this place. Without Harold, I wouldn’t have gotten to relive a lot of my childhood memories today. I should have thanked him for that. I began to walk back toward the old apartments. Now I have to remember where I left my car.

Sugar Glider Sonnet
By: Haseeb Wajid

Inside my house is a little creature
He likes to glide and sit on my shoulder
He eats many fruits and sucks the fruit juice
Spinning on his wheel makes him quite happy
I got him from a mall in West County
I fell in love with them at first display
They would jump into the pockets of men
I knew right then that I had to get one
Bonding took a long time and it was hard
But I stayed steadfast and kept pushing through
He would bite me and try to frighten me
But I showed him that I could be trusted
Now he sleeps in my shirt during the day
And slumbers in his cage when I’m at school

Ba-bang, Ba-boom, Ta-da
By: R. J. Shaw

Ba-bang he is dead on the ground
Ba-bang his wife was shot from the tower
Ba-bang his body was never found
Ba-bang the shooter had all the power
Ba-boom the bomb blew up the city
Ba-boom planes watched from the sky
Ba-boom the leader was feeling pity
Ba-boom the bomber waved goodbye
Ta-da they have won the war
Ta-da the nation has backed down
Ta-da the team has settled the score
Ta-da the team has won the crown
The battle is finally over
Said Clifford the Big Red Rover
I’m Already Five Minutes Late (epistolary)
By: Shawn Thomas
Hey you, sorry this has to be rushed
I’m crunched for time, between this or that, him or her
I know I owe you more and I promise I will
Someday, but not now, but then, later
You’re tired of hearing it, I’m too busy
With school, work, meetings, friends, family
And whatever time is left, always minimal
Gets left for you, it’s never enough, I know
So I give a little more, but then sleep sounds so nice,
Something you don’t want to do. So I say it again,
I promise one day you will get it all but until then
I can only hope you understand.

The End
By: Alexandra Morgan

This can’t be over
The days are going too quick
Slow down for one second
I want more time

I want more trips for ice cream
I want more drives to school
I want more songs, more meals, more conversations
I want more time

I want more afternoons watching reruns
I want more walks at the gym
I want more drinks, more dances, more laughter
I want more time

I want more cleaning up the house
I want more late-night discussions
I want more troubles, more solutions, more tears
I want more time

I want more nights studying on the couch
I want more exams
I want more assignments, more lessons, more deadlines
I want more time

Sure I’ll enjoy the freedom that comes when it is over
But for now, I just pray it slows down
I want more time