

Dragons' Fire



da Vinci Arts Middle School
Literary Review
2018 - 2019

Pieces for this ninth annual publication were selected based on literary merit; each poem, essay, or story had to be interesting, engaging, and well-written. The advisor edited pieces for grammar, punctuation, word choice, sentence fluency, and sensibility. Some selections were nominated by language arts teachers. Students wrote some as assignments in one of the Creative Writing electives. A few pieces are inspired by literary works such as *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg, Geraldine Connolly’s “The Summer I Was Sixteen,” Margaret Walker’s “Sorrow Home,” George Ella Lyon’s “Where I’m From,” Lisel Mueller’s “Curriculum Vitae,” and Kathie Appelt’s “What He Took with Him.” The visual arts pieces were selected from the 2019 Capstone exhibition, based on theme, to illustrate the written work. We thank da Vinci students for sharing their creative work with us.

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Alder Bailey-Conklin

Zoom In

By Leah Abramson-Slater

There is void. Black doesn't seem like the right way to describe it. If the void was black, that would at least give us something to latch onto. It's easy to imagine the void as an opaque sea of ink, as something tangible and comforting. A bit like white noise on the radio. There's no station playing, but at least you can still hear that absence. The void isn't a sea of ink or radio static or charcoal. Technically it's full of all sorts of complicated things, but that doesn't matter right now either. What matters is the feeling. The instinctual, overwhelming feeling of void without the help of any equations, theories or complicated laws of physics to explain it. Without all that, the void simply exists, empty.

Empty, until something decides to occupy it. There are many such instances of not-void. Stars, planets, asteroids, to name a few. They exist as pockets of something amid nothing, and as luck would have it, here comes one now.

An unsightly thing it is, all metal and sharp edges. It's cutting its way through the universe at a slow steady pace. A name is painted along one of the sides, *The Advenus*, in once-proud letters. It's a ship. A spaceship. Where is it going? Nobody knows. Ask a person on it, and they would shrug and say, "I'm not sure. Forward?" You would have to go back generations for a satisfying answer. For now "forward" will have to suffice. It isn't wrong after all.

But this ship itself is not the focus of this little vignette. Zoom in past the walls, the air locks, the dormitories. Past the gardens, the kitchens, the cafeterias. Past libraries and universities (it's a good sized ship, we're almost there). Finally, we've reached it. The museum. It's a big museum, as there are many things to put in it in order to remember what little of the past the inhabitants of the ship have left. The museum is sprawling, but let's take a look at a section that is very small. A room hidden in the corner of the building. The door is real mahogany, something unheard of now, but that is a perk of being a museum curator. The room behind the door is his office.

The curator's office smells musty. This, too, is out of the ordinary. Mustiness is not a smell often sniffed anymore. The must may be caused by the exceedingly large number of books. Physical books with ink and paper and sometimes even a leather binding. If you are picking up on a trend here, you might have guessed that this is strange as well, and you would be right. In this society, a family would be lucky to have a single bound book, and they are treasured heirlooms.

So, who is this curator? Well, he is sitting at his desk by the window. The cold bright glow of a nearby planet leaks through the glass and washes the back of his balding head in harsh blue light. The ancient lamp on his desk bathes the front of his face in warm orange.

The curator wears the standard attire of the ship inhabitants. Crisp gray pants and a crisp gray shirt, clean and waxy looking, as they always are. He looks out of place in this fantasy world of the past, as out of place as the glaring view from the window. That's okay, though. Anchors to reality are necessary sometimes, and the curator often drifts away too far for his own good. It's a risk of the job.

Currently, he inspects a small object with gloved hands. It has faded to a pale buttery yellow, but the curator can tell it was once as bright as the genetically modified lemons growing in the public gardens.

It is made of soft cotton, not polyester or any synthetic stuff. It must have been from Before. It looks like an animal, that much the curator can tell. He squints at it. Animals here are very rare. There is a small dairy farm, but the cows are kept hidden away. Not many people have seen a photo of an animal either, besides the ones of dogs and cats their ancestors brought with them long ago. They were not allowed to bring much.

The curator gently hoists a large book onto the desk and leaves through the colorful pages. *Hmm, wings. Must be a bird!* he thinks to himself. His finger rests on an image of a tiny feathered thing, with webbed feet and a funny orange beak. "*Duckling,*" reads the label.

"Duckling," says the curator, testing how the word sounds on his tongue. He likes it; it has a charming quality.

He is suddenly overcome with the urge to remove his gloves and hold the duck toy in his hands. Instead he turns to look behind him. Out the window at endless stretches of

silence and bright pinpricks of light as far as the eye can see. *Did a child hold this toy like I do now?* he asks himself. *Did they hold it while staring out the window? Staring at the retreating marble of a once beautiful Earth? Were they homesick?* The curator was homesick--for a place he'd never been. That's the worst kind of homesickness. It's the way you feel reading a beloved book, knowing you could never travel to the places inside of it.

* * *

Nobody on the ship knows where it is headed. Nobody knows when it will stop flying. For all they know, they will be adrift forever. Short-lived warm blood in a chilly endless night.

Why are we doing this still? This is the question lurking in the back of everybody's mind, afraid to be asked, but always there. Doomed humanity travels on. The universe is very big. They are very small. They travel on because, for better or worse, that is what humans do best.

But for now, the curator turns away from his large window. He draws the curtains, he breathes in the dust, leans into the orange light of his lamp, and holds the little duck toy in his ungloved hands. In this moment, the universe is miniscule.



Enzo Domenico

Death

By Molly Bernardo

She took with her our hearts

Encased in bottles

Mixed in with tears

She took the load

and left a musty space

Empty

The other side of the bed

Cold

The hugs and kisses

The birthday cards

And numerous presents

She left behind her pictures

Her boyfriend

She left behind her family

Her sisters and brother, my mother

Her nieces and nephews, me and my sister

Her parents

Every friend she has ever known

The last Big Flurry she ever drank

Cold, and not just because it was in the fridge

Her house

Her clock that now sits on my shelf

But most of all

She left behind her memories

The high-pitched laugh

The warm hugs
The chocolate shampoo she always brought us when she visited
And sometimes
I can even smell the shampoo
Forever in my hair



Anika Kasten

An Ode to Uggs

By Amélie Boehmer

Oh, Uggs, you are my knight
In shining leather,
You're better than sneakers
And better than Sketchers
And maybe, possibly,
Better than slippers.
I've worn you in rain,
Snow, and shine,
Even though the label says not to.
You stayed together when I spilled
Oil all over the toe and when string
Started to fray, and when the furry fuzz
On the inside started to get rough and fall out,
You still worked and felt comfy.
Throughout winter, fall, and spring you sat
On my feet, being the best shoes.
But now that summer's come
And winter's gone
Just know,
You're getting too hot
And you're getting too small
And that is why I have to let you go

Spring
(after ee cummings)

By Bill Brown

Spring is like an old neon sign (this makes sense I swear)

Its light flickers on and off seemingly randomly

 Clouded by something

Advertising energy to come, but yet to be

(what energy?)

and being as bright as a flower...

That is on fire from explosions(because superhero movies)



Nadia Hadjenan

Metaphorical Hope Dirt

By Georgia Burns

Life is like a hole, and you have a grappling hook. The grappling hook represents you trying, the hole represents life, and the dirt surrounding the hole represents your hope. As the hole gets deeper, it's harder for the grappling hook to get to the top of the hole. And sometimes it feels as though different people's holes were dug more or less deep than yours. Sometimes it feels like other people share a hole. But your hole will never get any less deep without more dirt.

Sometimes an event will add more dirt, sometimes an event will take it away. Sometimes a person steals your dirt, or sometimes a person gives you their dirt.

And if you lose your grappling hook, then the hope dirt slowly trickles down revealing a ground river. You may fall in the river and die, or you could hold yourself up using footholds dug into the dirt. And then sit there waiting for more dirt or a person with their own grappling hook.

There are so many different metaphors to make. But why not just say, life can be hard, but you need a grappling hook. I know that I'm probably going to get murdered for that line, but I just really have a lot of dirt that I won't die. I literally cannot stop right now, like I *definitely* don't have a broken grappling hook on my hands.



Amaya Herrera

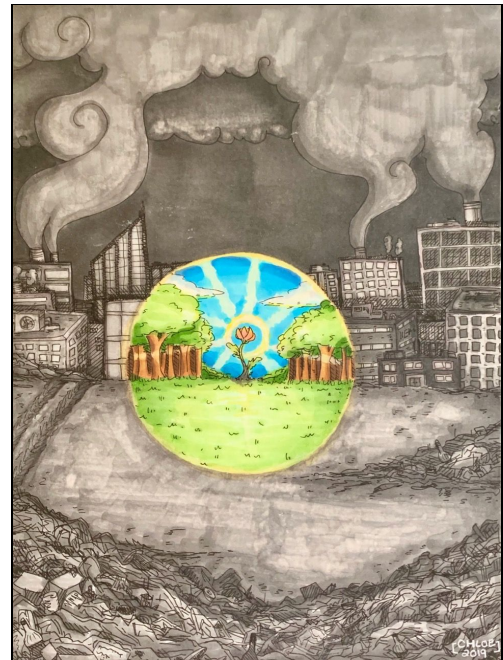
Letter

By Esther Calvert

Dear Future Generations,

Do you see that field over there? The one empty of grass, devoid of flowers? The one that's beige and dry? Do you see where the stumps of trees protrude from the ground like gravestones of warriors killed in battle? Oh. That's right. You don't know what trees are. Well, let me tell you. Trees are like leafy green giants, rising from the ground and creating oxygen to keep us alive. What's that? You don't know what green is? Green is the color of life, of growth and vitality. Our world used to be covered in it. It used to seep from our Earth like sunlight from the sky, making everything look like something straight out of a fairytale. Oh, you want to hear that story again? The one about the "mythical creatures" that used to roam our lands? Long ago, humans weren't the only animals on this planet. There were also fish and birds, elephants and alligators, dogs and cats, deer and bears. Each animal was more beautiful than the next, until they were slowly killed off from global warming.

Oh yes, the Earth was not always this hot. There used to be days so cold that you had to wear something called a coat. There used to be places that were so cold that water would freeze before it hit the ground. Yes, snow. You know that song? The one about the world being white on Christmas? That used to be a reality. Oh, and you used to be able to go



Chloe Berton

swimming without wearing a hazmat suit. I know, crazy right? The water in the oceans used to be a beautiful translucent blue, not a nasty green muck.

Let me tell you, future generations, of the horrible people who made the Earth how it is today, who prevented you from the wonder of our once beautiful Earth. They wouldn't do anything about the problem that was obviously plaguing our lands. They said it was all made up, just a conspiracy theory. Scientists proved again and again that it was real, that there was evidence, but they just laughed and threw plastic bottles over their shoulders. Future generations, I'm sorry that we didn't try to do something. I'm sorry that we left you with this mess instead of dealing with it ourselves.

Sincerely,

Me



Chloe Berton

Grandma's House

By Essence Campbell

“WELCOME“ meets me at the tip of my shoes. My knuckles rock to a beat on the entryway, and Grandma opens the door. Hugs are passed down as we switch onto the wooden floors. On a box TV, Eddie Murphy moans as he revamps into his skinny body. My favorite movie continues playing, but I rush to the bathroom. I go through a door leading me to another door, conducting me to a room. A furry rug welcomes my feet into the room dipped in peach. I pass up the offer of going to use the bathroom and stare into the mirror instead. A black girl stares back. A cloud of darkness raises over above. Pain, anger, and insecurities crawl down from her eyes. He painted her face with brown skin, only for tears to bleed off it. A soft smell of pound cake travels into the lavatory. I turn over to the peachy towels and wipe my face. My stomach twists.. I walk out into the kitchen-living room area. I sit on one of Grandma's four couches next to the gallery of ancient pictures and the dying incense. In the middle of the floor, there is a table. I stare into this black wooden table as a wave of memories come over me. The number of times I have stubbed my toes on that table aren't countable. I scrunch my nose, imagining that pain again. I gaze at the bruised walls as the night passes over my mind.



Ella Higgs

Death Rattle

By Ethan Daley

I wake up in my dorm and pull out my creation “DEATH RATTLE.” I hook up the tank of DEATH RATTLE to the top of my mouse cage and turn a knob to release the gas. I hook the Doom Soaker to my head and watch the mice. I see their eyes turn black as the DEATH RATTLE settles in and they collapse to the floor. I look at the monitor on my wrist which indicates the life force energy being absorbed into me and turned into muscle mass. The tendons in my arms start to bulge and transform from the mice’s life energy. I look down at my monitor which indicates that I have a four percent muscle increase. It worked!

Now it is time to do what DEATH RATTLE was built to do.... Kill Bortix. I exit through my dorm room door, walk through the halls to the elevator, slide my pass through the card reader, and the doors slide open. I step into the elevator and stand next to Steve making small talk.

“Hey, Steve, what floor are you stopping on?” I ask.

He turns, and his nose almost hits me. “Fifth floor. I’m going to see Professor Bernard,” he replies.

SHOOT! I think. Professor Bernard is Bortix, and I’m going up to kill Bortix! Well, I guess a human trial wouldn’t hurt. I put on the Doom Soaker, which is attached to a gas mask, and push a button on my wrist which releases the gas.

I exit the elevator with a 10 percent muscle mass increase, and I enter Professor Bernard’s office. As I walk in, I pull out the DEATH RATTLE device and aim it at Bortix’s chair. It sends a dart through the foam back of his chair and hopefully deep into his robot insides. I stroll up to the chair and spin it around revealing ... nothing? I turn around to see Bortix standing in the doorway, wearing a white lab coat and holding a tazer. He shoots the taser into my left arm. A shot of pain shoots up to my shoulder blade, and I collapse to the ground, screaming in anguish. My eyes flutter shut, and it all fades to black.

I wake up strapped to a table in a rusty hallway being wheeled into a cell by four men wearing black combat armor. They close the door on me, and I see on one of the men’s

armor it says DGP. Devil's Gate Penitentiary. The straps on my arms and legs release, and I shoot to the bars screaming and banging on the cell wall. After an hour of screaming, I collapse to the floor and swear revenge on Bortix.



Brandon Dittenhauser

Biography

By Indigo Day

1. My eyes found the light, beckoning me to the person I will learn to love more than any mother or father.
2. Omogashi sliding from my tongue to my throat, only giving me a few seconds to chew. Grandma yelling to chew. But I don't.
3. Friends, old and new, drenched in drama and young heartbreak.
4. New classes, new school, and no friends. People that hover and awkwardly talk, voices cracking. But I like to think I never changed.
5. Again, I'm thrown off, with new classes and more drama. And people who learn to drive and later learn to drink. And I'm thrown into it.
6. Everything's falling, buildings crumple and people scream. Water hits, drenching my feet. I scream, tasting raw throat, smelling blood. It never stops and i never stop living it.
7. I lost everything I loved. Grandma is gone, and so is my hope. I have no food, but I could never eat. I have no water, but it would be too tempting to drown myself in it. I have no oxygen, my lungs giving out.
8. I've lost more than I can rebuild, but I still live for all who didn't.



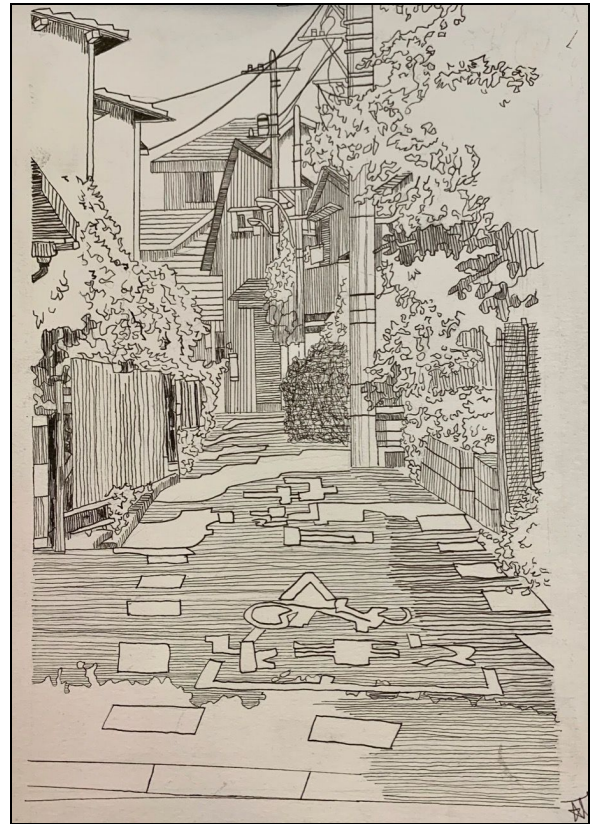
Audrie Trythall

What He Left Behind, What She Took

By Indigo Day

He left her behind,
With her big auburn eyes and the puff on top of her head.
He left the house he built with her
And the promise of family.
He left the promise of staying forever, because
Now forever seems so long.
He left the people he loved and loathed.
He left her hoping that he would come back,
But she finally learned that
He left because it was what he did best.

She took his mistakes and ran with them.
His mistakes biting her ankles, constantly
but never, ever slowing her down.
She took her heartbreak and emptiness
With her, even when she said she was over it.
He reminded her of herself
In the worst times possible,
When she would look in the mirror
and see the emptiness in her eyes,
in her heart.



Audrie Trythall

Dogs

By Dylan Deschler

I love dogs
the soft luxurious fur
juicy gelatinous lips
ears bouncing up and down
neck flaps dropping down
a tongue dangling out of the lips
carelessly bounding around
from place to place
tugging a rope
growling and slobbering
chasing after a tennis ball
more brown than yellow
cuddled up in your lap
always there for you



Lucas Bixby

The Infinite Abyss of My Mind

By Laila Deweese

Have you ever been so alone that you heard the silence
The melody it plays in your mind
The way the thought creeps in
The grasp on my mind
The shackles of the darkness in the silence
And I can hear it now
It's too loud
And the beat is dancing on my mind
Playing in repeat
As the tears fall
The record skips just a bit



Amelia McKean

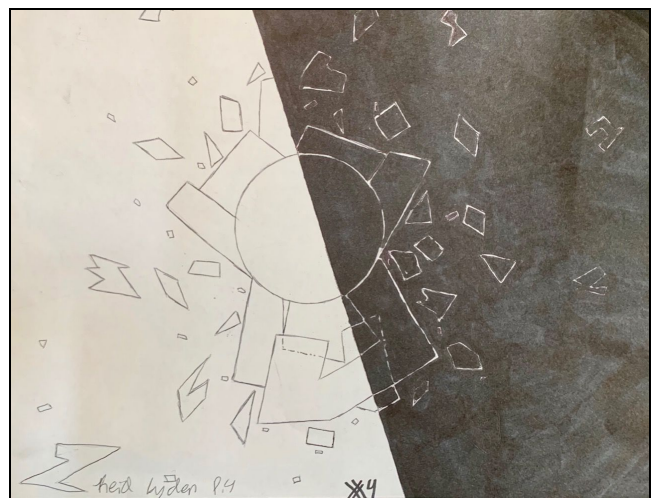
Steps

By Kian Doughty

The steps tower above him
The building goes up past the skyline
People rush in and out quickly
He ducks left and right
Constantly trying not to be trampled

He has never been so scared in his life
He feels fear trickle down his spine
He's too young to die
He's seen too little

A deep voice booms from behind him,
"IT WILL BE FINE!"
He turns around to see his dad
"COME ON! IT'S OUR FIRST DAY OF KINDERGARTEN!"
He walks forward.

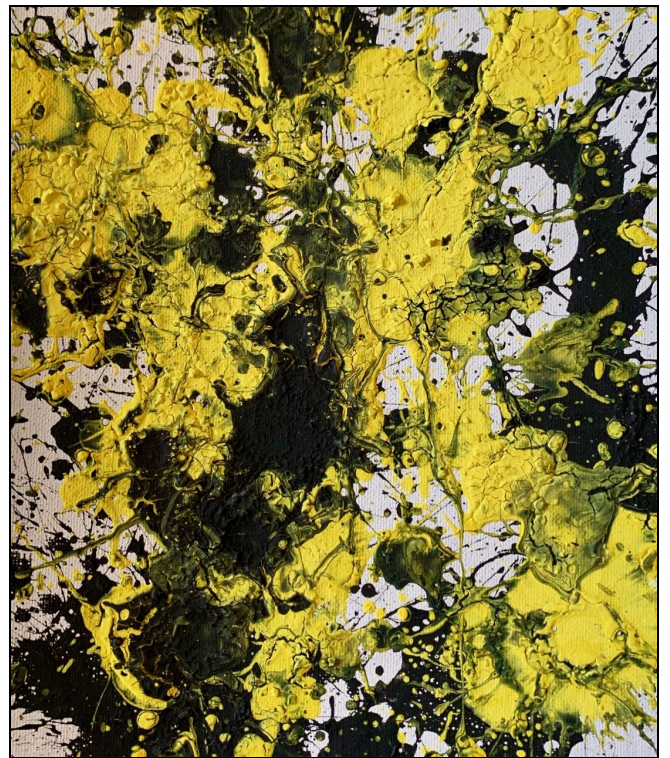


Reid Lyden

Untitled

By Echo Dunkle

he sees the color yellow much differently than i do.
no longer stifling fog - seeping through the places in-between
splendid choke.
gnarled teeth grasp at sun soaked pollen and worker bees
(what have we, if not teeth?)
no - he sees no such splendor.
yellow is his first kiss.
playground romance - broken school bus hymns
anxious gnawing & trembling fingernails
the house with the citron tint
(and dull crimson splatter)
the smell of nostalgia and gutted carrion
weary haze - crackling whisper
oh what different hues of the same color
and somehow i think the light hits his
even
more
beautifully.



Enzo Miali

Skywards

By Fiona Edwards

Broken wings can never fly
Some souls never die
Forests speak
When others are weak
It's hard to say,
If today's the day
To fix my broken heart
So that I can have a new start
To have good friends and not bad,
And to just be glad
For others to grow talents off mine
Instead of being tangled in their own mind



Seasons

By Walker Ferguson

Hay(na)ku: Summer

Cannonball

Warm blue

Sunburned through water

Winter

It pummels

the already damp ground.
with fists of hydrogen and oxygen
washing away
hope of snow and ice,
Could it be any more nice?
Dripping drops dive down drain pipes,
interrupting the cold,
sunny days
reminding us
how to appreciate
wet winters.



Ruthie Price

Where I'm From

By Walker Ferguson

I am from old houses that make noise,
from wet dogs that had to go.

I am from inky snow that floods the road,
from split chins and scraped shins.

I am from red wine, cheese,
and a parking strip of mint leaves.

I am from plane trips where we had to separate
and sidewalk chalk that disappears overnight.

I am from floating down an icy cold river in the middle of summer,
too young to remember the cold hands that lifted me out.

I am from M&M's in a racecar jar,
a scrappy little cat getting trampled by a passing car.

I am from dying birch trees and leaves of every season,
sunflower seeds and rubber cleats,
full of mud, now dried to dust.

I am from where I am from,
nowhere else.

I'll always remember where I'm from.



Tierra Thomas

See Me

By Evelyn Fox

See me
as no child
enveloped in a cloak of sweet lies
I want to believe.

See me
not only when
I'm doing something you don't like.
I'm not a person to you,
I'm the right and the wrong,
the rumors you create,
the space you claim I take away.

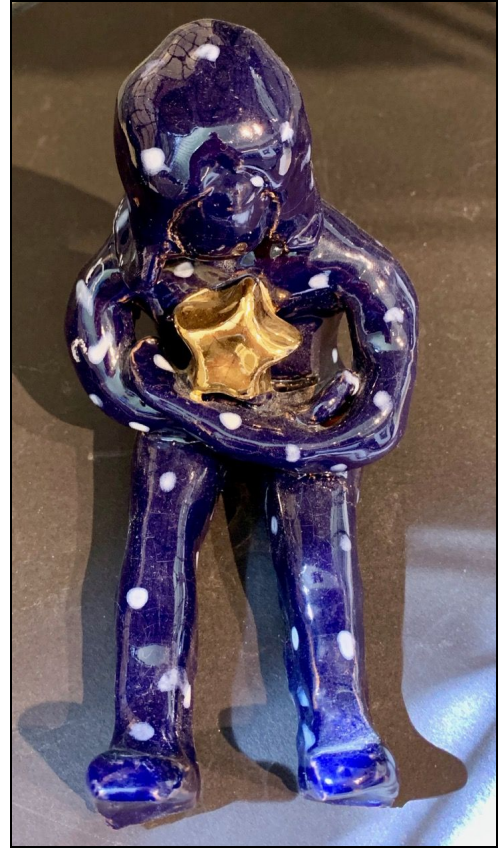
See me

I'm not a child,
hidden and masked,
shipped away in a box labeled, "Broken. Damaged goods,"
ignored on a sea of grief,
them pretending we are not continuously
fighting
for air
because what you can't control scares you.
The subject
of our feared stories
awkwardly pushed away.

I'm sorry
if my story makes you uncomfortable
Would you rather pretend that

I haven't seen things that would break you?
I am
broken glass
with the shards of your fake love and empty promises
scraping deeper and deeper into skin.
You can keep shattering me or try to fix me,
or maybe just be a person, open to loving anyone.
Will you just
see me?

You only
see me when I'm doing something you don't like.
You can like or hate me,
ignore or choose to see me,
turn me away or give me a home,
watch me on the news,
because my pain is only entertainment to you,
treat me like a animal in a zoo.
But I am a person
trying to survive
just
like
you



Violet Meyers

*Note: This poem was written from the point of view of a fictional child who goes through very real events while seeking refuge in Alan Gratz's novel, **Refugee**. This poem was created to voice and bring attention to the pain of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers around the world. It is my form of creative protest against unjust immigration laws. Even if it doesn't affect you, it is still happening.*

The Assignment

By Ezra Greenhill

Ezra stared at the blank Google Doc sheet. It all seemed so easy just moments ago, when Ms. Lanigan assigned him this “Long Story” project. It was second period Creative Writing, and he stared out the window, watching the breeze pushing a small green leaf out of a tree. Writer’s block had trapped him, pinning him to a narrow corner of room 208. He checked ParentVue and looked in his grade book. He had a PR in English, and alas, a C in math. He went back to Google Docs, now mad at himself for not retaking that coordinate graphing test. This whole thing had gone on long enough. He had to do something.

“Hey, Ms Lanigan?” he said quietly. But she ignored his hushed plea. She probably hadn’t heard him, he thought. It was 10:42 anyway, and class would end any minute.

Ezra’s mind was blank. And so was the document.

So he went to third period.

He got through Ms. Wasson’s class, then went to lunch, and consumed a little hamburger, courtesy of the school cafeteria. And as he ate that gross burger, he was thinking about the Long Story assignment. He wanted to have an idea during this half hour lunch/recess period.

But he didn’t.

He was too busy wandering around the cafeteria, trying to get people to feel sorry for him. It was kind of his thing.

The next day, he entered that dreaded Creative Writing room with a morose look on his face. He opened his computer, entered his insanely long password, and stared at the document. That stupid, irritating, document. He wanted to throw his chromebook at the wall, and watch the pieces paint the tile floor. It seemed like an overreaction, he knew, but it was the only thing he could think of, in the midst of his creative strike.

As the days went on, Ezra began to really worry. He had to write this story, he had to, or else he would get a DP, something that would severely injure his Creative Writing grade. And besides, Ms Lanigan had said it was due next week. After an exhausting first period

dance, he opened up his chromebook, his annoying, mind-meddling chromebook, and looked at the blank document, floating in a sea of half-finished assignments.

He dove in, and started to write.

Once upon a time-

No, that's not gonna work, he thought. He then typed a bunch of random story starters that did nothing.

“ARRRRRGH!” he said way too loudly, as some concerned classmates stared at him, worried that he might be having a seizure. Ezra jammed his chromebook back into its metal case, making sure to make as much noise as possible.

This is pointless, he thought. There's no reason to do this. I'm just a sad, pathetic, washed-out seventh grader who begs for attention and has no remorse for anything.

Then suddenly, an idea pierced him, leaving an invisible scar, stretched across his body. He silently screamed in agony, and in happiness.

And he began the assignment..



Gus deWitt

Woods, Birds, and Strife

By Charlie Gullung

Standing in the woods alone,
Only with a knife that's dull,
And all there ever is are gulls,
But we're too far from ocean's hulls,

Smelling only birds tonight,
Hearing them past day and night,
Feeling sadness thick in the air,
And tasting nothing but despair,

All I do is see tonight,
But sorrow blocks all that light,
Except for that train on its tracks,
Blazing towards me as fast as that,

Hitting me with no relay,
Pushing past my year of play,
Faster than I can close my eyes,
My future catches me this night.

And killed me before death tonight.



Alder Bailey-Conklin

Drowning

By Reese Harryhill

how does it feel to drown?

to drown in the pit you dig yourself? the grave you dug yourself?

it's filling with alcohol, despair, loneliness.

YOU ARE DOING THIS TO YOURSELF.

you can't change the past, but the future's entirely your decision.

you are probably going to f### it up.

you always f### it up, because that is what you do BEST.

you made this mistake, you clean it up.

stop trying to put your problems on other people.

this is entirely your fault.

because it is CERTAINLY not mine!

stop trying to shove your problems and your mistakes on others!

soon there will be no one left to blame. they will leave you.

i know you've noticed the way your relationships are ending, ticking down like a timer.

and then there will be you. you will be all alone, no one to call or see. just you, alone.

who will you blame then?

will you finally accept that it was your fault? or will you continue to try and slither out of it?

the choice is entirely yours.

but no, you're not going to try to fix the complete mess you made of yourself.

you still think someone will come and pick up after you, like the child you are.

after all, just yesterday you claimed you did "nothing wrong."

WHAT IS **WRONG** WITH YOU?!

HAVE YOU TOLD THIS **LIE** SO MANY TIMES THAT EVEN YOU BELIEVE IT NOW?

DO YOU NOT HAVE THE HUMAN QUALITY TO SEE THAT EVERYTHING YOU ARE DOING NOW IS GETTING MORE WRONG AND MORE WRONG?

will it always be like this?

will it always be a cat-and-mouse game, you always on my back and me constantly trying to escape your words, your actions, and your mistakes?

will it be like this next year? in 5 years? in 15? am I going to grow up and have children and a spouse, and you won't be there for any of that?

surely not, right?

but do I even want to see you?

you are *not* the person I knew.

and you will live the rest of your life carrying around that weight.

the weight of a failed family. the weight of my tears as I weep for what it used to be.

the weight of everything you've done leading up to this point and everything you will continue to do to dig your grave deeper...

but,

why do I have to carry it around, too

What She Took With Her

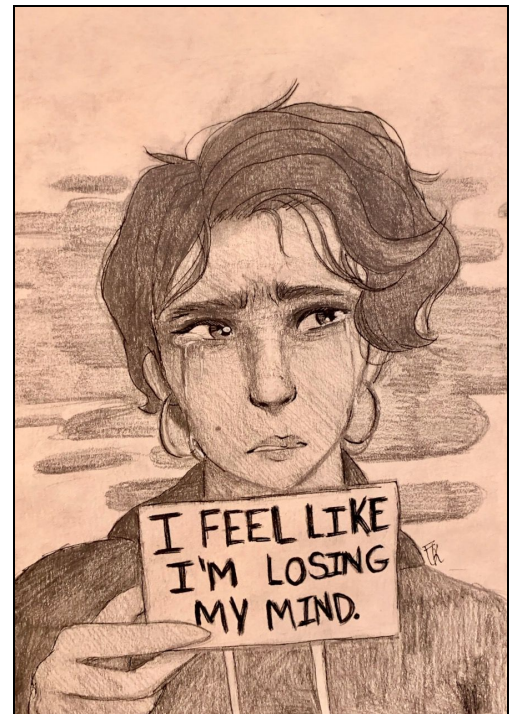
By Reese Harryhill

What she took with her:

Her gray and white comforter,
Her black rug,
Her mother's rings, clothes, makeup
All her clothes,
The names she was called,
Her sister's heart,
Her journals.
The things hidden under her floorboards,
Her photos.

What she left behind:

Her box of old makeup,
Her framed drawings,
An angry step-dad,
A heartbroken mother,
An empty room,
A broken deck.
Her broken childhood,
Her playlists,
Tears that couldn't be fixed with just cookies,
A cat, sitting alone in the sun.
Her camera.



Frances Kenny

Ode to Monster Energy Drink

By Scarlet Hasseries

Long nights
Of anxious
Waiting
For
My mind
To leave
Me alone
Until
I'm greeted
By slumber
I drift
Into dreams
For a few
Short hours
Until the
Blood curdling
Buzz
Of my alarm
Pulls me from
The tranquil night
Another day
Another handful
Of dollars
We cross
The pavement
To the

Corner store
Glass panels
Of cold drinks
The tile floor
The bliss
Of the cool can
In my hand
The satisfying
Pop as I open it
Sweet relief
Like a resurrection
From the dreary
Tired haze
Of the long hours
Of the night before



Indigo Day

Skin Deep

By Emily Hazzard

She walks elegantly everywhere she goes, her movements forming a silent symphony. Her neck supports her heart-shaped head and holds it toward the sky as if it's an offering. When she speaks, her sharp voice will pierce you, but in your wound, you will find a spark of new knowledge. The perseverance she holds in her liquid amber eyes trickles down her spine and straightens her back. Her style is simple, usually consisting of a golden chain around her neck and an expensive, jewel-toned dress. With her tar-colored hair slicked back into a too-tight bun, and her creamy skin dusted with makeup, she is the picture of poise. Always holding herself so tall and straight that she could pose as a mannequin in a store, stiff and unmoving. Except, when you take a peek through the dusty curtains of the stained, white townhouse on the corner of Main Street, you don't see poise, you see struggle. Whenever she gets home from work at the high-end jewelry store across town, she pulls out her bun and nearly screams from the stinging complaints of her scalp. The designer heels, always polished to the point where they could be mistaken as mirrors, are slowly pulled off, revealing raw, blistered skin underneath. The dress is stripped off to reveal a scar like a winding road traveling down her torso, and replaced with a baggy sweatshirt and sweats. Then, she will go look at herself in the mirror, take off the golden chain around her neck, and, it is as if a switch has been flipped. For that is when she cries the tears of someone who has lost something, deep blue rivers taken directly from the endless ocean of pain in her soul. A person can only hold it together for so long until they break, and she broke a long time ago. But this woman doesn't give up without a fight, which is why every morning she gets up, gets ready, and only puts the wine bottle down when she places the golden chain around her neck, upon which a locket filled with memories rests. A locket shaped like a heart, wrapped in promises she will always do her best to keep.

Worry Ball

By Asha Kaiel

You know that ball in your throat when you are
or feel like crying,

I've seen it.

I've had it

and it feels like trying to swallow a
bouncing ball with tiny spikes on it.

Inside the ball, all the guilt, pain,
disappointment, discomfort, judgment,
catastrophes.

It hurts to swallow,

but the worst part is it never goes away,

even if you swallow it,

it comes right back up.

You'll always have that worry ball;

where ever it may be

you always have it.



Lindsay Raban

Ski Poe(m)

By Reid Hofmeister

Once upon a morning dumping, while I powered, fast and bumping,
Past many a tourist weaving, tucking while in a wedge—

While I skidded, teeth a-gnashing, suddenly there came a thrashing,
As of someone hugely crashing, crashing off my powder ledge.

“Tis some tourist,” I muttered, “thrashing at my powder ledge—

Only this I have to vege.”



Felix Cohen

Untitled

By Frances Kenny

I love you.

I don't think I've said it before

And I don't think I ever will.

You were the one to hold me,

you were the one to drop me,

you were the one to tell me to get back up

Just so you could trick me again.

And yes those things hurt like hell

But they made me stronger.

For that I can't thank you enough.

You were the one to point out my flaws

The ones other people were too kind or naive to see.

Thank you for correcting my spelling,

thank you for pushing my elbows off the table

thank you for telling me how to kick the right way

thank you for showing me how to draw a human body.

You pretended to be so cruel.

I didn't forget.

The days in the park together

hiding amongst the roses

and picking spiders off the trees.

The Hello Kitty popsicles

and the time that Popcorn ran away.

I remember so much.

I remember you told me not to ride my bike when the air smelled pure

I didn't believe you and I did anyway

And when I fell you were the one who chided me

Right after you patched me up.

I thought you didn't care.

I thought you hated me because I wasn't what you wanted.

But you had reasons for everything,

and I was too blind to see them.

Mostly because you sprayed sunscreen in my eyes.

But despite all the scars I carry because of you,

I'll be the one who leaves flowers for you 50 years later.

I love you, brother.



Cece Mecklem

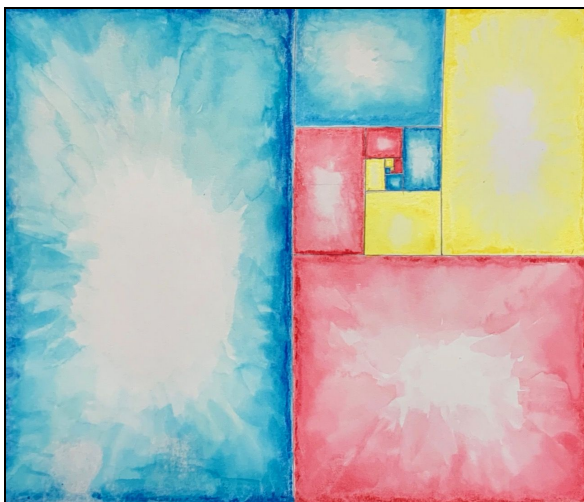
The Descent

By Frances Kenny

He leapt--dove--from the smoldering building, feeling the cold rush of the air as he plummeted towards the ground. Glass shards followed him on the descent downwards, cutting his arms like misplaced throwing knives, no doubt the result of his brash method of exiting the raging studio. And in that fleeting moment of adrenaline, it finally crossed his mind that jumping out of the building was a very bad idea. There was no trampoline, no elastic storefront canopy, and no distressed lover waiting with open arms. There was a paved concrete road speckled with ash and a couple firefighters contemplating the disaster. Yes, he decided, this was probably the worst decision he'd ever made in his soon-to-be-short life.

He closed his eyes and waited for the impact. He waited for the telltale sound of a Glow-stick snap, popcorn crack that would be the last sound he'd ever hear. He waited, and waited, and waited, until he thought he'd never waited for something longer.

He waited on the ground until somebody noticed. Unidentified male, they said. Please come forward if you recognize him or if you are missing a loved one. No one did, of course; he didn't expect them to. He was perfectly content with being nameless, perfectly content with only being remembered for his hair and his blood. Hair and blood, pooling out on the ground like fine silk, as red as the blaze where Nikolai Kaja jumped to his death.



Lucas Bixby

Uncertainty

By Adelle Kistner

I've had good friends before
But I lost them, I still don't know why
I guess there's two sides to every story
Things happen for a reason I've been told

I wrote lists to feel prepared
I still have those lists
Their words never crossed off
You could say I'm a procrastinator
But really I never had motivation
You could say that's the same thing
But we're not the same person

My best friend loves the water
I think I like the beach
We'll run out into the harsh waves
As far as she goes I'll go
But I stay slightly behind her
I'm always behind her

When I'm talking to people
I make up stories
Pretending it really happened to me
I think up lies on the spot
But when I look back
I realize there's something true
I could've said instead

A fear of heights
I scraped my hip climbing a fire escape
And jumped off a waterfall
Twisting my ankle
But that's not why I'm scared

I have my whole life planned out ahead
But no way to get there

I'm indecisive
Changing relationships
Uncontrollably
I'm happy to talk to them again
Scared to see where this will go



Keira Hoy

Innocence Abandoned

By Twylo Landey

Willows bleeding and thorny vines.

The evening sky sings
dark crimson,
the skin of an overripe tomato,
freshly diced.

Encased,
tulips
repose stiffly.

There were bees splashed with ink
and spiders covered in soft coats of fur,
weeds, sprinkled like confetti.

Small seed helicopters
twirl a memory.

Swollen purple grapes
and a long, lonely, grey stretch of silence.

Drowning in dirt, a plastic, once-blonde head sits.
Faded eyes, watch.

Perched atop the black fence post,
A blue raven flits its wings.

Preparation to soar.



Audrie Trythall

The Wait (after Audre Lorde)

By Twylo Landey

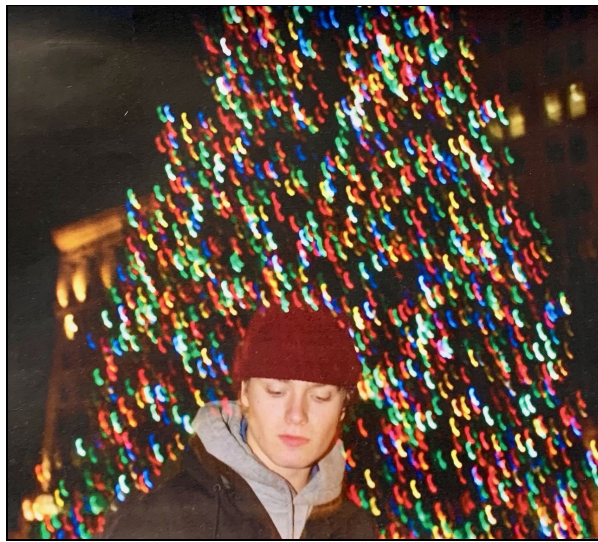
I am thirteen and
on my face grow
large orange blossoms.
With my large hands, I pluck them
but each day a new one grows
bigger and brighter
And you are in the basement with the door closed

I go to school, and I am in eighth grade
where people yell.
I need to study for
the map test
that I failed
and learn how to act
like nothing matters
And you are in the basement with the door closed

I am a boy in tights
muscled and fearing
my stomach curls
electric shocks in my heart
But the winner takes the trophy
And you are in the basement with the door closed

For a bus
I wait

That comes
when I am
brave enough
to call it
And you are in the basement with the door closed.



Gus deWitt

Cabin

By Eli Lanners

I love the cabin

I love the smell of Deet so strong, just the smell keeps the mosquitoes away

I love the taste of Tobies Caramel Rolls: the way the pecans give it an extra crunch

I love the feel of a mosquito biting you and how it itches so much the next day (kidding)

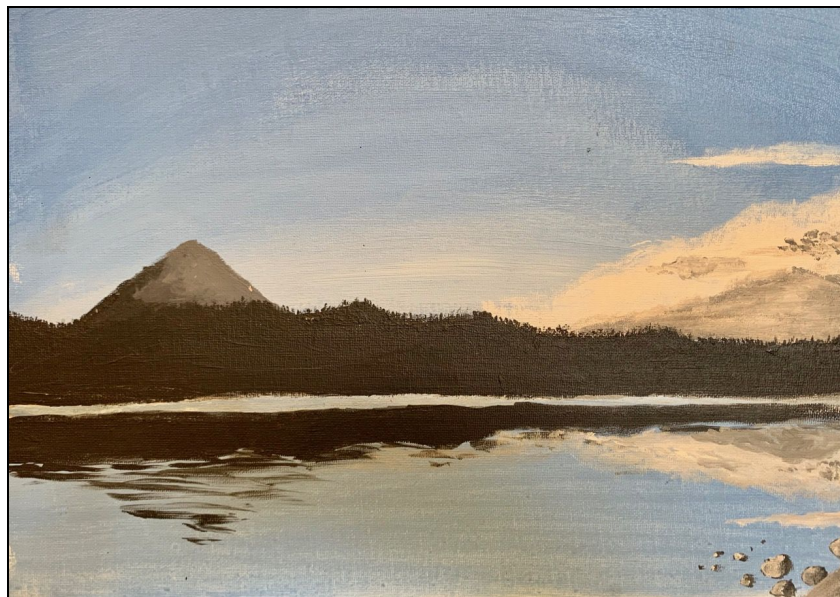
I love the feeling of being pulled behind a boat in an inner tube at 30 mph, turning so much half your body is about to fall off the intertube

I love the feeling of working on Buckingham pallets and digging holes

I love the rush you get riding an ATV down winding dirt trails, and when then you see a straight- away, you bring it up to 35

I love it when you get a bite on the line and then another and on the next one you bring in a two-pound bass

I love the feeling of driving a boat, going 30 and hoping you can slow down



Owen Bucher

Stream of Consciousness

By Emma Laus

The citrusy aroma of oranges
Wafts in front of me
Reminding me of a fresh tangerine
I plucked off a tree
On vacation in Florida.

I remember my uncle picking me up
From the cool airport
And the blast of warm breeze
In my face when I stepped out.

I remember my grandpa's
Steel-cut oatmeal,
With warm soft apples
And soy milk
Filling my mouth every morning,
And the sweet strawberry ice cream
Straight from the carton
In the evening
Or sometimes before dinner
If Grandma was in a good mood.

And the tangerines:
The sweet burst of flavor in my mouth
As I ate out the delicious inside,
Then nibbled on the rough peel

And spit it out when it was nothing
But a thin orange strip
And a bitter taste on my tongue.

Tangerines aren't the most bitter thing I've tasted
However.

My mouth recalls the bitterness
Of crab apples from the tree in our backyard
And how I'd try to convince my mother
To bake a pie with the crab apples.

I love my mother's pies,
My favorite is the strawberry rhubarb.
The gentle sweetness of the strawberry
Mingling



Indigo Day

Ode To Xbox Controllers

By Harry LeBoutillier

Black and curvy

Your buttons and triggers soothe my hands

I love it when you vibrate, sending shudders down my arms

You have been dropped and ignored, but you don't care

You still work

Clicking

Taken to friend's houses, stuffed in bags

You are my vessel on my games

Racing in Forza

Shooting in Call of Duty

Building in Minecraft

Destroying in Battlefield

I use you on hot, sickly days

Cold, wet days

You endure through hours of gaming

Hands trading you back and forth

Sweat has rooted itself in you

I use you excitedly when coming back from camping

or when I get a new game

Grabbing you off the charger next to the TV, Xbox and Stereo

Your d-pad, rarely used

Your bumpers and triggers

And finally, your little buttons, each a small oasis in a desert of black

50 Words

By Riley Linnell

The world surrounding me was blank. A white canvas. The last words I heard echoing in my mind as I wonder where I am. Who I am. And what I am. My hand reaches forward in attempt to feel something, but there's nothing. Only a blank space. A white canvas.



Eliseo Stager-Morena

Monster Cry

By Giovana Mahoney

Welcome to the Monster Cry
Come on in, don't be shy
Down Dead Boy Lane, up Zodiac Hill,
now come into my store for an unnerving thrill

We got sea monster lard
The lear of a bard
Pikachu's hair
The teeth of a bear
A she-wolf's tail
The eggs of a quail
A witch's first broom
And a bottle of doom
A vampire's cape
The head of a snake
A killer's first knife
A child with no life
Then there's the unicorn poop
And a pot of giant's soup
A brick of ancient wood
And a load of good food

Welcome to the Monster Cry
Come on in, don't be shy
We got all you scary needs
Please try not to cry



Charlie Gullung

What She Took and Left

By Elliana McKinney

She left her lies in the room where she used to say “I didn’t do it”

She left her regret

Her guilt about a lot of things others wouldn’t understand

She left the tears she cried in her bathroom over the sink

She left the mean comments that lingered in the air

She never looked back on the reckless nights she would have over and over

She misses her mom’s goodbye kisses

She misses the nights she stayed up late hanging with the one she used to love

She looks back on the memories that were undeniably fun

She will never forget the ones that broke her heart over and over



Rico White

The Flame of the Other

By Kat Meeker-Becker

In my eyes you were a burning flame
that could never be touched by hurt or blame.
You had a fire that grew and spread
But in the end it burned you instead
You show your power
but inside you cower
you were deaf from the yelling
So you started telling
The lies that you were fine
And that all the troubles were truly mine
You taunt the happiness of others around
And send their hopes back down to the ground
In my eyes you were a burning flame
But now you've been burnt by hurt and blame



Frances Kenny

The Summer I Was 12

By Tory Meltzer-Quiz

I was with my best friend
forcing my dad to drive me to her house
Where we would sit in her living room
contemplating what to do next

We would jump on the concrete like
it was burning coals
me, holding my shoes in my hands
to avoid having to run on the grass

for fear of getting stung by bees
turning on the sprinkler and running
back to the trampoline and waiting
for it to get saturated in icy water

then we would jump on it
forcing water into the air like a reversed
rainfall

we would be there in her backyard

until we were completely soaked through
our thin summer clothes
then run back to her house
in a shivering gasp



Lucas Bixby

and sit on her bedroom floor
drying off
having the time of our lives
until my dad would get there



Aisha Callahan

Live

By Violet Meyers

I've lost both grandfathers:

Pops,

Papa.

A cat I had
known
my whole life.

I've lost races,
games,
praise.

I've ridden
a roller coaster at
night,
all light up.

I've been scared out of my mind
when faces
I barely recognized
pressed to the glass
screaming

Only once have I been
out of the country
to Canada
for under three hours



Mainichi Miles

I've lived in one place

One home

One family

One heart

I've had my ear

Pinched

so hard there was enough

discharge

to fill a Ramuné

I have a scar on

My ear

My arm

My toe

I have held a newborn

husky puppy

eyes still

closed

I have learned

that not all questions

Need

Answers

I have gotten sick

In the middle

Of the night

Not telling
Anyone,
Too worried
That I would make
Everything
So
Much
Worse

The smell of turkey, yams,
eggnog, cranberry sauce.
Granpie's puzzles
Staying up
Late
to finish the
last
few
pieces

I smell carrot cake,
I smell zucchini bread,
I smell blueberry muffins,
all warm
out of the oven

A Sonnet for the Waterfalls I Love

By Nia Miles-Avery

The water hurriedly rushes way down
It flows unstably in a clear stream
Mist forms around like a translucent crown
Reflecting from the glorious sun beams

Droplets hitting my already wet face
One small moment here in my misty land
It all seems to be lost in time and space
That sounds like my own private marching band

The woods stand still as time stands still for me
Only waterfalls and the birds chirping
The water puts me in a state of glee
Water gleams and nothing bad is lurking

Encapsulated in the bright water
Not one thing could ever make me deter



Chloe Isaacman

The Test

By Finn Nash-Bird

To think that only three hours ago,
I was engaged in blissful N-REM sleep
But now I am sharpening my pencil
It is still passing time
I still might be able to study
Who am I kidding I only have one mi-
The period has begun.

I race to sit down
The room is alive with chatter,
Chatter that could be my downfall
The room quiets down as the teacher stands up
And she starts to hand out the test
The final.

The period is over
School is over
I check my grade
faints



Cece Mecklem

100 Words

By Elias Norwood

Why did I stop them I mean, I shouldn't care. I just stopped them for no reason. Well, there might have been a reason. I did what I had to do, didn't I?

Yes, you did not.

Who are you.

Not important.

I am too.

No, you're not.

You didn't answer my question.

Not important. We help you do the right things.

The "right" things, sure. You should have done your job where there is no room for pity.

You did the right thing, the good thing.

I am going to bed.

Can I say one last thing?

Nope, g'night.



Ode to Florida

By Sophie Parnell-Moore

I could
Feel the
Humidity
From inside
The plane
Oh, Florida
You are a place like
No other
Your colossal beaches
That seem to stretch on
Forever
Your magnificent
Picturesque
Vibrant sunsets
I will love you always
Even if it means
I'm swarmed with
Mosquitoes
Everytime I'm with you
Sand white as snow
Covers
My toes
But your clear
Warm
Water wipes it off
In one quick move

I feel the sinking sun on my shoulders
As I take a deep breath of your
Salty air
Small waves
Slosh around my legs
I wave my hand across
The water
And see the image
Of a palm tree behind me
Before it fades
Away into ripples
I crave the sweet
Lemonade
You provide
Always quenching
My thirst
My feet leave behind
Sandy footprints
Heading towards
Our beach house
And finishing another
Full day
In my happy place



Indigo Day

A Letter To My Eleven Year-Old Self

By Ava Penberthy

Dear Ava,

First things first, hello

I'm fourteen, and I've been thinking about you a lot.

I remember being you, and

to be quite honest,

it's not a memory I look on fondly

But I still love you.

Let me tell you a little about me.

Us.

We've searched for

and found *wonderful* friends.

I can't wait for you to meet them, you won't believe how grateful you'll be

We've performed on so many stages and lived in dozens of worlds.

Masters Drama is our favorite class because

theatre

finally

taught us to fly.

Secondly, I really need to tell you something

You will be okay.

I know you feel lost and drifting

I know you're confused and tangled up

I know that most of the thoughts in your head stay silent

and fall short of your voice.

I know you're not comfortable with yourself,

and I know each day to walk down the halls a different way

nervous

small

smiling

confident

downcast

to see which one

fits you like your favorite sweater

none of them do yet.

But that's okay

I promise you'll find yourself

You'll find yourself

in your morning mug of tea

and

every time you're onstage and you can feel your words and stories fill the room

and

once you discover your favorite spot by the window

and

every time you take a deep breath

and

when you laugh with your friends, feeling the puzzle pieces click.

And guess what?

I'm only three years older than you.

There are plenty more

windows, mugs of tea, comfy sweaters and stages left.

But for now, you are in sixth grade, and you are eleven, and you are scared of tomorrow
You'll get there.

I did.

We will.

Just remember to breathe, to be yourself, to hug often, and add two spoons of honey to tea.

Just remember

even though next year

you'll have to go through something

that will cause

a river of tears

a storm of sadness

the loss of a best friend,

make you feel smaller than a grain of sand,

and make your

heart

ache

for months...

You will be stronger because of it.

Your tongue will be sharper, your friends will be truer,

And believe me, your currently unused dark humor will become well loved.

But don't worry about that now.

You'll find the light.

believe me, there's plenty of that, too

And please

listen to me when I tell you...

you'll be okay.



Ida Price

Regret

By Luke Pettit

He was welcomed
A feeding and loving home
He took for granted
One small mistake led to another
Which led to a bigger mistake
Which led to regret
Which led to sadness
Which led to a new home
A less-loving home
A home filled with so much regret you could drown
A home where nobody was loved
Where misery was the mom
Rage was the dad
Bewilderment was the brother
And heartbreak was the sister

The only food was sorrow
Slept in a cage, trapped
Stuck in this life
Stuck in this feeling
Trapped forever because of one mistake that led to another



Tony Meltzer-Quick

Fire

By Emerson Quarles

She lit fires in her heart. Honey skin and eyes like pools in July. Her heart was too big to be given away. She was confident in a way that made people stare, even though she didn't like the bags under her eyes or how she sounded on tape. She couldn't be shackled to the weight of forever. She wanted to be a mother, a doctor, a lawyer. She wanted to use the fire God had given her, though God had never been more than a wish list and a stranger. Her laugh sounded nothing short of an orchestra grabbing the attention of everyone in the room. She wasn't afraid to cry because, unlike the rest of the world, she didn't shy away from ugly emotions. She greeted them like old friends because life is too real to sensor. She was a true summer baby. She always was looking for the darkest nights and the highest wall to scale. She was an early bird because she refused to let the sun rise without her. Even when she walked she was dancing. She always was dancing. She was the sun and the moon because she could never make up her mind. Wherever she was she dragged the sun along with her, taking her fire to the edges of the universe. She always had something to do because the world is too big to be boring. When she said your name, it sounded like a prayer between her and the God she never knew. She wasn't afraid to be bolder than the sky. She treated her love like a gift that she loved to give and always had more to deliver. She was perfectly flawed, with every fault placed with precision and grace. Her fear was beautiful and raw, descending in waves of tears and sheets anger. You couldn't help but smile when you saw her eyes gleam with light and a smile that her face could hardly contain. She burned down every wall and broke every heart.



Rain Watson-Benedetti

It Used To Be There

By Augustina Sprinkel

It used to be there,
Inside of the house
With the shallow, hollow walls
It used to be there
Inside of that room
With the rusty, dusty appeal
It used to be there
Inside that closet
With the rotted, wooden door
It used to be there
Inside that hole,
Behind the dresser's door
It used to be there
Inside of the wall
As footsteps and words could be heard
It **USED** to be there,
That's what they all say
Chattering, mumbling, talking away
With this small little theory that is now gone,
How do they know it's not inside the wall?



Matilda McCabe

Winter Poems

By Holland Swan

Haiku: The Fire

It glows while snow falls
It can be seen for miles
Outside our window

Tanka: Mr. Snowman

You glow like embers
That are newly extinguished
From yesterday's fire
I can see you through the snow
Watching over us with coal eyes

Cinquain: The Tree

Spotted
Across the way
A noble fir, intact
Its sheer ruggedness blinds my eyes
Beauty

Lune: Hot Chocolate

It burns my tongue sharp
With memories



Indigo Day

From my toddler days

Collom Lune: The Lights

Strung all around
With each burnt out bulb
Comes different stories

Gogyohka: Ornaments

Ornaments sway
From branch to branch
Like men from monkeys
In a book
Written by the ages



Nadia Hajenian

Blackberries

By Quinn Thomas

PART I

I saw a maiden tree of green
Her leaves they had an emerald sheen
Bark the brown of blessed earth
Beautiful branches held much worth

She dwelled there by a burbling brook
And for much time I'd sit and look
Across the graceful forest glade
Under the maiden's flowering shade

And all was good and all was well
'Cross forest was a peaceful spell
I'd watch the maiden as she swayed
Too soon my tree maiden would fade

For soon came death, colored like night
A berry, a true baleful blight
It came, came with tidings of fear
We begged it please do not stay here

But blackberry listens to none
Keeps up attack 'til all is won
Covering peaceful forest scape
'Cross undergrowth black vines did drape

It came, destroyed my maiden tree
She could not run, we could not flee
Our peaceful lives now filled with pain
So I tell you this sad refrain

So listen when I say be wary
Dark is day under blackberry

PART II

A man with dual blades glistening in sun
Came to forest of ink
He said no matter for all or for none
Even to own live's brink
I will fight 'til I see the job is done
Through thorns that wind and slink

To forest edge I came to see
This man of greatness claimed
I wish he would just leave us be
He'd spare himself much shame
I went to him please here my plea
The vines cannot be tamed

He heard my words, heard what I said
And responded with nay
He demanded that he was led
To where the black thorns lay

I took him through the paths I tread
From the trail he did stray

Never again was that man seen from life I believed that he fell
Under the ancient winding vines his body there it shall now dwell

PART III

Black vine of the darkest hue
Engulfed my land I once knew
Forest's corrupted, nothing's true
If you do not want this fate, too



Jansen Corson

letter to my first girl crush

By Laila Vickers

this is for the girl
with the hair that swept to her lower back
a shiny blonde
the one i held between my fingers
as braids descended from the hard work
i accomplished
this is for the girl
with the eyes that showed worlds beyond mine
those baby blue eyes
brighter than any star
that i could imagine
this is for the girl
with the lips that curled for life
pretty pink
glossy and full
curved at every inch
this is for the girl
with hands softer than a cloud
that could make anything she touched mush
touched with grace
made silk look like water
this is for the girl
whose voice sent me to a daze
words stringing together like a symphony
whose touch was euphoric
like she knew what she did

whose gaze was everlasting
looking at you as if she could see past it all
whose laughter seemed to echo in my mind
i don't know where you are
what you're doing
how've you been
but i do know
i've never forgotten
thanks for showing me
that i did want to hold a girl's hand
before i knew what that meant.



Lindsay Raban

Sorrow Home

By Laila Vickers

My roots are deep in Africa
Where queens ruled the world.
Melanin flowing through them
Crowns weaved with coco.

I belong to protest
I belong to unapologetic black woman
Who told me to be me, unapologetically
I belong to Afros so tall and firm they break through glass
I don't belong in the small box you seem to love to put me in.

Pain flows through my blood
Queens and Kings flow through my blood
Resurrection flows through my blood
And it seems like my blood is the thickest,
The one that is the toughest,
Though I've never been through half of it.

I want to be the voice, for all whose mouths have been taped shut.
I want to be in a room full of melanin, for once.
I want to be running the world one day,
Acknowledging those before me who let me stand so tall,
But first I want to go where it all started.

Oh, Africa, can I even call you home?
You seem not to know if we belong.
I would like to,
But it seems that all the connection to you I have
Is through the melanin, tinting my skin.

That Summer Day

By Rain Watson-Benedetti

It was a hot summer day just like any other. The air was dry, my skin was sweaty, and the AC was busted. I had called my friend, Anna, over to hang and head down to the ice cream parlor. You see, we had recently started to get to know each other, so this was her first time coming to my house. When she arrived, I couldn't help but blush at the sight of her in short shorts and a crop top; though to be honest I wasn't any more clothed than her. I was in my usual red short skirt and turtleneck tank top. I gave her a swift tour of my house as we walked to my room. I quickly ran downstairs to the kitchen to get ice water for the both of us; although looking back it would have been wiser to pour us a tall glass of lemonade, much more classy and suitable for summer.

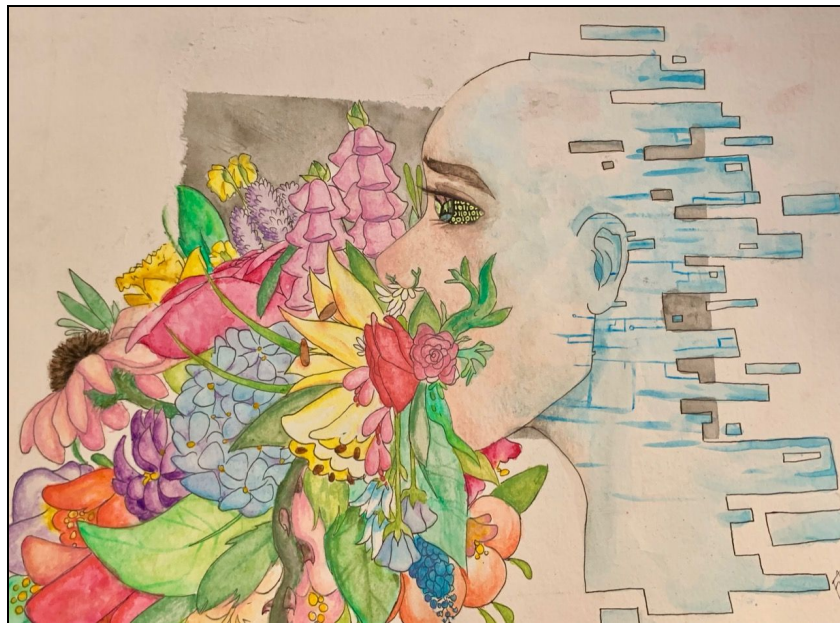
On my way back to my room, I couldn't help but notice that my dad's cross was hanging on the peach-colored wall upside down. I'm not very religious, but I knew if my dad saw it, he would absolutely freak and throw all the blame on me. Once I had carefully turned the cross right side up, I started up the stairs once again. But something was off. The closer I got to my room, the colder the air started to feel. There were no sounds of a buzzing AC, just the stomp of my feet and my Anna's voice. That was weird, since I'd left her up there alone, but for all I knew she could be on the phone with a friend.

When I entered my room, Anna was sitting on my bed, smiling to herself. I asked her who she was just talking to, and her responses made my entire body freeze. She said my little sister had come in and introduced herself. Here's the thing, I'm an only child. She tried to describe what she looked like, but nobody I knew matched the description. After a few minutes of awkward silence, I finally decided it was time for ice cream.

As we walked along the town boardwalk, the sun poured down on my shoulders, burning my skin through the sunscreen I had layered onto my body. The ocean next to me glimmered as if it were filled with millions of gold sequins. The soft breeze that drifted through the air made the palm trees gently sway. As my feet burned against the hot boardwalk, my mind began to drift. I almost entirely forgot the incident that had happened,

but then my floating mind was pulled down to earth by the yanking on my arm. It was Anna pointing to a “missing” poster stuck to a telephone pole. At first, I thought nothing of it, but then Anna said, “That’s her, that’s who I saw.” With that, a menacing chill devoured my body. The girl in the poster was around the age of seven, she had red hair, eyes that reflected the same green as ivy, and a smile that looked as sweet as honey. I almost immediately recognized her. About a month ago, her body had been found in a flower garden. She had died of repeated stab wounds and was buried on May 10th.

To be honest, till now, I strongly did not believe that ghosts or spirits existed, but, now every time I noticed something out of place, something strange or unusual, I can’t help but wonder if there’s something out there beyond this plane of existence trying to get my attention. As for Anna, we don’t talk much anymore. I think we both just want to forget any of this ever happened, but it did, and there was no denying it. No amount of space between us can dissolve the memory of that one hot summer day.



Frances Kenny

Auschwitz

By Abigail Wendroff

The List

As I walk through the ghetto's crumbling blocks I see sad, starving faces staring at me
through the grime-covered windows.

I run to the store, snagging the last caramel.

I check the list like I've done every day.

But this time something's different.

My name is on the list.

I feel like an ant, small and helpless.

That's when it sinks in.

I'm leaving, but my parents aren't coming with me.

The Arrival

When I arrived at Auschwitz, it was pouring rain.

We were quickly hurried into an area where we were told to undress so we could shower.

After we undressed, the women were ordered into a sad, crumbling building.

I could hear the soft buzz of the razor as they shaved my head.

I said a silent goodbye to my hair

We were then herded to the showers like cows to the slaughter.

Something wasn't right.

This was not a normal shower.

The Truth

I step inside.

The first thing I notice is the lack of a shower head,
and the way the air feels heavy around me.
It smells wretched.
No, it smells like death.
Even this room carries the burdens of every soul broken, every person lost.
I start to feel faint.
This doesn't feel right
I fall to the floor with a crash.
I can't breathe.
As my heart beats for the last time, and I take my final breath, I figure out their evil plot.
This isn't a shower at all.
It's a gas chamber.

Criminal Powers

By Avery Wiesler

Andy went to the bakery
On his stolen motorbike.
He had other rides but didn't take
His Lambo or his trike.
He joined a vehicle stealing crew;
He was good at it.
Had been since he was two.
His Lamborghini was stolen, too.
He gunned his bike
Rode through the roundabout
Hit someone
And heard them shout.
He yelled a retort
The victim didn't hear.
He burned some rubber
And stole some mail
The ultimate robber
Didn't fail.
He hit full throttle
He wasn't timid
Oh, wait, that's 30!
That's the speed limit!
He slowed right down
He wasn't *that* criminal.
Though that offense
Would be pretty minimal.



Aisha Callahan

He turned around
Drove the wrong direction
Weaved through the cars
Towards an intersection
Punched an awed bystander
In the midsection
Shoot! That was a knife!
He could see their cross-section.
Just a few more blocks
He was at the bakery
He could see the multi-colored drapery
He could feel the many ovens' heat
But then he realized something crazy:
He didn't even want to eat.
He turned around, saw a cop car.
Not now, he thought, *I got this far*.
He hopped on his bike
And roared away
Knew the cop couldn't get him
Any day.
Andy admired his own criminal powers
Then used them more in twenty-four hours.



Giovi Ronning-Botel

