

mosaic

L. Powell

last
thoughts
before
quarantine

2019 + 2020
madison high school
literary and visual art magazine

What happens when students have bravely offered their creative gems to the school literary magazine and then a global pandemic hits?

We make a literary magazine anyway.

We hope this electronic version eventually makes it to print so that it becomes an artifact for these writers and artists to take with them out into the world. For now, this electronic version is no less an accomplishment for these now-published Madison family members.

Please congratulate the authors and artists, savor what you find in the pages, and then let it inspire you to go out and create something of your own.

Create More, Fear Less.

~Ms. Gomes
& Mr. Maves

Special Thanks

Thank you to the **students and staff of Madison High School** for their contributions to this 15th edition of the annual literary magazine.

Thank you **Principal Adam Skyles** for your annual support of this literacy-in-action project.

Thank you **Randy Maves** for your digital design knowledge and support, and **Mrs. Sullivan** for your support of all things literacy.

Cover Art:

7th Period

By Pearl Fetters

Editors:

Jason Anajovich
Yunna Artemenko
Erin Challenor
Georgia Rector

Teacher Editor:

Kelly J. Gomes

Madison High School
Portland, Oregon
May 2020

Table of Contents

Title	Author/Artist	Pg.
<u>Brown Pride & Black Love</u>	Ivan Gonzalez-Meija	7
<u>Power</u>	Jazmyn Plowden	9
<u>Independence</u>	Monsasia Saunders	10
<u>Siblings Be Grateful</u>	Maria Tran	11
<u>From Bus To Bed</u>	Reese Lanier	12
<u>Many Aislings</u>	Aisling Gazzo	14
<u>9 Expressions</u>	George Thai	15
<u>bad dog</u>	Nolan Taylor	16
<u>Toast</u>	Dawson Siel	17
<u>Change</u>	Audrey Shaw	18
<u>“Charred” Chapter 1</u>	Bridget P. Borden	19
<u>Dandelion</u>	Cecilia Truong	22
<u>The Joker</u>	Tyson Ly	23
<u>A Tribute to Mac Miller</u>	Tyson Ly	24
<u>Count</u>	Oz Warner	25
<u>I, the World</u>	Angus McDonnell	26
<u>A Writer’s Ice Cream</u>	Chespin Parsons	27
<u>The Garden</u>	Mars Aichler	30

<u>Patterns</u>	Rory Glass	32
<u>Button Flash</u>	Georgia Rector	33
<u>Beneficial Problems</u>	TingTing Zhang	34
<u>Lorna</u>	Mars Aichler	35
<u>Emotions</u>	Leo Buckwalter	40
<u>Low Poly Portrait</u>	Ella Kay	41
<u>Low Poly Portrait</u>	Evan Sonne	42
<u>Patience</u>	Aracelie Sanchez	43
<u>People</u>	Van Ho	44
<u>Why Do We Live? Why Do We Die?</u>	Abdulrahman Al Masr	45
<u>Hindsight - 2020 Sophomore Story Slam Winning Story</u>	Wyatt Mejia-Lopez	47
<u>Hindsight - 2020 Madison Story Slam Winning Story</u>	Tyler Horan	50
<u>Bubbles</u>	Suipeli Tauhelangi	52
<u>Untitled</u>	Cailin Dunbar	53
<u>Untitled</u>	Erin Challenor	54
<u>Cassie</u>	Yunna Artemenko	56
<u>Hole</u>	Lola Lang	64
<u>Crayola</u>	Liv Tran	65
<u>Untitled</u>	Sicity Webster	66
<u>Being Black in America</u>	Jamari West	67

<u>Dear Dad</u>	Katie Harmon	68
<u>I Have Insomnia</u>	Katie Harmon	69
<u>Life in Another Country</u>	Alejandro Can Vazquez	70
<u>Untitled</u>	Nina Casey	71
<u>Untitled</u>	Harrison Rhodes	72
<u>Summer Schedule</u>	Morgan Barrow	73
<u>Two Transformative Experiences With Ducks</u>	Georgia Rector	74
<u>We</u>	Elliott Cusick	76
<u>Two Sides</u>	Jason Anajovich	79
<u>Women Ball Too</u>	Ava Arias	80
<u>Let's Get Political</u>	Jason Anajovich	81
<u>Forgiving My Cheater</u>	Linda Nguyen	85
<u>7/21/19</u>	Ella Kay	86
<u>Oaths and Radiance</u>	Alexander Markwell	87
<u>Low Poly Portrait</u>	Gabe Vanelli	88
<u>Low Poly Portrait</u>	Lola Lang	89
<u>Home</u>	Iqra Awow	90
<u>Memory</u>	Jasmine Skinner	91
<u>Java Suc(++)ks</u>	Cameron Horton	92
<u>The Dandelion That Grew Through the Concrete</u>	Raven Linda-Ann Grant	93

<u>What's Left?</u>	Jaziel Pat-Canche	95
<u>7th Period</u>	Pearl Fetters	96
<u>List of Contributors</u>		97

Brown Pride & Black Love

(A gift to the new world - A message to our oppressor!)

Ivan Gonzalez-Mejia

Let's give the new world to the brown and black kids of the future
I know that clearly it's not nearly what it used to
It overused to the the truth a bit beaten and bruised too
But just imagine what could happen if the planet saw black girl
magic was bound with brujería
Then they would see us even fear us
For we'd be almighty powerful
We're an accumulation of spices made to frighten
And you frankly are sourdough
And you known for only seasoning salt in things still it shows how
you sour though
Because we came in a variety and we're taking over society
Or taking it back
Making it brown again and mixing it black
Mexico was first to have the west coast yes yo we did
And the homies weren't here long after arriving by ship
But the unfortunance of it all was the forcing them all
But we now have something to stand for and do so together
Let our laughs now boom like claps of thundering weather
Like storm in midsummer in the land of my mother
From gangbangers to president
Drug dealers to executives
We sure as hell did a lot for the directionless
And there is the magic amassed from potions and talent
The combination of a new nation inevitable
It's what we're headed for
And any painting in depiction of us slave and conquered can be
set aflame and stomped on
Because God painted me first

And all his array of babies the varying shades of the earth
Black like the soils the enrichment of living
And the brown stained foundation u live in
Accept the fact that we are dirt
The very ground beneath you
The only thing that keeps you
From caving in
Yet dirt and soil rise and transform into mountain
I've seen it happen
So don't feel so high and mighty when we carry you on our
shoulders
If we fall it's you up top who fall much harder

[Return to TOC](#)

Power

Jazmyn Plowden

Power, the ability to do something.
Power, a tool we use to rise.
Power, a source of light.
Power, a necessity we choose to use.
Power, a manipulative bastard.
Power, something we have within ourselves.

Power, it gives us life.
Power is money.
Power, it's used so wisely.
Power can be a gift or a curse.
Power, it reveals the truth in others.
Power, it may feed on darkness

Power, has its revenge
Power, is in the sun
Power, is in the moon,
having power isn't fun.

Power, is defined
Power, can be colorful
Power, is amazing if we believe in it.

Power, it's cruel, but it is a tool.
So, how do you take back your power?
You rise.
Power is Power.

Independence

Monasia Saunders

The melody of raindrops drumming against the car window while I'm in the back seat of the car. This would often bore me because I was young, and car rides felt like forever, I just couldn't wait to get home.

Now I'm hearing the raindrops on my own car windows and it's now soothing, it's a satisfying thing to hear as I'm on the way to my new lifestyle.

My "adult-like" lifestyle. Life after high school is starting to excite me.

Going to and from work, running errands that I need to take care of, going to my appointments, and handling my business.

The feeling of independence is nice and emotionally comforting. The pitter patter of these Portland raindrops create a melodic vibe.

Siblings Be Grateful

Maria Tran

Be grateful you have parents,

Parents who love you dearly and support you.

Be grateful for having a roof over your head,

While not stressing to pay for the roof under your head.

Be grateful for having a family,

Whereas others who don't have anyone.

Be grateful for having a meal everyday,

When others skip or share a meal.

Be grateful for a car,

The car who has taken you everywhere you've wanted to go.

Be grateful for being loved,

Because that feeling never lasts.

Be grateful for being guided everyday,

But you're just too young to understand it.

From Bus To Bed

Reese Lanier

Tick, Tick, Tick

The Ticking is time in an eternity

Electricity within my brain's flow

My brain melting as the city is dreary

The city that passes by on the bus about to explode

Making judgement calls was not in my training

Though the train leading to the lane fleeting

Will help my brain make the world less melty

Or maybe it will allow me to walk like jelly

In a world much brighter and vibrant than the night

But the night provides vibrations and crickets

Crickets and tickets, slim pickin and bitchin'

Tick, Tick, Tickin

My brain oozes

Ooze rhymes with booze

Booze leads to the great adventures of a hungover tomorrow

I am not drunk, but I am on an adventure

Dancing with the flowers who feel no sorrow

Who smile when the sun stems south

Over my great massive incredible liquid head

The liquid that leaks from my mouth

Liquid that lickers shouldn't lose

Lickers and pickers and pockers and soccer

This is an adventure

A would be palate cleanser

With all the change coming up

And not a dollar to my dime

Nor a solo to my saxophone

Just some music playing from my phone
It sounds sureally real
As real as those leaves
Leaves never before believed or perceived as truly teal
Until the bus on the verge of explosion
Exploded like the drums hummed by the strum of his guitar.
A guitar playing to a metronome
Tick Tick Tock Tick

No sleep will be had tonight
A mere three hour fear fight
My ooze brain against my awake body
What to do except look in the mirror and think
“Wow, what a hottie.”
Nothing
To Do
At All.

Tick
Music is too loud
Tick
I must make like a mouse without a sound
Tock
Pure pain is felt every glance of the clock
Tick
At this point great entertainment comes in the form of a stick.
Sticking with thought loops popping like pizza dough
I think
And I blink
My thoughts ever so deep
And then, I sleep.



Many Aislings
Aisling Gazzo

[Return to TOC](#)



9 Expressions
George Thai

[Return to TOC](#)

bad dog
Nolan Taylor

to lay naked
vulnerable
is to bare wet open wounds and teeth
prepared to defend yourself
from threats
real or imagined
for i am just a dog
who is losing the fight
and
you are the man who
bet on me

we will both go down together.

Toast

Dawson Siel

The bread was happy,
It was part of a loaf.
But then he was taken,
And it made him feel crappy.

He was put in the toaster
And forgotten about.
He was burnt to the crust
And eaten with sauerkraut.

And as he was digested,
He thought about the good days.
When he wasn't ingested,
And was part of a loaf.

Change

Audrey Shaw

Sometimes I wonder if I know what is best for me
I let you give me advice because I know you truly care
I don't want to fail or disappoint
I like when I succeed
Sometimes I wonder if I am scared of change,
But at the end of the day I know it is a good thing.
I tell myself If I am not giving my best at everything I do, then I am
failing myself
You go out of your way to make sure I am okay
I can't thank you enough
I know our friendship will never change,
It is stronger than ball and chains
And if for some reason it happens to change
I know your heart will be in great pain
No matter what happens my attitude towards you will always stay
the same
I have great respect for you and that is something that will never
change.

“Charred” Chapter 1

Bridget P. Borden

Nobody is born with free will.

I learned that the hard way when my overly-protective parents sent me to an awful school for awful people, called "Utopia Junior High." How ironic. Of course, it isn't all too bad. I have a friend there- Casandra Lupongt. She's the greatest friend anyone can ask for at that godforsaken school. She's the only one there with a hint of sanity left, plus she gets the best grades, has a boyfriend already, and knows two languages. She's pretty much perfect in every way. I could be seeing her in a better light than I should, though, knowing that she's my only real friend here.

She was wearing her favorite blue and pink dress, with her beautiful blonde hair tied back in a low ponytail complementing her teal blue eyes. Her pink boots and gray fishnets went surprisingly well with her pink fingerless leather gloves. She was prettier than me, too- I had black, matted hair tied sloppily into a thick braid. My outfit wasn't much of a sight, either- I was wearing a purple sweater and a reddish-black skirt, and a pair of Mary Janes with knee-high green socks. Yeah, I look like a mess.

One day during lunch, she asked me something. "Do you believe in the supernatural, Ana?"

I wasn't sure how to respond. I had no clue that Casandra of all people was into that stuff. She never talks about it- only fashion, books, and some TV show that everyone likes at the time. Not that I'm against fashion, books, and popular TV shows. "I guess? I don't think about ghosts an' stuff that often," I replied after a short silence.

"Well, you should get a bit more caught up! Jason said that he knows the basement in his new house is haunted- he even got some photo evidence!" Casandra said in a matter-of-fact tone.

Jason Rildonnie was the most jock-type, alpha-male person anyone could ever meet, as well as Casandra's boyfriend. In my own opinion, I think he's just a huge jerkwad. No one believes me. It's probably because of Casandra, or that he's super charismatic and social with like-minded jerkwads. "Casie, have you ever seen these photos?" I asked softly. Some people were staring at us from the other tables in the lunchroom.

"Yep! I do have evidence for something! Aren't you proud of me? Oh, I know you are!" She giggled innocently.

I was proud of her, a little. There was a part of me that couldn't deny the facts- but I had to see this image for myself to believe it. She got out her phone from a pocket in one of her boots. She had the kind of boots with those zip-up pockets where someone can store money and other small essentials in. It's the one pocket that Casandra had. She pulled up an image on her phone of what looked like a greenish oval shape in a crowded basement with a beautiful, almost transparent woman within it. I sat there in shock. "Are ya sure this hasn't been photoshopped at all?"

"Nope! It couldn't have!"

I stared at the photo. An idea popped into my head, and I promptly said, "How 'bout we head over to Jason's house after school? Y'know, to check if it's real an' all."

Casandra shifted in her seat, but it wasn't a volatile shift. It was rather happy. "Absolutely! I'm gonna go ask him."

I've at no time seen her so blithe to visit someone's house. It creeped me out at first, but I needed to calm down. Not like being blithe or creeped out had any effect on the future. It shouldn't. She departed the table, simultaneously leaving me alone. I don't like being alone, never have. Casandra was the one preventing that loneliness. I began to think to myself, staring off into space, What if the woman in the photo is Jason's side girl? The thought came intrusively. I don't mean that, but it was something to ponder. What if he just doesn't want to tell Casie the truth? I really shouldn't be thinking that. I would seem like a bad friend if I said that out loud. But Jason's such a jerk. Would it matter? Would Casandra get offended by it? I wondered what would happen if I said my thoughts aloud.

She came rushing back to me, breaking the thoughts that I had. "He said we could check it out!" she said gleefully.

That phrase debunked my thought process, unless... Is he bluffing? No, it couldn't be that. I smiled at Casandra. "That's great new--" RIIIIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNGGGGG!!!! The bell cut me off. We laughed after it rang, though it was still ringing in our ears. "Well, we should probably get to class, huh?" I said.

"Yeah." She grabbed her stuff. "Let's talk after school,"

"Agreed."

To be continued...

Dandelion

Cecilia Truong

D-e-a-n-d-i-o-n-l
N-o-i-l-e-d-n-a-d
(fly)ing along the wind
(gracefully) (in the sky)

Ycaringr

W

I

S

H

E

S

dancing

THTRHoEuSgKH Y

Dandelion seeds

Slowly traveling along the breeze

Landing.

And again flying.

A

S

A

D

A

N

D

E

L

ION.

W

I

T

H

C

A

R

E

[Return to TOC](#)



The Joker
Tyson Ly

[Return to TOC](#)



A Tribute to Mac Miller
Tyson Ly

[Return to TOC](#)

Count
Oz Warner

So you say I don't count?
When my Native roots are just as thick as theirs?
And you say I don't count.
Even when I grew up with a family from Mexico?
But apparently, I don't count.
Because my light skin must mean I have no latino in me.
Because I have white passing must mean I'm not indigenous.
But I do count.
Because you don't get to decide what I am and what I am not.
Just because I'm mixed doesn't mean I don't count.

I, the World

Angus McDonnell

I don't have water

That is free of chemicals

I don't have air

That I can trust is clean

I don't have food

That won't make you sick

I don't have soil

That is without pollutants

I don't have trust

That people will fix what they have done

I don't have hope

That they will change

I have water

That can be filtered

I have air

That can be purified

I have food

That can be renewed

I have soil

That can lock pollutants deep underground

I have trust

That I can fix myself

I have hope

That we can change

A Writer's Ice Cream

Chespin Parsons

It's mid day, and you are at work. You are in a quiet empty baby blue room with one window and a quiet empty street to accompany it. You look at the keys of the computer. Your fingers are poised over the black tiles, but your mind is a sheet of white. You have no idea what to write next. You sigh, and lean back in the black swivel chair. You push off into the vague center of the room and experimentally move your legs so you spin around in a 360. You never really quite figured out how to get over writer's block. Should you kill a character? Introduce a new character? Who fucking knows. After a deep inhale and exhale, you get off your butt and walk back to the desk and pick up the water bottle, one of four or so objects in the room. You pull the top off and bring the rim to your lips. Immediately you choke a little on the liquid, as you hear a distant noise. Your face redens as you double over and spit warm clear liquid from your mouth and nose, spraying your computer and desk in a shower of bleh. You tumble to the door and lazily drop your bottle to the floor not bothering to screw the cap back on. You quickly wipe off your face with your sleeve and shirt, soiling your best clothing. You throw the door open and hail the ice cream truck just as it was about to pass. The driver seems to barely notice you and stop. The white gleam of the truck blinds you momentarily as you pull out your wallet, a glorified pale yellow rubber flap with various holes in it, and pull out a \$20 bill, the only bit of paper money in the thing. A burly man with several neck tattoos and monkey hair that darkened most of his arms pulled up the side door to serve you. His overall style seemed to clash with the fact he was wearing a paper hat and a white apron. He was slouched over to fit in the back of the truck. You gaze at the options listed in a childish fashion, again at another impasse of indecision.

"I'm not supposed to stop here so could we make this quick please? I've got to get to the rich neighbor--I mean, 42nd street." his voice was low but soft. You silently concluded that he could probably be a singer if he tried, but probably not for the type of songs he might listen to.

"Sure, of course. Mmmm, I think I'll go for the bubble gum blue raspberry."

The man lifted a lid from behind the counter and scrunched his eyebrows into the cooler.

"Forgive me for asking, uh, Grayson," his name tag was barely visible, but definitely there. "but have you ever considered a career in singing?" He brought his head up from behind the cooler, a look of mild surprise on his face.

"Well, I took a quire class my freshman year of middle school, but otherwise no. People always told me I had a pretty good voice. But for the kind of music I would want to sing, I do believe I have the wrong pitch range."

"I thought so."

Grayson the Ice cream man passes you the blue raspberry flavored packet. "That'll be \$2.50."

"Gotcha." you hand him the twenty you forgot you were holding in your left hand.

"You live around here?" Grayson asks while counting your change.

You're surprised by the question, but it quickly fades and you reply "No, I live a ways away. I come here for work," you unwrap your artificial sugar package and take a tentative bite. Through cold teeth you explain: "I'm a writer and I find the silence out here is the perfect conditions to actually make progress."

"That's neat. I respect that." Grayson glanced at his wristwatch and gave a sharp inhale of breath. "Whelp, I've got to get out of here. It was nice meeting you. Oh, and here's your change." Grayson proceeded to rattle the whole ice cream truck by closing the side door and climbing back into the driver's seat.

You watch him swerve around the corner and turn his music box on again. You smile to yourself and turn to go back inside. As you do, you decide you know exactly what to do next in the novel. *Grayson*, you think. *Grayson is a good name for a character.*

The Garden

Mars Aichler

The garden of the flowers
A place I thought I never belonged
And after the final sunflower head has been chopped away
The one blocking me from my much needed sunlight
Blocking me from the growth I required
Stealing to nutrients from the soil
The ones I longed to use to nourish
The roots I wish to grow
I prepare myself to leave
To cut myself off
I spill too many words
I speak too much
And people are tired of it
They are angry with me
So I will go silent for you
I will trim the flowers
All of them
I will no longer be your problem
You will not have to deal with me anymore
The lawnmower is prepped
At least when I leave the garden space
The air will smell like fresh cut grass
And welcome guests with the scent of spring
But some will not let me go that easily
The cherry tree extends an olive branch
She blooms most in late February
Early March
Her flowers are kind and welcoming
And I leave her space showered in the scent of sweetness
Pretty pastel petals woven into my hair
I feel welcomed by spring itself
So I suppose I can stay a little longer here
One welcomes me as she always has
Surely the others won't mind hosting me for just a bit longer
The tiger lily is wild
Her words can sting or heat me

She is neutral in this
I can stay around here if she'll let me
And there's always the cherry tree
But slowly the other flowers bow down from their solemn stances
Take my seeds and plant them
"I like your daisies, you can always show some to me"
"They're pretty! I know I don't admire them that often, but please
keep planting them"
"I think daisies are nice"
The peony reaches out with shy glances and kind smiles
The jasmine has always been there, twinned around me
The morning glories return each season with laughter and smiles
Though I forget how I appreciate the motion
It's lovely to hear the bells ring out as they sway in the wind
And then the climbing rose
Though her thorns can be sharp
She does not mean to pierce me
"I'm sorry, I didn't understand, it was a mistake. Your flowers are
so unique, I appreciate them. I was wrong to treat you like a lowly
weed."
And by the beginning of next spring
When the thoughts of cutting myself off
Throwing my seeds to the sky and hoping,
Praying they will bring me to a place I feel welcomed
Are gone
Blown away in the fresh that carries the scent of storms and rain
And the showers that water the plants
The message is clear;
"You will always have a place in our garden
It does not matter if you don't seem to fit
You are a flower
And for us, that is enough."



Patterns
Rory Glass

[Return to TOC](#)



Button Flash
Georgia Rector

[Return to TOC](#)

Beneficial Problems

TingTing Zhang

Won't you celebrate with me
Some small things can make
A big problem
In life
Can we stop doing that?
Nope thanks
The turning points in life are

Problems

Draw a line to connect them
Turning points and problems
Choose and process
Suppose and result
Sometimes, we think
we choose a wrong way
The problems come out

every time

Solve and arise
After many and many times
The wrong becomes the right
Each direction toward
A different ending
But that doesn't have right or wrong
Come here celebrate with me
Crooked life and insignificant problem
And they never drop me down

[Return to TOC](#)

Lorna
Mars Aichler

Legend has it that there was an audible sound when Lorna finally stopped giving a shit.

She was standing in the center of a train car, one hand on the yellow support bar and the other fiddling with the edge of her sleeve. She was wearing one of those peach sweaters that went way past her wrists and would have covered her shorts had she been wearing any. Instead she was wearing a black skirt. White ankle socks. Black converse. Her backpack was tiny and yellow and cute.

Her friends had just gotten on the train, the same car as her. This was the transit center, where you could leave one train line and get on another. The doors were open extra long, almost for a minute or two.

Lorna made eye contact with her friends, all four of them at once. She smiled at them sweetly, hoping they would stand near here so all of them could chat before they arrived at their stop.

Not one of them smiled back.

Lorna wasn't sure exactly how it had happened. There was buildup of some sort, a high screeching, squeaking sound like the train powering up to jet off across its tracks, or like loppers attempting to cut through a branch that was a bit too thick.

Something came loose in her skull and came to rest in her mouth, making her frown. Why hadn't they smiled back? What was that about? She had done everything she always did that made her friends nice to her. She had been dressing like them since she

was eleven, did that not matter five years later? She had become soft like them, wore skirts without pants underneath despite how they made her legs cold and she wore long sweaters even though they overheated her indoors. She wore pastels of yellow and peach and baby pink even though her favorite color was china blue. She carried around a tiny backpack that couldn't fit anything in it because it fit her outfits, her aesthetic.

Everything she had worked for so hard, and yet none of it had paid off in the way she hoped it would. They still chose each other over her.

Squeak, squeak, squeak.

Trapped in a train car with people who didn't value her the ways he thought she valued them. Why didn't they care the way she did?

The doors are closing.

Clock!

That's what it sounded like when Lorna realized her next thought. Not a click or a lop or a drop or a zap or a zing or a zop. It sounded like the word "clock." Like the sound of large fabric scissors snipping their blades back together, or like a sunflower stalk being cut off. Others turned their heads to look at her. The train doors froze midway through closing. Her friend group gave her confused looks, furrowing their brows, pursing their lips.

Why did she care what they thought when they didn't care about her presence?

Lorna stepped off the train and let it speed away behind her. She would be late to school now. She didn't care. She didn't want to go. Not yet, at least. Lorna enjoyed going to school, but mainly when there was a late start or a short day. This wasn't either of those things.

She bent down to the tracks and picked up one of the rocks near the metal. She went to a coffee shop and got herself a hot chocolate. She bought herself a very long pair of black socks and put them on so her legs were covered. Lorna smiled to herself. Now her legs weren't cold.

She caught the next train to school, arriving about a half hour late.

Her first period teacher was confused, because Lorna was never late.

"I took the late train," said Lorna.

The teacher nodded in understanding. "Oh, I see. You missed your train."

"No."

The teacher fixed her with a confused look, and so did the rest of the class.

"What?"

"What do you see, exactly?"

"I don't quite understand your question, my dear."

Lorna tapped her shoes on the floor. She needed new ones. These stupid converse weren't very good for walking in, were they?

"I was on the right train. On time. But then I got off the train, bought myself some new socks and then came here."

There was more silence before the teacher nodded hesitantly. "I'm assuming you don't have a late note?"

Lorna shook her head.

The next day, she wore a pair of jeans and a black t-shirt with that large china blue hoodie she had found in the athletic department of the store. It was fitted, unlike her sweaters, and it kept her warmer. She also wore a pair of combat boots, the broken in ones she used when she hiked on weekends. She had once vowed never to wear them to school because how beat up they were, how gross they looked. She wanted her outfits to look well put together, crisp, clean. But now she was glad to have them. They were comfortable, made for walking and standing.

She started using her bigger grey backpack to carry her things. She stopped blushing her nose with makeup. She didn't wear foundation to cover her acne. She wore thicker, more comfortable socks.

Comfortable.

"I'm not going to the library to read during lunch anymore," she told her friends in class.

"Why not?" They were only concerned about her absence when she announced it.

“Because the agriculture teacher has eco club open every day if you want to go, and I want to.”

Lorna began growing plants in her room. She started keeping candles and using them to cast spells. She enchanted her train station rock with a charm of safe travels she found on Pinterest. She enchanted a shell with a confidence charm and kept it in her backpack in a separate pouch from her rock. The longer she had them with her, the less she cared what others thought. The other people on the train seemed to find themselves a little more cleaned up than before.

Lorna brought black tea in a thermos to classes and drank it throughout the day when she felt a draft blow in from under the doors. She made sachets and put them in her dresser drawers so all her clothes smelled like lavender. She would fidget with one charm on her necklace when she wanted someone to go away and another one when she felt like welcoming whomever felt the need to greet her. The second her skin came in contact with the first charm, those who were going to judge or mock her felt the need to go to the bathroom, leave class early, or keep their mouths shut. When she touched the second one, the energy of the class relaxed. Studying, asking for help or asking questions, or being polite were easier.

“You’re different,” said a guy in her health class. “Why did you change?”

“I didn’t change, I’m just more myself now.”

That was what she told everyone when they asked her. That was all that mattered they know.

[Return to TOC](#)

Emotions

Leo Buckwalter

Your head is filled
With emotions
Happiness, sadness,
anger.

The list goes on
But only one controls yours
It sometimes creeps in without knowing
With age
Certain events.

Depression
It creeps in
It can take over slowly or increasingly fast
Some think about hurting themselves all the time
Many get better.

How will you let it go?

[Return to TOC](#)



Low Poly Portrait
Ella Kay

[Return to TOC](#)



Low Poly Portrait
Evan Sonne

[Return to TOC](#)

Patience

Aracelie Sanchez

I don't know if you understand how much I appreciate you
How much I need you
You're always my go to
No matter the weather, day, time you're always there
Like the back of my spine
I'll admit I hate waiting on you
As I wait I can see you
So close yet so far
I prefer you over a car
Once I get on, all these emotions hit me
I get nervous as I look around
Scared I might not find a seat
Excited when I think of where I'm heading
And thinking of what we could be
Loving the view
I pass places I've never seen
Even though the seats aren't always that clean
Sometimes wet and dirty
Sometimes tweakerz scream "Die BirDy!"
There's usually a wack driver
Usually cranky and old
With a big black mole
Driving mean not clean
I think I can hear 2 babies scream
All the conversations don't stop
I try not to eavesdrop
I pass my stop
See a man sell pot
I got a thing for the bus i'll confess
Especially because the destinations endless

[Return to TOC](#)

People

Van Ho

People

We are the United States of America,
but the Americans of the states aren't united.

The powerful political parties
are practically piss.

People,

we are as stubborn as sticks in the viscous mud.

Picking on the previous proposition,
so we could propose and praise our own position.

People,

we'd always want to be politically correct,
but never try to stand up and
correct the political problem properly.

People,

we are the keys to unlock this nation's potential,
but having too many

keys are also our god damn problem. People,

We live in the United States of America,
yet we depend on the electoral college
to pick the people's president.

We,

run this nation,
without the US

it'll just be A predicament.

"We the people of the United States"

A statement that reminds us of our past,
both good and bad.

So, we

should proudly push past our pride and prejudice,
but before preparing to proudly push past our pride and prejudice,

we

the people need to reunite.

[Return to TOC](#)

Why Do We Live? Why Do We Die?

Abdulrahman Al Masr

I remember when
I left Syria
I was 8 years old
I was scared
I didn't know the meaning of
WAR
It is a million words
YOU see YOU taste
YOU smell YOU touch
YOU feel
WAR is death
IT is the taste of dust
when bombs explode
IT smells like smoke
EVERYONE feels afraid
WAR
IT is the look of fear
IT is trees falling
IT is airplanes bombing
IT is houses falling
IT is the sound of people dying
WAR
feels like shit sounds like death
tastes like skin and blood
smells like burning houses like volcano fire
IT
is the color of bloodshot eyes
WAR
Will break your heart
IT
Will break your body

WAR

Will kill YOU

IT will break YOU

Who decides who lives?

Who decides who dies?

Why must you drop bombs on us?

Are you alive?

Are you dead?

I know why we have IT

I know why we live in fear

But I still have to ask

Why do we have war?

[Return to TOC](#)

Hindsight - 2020 Sophomore Story Slam Winning Story

Wyatt Mejia-Lopez

When I was in sixth grade, there was this girl that I liked. A lot, actually. No, let me describe myself: I was a short kid, 4' 10". I had problems. I was very confident. Very confident. I was overly confident. I thought I could do anything, but at the same time I was like socially awkward, so you know I couldn't interact with people. There was this girl I thought I had a chance with. Thought I did. Yeah, I thought that she liked me. I was like, this girl likes me. It was very obvious, like come on, she says hi to me all the time and she even touched me on my shoulder once. I know it was my left one, so I know the exact shoulder.

I was just in my room once thinking, when should I ask this girl out? I was thinking for like 15 seconds, like when should I ask her out? And then, I was like, actually I know when to ask her out. I planned the day. I planned what I was going to do, what I was going to say. By the way, this girl was HOT, like seriously, like this girl was Whoa... but yeah, her eyes were gorgeous, her hair was straight and all that. By the way, this all happened in Honduras. So anyways, when the day came I took a 30-minute hot shower. I got a bunch of my grandma's perfume and I said *spritz spritz spritz spritz spritz spritz*. Then I got 2 mints, I looked in the mirror, and I was practicing my lines. I was like, "Will you go out with me?" No no, don't say it like that. You're stupid, you're being stupid. Okay, "Do you want to go out with me?" Then I was like wow, I got this! I looked the mirror dead in the eyes, and then I had a 15-second make-out session with my mirror. What was worse is it tasted like glass later on.

After all that, I got ready, put on one of my dad's tuxedos which was like huge on me--my dad is like five foot six and I was like 4'10". So then I just ate my breakfast. I got ready, looking good. I look in the mirror and I still see that kiss mark. I'll clean that later. I was like okay I'm going to go eat my breakfast and then I'm

just going to go to her house. Then I was like, “Okay Mom ,I got to go.”

She was like, “Go?”

And I was like, “Yeah I got to go.”

“Dressed like this you're going somewhere?”

I was like, “Yeah.”

“Where you going?”

“I'm going to go score.” But now I know what's scoring means so.. never saying that again. No wonder she gave me that look.

When I was on my way to her house, I was just walking like I was so confident. I got to her place. Honduras is a very dirty place so it was weird that I was just dress like this over there. So I got to her place and knocked. Waiting...waiting. She opens the door and she's like, “Ohhnh hey.”

And I'm like, “Heyyyyy.” In my mind I was like *okay the lines the lines the lines will you go out with me will you go out with me will you go out with me*, but then my confidence is going up and I said, “Hey you. I know you want to go out with me. It's very obvious. Come on, you touched this shoulder. You say hi to me all the time. What do you expect from me? I know you like me. Come on, I know you want to date me. It's very obvious, so let's just date already. You know what? You don't even have to answer. I know it's a yes.”

She approaches me...she approaches me...she approaches me...and then she slaps the crap out of me! Don't mess with Latinas. Then she closes the door in my face.

And then, I'm just here like *she wants me*. I go home I'm just planning the next time I'm going to ask her out. I saw her on the street once, and she saw me and then just started speed walking the other way.

But yeah, what I learned from that is if you're if you're going to ask someone out and they say no then you've just got to accept it. Don't make it worse. Don't be too overly confident.

Confidence is a good thing, but don't be too overly confident.
Something I could have done better was to just ask her out and if she said no, I could've said "Can we still be friends?"

[Return to TOC](#)

Hindsight - 2020 Madison Story Slam Winning Story

Tyler Horan

When I was 11 I was really really insecure and I was insecure for a lot of reasons, but one of those reasons is because I was trans. I was trans at a very young age. I didn't really know how it worked. I didn't know what was going on with my body and my identity so you know I just was very insecure and you know what insecure kids do? They wear ugly t-shirts from Kohl's. But you know what they also do? They walk with their head down and this makes it hard to go throughout your life because when you're walking with your head down you're not paying attention. I've walked into poles so many times and have fallen on my ass. I walked into people, which is even worse, because people you have to talk to, poles you don't.

So anyway, I was 11. I was in the car with my mom and we were going to get me my first-ever chest binder, which is something that trans people wear that basically makes your boobs go away. I was really excited. I was excited to try it on, this thing that would make me feel better about myself. Maybe I could walk with my chest up for once. But I also was scared and my mom knew that I was scared and I thought to myself: you know there was nothing that my mom would do to make this experience any more worse for me; you know like she would tell me everything, so I thought. The first thing I noticed about the store we were going to was that the windows were blacked out which usually doesn't mean hey we're super inviting and you should come in here. No. it probably means like we're going to kill you so... and the second thing I see is this big neon sign that says She Bop. Yeah, so I was this little kid and I looked at my mom and I was like, "What is this place?"

And she said, "You'll see."

And I was like okay, so this is not normal.

We walk in and I told you I walk with my head down; I do not look at things. So I walked in there with my head down as usual, and my mom starts laughing, and I'm like *Oh God*, and I look up and I'm surrounded by dicks everywhere, all shapes and sizes and colors. It was like a Disneyland for lesbians. I was young and I was terrified and I was like Oh my gosh there are penises here, that is disgusting! My face was red. I was panicking. I wanted to melt into the ground but instead I went to the back of the room and I put my binder on and I looked in the mirror and I was like *yeah hell yeah, I look like a boy. I'm a sexy cis man. I have muscles. I'm going to drive a Hummer.* I just I was so excited and then I tried to take it off and if you know anything about binders, they're very tight for obvious reasons, so I tried to take it off ,you know, like the sexy guys do and then I got stuck with my arms in the air, boobs out, terrified. I sat in that dressing room for 20 minutes waiting for someone to ask-- I don't even know what I was waiting for-- panic ensued and I thought to myself *this is it this is how I'm going to die.*

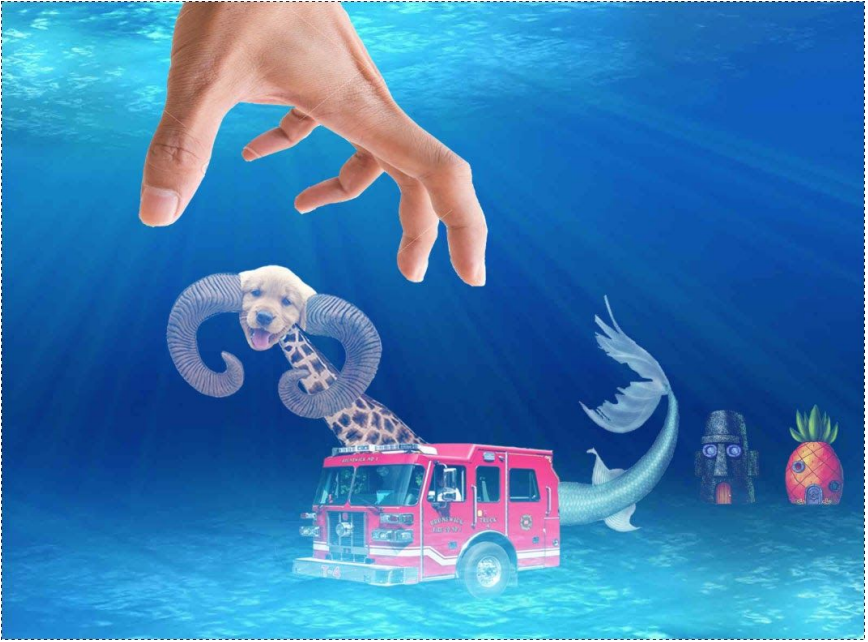
Eventually, the lady that helped me pick out the binder called for me and she said, "Tyler are you okay"?

That was the first time anyone had ever called me Tyler, and you know usually I would have been like, "Great, fine thank you for asking." I'll deal with this on my own. I might be here forever. But instead, because she called me Tyler, I said, "No I'm not okay."



Bubbles
Suipeli Tauhelangi

[Return to TOC](#)



Untitled
Cailin Dunbar

[Return to TOC](#)

Untitled
Erin Challenor

me eating green apple candy and you smoking cigarettes
our legs dangling off the roof of an empty parking garage
our hands dry and cold and caked in pebbles
both of us crying poetry to the sponge sky

sharing heaven's hatred
and hell's presents
we've never seen anything like each other
and yet we've seen each other all along
your headphones are tangled and I like it that way
and you like how I hold a pencil between my teeth

our stamp is not for sale
but we do sell our souls to the stars
i promised myself i would never write a love poem

our backs yawn but our smiles don't
yours shuts the world out to make way for baths of lilac
target practice on stereotypes
locked metaphors and swallowed keys like in the movies
i play with your hands instead of biting my nails
somehow it only rains when we want it to

we don't capitalize our i's
we write in books
we wrap ourselves in newspaper columns
scribbles over text, leather notebooks, pencil swallowed in coffee
and tears
1776 or 1941

i let the ridges of your corduroy tickle my nails

blurry photos sound nice but you'd never show up
the third sentence of our story is "and then i met you"
you like my music taste and we say fuck aesthetics
but i secretly want yours to be mine

i burn my pages
i watch the black ink rim with fire before coiling into emerald ash
the rose's devastation tickles

wind ruffles her fingers through your remains
and takes them out to sea
my tears wave goodbye as you are whisked away
my whispers of delight are swallowed by a lake of absence

you'll always be mine
and your ashes will return to my page -one day
i'll sweep you up, pat you into form
Your blood my ink as it seeps into words
I'll stitch you up new

no one can write you like I do

Cassie
Yunna Artemenko

“Hey Cassie, everything alright?” someone says placing their hand on my shoulder. I turned around shocked to see Layla, a drink in her hand.

“I’m fine, but isn’t drinking at this party illegal?” I jest. She smirks, placing a finger to her lips and making a quiet shushing noise.

“Hey, do you know where Lisa is?” I ask.

“Umm.. Last I checked she was outside with a few guys.”

“Yup, sounds like Lisa, thanks.”

I walk downstairs and head towards the door that’s already open, and instantly my eyes are drawn to a huge crowd of people. My guess is Lisa is in the middle, like always. I love her, but I can’t deny that she’s always the center of attention, and does stupid things to be there. I push my way towards the center to find Lisa, cup in hand, dancing to the music. She sees me and runs over, placing her right arm around my neck.

“Hey Cassie, where have you been all night?” She says leaning her body against mine, making me feel as though I was carrying both our weights. In that moment we heard glass shatter and all look up to the upstairs bedroom, and see some random guy just fall out of the window, and drop to the ground with a loud thud. Everyone starts running towards the body on the ground, I looked up to see Layla standing behind the window sill looking down with a horrified expression. I started walking towards the large group of people until I was pulled back, and saw Lisa holding on to my arm.

“We have to leave right now,” she says with a worried look.

“What? What are you talking about? Why?”

“They might think it was me, I was here and I can’t be blamed for this, please let’s just go.”

“What are you talking about? We were outside, and blamed for what?”

“Please Cassie, let’s just go before the guard shows up.”

“Okay, let’s go I guess,” I responded, a bit confused. We were standing outside when it happened, why would she be questioned about it? Well, doesn’t matter, I had no problem with leaving; parties weren’t my kind of scene. Lisa started walking faster towards her car, I was trying to match her pace. I was kind of surprised how she was able to walk so fast when 5 minutes ago she couldn’t even keep her balance.

She kept looking behind us at the huge crowd, trying to get to the car faster, but I don’t think she noticed the blonde guy, wearing the black guard uniform, who kept watch over the party at the end of the street, who was looking straight at us. I met his gaze, and quickly turned around as we got into the car and drove away. Lisa drove me home, the car ride was unusually quiet, and I wasn’t going to be the one to break the silence.

“Well, goodnight. I’ll see you at school tomorrow,” Lisa said as I stepped out of the car.

I mustered up the courage to finally talk about what we saw, “Yeah, also are you okay? You know, with what happened at the party and all.”

“Yeah, I was just scared that my parents would find out I went to the party, they kind of never gave me permission to leave,” she chuckled a bit at the end, making me feel better now that she was acting like her old self again. “And I was caught off guard with the body and all, it scared me a little.”

I sat back down in the car and gave her a hug, “Yeah, it scared me too,” I said before going inside. I snuck my way upstairs to my room, trying to avoid having a conversation about the situation with my parents, and went to bed. I thought about the body, hoping it was just some people messing around. Could it be possible that he died from that fall? No, the guard wouldn’t let it get that far. And what was Layla doing upstairs? Could she have

been the one that pushed him out? I stopped thinking too much about it, remembering that I had to get up early tomorrow and fell asleep.

I woke up to my alarm the next day, and got ready to go to school, trying to keep the events that happened last night out of my mind. Lisa was already parked outside when I left home, and we drove to school. I felt better now that she was acting normal, as though yesterday didn't happen. We walked through the school doors, all eyes on us.

"Why is everyone staring at you?" I whispered to Lisa.

"T-they're not looking at me," she said panicking. "They're looking at the both of us."

"Lisa Chambers, Cassie Martin?" A man in the guard uniform says from behind us. We nod at the man, not knowing what to say. "Come with me please." His face was stern and intimidating. We walked out of the school with the man, and as soon as we left the building two other guards came out of the van and put handcuffs on us, as though we were dangerous. I was too shocked to say anything and obliged quietly. Lisa on the other hand was yelling and arguing, but I was too focused on the handcuffs on my wrists, too scared to look up or tune into the conversation going on around me. We got inside of the van and left with the guards.

"What is going on? Why aren't you saying anything? Cassie!" I looked up at Lisa, who looked back with an irritated look.

"I don't know, I-I don't know anything," I wasn't sure if I was telling myself that or her. I felt my throat burn with every word I said, I was so scared because everyone knows that whenever someone's taken by the guard they're either innocent and released, or may get sent away to another city if they don't have enough evidence to prove them innocent, or they're deemed guilty and sentenced to death. I knew I was innocent, but how am I supposed to prove that when I don't even know the crime?

I was lost in thought when the van came to a stop, and the doors opened and saw a stream of sunlight coming through the doors. One of the guys grabbed my arm and I quickly got to my feet as we walked into the building, and we were put into an empty room. We instantly walked to the opposite end and sat on the floor side by side.

“What’s going on Lisa?” I said feeling the tears streaming down my face.

“Nothing, I’m sure they’re questioning everyone from the party.” She said, trying to reassure me.

“What? Why would they be questioning everyone?” I looked at her tranquil face. Why wasn’t she as scared as I was?

“Do you not remember the body? Don’t worry, we’ll just say we left before that happened.”

“But why do we have to lie, we were both outside and we saw the body. I didn’t know he died, I just thought someone was messing around.”

“It’s not lying, we did leave before anything happened, I just don’t want to be a suspect in case they don’t get enough confirmation to prove our innocence.”

“Oh, okay, I guess you’re right.” I said leaning on her shoulder, tears streaming down my face. I knew something wasn’t right, it was as though she had all the answers, but I didn’t want to pressure Lisa into saying anything. I know she doesn’t want her parents finding out about the party, but I feel like that should be the least of our worries. We sat in the room for another 10 minutes or so, until two of the guards walked in. One looked familiar, he seemed way too young to be a part of the guard, and the other was noticeably older and balder. I recognized the younger one, he was the guard at the party who saw us leaving. As I examined his face, I realized he was avoiding looking at us, he kept his eyes on the wall above us. The older guard stepped forward.

“Hello, I’m Richard, and this is my partner Jacob,” he said, opening up the folder in his hands. “Now, Lisa can you please

come with us,” he said, gesturing his hand to the door that Jacob was already holding open for them.

Lisa got up and squeezed my hand, and gave me a comforting smile before going with the guards. I sat in the room alone for what felt like forever, until the door opened again, and I saw Jacob, but this time he was alone. He wasn't avoiding looking at me this time, and his face wasn't as serious.

“Cassie, please come with me,” he said, opening the door. I got up and followed him to another room, the kind you see in movies when a suspect is being questioned. The lights were dim, and it was hard to see. We walked in and I was guided to the seat across from the man that was sitting there, he was wearing a dress shirt, it felt strange seeing someone here not in a guard uniform.

“Hello Cassie, I'd like you to please tell me what happened at the senior party you attended last night,” the middle aged man asked. I looked at the door and saw that the young guard wasn't in the room anymore, and it was just me and the man now. “Well?” He said with a serious tone.

“Oh right, the party. Well I went with Lisa, but we were separated at some point and then I looked for her and someone told me she was outside. I went outside and found Lisa and then we saw a body fly out-”

“Wait, you saw the body?” The man interrupted.

Shit, I shouldn't have mentioned that we saw the body.

“No, we didn't see it. I remember someone told me about it, I'm just nervous, I'm sorry. But even if we did, we were both outside at the party, not upstairs. And if you still don't believe me I saw Layla standing behind the window right after the guy fell out,” I said trying to cover up what I said, but I could see the disbelief in the man's eyes.

“The body was dead before it was found outside, and we already talked to Layla Bellamy, which led to you and Ms. Lisa. Thank you, that's all the information I'll be needing.” He got up and

left me alone in the room. I can't believe I said all that, why couldn't I just keep quiet and not say anything about seeing the body? I laid my head down on the table and just let the tears fall down my face. I knew I messed up and now it would cost me my life.

A few minutes had passed and the door opened and this time Lisa walked into the room. I could see from the puffiness in her eyes that she's also been crying. She sat down in the chair next to me and gave me a tight hug, it felt like we've been apart for so long. Before we had time to talk the man returned, but he wasn't alone this time. The other man was darker and was visibly older, maybe in his 40s or 50s. They sat down across from us and the older one began to speak.

"Ms. Cassie Martin, and Ms. Lisa Chambers. I have reviewed both your stories, and with the insufficient amount of evidence you will not be deemed guilty." We both breathed a sigh of relief and smiled at each other, tears forming in our eyes. "But," he quickly added. "This doesn't mean you're innocent. We'll still keep the case open and we will get an answer on who killed Andrew Nielsen."

"But this means we're free to go, right?" Lisa asked.

"Yes and no," we gave him a puzzled look. "You're free to leave, but you can't stay in Oakridge anymore."

"What do you mean? This is our home, our families and friends live here," I blurted out loud.

"I understand, but we can't let you stay here until we close the case. You'll temporarily be sent to a nearby city tomorrow morning, until we have enough evidence to prove your innocence. I suggest you say goodbye to your families. I'm sorry but there's nothing I can do," he said apologetically. He then got up, grabbed the folder and left with the other man.

"Do you think we'll still see each other?" I stammered.

"I don't know, but it'll be okay, I promise," she reassured me. I don't know how she stayed so calm, if I'm being honest I

kind of blamed her for this, she dragged me to that party. But she was my best friend since we were just kids, and nothing could make me hate her. For a moment I thought she was the one that killed him, after the man said the body had been dead before it was found outside and that Layla said something, but I still wanted to believe that it wasn't her.

What could Layla have said that led the guard to us? I saw Layla, she must've been the one that pushed Andrew, but why would she say it was us? It wasn't me, and I knew the guard wouldn't bring us in unless Layla had proof that it was us. It wasn't me, I didn't even know the guy, and I doubt Lisa knew him.

They drove us back home, and gave us one last day in Oakridge. I was mid-packing until I heard a knock on the door, and I was surprised to see Lisa on the other side of the door.

"Let's go, we don't have much time," she said.

"Go where? I want to say goodbye before we leave, and I'm not done packing."

"Just grab a bag, and follow me," I did as she told me. I was a bit curious, but also scared. We drove to the edge of the city. No one knew what was beyond Oakridge and the only known way to get out was by plane, which only the guard possessed. No one knew what the forest led to, even if people did escape this way, they never came back so nobody knew if they got out. I stood in shock at the edge of the border and Lisa looked back at me.

"Well, let's go."

"Why are we running? They'll realize we're innocent and we'll be sent home," I don't get it. Why would she run if we're innocent? What if she was the one that killed Andrew? No, Lisa wasn't capable of that.

"Look, just trust me. We need to run, we'll get blamed for this."

"Why would we? We're innocent!" I yelled. "At least, I know I am," I said quietly. "D-did you kill him?" I stuttered, avoiding her eyes.

“What? Why would you think that? Cassie, please just come on, I’ll explain everything later,” she said grabbing my arm and taking me into the forest with her.

She guided me around the branches and trees, meanwhile I was lost in my head, deciding what to believe. I knew she was hiding something ever since the party, but could she have possibly killed him? The evidence was there, but I’ve known her my whole life, was everything I knew about her a lie? I needed to know the truth. I stopped in my tracks, Lisa looked at me concerned. “Tell me what’s going on,” I said confidently.

“Cassie, I said I’d explain later.”

“I want the truth, right now,” I demanded. She looked startled. I myself was surprised with this new confidence.

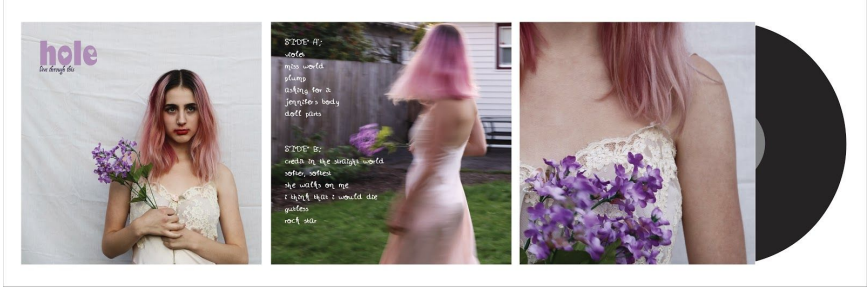
“Cassie, I’m scared that if I tell you the truth you’ll leave me. You’re my sister, I can’t lose you. I need you. We’ve always been together, in any situation we’re always by each other’s side,” she said genuinely.

I knew she meant every word she said, but now I knew the truth. She was still my bestest friend, and she was right, we’ve been through everything together. We could never live without each other, maybe we could, but did I really want to find out? I snapped back to reality, and looked into her sorrowful eyes.

“You’re right. I don’t know what I’d do without you,” I smiled at her. She jumped up from excitement and smiled at me.

“I’m so glad we’re friends,” she turned around and started walking deeper into the woods.

“Yeah, me too,” I whispered to myself, and I watched her figure get smaller as the distance between us increased.



Hole

Lola Lang

[Return to TOC](#)



Crayola
Liv Tran

[Return to TOC](#)

Untitled
Sicity Webster

I am a porcelain tea cup.
Sometimes I'm left on a shelf for decoration by you.
Sometimes you take me down and use me.
But every time my porcelain figure is held tightly by your cold
hands,
It's only for the convenience of you,
To warm you.
But what about me?
I am a porcelain cup.
I need tea when it's cold, I shouldn't have to beg.
I don't want you to wait till you see the dust to know it's too late.
I have been chipped and by the hands and lips of the one person I
wanted the most.

Being Black In America

Jamari West

Being Black In America

You face a lot of challenges,
Trials, tribulations and
Obstacles being black

I could be walking down the cully or
Driving down cully
Minding my own business
And get mugged for no reason

I could walk into a public place
And look up and all eyes are on me
With all the shootings
Of unarmed Black Men
Just makes my skin crawl

I walk out of my front door every morning
Hoping, Praying
To make it home safe
Because I'm afraid of being taken to jail

Because they say
"You fit the description for a crime committed last week"
When at the time I was in bed
Or being shot for doing what
The officer told me to do

YES!!!!

For what the officer told me to do
Once Again
Being Black In America

[Return to TOC](#)

Dear Dad
Katie Harmon

Dear Dad,

i haven't talked to you since my birthday; that was last november if you can't remember. Theres brown and red leaves that crunch when you step on them in Portland during that time of the year. i know you talk to ~~my brother~~ Dillon a lot but never seem to get to me. Just because i don't tolerate ~~you being an alcoholic~~ your drinking habits doesn't mean i don't think of you. Every shiny red ladybug, every starry night, everytime i smell the scent of plywood or Chambray blue paint it reminds me of all the times i hopped into that white Ford F-150 truck to go on a work project ~~I think about how wonderful life was like as an eight year old~~. Everyday, every night, everytime i have anxiety ~~it's because of you~~ i trace it back to you. i was always a daddy's girl but that's because i didn't realize that you weren't just being adventurous and daring. The stories i remember from childhood are so much different now. i realized you're just a dad who cares more about a heineken beer more than his baby girl with hazel eyes and straight blonde hair.

- katie

I Have Insomnia

Katie Harmon

A lot of the time I stay up all night.

Sometimes I think about anything and everything listed from A-Z
Apricot Princess- my favorite album of two years talking about
love and how horrible but wonderful it is.

Bowie- my stinky dog. He looks a little like the Tasmanian devil.

Black , white, and brown fur that's fluffy but stiff at the same time.
He acts the same too.

Courgette- the french word for zucchini. It also happens to be my
favorite french word. The way the word rolls off your tongue is so
smooth.

The list goes on.

Other nights I think about nothing.

Hopelessly wishing I could just fall asleep.

Yes I've tried counting sheep,

And ladybugs,

And buttons,

But it just doesn't work.

I just want to fall more and more into my dainty floral design yellow
and white fluffy bed sheets.

The way that they look and feel like the softest asperatus clouds in
my mind makes me so happy but mad at the same time.

I wish I could be blessed by them every night.

Constantly tired through the day results in sleepless nights.

I have insomnia.

[Return to TOC](#)

Life in Another Country

Alejandro M. Can Vazquez

Traveling to Mexico we saw palm trees. We passed through dirt and gravel, I loved the crunching sounds, and it always felt like you were in an oven. Still, Maní, Yucatan, Mexico is a beautiful gem. Beauty can be seen through many things, I see it through STEM, but it can be found everywhere. While my grandma passed we all cried, everyone in the family was mourning up until her last breath, she laid in her favorite hammock. Many people are afraid and despise death but we smiled, giving a last farewell to someone who touched our lives To someone who loved us in a beautiful way. Sadness is another emotion we all have. My grandpa demonstrated it very well as his wife had just passed away. Too much sadness leads to depression. We need happiness to not go astray. To achieve this it took time, but he learned to spend his time happily with us, his family. Chasing us, playing with us, celebrating with us until he finally met the beautiful ending of spending his time with his love.



Untitled
Nina Casey

[Return to TOC](#)



Untitled
Harrison Rhodes

[Return to TOC](#)

Summer Schedule

Morgan Barrow

So everyday I went down there. I'd put on my mudding boots and my special raincoat I got for my 8th birthday. My special fuschia raincoat with lime green and orange buttons, flowers for pockets and frills on the sleeves. Of course no adventurer is prepared without a safety bag, so naturally I had one of those with me as well. Inside the little brown satchel was my flashlight, extra batteries, a stick of gum, my journal, and mittens. On hot days I'd ditch the mittens for a water bottle and sometimes I'd need the umbrella, but not that day. No, on that day I needed the extra warmth as it was in the transition between fall and winter, the wind was picking up and the temperature began to drop. That didn't mean the sun wasn't out, it was a beautiful day, just really cold. I had finished the routine preparations then set out on my regular trek into the woods. The forest around my house, oddly enough, didn't bother me as I never got lost in them. I don't know how or why it was so easy for me to navigate them, but I did with extreme comfort. As I fumbled over tree logs and stumps I just instinctively knew where to turn, I was always back home on time. I was thankful the trees never let me lose myself, I don't think my mother would be able to stomach my absence.

[Return to TOC](#)

Two Transformative Experiences With Ducks

Georgia Rector

I know the whole idea of the white-Americanized spirit animal is ridiculously insensitive, but if I had a spirit animal, I thought for a while that it would be a duck.

Last year, while throwing a comically oversized tree limb into the Clackamas River for my dog to retrieve, a single greyish duck with a red face flapped out of the water and headed towards me. I figured it would quickly depart, scared of the 70 pound black lab nearby (or me, for that matter), but that wasn't the case. I pulled my phone out to record.

“Look at this duck,” I said as it waddled closer and closer. It stopped about four feet away, and at that moment became my closest encounter with a wild animal. But my electrifying connection with this duck was cut short as my dog bolted from down the river shore and chased the bird back into the water, just barely brushing her nose against its tail feathers.

Now, *finally*, I'd had a special animal moment; when the school year began, I was finally able to answer the inane icebreaker question of “What's your spirit animal?” sufficiently. Life was good, and for almost a year, my view on ducks was overwhelmingly positive.

And then, it was Mother's Day.

It was my idea to have a peaceful picnic in Laurelhurst Park with my mom to celebrate, and all was going rather well. We ate our lunch, and shortly took our seats on a slightly rotten bench, enjoying the tranquility of the pond and the musicians on the other side of it. But there were ducks in the pond, and I quite foolishly

thought that I might have another favorable duck experience.

We had noticed a small female, with its dull brown feathers, being chased by an extravagantly plumed male; they flew and swam and flapped their wings all over the place. Suddenly, when they were a mere twenty feet from our shoreside bench, the male caught up to her, grabbed the back of her neck with his beak, and climbed on top. She thrashed to get away, but he was far too strong and... passionate — I'll just say he did *what ducks do*. But to our dismay, he soon wasn't alone. At least four other males joined in on the action, each getting their fix on that one poor female. All my mother and I could do was stare on in horror, mouths agape at the gruesome duck gang rape we were witnessing.

Needless to say, my spirit animal isn't a duck anymore.

We

Elliott Cusick

I honestly feel like...
I can't perform.
I feel as if everything I write creates
Snores
And bores.
I feel that my rhythm is weak.
That with every sentence I write
I must be bleak.
When my pen goes to parchment
I must be able to think
About what needs to be made.
You might too
Feel like I do.
Do you want to snap?
Do you want to crack?
Can your feelings be let out?
Can your thoughts wander about?
What will happen if they do?
You think everyone will see the real you.

That one who's a fool.
I'm sure
You "have" to please,
You "have" to maintain
That same image.
That necessary vision.
Necessary to live,
Breathe,
And everything in between.
At least that's what you think.
But

Why not be the “best” you can be?
“Only”
To decide to
Suppress
Which leads to stress
Then...
Inevitably...
You’ll regret.
So will you continue
To curate what you should be?
What isn’t you.
What isn’t me.
So after all this
I ask you now
Do you like what you see?
Is the presentation of self-insubordination
What you need?
You don’t have to decide.
You can continue to lie.
BUT PLEASE KNOW
This tide,
This hide,
That is pulling you back,
That will continue to nack
And rack
Until you release
And start to leak,
Start to bleed.
We all see!
We know
Your struggle.
We share the pain.
We share that self-blame.
We know your name.

It's human.
It's you.
It's we.
It's me.
You're not alone
Your future is not carved in stone.
We all hide,
We all lie,
Most importantly,
We all die
In the end.
So
If you feel you need to fit a mold or
That you have to follow everything you're told
Remember
That sentence you write
That final determination you make
That person you share,
You show
Shouldn't end with "me".
It should end...
With
"We".

But maybe
It's an excuse.

Maybe
my anxiety
Of a wide release
Is preventing me from being honest

could you
with enough time
learn how to recall
the shape of my face
the touch of my skin on
yours, the smell of my hair
? the moments we shared
the memories we have with
each other? this diagnosis
doesn't have to change us
i don't want it to change us
please don't let this change
everything we had. but i don't
think this is in your control i mean
you can't even remember your own
name how could you possibly recall
us? but i keep holding out hope
that i'll wake up one morning to
the sounds of you making my
favorite breakfast, singing along
our favorite songs and dancing
in your socks and t-shirt alone
in our kitchen because you
think i'm not watching and
i remember how to fall in
love with you
all over again
and again
and again

i can't recall
my name or my
own face; my skin
looks foreign and sick
faded and jaded and ill.
when i look in the mirror, i
can't recognize my reflection
i don't know who i am at all
anymore. i woke up with you
beside my hospital bed, but
i don't think i know you either
you play songs i think i heard
before, make jokes that make
me laugh more than i can believe,
how do you know what makes me
smile when even i can't remember?
how can you stick beside me, a
stranger with a familiar face, a
faded shell of whoever i used to
be? do you still love me? can
you still remember how to love
me? will you still love me like
you must have done before all
of this happened? i can't go
back in time but i can try to
go back to the doc
and hope they
can find me
a cure?

Two Sides

Jason Anajovich

[Return to TOC](#)



Women Ball Too

Ava Arias

[Return to TOC](#)

Let's Get Political

Jason Anajovich

Thanks to Russia Donald Trump was voted in (pretty much on accident)

But let me tell *you* something first: that man is not my president

We spent two trillion dollars to send soldiers into war

But somehow we don't have the funds to help feed the poor

We can abide by,

Survive by

Stand by genocide

Because we worry more about the funds

That come from building guns

Instead of caring about people's lives

We impeached the president

And then he bombed Iran

The fuck we gotta do to help you understand

The world cannot afford to re-elect this man

We have ten years to undo centuries of pollution

To help ourselves create a permanent solution

To stop methane and carbon

From choking up the atmosphere

Unless you feel like burning up

Along with the stratosphere

So Trump I think you need to start thanking Greta Thunburg

Since she's doing what you never did

The real adult in the room?
The seventeen-year-old kid

Also dude what is your problem
With wind turbines
You know they *help* the environment
As opposed to all your landmines?

Why don't you try to do something
That might actually help the world?
Because it's your hot air melting ice caps
As far as I'm concerned

Politicians are stripping women of the rights to their bodies
But human rights and consent aren't sellable commodities

We're splitting families at the border
Invading homes because of orders
Visa lengths keep getting shorter

Oh you gonna mock that reporter because they have a disorder?

You think it's funny to joke at someone else's expense?
Well I got a joke for you Mr President
and your good friend Mike Pence

We got a clown in office
Who forced Ukraine to scratch an itch
You think we didn't hear about that phone call
You narcissistic bitch?

"Make America great again"
Yeah by getting you out of office
I don't think I can take any more

Do you drop bombs just to get off or-

Okay, yeah, I might have taken that a little bit overboard

But I mean

So is banning trans people from existence and the draft board

Enlist in the military

Go to war

Prove you're a man

Well I can't go to war because I've been motherfucking banned

And just because I don't want to fight your wars

Doesn't mean other transpeople won't

But they're here to fight for America

Not your overblown ego

We've got kids from Salt Lake City

Fighting a war in Iraq

Because you assassinated a general

None of us asked for that

My eighteen-year-old friends go to bed

Afraid you'll bring the draft back

And you're so fucking old school

I bet you'd really like that

I don't want America to become republican permanently

Just go and take a look at WWII Germany

Hilter knew what he was doing to rip the Jews apart

Trump's doing the same thing (except he's not as smart)

Take it from the man who thinks the Chinese invented climate
change

To fuel their own trade wars

And increase stock exchange

Take it from the man
Who claimed Obama would bomb Iran
Seems that didn't go quite to plan

And now you've got drone strikes you're commissioning?
Hm. Interesting.

A tweet by Mr. Trump
"America needs a president who can negotiate better deals for the
American people"
Man for once I couldn't agree more
So when do we get to meet her?

And a quick shout-out to all the problems I didn't have time to say
Like conversion camps and Mexico and electroshock therapy

This poem is getting long
I should've wrapped it up sooner
But I've got two words left to say to you:

Okay, boomer.

Forgiving My Cheater

Linda Nguyen

55-word story

The phone rings and rings.
I stare at my phone, hesitating to pick up.
I know I shouldn't pick up.
I know that he's going to beg for forgiveness.
He told me he wouldn't cheat again.
He told me he loved me.
He doesn't deserve forgiveness.
But I forgive him anyways.
"Hello?"

[Return to TOC](#)

7/21/19
Ella Kay

The final rays of golden sunlight cast themselves upon their freckled faces.

We all wear our favorite dresses and dance among the endless rows of roses.

As the lush grass sweeps at my ankles with each step,

The sweet July breeze flows within me and fills me until I overflow with laughter.

And then we are onto the next adventure.

We have no agenda, not a care or curfew,

I think driving us over the river, the gas pedal dial inching past 70.

I am electrified with the energy of an entire city;

I can see they are too.

And so as we ride into the blushing sky,

My friends and I

Embrace both the calm and chaos of this summer night.

Oaths and Radiance

Alexander Markwell

Many of us know the saying “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” However, the most important step that we can take is not the first one.

We all have goals that we strive to complete. Whether it’s to lose weight, to become more attuned to nature, or to be more empathetic, we have to constantly fight to gain ground. In our way, there are many obstacles—including ourselves—that knock us down and try to destroy our dreams. But, day by day, painful step by painful step, we each have the determination to continue, the force of will to press forwards.

The most important step one can take is not the first one, powerful as it may be. The most important step, now and forever, is the next one.

Always the next step.

[Return to TOC](#)

Gabe
Vannelli



Low Poly Portrait
Gabe Vannelli

[Return to TOC](#)



Low Poly Portrait
Lola Lang

[Return to TOC](#)

Home

Iqra Awow

SOMALIA, on the east coast of Africa.

The HORN of the MOTHERLAND, where my bloodline starts and my teardrops end.

The land I might never really understand or visit.

But, to my momma and papa it brings rishing MEMORIES that never died or got lost in the land where it all began and vanished.

To the DIRT where my father once walked as a boy.

To the SKY where my mother used to swing so high as a girl.

To the rips BANANA TREES the children used to pick and climb.

To the DESERT where my people used to thrive with camels.

To the roaring OCEAN that once was ruled by fishermen.

To the SMELL of home cooked SAMBAS that once traveled through the city after the break of dawn.

To the MUSIC that once played so loud and made people dance.

The dirt, now empty FOOTPRINTS.

The sky, now SMOKEY.

The banana trees, BARREN.

The desert, now a GRAVEYARD.

The ocean, now a quiet POOL.

The music, now just empty SILENCE.

The smell of home cooked sambas, now the STENCH of my people's BLOOD.

The land my parents once called home is today a place they don't recognize anymore.

[Return to TOC](#)

Memory

Jasmine Skinner

Slipping gently through the cracks,
Through ancient stone locked in time
Every trembling whispering breath
Is held within **Mossy** brick that glistens with eternal frost.
It is a **Nook**, forever tucked away by greedy stone.

[Return to TOC](#)

Java Suc(++)ks

Cameron Horton

Compiler,
You perpetually irritate
Meticulous as ever,
Can't you see the distress you make?

To find the line,
Another folly of mine,
Would bring this erroneous code
Towards being a submittable load

I've spent the day
Troubleshooting away
But when the syntax flows right
As my monitor glows bright
Feeling this CRT monitor tan
Brings me great amity you ran.

The Dandelion That Grew Through The Concrete

Raven Linda-Ann Grant

What if I told you
That dandelions are more beautiful than roses?
You'd say I was crazy.
You'd say
"How can a simple weed be more beautiful than an elegant rose?"
And I wouldn't have an answer for you.

I met a girl
Simple, sweet, and had a smile like sunshine.
I thought she was the world.
That she didn't deserve anything but love.
But other people
Begged to differ.
She
Begged to differ.
You see,
This girl thought she deserved nothing.
That she deserved to be hurt.
She didn't see her beauty.
She thought she was boring
And ordinary.
She didn't notice her simple elegance.
She didn't notice she was worth everything.

She was a dandelion that grew through the concrete,
In a harsh world.
Trampled by people, too wrapped up in their own problems to see.
But throughout the struggle,
Throughout it all,
She makes people smile.

Even if it's just one or two people.
She brightens their day.

Now,

If you were again to say,

“How can a simple weed be more beautiful than an elegant rose?”

I would answer to you;

“Because roses are bland. They are too fragile. Too boring. Too simple.

Dandelions grow from anywhere, even concrete.

Like little sunshines, they brighten the world.

One sidewalk at a time.”

What's Left?

Jaziel Pat-Canche

After all the trials and tribulations, scars, wounds, battles,
wins and losses,
After all of those restless nights,
What's left?
Every battle leaving you more bruised
More beat up than the last,
With wounds that may never heal which will eventually turn into
scars
How does someone go on with that?
How can you get up time after time and still fight?
All I could say is
Don't give up.
You have come too far to let it all go to waste
Keep fighting for what you believe in.
The Man above never gives you anything you can't handle
I always like to say.
If you still are standing after all of that
Don't give up.



7th Period
Pearl Fetters

[Return to TOC](#)

List of Contributors

Mars Aichler
Abdulrahman Al Masr
Jason Anajovich
Ava Arias
Yunna Artemenko
Iqra Awow
Morgan Barrow
Bridget P. Borden
Leo Buckwalter
Alejandro M. Can Vazquez
Nina Casey
Erin Challenor
Elliott Cusick
Cailin Dunbar
Pearl Fetters
Aisling Gazzo
Rory Glass
Ivan Gonzalez-Mejia
Raven Linda-Ann Grant
Katie Harmon
Van Ho
Tyler Horan
Cameron Horton
Ella Kay
Lola Lang
Reese Lanier
Tyson Ly
Alexander Markwell
Angus McDonnell
Wyatt Mejia-Lopez
Linda Nguyen
Chespin Parsons
Jaziel Pat-Canche
Jazmyn Plowden
Georgia Rector
Harrison Rhodes
Aracelie Sanchez
Monasia Saunders
Audrey Shaw
Dawson Siel
Jasmine Skinner
Evan Sonne
Suipeli Tauhelangi
Nolan Taylor
George Thai
Liv Tran
Maria Tran
Cecilia Truong
Gabe Vanelli
Oz Warner
Sicity Webster
Jamari West
TingTing Zhang

[Return to TOC](#)