

# kindling

A 451 Anthology



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## *Kindling*

*This book was built to burn  
To torch and scorch  
To sear the words  
To send them up  
In smoke and flame  
To render the pages  
To ash and dust  
To be blown away  
With one strong gust  
To be the sacrifice  
On our mind's pyre  
And to be the kindling  
For our dwindling fires*

G.S.

## FOREWORD

“It was a pleasure to burn.” Thus begins Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, the novel this year’s creative writing class borrowed from when we named ourselves. First we were “Class 451” and then we simplified to become “451.”

That tendency to brevity is also seen in what became the class “laws” that stayed on the board all year long. Only two, and two words each. “Write (crap),” which really means to write no matter what, even if you know—or think you know—the writing isn’t good. The second goes with so much of what successful authors advise for young writers: “Read (excellence).” Find writing so exceptional there’s an energy to it, a heat that can inspire. Like fire.

My copy of *Fahrenheit 451* is the 60th anniversary edition and comes with an introduction by Neil Gaiman. In it he says, “Ideas—written ideas—are special. They are the way we transmit our stories and our thoughts from one generation to the next. If we lose them, we lose our shared history. We lose much of what makes us human.”

Consider the book in your hands, *Kindling*, a transmission, and an artifact. The writers who came together for a year share their history, the stories and poems and whatever else came to them at the time, and they now offer their works to you, the reader. This book burns, and you won’t have to look hard to see something pleasing in its light.

M.R.

4-6-14

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# ANDREW ANDERSON

## “Maybe “E” Means Extra Fuel?”

An abandoned road in the middle of the Desert in the American Southwest, the only thing that moved were the tumble-weeds that occasionally bounced by. On the stretch of highway that has been long decaying, a lone vehicle, a truck, a Dodge Ram zipped by like a Bat out of hell. The Behemoth was bright red, covered in dirt and had a camper on the back.

The truck was going over the speed limit, but there wasn't a cop for miles, the three passengers, 2 guys and 1 girl. They have been driving for hours without a single stop, everything was well until they heard that “BEEP” from hell.

“BEEP!BEEP!BEEP!” went a small light near the speedometer, they were out of gas in the middle of nowhere! “OH SHIT!” said one of the guys, “what are we going to do?” said the girl. The other man stepped out of the truck to see a sign that said “GAS STATION AND RESTSTOP FOR 20 MILES” “WELL THIS SUCKS!” said the first man “I guess we have to push”. They told the girl to get in the driver seat and steer, while the men push.

It was a record high in the area 110°Fahrenheit and the men pushed the one ton machine through scorching heat for 20 miles. They have finally reached their destination, painful 5 hours. When they finally pushed the truck into the station, the men collapsed of exhaustion. When the girl was grabbing her purse that was safely in the camper in the back, she saw her purse on top of several suitcases, when she grabbed her purse she saw a strange red object in the corner. “Hey a full gas can!” The men groaned in pain.

## **Eggs with a Side of Fist in Your Face**

As I woke up this morning, I smelled the sweet, delicious smell of the most important meal of the day.

I went in the kitchen and saw my wife flipping pancakes and also putting toast in the toaster. A plate full of bacon and a full pitcher of fresh orange juice sat on the table. She looked at me and took the kitchen chair and smashed it over my head with repeated upper-cuts to my stomach.

She took me by the neck and opened the refrigerator, put my head in the refrigerator and repeatedly smashed my head with the refrigerator door.

When she was finished she looked at a can she had open before what had happened and said "Sorry Honey, I got the wrong can at the store yesterday" I grabbed the can with my bruised hand and then my wife said, "I accidentally opened up a can of WHOOPASS!"

## 13 Ways at Looking at a Piece of Paper

- I. The piece of paper stares at me  
And mocks me.
- II. I stare back with even greater  
Mockage!
- III. But, then I realize it's just a  
Piece of paper.
- IV. I could just crumple it up and  
Throw it away.
- V. But, I have to put words on  
This piece of paper.
- VI. It would be great if I put words  
On this paper.
- VII. Will maybe then I'll get the  
Grade.
- VIII. And then it wouldn't be a  
Blank piece of paper.
- IX. It would be a written piece  
Of paper.
- X. These contemplation's are amusing  
To me.
- XI. But as I ponder, I forgot to realize  
I have not written on it.
- XII. And yet again it mocks me with  
It being blank.
- XIII. And then again I realize it's just a  
Piece of paper.



## Betamax Is the Future

As many summers as I have experienced this one always brings back memories. From June 1979 to the end of August 1979 was the most memorable out of all them. It was the summer I got my first job, met a friend's outlandish relative, and also met some interesting people.

My story starts in my hometown, the city of Aucklan. A somewhat large northern Californian town that has that bit of small town charm and is within a small valley, bordered with mountain like hills that are splattered with pine trees and redwoods, with a small line going right through the forest, the highway that neighbors Aucklan.

The last day of school for Aucklan high school students before summer break. The classroom of Mr. Hoover's Algebra 1 class was at an irregular standstill, every student was staring at the clock with such enthusiasm & single-mindedness for their own plans during the break. In fact the energy was so vigorous that even the teacher walking around the room would have burst into flames from the overwhelming excitement that the students were producing. I, Lucas Greenbaum and my friends Daniel Peniles and George Hamill, were some of those students. "Well students, it's about a quarter to 3' a whole 15 minutes, boys and girls." Some were so intent on looking at the clock that they weren't even listening. Mr. Hoover walked over to his chalk board and started writing something, while George leaned closer to Daniel and whispered "Danny...psst...Danny." Danny looked behind him with such irritation and spoke in such a still yell that I, George and only some neighboring classmates could hear. "What do you want!?!?" I looked at Danny's taciturn infuriation. "Whoa, what's up your ass?" "Well I have a headache; trying to draw and also while you were doing your psst's..." Danny purposely blew small spit fragments out of his mouth, almost hitting George in the face. "...your spit went inside my ear, that's really disgusting." Danny turned back to his drawing. "Well sorry, I was just going ask what you were doing." Mr. Hoover was finished writing on the board and started to read what he wrote. "How summer jobs can help your future. Is there anyone in the class who's going to have summer job?" Only a handful of students raised their hands. "Hhhmmm...only a few, huh...well this is all I have to say: if

you get a summer job now it will benefit you in so many ways, it will give you a sense of accomplishment and independence in your young lives” I thought about what he had said for a long time, I would keep thinking about it until the bell finally rang.

George was busy putting away his things in his backpack, while Danny was grabbing tissues to clean his saliva infected ear, “Oh god it’s like a reverse wet-willy!” he said “Oh come on Danny, stop acting like a huge bitch.” George said “Come on guys we got to meet up with Marvin and Nick.” I said. We got our things and walked over to the lockers, where Marvin and Nick were talking. “Hey guy’s! What are you doing this summer?” asked Marvin.” “Well...I don’t know.” I said. George and Danny gave a unsure nod. “I just got word from my uncle Benson that I, and a couple of friends can go to his remote beach house in Fort Graff for the entire summer vacation.

# EMMA BARASH

## Cast Away

The once-proud lion circles his cell  
Is this his punishment?  
This is hell

His tail swishes as he paces the floor  
Sticks his nose through the black iron bars  
The people watch him as if they want more

This poor beast, a thing of the wild  
Labeled as 'saved' and put in a cage  
For the eyes of a child

Immense beauty, a depressing sight  
Sheds thousands of tears  
We don't see at night

He looks at the stars  
For his homeland  
Licking his scars  
The story of the lion's plight

## Crap

Come up, read something so heart-wrenching  
So emotional  
And you call it crap

Call it anything you like  
Lie it on the floor  
But crap? No

You open up your mind  
And spill out soul on paper  
Yet you label it crap out of fear  
The fear that the best work you've even done  
Is someone else's crap

Well, THAT'S crap.  
Shout it from the rooftop  
Don't let your words cut short  
Never stop

## Terrible Fame

“Fame let thy trumpet sound”  
Sweep me off my feet  
Carry me off the ground  
Be my horse in dapple grey  
Keep all my enemies at bay

Let thy grand trumpet sound  
For only joy can be found  
On the surface at least  
My insides will never be at peace

The plastered smiles  
They can go for miles  
But it’s just an empty  
Slate of tile

“Fame let thy trumpet sound”  
And let the miracles be found

## The Castle

I stalk the edge of the castle  
Around and around as the air freezes and drops  
They laugh at me from the battlements  
Then fade before I can see them

There is an easy way in  
A way I cannot find  
The castle leers at me with its menacing towers

I want to get inside  
Restore it to its former splendor  
I just can't figure out  
How to get inside

## Water Lilly

She sees the world in a different way  
Something new day by day  
A child's memory  
Strongest thing in the world

The flower in the palm of her hand  
So neat and delicate, each and every strand  
In her bed of white  
She has nightmares every night

Failure, not much time  
The flower is wilting, cut by a line  
That's all they can do  
With all she's been through

It's heart not stable  
It died on the table  
Right where she left it  
A memory, that's all

## Empty House

Wandering around the empty house  
Long socks and slippers  
Sipping hot chocolate on the couch  
Watching the fire simmer  
A little heat haze stretched out by the glow  
Cold winter days  
The tile is cold on your stalking toes  
As you leave this world to go upstairs  
Too much wanted sleep and dreams of snow



## Fire Sonnet

Burning-the fire tongues licking the wood  
Heat-tingling up and down the spine  
Fire-the castle with turrets of flame  
Stalkings- precariously hung around  
Lights- glittering from the gutter outside  
Magic- the fiery trance in the hearth  
Warm- pillows and blankets on the couch  
Outside-the snow swirls all around the house  
Love-contained within the body and heart  
Cat-big lump on rug like animal hide  
Spark-dancing with a loud crackling sound  
Without flame- winter would not be the same  
Wintertime- a season of yours and mine  
Fire- we come to share as best we could

## **Momentarily**

The happy dew drops

Little bits of water

Collected by the flowers

Sliding off their glossy leaves

Shadowing the places they fall

Briefly

## **Ode to the Guitar**

Five strings

Five different melodies

Coming together to the same song

Tandem of fingers and brass

They affirm that music lives on

Playing the words that cannot be spoken

The thoughts that cannot be expressed

Passed down

A rest is not the same as broken

## **America, Where Were You?**

Where were you, America?  
When your countrymen cried for help  
When people were murdered on the streets  
Where are you now, when the best minds of this generation need you  
As they penetrate and intoxicate themselves,  
As they look in the mirror to see a new reflection everyday,  
As they wallow in the stairwells living an imaginary life,  
As I see day by day, advantages taken,  
Taken by people who don't even need them,  
Who need to snap out and see life.  
Look down at your people, America,  
What life has been given?  
What is the meaning of "greater good"  
When morals are flushed to an irretrievable underground  
Dug by your society  
Can we reunite?  
Under stripes of red and white,  
America, where were you?  
Where are you now?

# ALYCIA BILLY

## It Will Always Haunt Me

This is a true story about me from when I was younger and my experience with “window dog” and the grief he exposed to my family. It started 2008, my neighbor’s dog, Shadow recently passed away from old age. Shadow was a barker, you see, and he would chase me often my parents would always complain to his owners but nothing would get done. He was loud when someone got within two feet of him, even if he knew them. My neighbors became very depressed and wouldn’t even come out of their home. I’ve always been a dog person, so even though I was kind of young I still had a good amount of empathy. I would sometimes bring them plates of brownies or cookies that my mom made for them. After a few months, I think the healing process started to kick in from their loss of their dear Shadow. And just when the healing process began, so did the encounters. I would walk home from the bus stop, and I would hear this barking. The hollow echo from the backyard would ring in my ears and I could hear his familiar snarl. I would also see his reflection in windows of houses and doorways. There is even a picture that my mom took of me in front of my front door with a black figure in the reflection. I would walk home backwards sometimes because I felt like something was following me. After a few weeks of this, I had my first one on one encounter with Shadow. I was walking home from the bus stop one afternoon and it was very sunny and bright and cheery, but that would soon end. I could hear the scratching of claws coming up quickly on the pavement from behind, and I turned around and saw Shadow racing up to me with bloody foam in his mouth. His body was mangled and his dark skin and fur was falling off to expose his tendons and muscles underneath. It was horrifying, I raced the rest of the block up to my house and looked back, and he was gone. My parents were convinced it was just my imagination, but I remember the blood in his path and watching the muscles and bones quiver.

After another month, I had also convinced myself that it was

just my imagination. I would walk home again, but I would always be cautious. My next encounter was in my backyard. I had let my dog Doja out, and after a while I didn't hear him whining to come in. I looked out the sliding door and my poor dog Doja was lying on the deck with gashes and bite marks all over his chest and legs, laying in a pool of blood. The worst one exposed the muscle and made the skin hang loose. We took him to the vet and they confirmed that it was an attack from another dog, and they also confirmed that a good amount of blood was not Doja. I was and am sure that the blood was Shadow's, much like the blood he left on pavement when he chased me home. Sadly, Doja passed away not too long after that.

After a few months, the encounters would decline. I would stop seeing tracks of animal blood in the grass and stop feeling his presence. My younger brother and cousins confessed seeing a black dog every once in a while lurking around our home. I always wondered why it was us and not his previous owners, and then I learned why.

Shadow had been lurking around and watching us from the windows for one specific reason, Doja. I recently spoke with Shadow's owners and I learned that Shadow was subject to many dog attacks in his years, leaving him with scars and hearing loss. Shadow targeted us because of Doja, and once Doja died, Shadow left. I think about Shadow often and I feel sad, that I believed he contributed in the death of my seven year old lab and for the honor he caused me. I wish I could've gone back to when Shadow was alive and offer him compassion or try to socialize him with other dogs. It will always haunt me, that day that he chased me home and when I found Doja in a different dog's blood, but I know Shadow is gone.

## Perfection

I can feel it. Just under the surface, it's there. That hard prominent perfection. Under my fingertips that trace my imperfections. They are there. Beautiful and white. Just pull my skin tight and you can feel them too.

## Forever

As I lay here in bed, I think of you.

I think of how everyone else's relationships are falling apart at the seams and here we are.

We're still going strong.

You haven't any clue what you mean to me.

Even though you think

you do, you will never know

quite the way my heart beats

when I see you or the way my

stomach gets butterflies

when you look into my eyes.

I love you so much baby and I'm glad

that it's just you and I. You're

the only one who has ever

meant this much to me.

You're the only one that can.

I want us to be forever, and I know we

will make it through the good and

the bad, for I'll love you

until the day I die.

## **I Know This Is Real**

I gaze at your pictures  
As I go to sleep.  
I can hear your voice  
It sounds oh so sweet.

I then close my eyes  
And sleep the night through.  
The dreams that I have  
Are of me and you.

I awake in the morning  
I know this is real,  
This dream that I'm in  
It feels so surreal.

I whisper your name  
And say I love you.  
I tell you my dreams  
They're of me and you.

You look in my eyes  
And hold me so tight,  
The fears that we have  
Will soon have respite.

I cannot contain  
My feelings for you.  
My heart is set free.  
It belongs only to you.

## Secret Places

I must have left the door unlocked,  
Because I keep finding you in all my secret places.  
First I stumbled over you,  
Then I ran into you.  
Then I found you walking beside me.  
You touched everything  
And made it all  
Better  
Brighter  
Richer  
More beautiful.  
One day I realized that you aren't just in my world,  
You had become my world.  
You.  
I must have left the door unlocked.



## Senior year

This has been a wild year,  
More full of life and changes and tears,  
More than I ever thought could possibly be shed in a year.  
I've laid in the darkness with wet eyes and fallen blissfully into  
oblivion with  
a smile upon my lips,  
And I'd do it all again.  
This has been a wild year,  
I've learned so much that I could never even imagine turning back,  
Back to my old stupid self,  
With her self-hate and her slow brain.  
I've met people who have made me bloom and kicked aside people  
who lived to see  
I wither.  
It was hard to sever the ties, to set myself free in my own body and  
mind,  
It was much harder than you'd think,  
And I'd do it all again.  
This has been a wild year,  
I've conquered items on my bucket list,  
And added some to the bottom with the seal of a hot kiss,  
A kiss of my own personal approval,  
Because I am so proud of you.  
You've made it to your last and final year in this world,  
This in-between realm of both loss and gain,  
And you've come out alive —  
Not only that, but you thrive,  
Thrive on knowledge and adventure,  
On your dreams and your passions,  
But most importantly on your self —  
Your true self and no one else and I couldn't be more proud,  
Even if I had to do it all again.

## Some Illnesses Are No Longer Prisons

Science can explain a lot of shit, I know.

The sunset is no longer  
always such a numinous miracle.

Some illnesses are no longer prisons  
where sufferers wait on death row  
but instead medication can make them  
feel like they aren't at the end  
of a finite line.

Science can explain why stars are not angels  
and why the northern lights  
are not luminescent spirits  
Dancing in another realm.

We now know that constellations  
May not actually be portraits  
of ancient myths.

We now know that we are not the centre  
of the universe.

And we never were.

I wish science could explain

Why life sometimes feels

Like it wants me to give it more.

While I stir my black coffee at six

And the Sun does what it's supposed to do,

And the sky remembers to turn blue

And the clouds remember to slide along

And the birds remember to sing.

I wonder why science doesn't adequately

Explain

Why there is more to us than just reproduction.

Maybe science can explain the technicality of us,

But I'll never understand why

Love is more of a mission

Than a biological process.

## Poverty of Solitude

Symbolic stones shedding disguise of old but now gone green as  
dragon flicks fear of fire breath upon the creativity of change

Chaos married wisdom by birthing children in form of serenity and  
courage to avoid the poverty of solitude

With fingers scraped raw upon a brick turned red, a message relaxed  
the feed or pump of finding center in realization of words stating  
request to tame the adrenaline and just be held

Just be held safe in comfort from thought

## Spilled Dew

Dig deep in loose,  
Brown leather muck  
And red, smeared over  
Soil like plaster and  
Newly mixed war paint.

Drains dry this cup,  
Elixir like falls from  
Snow Mountains,  
Dripped down black branches,  
Washed over small pebbles.

Soak up this sun,  
Light glinting off a  
Discarded dime of  
Spilled dew  
In your gardens,

And bloom!

# DANIELLE BUTOW

## Tainted Blankets

My toes are a wonderful ice wet; I wiggle them to feel your grainy sand stuck in each nook as well as crack of my now purple toes. I enjoy you. Your strong salty wind rubbing my face and combing it's fingers through my hair, causing it to whip around like a proud flag tied to a tall poll. Your delicious odor of fish and uncooked seaweed filling not only my nose but my lungs, stomach and ankles as well. So huge, so huge, so magnificent that I cant help but beg you to consume me. I call for your waves to crash into me and pull me down into your salty wonderland of exotic rainbow finned creatures.

You finally start to answer my pleads and knock me down with your wind as, a wave blankets me in everything I ever wanted. I eventually feel its safe to wipe the water from my eyes and peer up at the gray Skye, I stretch my arms out to grab comforting sand but unexpectedly what I bring back is a pile of worms. I bolt up screaming as I crush the muddy worms in my hands until they seep out between my fingers. I look around only to find what I feared most. A puddle about one inch thick replaced the ocean, water so putrid brown that I wouldn't know I had toes. I'm not wrapped in naturally salted seaweed, I'm covered head to toe in brown slop.

I scream again throwing myself back into the mud. The brown starts to turn and mix with red and as I breath my last breath only one thought was running through me.

"I thought you loved me."

## Eyes

She swims and splashes  
while her deep eyelashes  
tell a story of someone  
Forever uncommon

## If Only

Warm soft couch,  
hot cocoa by the fire.  
Harsh cold winter,  
heavy sleep over comes  
me while I'm wrapped  
in a coat of your love.  
If only what I remembered  
your passing.

Hot summer days,  
running naked through the sprinklers.  
Eating pop-cycles and sipping  
Home-made lemonade. Cracking eggs on the sidewalk. If only you  
treated me like a child.

Going to the movies  
family game nights.  
Reading me stories  
Telling me old memories  
of your past mistakes.  
If only we did things as a family.

## Do

In out breath,  
red.  
Sob weep kill,  
blue.  
Live hope joy,  
bliss.  
Sleep dream steal,  
hope

## Heart Beat

I miss the quicken of my heart beat  
when the ghouls on the television  
jump out at us. I miss my butter and salty  
lips from home made popcorn. I miss  
the gentle and soft cuddly nights of us  
scared to sleep alone.

I don't miss the quicken  
of my heart after screaming.  
I don't miss the slamming doors  
and trashed rooms or the knife  
that pierced my stomach with forced  
guilt. I don't miss leaving you behind.  
For if god would have answered my prayers  
I wouldn't have remembered anything at all.

## Deep

So much depends upon,  
a sweet kind gesture.  
Dipped with honesty,  
to cure what's left,  
of the very soul.

## My Response

I left slowly. What  
I was leaving behind  
scratched at my back.  
Puddles. Deep and black  
forming behind only me.

The boat was rough.  
A hard trip down a river  
with storm clouds above.  
The heavens are surely angry with me.

Once the wind blows  
hard and knocks what  
was real out of me I  
move on from my moment.  
I know only then the  
sun will rise.

For death is the only  
option with out you.  
Good bye my sweet for  
this letter is forever  
tainted red.



## Poker

An arm for a leg? She suggested to her husband.  
Surely I'd prefer an eye for an eye.  
What about a lock of hair for that fox over there?  
No, he's much too important.  
Then it's settled.  
Agreed, I'll take your right ear and left nostril for my  
right toenail and left leg.  
Throw in all teeth to the right and you have a deal.  
They threw their cards down on the table.

## Oops

I was walking around with my chest in great pain.  
Debbie was in the kitchen with my heart on a  
platter.  
All of the sudden I hear a crash, and Debbie cry.  
I ran into the kitchen.  
What's wrong?  
I accidentally broke your heart!

The lone wolf sings loud,  
a lonely moon at midnight,  
Lonesome companions.

The Magician's fire,  
he builds your recipe to drink,  
cold mystical future.

The High Priestess sings,  
glass shatters to the cold ground,  
birds chirp, nature sings.

The Empress cheats through,  
significant lies breath short,  
hooked mouth shows truth.

Emperor stairs down,  
skulls pile upon his throne,  
No animal wins.

The Lovers nothing,  
deceitful faces,  
bearing bad news.

The Chariot,  
Phoenix in his hand,  
gold wind sings.

Strength lion brings,  
gargoyles chain him,  
strength breaks free.

The Hermit,  
strictly lean two,  
Rick see pride.

Be-careful,  
the wheel of fortune,  
timings need.

Justice holds,  
No malice here now,  
goodbye world.

He hangs quiet,  
the hanged man,  
my big fan.

Skip a rock?  
Don't disturb,  
the sleeping water.

Wet sand,  
glued to hand,  
the ocean follows me home.

*(ukiaHaiku contest winner, honorable mention)*

Tripping creek stones,  
don't break,  
the frog's home.

Nerd glasses,  
Volcume belt,  
Jewish hair.

*(dedicated to Noah)*

Stereotypes,  
all so alike,  
high school.

## Hag

The old hag sings bliss, she shows a smug smile.  
The hag breaths in the fresh air. Birds chirp with bliss, and  
she hears this. The lone old hag tends to her green plants.  
The day moves on with the bird's song.

## Not So Sane Thoughts

Wash my face with sane thoughts. I can not loose my past.  
I want what I use to, once more. Save her and her other self.  
She must pass this test for her child's sake. Her son helps the  
young ones, in the house. I can not let her see her own sons. This  
is her end, it is our end. The gun goes off, head smacks the door.  
He finds her, he'll live not sure of the truth. It was to save them.

A broken smile,  
A fake laugh.  
I'll be gone for a while,  
We wont last.  
Kiss me I'm dreaming,  
No your aren't.  
Don't leave me I'm dieing,  
This is my part.

# ANA CORONA

## A Wisher

I never realized my thoughts would wander around this day  
I never realized it meant so much  
Something powerful enough to turn my world inside out  
It was a battle that cost me everything  
With a snap of the wrist  
The blink of an eye  
You knocked me down  
Oh how the sun stopped shining  
Oh how the sirens singing turned to wailing  
How we plunged into Tartarus  
Never again to see the light  
This is the life we were sentenced to  
The poor pathetic souls  
No one ever fought to save us  
No one ever lost a breath on us  
But yet guilt never hung on their shoulders  
Maybe they were never to blame  
Maybe we brought this upon ourselves  
Maybe I brought this upon myself  
I was the only one to blame  
I was damned, I was a mistake  
I hoped too much, I wished for more than I could ever have  
My existence was nothing more than a game  
Pray for a better outcome  
Maybe you'll get lucky  
Or maybe that's too much

## Miserably Loving Him

He had the words that made my heart beat  
He knew just what to say  
Could it be because he had played so many hearts  
Was I just another accomplishment to his collection?  
I had never played in this game before  
It was torture simply talking to him  
I wanted more, I needed more  
Addicted to his whispers and promises  
I couldn't bring myself to have enough  
Those lips that had tasted the world  
I wanted to be just another tally mark  
Another scratch to his wall  
How much more until he conquered everyone  
His past floated around me  
Warnings shone as bright as stars  
Ignorant was stamped across my forehead  
All I wanted was the experience  
A bitter kiss with no emotion  
Tasteless lips raw of feelings  
I was hooked  
No such better addiction  
As a feeling of fake love  
He pulled me in as I closed my eyes  
Arms wrapped around me  
Chests pumping with anticipation  
With his chin resting on the top of my head I smiled  
Little was I to know  
That without a single sigh  
He would walk away

## Sleepless Girl

Wanting to be anywhere but here  
She was never one to complain  
But there were moments,  
Moments when the weight of the world got to her  
Too much on her mind  
Too much she wanted to solve  
One poor soul can't take that much  
She had to find an escape  
Over-flown with water praying to be set free  
The spinning and spinning and spinning  
She choked on her thoughts  
"I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't."  
She couldn't handle it much longer  
Everyone was screaming and crying around her  
The wall was breaking  
"Please" I whispered  
The clock refused to tick backwards  
The trembling began  
I saw the crack appear  
Tiny memories of her chipped away  
I stared awe-struck  
And blacked out the second after  
....  
Now all alone in her room  
She sits staring at a blank wall  
Body cold from tears  
With one swift motion  
Her escape is complete

## Cycle

As she falls to the ground, she vows it's the last  
As he walks away, his new plan is devised  
With her mind torn apart, her cry can't be stopped  
Without a single thought, he laughs at her pain  
The story of love, she only asked to be loved  
The reason he lied, to have a good time  
No longer a virgin, classified and unwanted  
No longer a prize, because he got what he wanted

## Oh Shit

“So you're not a virgin, huh?”  
I bite my lip, “Well, no,”  
“You slut!” She giggled, “Did it hurt?”  
“Well, yeah,” I replied.  
“How old?”  
“13.”  
“You easy girl! Did you like it?” she asked.  
“It was um, unexpected.”  
“Was it at least with someone you knew?”  
“Yeah.”  
“With who?” she asked greedily.  
“My dad.”



## One Day

One day I want to open my eyes and walk around  
I want to settle down besides a tree and start a story by myself  
I want to create a plotline on my own  
One where I could be the ending  
I want to write endless pictures on my arms  
And not be judged  
I want to not cry when you say no  
Learn to take the pain without it showing on my face  
I want to jump into your arms  
And have you tell me it's all okay  
I want to not wake up in the middle of the night  
Terrified of what lays under my bed  
I want to dream and hope  
And never be shot down  
I want to be the reason you trip and fall  
Just to catch another look  
But I live in a place so cold  
Filled with shattered minds  
Where everyone promises themselves a better tomorrow  
But nothing ever changes  
Maybe one day  
I'll realize this day will never come

## Great Pretender

All you do is feed me bullshit  
Made up lies and stories  
I beg you to stop  
But will you ever listen?  
A promise is merely a postponed lie  
Don't you ever get tired of the acts?  
Don't you ever stop and wonder  
Can these lies fuck with someone?  
But I bet your cunning smile never falters  
As you force yourself into my mind  
Shoving perfect pictures down my throat  
Masquerading how you really feel  
As you fall to your knees  
Crying hoarsely that you've changed  
But there's no tears running down your face  
And when life gets complicated  
You pack your bags, get up and leave  
Running away won't help  
Either way I'm always there waiting  
And when you return  
You say the movies ended  
But you can't bring yourself to drop the character  
You write on your wrists  
Because not even you can remember your made up shit  
Too good to be true  
These lies don't come with a price  
You change the plot  
To match your never stopping moods  
Ignore the characters you wish to disappear  
The rising action I plan is never good enough  
The climax must include your face  
Because god forbid you miss the scene  
Can't we see this is nothing without you  
One day we'll learn it's not the end unless you call the shots and pull  
the curtain  
What a wonderful performance  
Congratulations  
You've fucked me over once again

## Teenagers

I saw the innocent minds of my generation get fucked up by sexual  
desire  
Indescribable lust ticking away the marrow in their bones  
School girls in crisp white shirts, and knee high socks  
Plaid skirts raised high above their waists  
Eyes dark with “love”  
Sex-derived dreams eating away their thoughts  
“I want you”  
“I need you”  
They croaked  
“I love you” They all lied  
Who wanted to be left behind?  
They signed their names with blind eyes  
Sweat dripping down the hollowness of a naked body  
Heavy whispers as they approach their oh so wanted climax  
And as their corpses become one they float up  
Closed dark eyes, bitten lips as their bodies convulse in ecstasy  
And after a night of pain and pleasure  
One’s left for broken  
Alone and Dirty in the painted streets  
Broken promises remain  
Wrappers and used condoms lying all around  
Oh what a beautiful bond has been made on this night

## Mama

Some Mothers don’t deserve children  
Some Mothers don’t know the definition of Mother  
Some Mothers just flat out don’t give a fuck  
Some Mothers think they can change a kids sexual preference by  
simply insulting them  
They judge and judge and never accept  
Those Mothers are the downfall of us  
The Kids who fall in love with the same sex

The Kids who dress differently  
The kids who rebel against their morals  
The kids who dare question such thing as a God  
The Kids who try but never end up being good enough  
The Kids who don't want to be perfect  
From the Mothers who plan out their kids future without even asking  
To the Fathers who come home and drink their sorrows away because  
the stress is just too much  
They blame you for the dysfunctional family  
Why couldn't you be normal like the rest  
The fights and arguments come because of you  
But how is it our fault we turned out this way?  
We cannot simply change, we tried to quench our likes  
We shoved them so deep down we lost ourselves  
We were prisoners in our own homes and families  
Afraid to speak our minds  
Because we weren't heterosexual like the rest  
You blamed us for what we couldn't help  
Maybe we weren't meant to be like the rest  
Mindless sheep without a purpose, following orders  
And standing up for something we don't believe in  
Choking on the lies we were born to follow  
Because god forbid your baby girl liked girls instead of boys  
What would Jesus say of this monstrosity?  
This sure isn't in the bible  
Call a doctor, No! Call a priest  
Expel this demon, show her the light  
All useless attempts to fix what isn't broken  
And poor mommy will cry  
And ask the lord why she got punished  
And the poor girl will cry  
And ask herself why she's been punished  
For she's in love  
And since when has love been wrong  
And as she cries into my shoulder  
I'll tell her, She might have given up on you  
But you still haven't given up on yourself

## Skumfuk

Is there a better word to use? You arrogant little fucker  
Don't you think you're so cool, Mr.I-insult-who-I-want  
I'm guessing you find your voice so attractive  
Open that lovely little mouth and speak  
Watch the maggots dance out of your mouth  
Your pathetic insults oh so clever, they really strike a chord in my  
heart  
Will you take a look at yourself,  
Don't you feel at the top of the pyramid? Aren't you such a god?  
Spitting down on us puny humans  
Feeling like the main wolf,  
But take a look around, are the laughs really that real?  
Who else is enjoying this but you  
No wait, let me take a swing at it  
Your idiotic little sidekick, doesn't she feel like the queen  
Tagging along, so she says she wants to punch me?  
Go ahead, bring tears to my eyes  
Satisfy yourself with my pain  
Laugh and smile, and make a joke out of my life  
Because guess what, I won't give two shits about your life  
Pushing me around since middle school must have done you so good  
Did you enjoy knocking me to the ground? Day after day?  
Were you shocked when I kept coming back? Day after day?  
Didn't you love not getting caught? Day after day  
Trying to make living hell my new life  
Now look at your future, tell me if you see my forgiveness  
Stare at that blank wall harder, is the answer there?  
Maybe if you squint your eyes a tad bit more  
Is it visible yet? Yeah, I think not  
When you're on the brink of death I'll shake my head  
Forgive you? Yeah right, not even  
In you darkest dreams only  
But oh my, oh my, aren't your insults so hurtful  
What reaction do you want? Should I burst into tears?  
Am I supposed to be hurt? As if, if only I truly cared

Your clever words passing me by “You’re ugly!”  
Grow up man, I’m not who I used to be  
I won’t keep it to myself, because if you talk, I’ll talk  
Insult me all who want, I really won’t give much of a fuck  
You’re the dirt everyone spits on  
Nothing but mere scum  
Then years from now, let’s see who still loves you  
Keep this up buddy, snicker at the sight of everyone  
I’ll laugh when I see you begging for change on the streets  
You’re going to love where your jokes take you  
I can’t wait for the payback, you’ll get what you deserve  
Cliché as it may sound your life will cease to exist  
And these sugary high-school memories will be what’s left of you

# MICHAEL CHASE DURSTELER

## Beginnings

“David?”

The patter of soft feet on wooden floors, the soft smell of tulips and roses, grave flowers and earth.

“Yes.”

His quiet voice filling up what was left of the room; bouncing like wind of the burnt walls.

“She was beautiful.”

Soft black shadow against charred floorboards, yellow eyes like streetlights in the dark.

“She was.”

He turned toward the gaping hole that had been her door, remembering the red wood against pale flesh.

“This is not her house.”

He stared down at the fur trimmed shadow, slit pupil eyes looking up at him.

“This is her address...”

He looked at the charred walls, the burnt brick of the fireplace, and the seared metal springs of the sofa, where they had first made love...

“It is, but this is not her house, she never owned a black thing in her life.”

She had loved pastels and sunlight, yellows and blues, tea and spring flowers that had lived permanently in a vase in her kitchen, even as the winter rains pounded against the windowpanes.

“Except you, David.... She owned you.”

He thought of that night, of him, his overcoat died a deep black with blood. Of her, in a pastel summer dress, at midnight; a soft snow falling to the oil slick road. He thought of her arms around him, her sweat voice whispering softly....

“We need to go, we have work to do.”

“You will see her again, David.....”

“Only if we do our work.”

## Drive-Bys in Heaven

“There’s no drive-bys in heaven,” Benny said under his breath. Father Johnson looked down at his son, years of hearing gossiping children over the sound of organ music and the choir had turned his ears into weapons of mass destruction, often followed by a slap on the head from his leather bound bible. I had always wondered how it was possible that the rigid, white collared, Soldier of Christ, Father Benjamin Jonson, could conceivably father a son. “It was like a cell or something.” Said Benny once, “He just thought about it really hard one day, said some Hail Mary’s, and I just split from him.” I had smiled then, and turned around to look at him. “Is being asexual even condoned in the bible?” Benny had laughed his loud laugh, tears running down his cheeks. I laughed to, so hard that my stitches had opened up, leaking blood into the starched white hospital sheet. After that doctor had run in, followed by a flock of fifty nurses. Benny had asked me latter. “Do you believe in God, Davie?” I had smiled my pain killer smile and nodded. “Yes,” I said.

Dad came to see me on my third night in the hospital, the stench of whiskey and cheap weed waking me from whatever morphine sleep I had been in. I knew that smell, dad’s stench, I had used to call it, better than any alarm clock. He sat in the only armchair, a bottle of Jack Daniels swinging limply in his left hand. His right arm was gone at the elbow, a mass of frayed tendons and flesh. His face was worse, I knew it was, but I couldn’t bring myself to look at it. I could never look at my father’s face...I had only looked at it once, and it would look the same now, the same as it had the night he had died.

“Am I dead?” I asked, more of a statement than a question. “Fuck if I know,” he said, his words slurring. “Maybe you are.” “You wouldn’t care if I was or not.” I said another statement. “Sounds about right.” he said, sounding like he was about to fall asleep. “I would like to know if I was dead.”



I said, and my father nodded, either fighting of sleep or agreeing with me. He stood suddenly, stumbling on broken legs. He walked to the bed, and vary unceremoniously stuck a finger in the seam in my chest, down into my flesh, rubbing against my ribs.

“Oh.” I said quietly,

“That hurts...”

He nodded, pulling his finger out and wiping it against what was left of his pants.

“You aren’t dead,” he said, turning to go.

“Thank you.” I said to his back, thinking it was funny that that was the first time I had ever thanked my father, then the world faded into black

“It’s a good thing you got shot.” said Benny “Or they wouldn’t have found it.” I didn’t answer him, focusing entirely on my baby food. Focusing on getting the spoon into the little cup, getting the spoon to my mouth; delivering its neon green load of tasteless split peas. After one spoonful, I was too tired to eat more; instead I sat back and stared at the peas, wondering why they were called split peas when they were really mashed, pureed, and packaged for people that couldn’t digest anymore.

“You really like looking at those peas, don’t you Davie?” asked Benny,

“Yes,” I said, looking over at him, hot tears running down my cheeks.

“Why?” He asked, reaching onto the bedside table for the happy yellow box of tissues.

“Because,” I said, “we both know what it’s like to be eaten.”

“There’s a parasite in my stomach.” I told my father.

“Hmmm” he replied, his voice like flat soda that had forgotten how to fizz a long time ago.

“It’s eating me.” I said, looking down at my stomach, the seam in my flesh still aching from the brush of his finger. He shrugged a pair of shattered shoulders.

“We are all food for something.” he said, and I could almost hear the sneer on his voice, “worms or maggots, we are all just meat.”

“Thank you father.” I said,

“That was great advice.” He shrugged again,

“You can’t say I never gave you anything.”

“No,” I said, “You gave me a name to.”

“We all need a name.” said my father, his voice almost a whisper.

“Yes, we do.” I said, “I named it, my parasite, I named it after you.... I named it John.”

My father grunted, and I heard him grab blindly for the door, I heard him twist the door knob, heard him say under his breath, “Get eaten.”

I smiled and laughed a crazy wild laugh.

“I’ll be back.” I heard him say, between my laughter.

“Why?” I screamed at the top of my lungs. “You never came back, not once. Why would now be any different?” He turned and looked at me, the sound of his breathing filling up the room with the rotten stench of whiskey.

“Because now you’re going to die, David.”

“There are two things we can do.” said the doctor, chewing furiously on the end of his ball -point “We can attempt a surgery, or we can wait.”

I shrugged, but Benny pushed himself to his feet, anger clouding his face. His father’s face, pitted by long days in the sun, lined by long nights listening to the sinners after the bar’s closed.

“That’s the only goddamn options?” he asked, the tendons on his arms stretching as he clenched his fists.

“Yes...” said the doctor, pulling the pen from his mouth.

He had smoked once, I thought, and chewing pens was his vice, his crutch. Judging from the chewed bits of plastic and the used nicotine patches, it wasn’t working. I felt bad for the man, so I reached over and grabbed Benny’s arm, looking into his eyes, their pupils burning bright with fire. Not the God fueled fire like his father, but anger, a dirty flame, not a clean burning bush.

“It’s ok, Benny.” I said my voice horse and weak. “It’s ok, were all just meat.”

He looked at me, eyes burning even brighter.

“You sound like your father Davie,” he said, and then he walked out of the door, the light of the hallway throwing his shadow a crossed the room. I watched silently as the last person I loved walked away into the light.

“Why are you here?” I asked.  
“You’re dying.” he said.  
“That isn’t a answer.” I spat.  
“It’s the only one you’re getting.” he leered.  
“Get the fuck out of here.” I screamed.  
“I won’t be back.” he whispered, and walked out the door.  
As the door closed, a breeze from the hall blew in.  
And I thought I heard, “I love you, David.”  
Carried on the soft smell of whiskey.

That morning my stomach erupted in fire, so hot that the tears that streamed down my cheeks were as cold of drops of ice. I scrambled for the buzzer, my groping hands sending it to the floor. I fell down after it, screaming. That is where the nurse found me. She called for the doctor....

They gurney hurtled down the hallway, the fluorescents blinding me as they passed overhead. Somewhere to my right Benny asked the doctor what he was going to do. I never heard the answer, a set of doors slamming shut behind me, the red words “surgery” the color of dried blood, staring at me from the ceiling....

I woke up on a cold slab, a white sheet covering my body.  
“What happened?” I asked.  
“You died, David. I am very sorry.” I looked to my left and a man stood there, leaning against a gurney.  
“You’re not my father.” I said, and the man smiled a sad smile, the corners of his mouth peeling back to reveal white teeth.  
“No,” he said in a quiet voice, “Your father was only here to say his goodbye’s... and to be a sort of guide.”  
I laughed at this, “Where is he guiding me?” I asked “where could he guide me but hell?”  
“You would be surprised.” he said, and then he looked over as the door creaked, the sign on its front flashing, “morgue” in large black letters. A cat strolled into the room looking at me with large yellow eyes.  
“What is your name?” I asked the man.

“David,” he said, smiling wider.

“Really?” I asked.

“Yes,” he said.

“That is odd,” I told him.

“Yes, it is. Listen David, would you like to go for a walk?” he asked

“Yes, David, I would like that vary much” I replied.

He nodded, waiting for me to get off of the slab.

“Are you afraid, David?” the man asked.

“No,” I said,

“A man once told me we are all just meat.”

“A wise man.” said the cat, “Now let us go boys, it is a lovely night.”

I followed them out of the door, into the night, smiling.

## Waiting

The man sat by her at the bus stop, one leg folded over the other. A cat padded up behind them and hopped onto his lap as if it owned it, making a bed on his slacks. She turned to look at him, but a hat was pulled low over his face. The cat stared at her with a set of yellow eyes, watching her curiously.

“I’ve never seen a cat do that,” she said to the man. “She is very beautiful.”

The man sneered from under his black fedora.

“She is a bitch,” he said, like every word was poison.

“And you have never seen a cat do that, because she isn’t a cat.”

The man stood, and a shaggy black dog stood up after him, its red tongue jutting from its jaw. She recognized it from her one semester of biology at the community college, a jackal. The dog turned, and looked at her with a pair of slit pupil eyes. “I’ll see you next week.” said the man in voice that was almost a whisper. The dog looked at him, then back at her. It opened its mouth, and said. “Have a wonderful week dearest” with the accent of one of the lady’s from *War and Peace*. Then, the pair left her there, the needle marks in her arm-oozing puss, alone, waiting for the bus.

## In Time

He walked in the door, lifting a flimsy piece of yellow tape out of his way. He looked down at the dead man, lying in a pool of caramel colored liquid, a perfect swirl of whipped cream floating on its surface. “Humans and their coffee.” he said, the sound of his voice seemed to cool the room, a thin layer of ice forming on the pool of coffee, and frost speckling the dead mans pale skin. A crow flew in the door and landed on the man’s shoulder, its small black eyes like dead embers. It cawed, then said in a high-pitched screaming voice.

“This is not the one we are here for, this one is already gone.”

“I know.” said the man, his breath steaming, “But he is not”. He nodded towards the detective, who was walking from the bathroom, the sound of a flushing toilet following him. He saw the man and stopped, “Can I help you sir?” He asked the tall man.

“Yes you can.” He said, flashing a silver pocket watch. “My watch is broken, do you have the time?”

The detective looked at his watch, whipping the frost from its face, “Its twelve forty two.” He said, nervously.

“That is good.” said the man, his white teeth shinning.....

## Endings...

“Hello ma’am, how are you tonight?”

“I am quite fine Reginald, just out for a stroll.”

A crow fluttered on a lamppost, soft rains making it ruffle its feathers. Reginald looked out into the dark, after the old woman. Her pink coat disappeared behind a rose bush, a little fat dog waddling after her. For a second he wondered if he should go with her, but he shook the idea from his mind, rain flying from his short hair...

She had people for that, thought Reginald. He began to walk up the stone steps, the arthritis in his legs complaining of the clime and the cold. He rested on the lip of a fountain, his old mind wondering why the water had frozen over with a thin layer of frost. ...

In front of him a man leaned against the stone railing, his black top hat pulled low over his brow. Seeing Reginald, he doffed his tall hat at him, a cold smile spreading across his face. Reginald nodded, and then shivering from the sudden cold, he pulled the lapel of his double-breasted coat tightly around himself. The man seemed to see him shiver, his smile growing, like a pearly half moon framed by thin lips.

“Are you cold sir?” He asked in a quiet voice, with an accent that Reginald could not quite place.

“Yes sir.” Said Reginald, shivering more. “You are not?”

The man laughed, a sound like a knife being drawn over a wet stone.

“No” he said, in almost a whisper “I have not been cold in a long time.”

He seemed to think for a while, his grey storm cloud eyes watching a rose bush that had begun to wither and die.

“S-sir, where you a g-guest at the party?” asked Reginald, trying to stop the cold, and the cold fear from making him shiver. The man looked at him again, the smile again plastered to his face.

“I am the guest at every party,” he said. “At every gala, every ball, every dinner, every home... I am the only guest that does not need an invitation, and who is never wanted at the party.”

He smiled at Reginald, then he fished a silver watch from his suit pocket, flipping it open and making a face of disgust. He drew back his arm and hurled the watch, high over the petunias and the yellow

roses. He turned back to Reginald, who was looking at him, fear and astonishment on his face.

“Do you happen to have the time kind sir?” He asked

“A quarter to midnight....” said Reginald, eyeing his watch. The man smiled, when he spoke, an icy cloud billowed from his mouth.

“That is good.” He said.

“Now good sir, would you be so kind as to show me the way back to the party? The shrubbery has become a maze to me.” Reginald nodded, getting up reluctantly, his joints aching. “Right this way sir” he said, leading the man of into the darkness

A crow flew from its perch on a lamppost. It cawed loudly, its shrill scream almost happy...

An old woman rubbed her head, looking down at the silver watch that had hit her. “What in the bloody hell was that?” She asked, her fat dog did not reply. Instead it pricked up its ears, listening to the far of sound of screaming, and high, happy laughter....

A black crow landed on the earth like a comets shadow, its tar black feathers parting into fur. It looked with yellow eyes at the crouching man, kneeling in front of a figure who blazed with white light. It was soon enough to see a red double-breasted coat disappear into the blaze. The kneeling man rose, looking down at her...

She smiled a feline smile, white teeth shining behind pink lips. She wiped black fur and charcoal feathers from the pastel folds of her dress, then, she turned to him.....

“Are you ready David?”

“Yes my love....”



## Oh, Frida

Oh Frida, far away eyes gazing through sparkling glass, the fluorescents of the maternity ward turning your eyebrow into a fat centipede, crawling across your face.

You are too sad, even for this place, with its white walls and starched sheets. Especially for this wing, filled with little hopes in plastic cradles; new eyes drinking in the world.

Oh Frida, go sit with Van Gogh, blood dripping onto his crimson beard, eyes as sad as yours, every detail picked out in pastel.

He has been sitting in the emergency room for hours, ignoring the babbling women to his right, waiting for someone to tell him they can't sew on his ear.

Or, Frida, if he is too sad, walk to the morgue and find Da Vinci, scalpel in hand, eyes filled with wonder, smile not quite a frown,

Or go to drug rehab, and sit with Dali a while, face slack and placid, far away in a land of hanging faces and hatching men.

Oh Frida, your waist won't heal for a while, you'll be here a long time, so you should meet the others, lost here as well.

There's Picasso in the corner, babbling about squares,

And Michelangelo, hanging from the roof, arm outstretched; but not quite touching god.

Or Frida, go to your husband, painting murals of men beating steal and torquing wrenches.

Your monkeys and birds will always listen, but they can't always tell you what you want to hear, these white walls are your canvas, so paint, my dear.

# SEQUOIA GAMBLE

## Things That Come in Threes

Staring down this bed of rocks once flowing with water clear as hope,  
Where once I sat, toes dipped in, no reason to think of the past.  
But now I sit and think of it, remembering all of those times.  
The birds will sing, the water comes back, but sadly my memories will  
remain just that.

Is this what missing someone is about?  
Dreams of them wandering and calling out,  
Hoping one day they will get back to you?  
Knowing they're gone, but wishing it weren't true.

As hard as I try to let myself cry the tears just don't seem to come out.  
I've scraped my knees,  
My elbows still bleed,  
But my vision is still dry beyond doubt .

## Reminiscing

I saw you last night. I was at the intersection; it was a red light and I heard the chug of your diesel pull up. At first I thought nothing of it, but then I heard the voice on your radio announce; “MAX 93-five fm!” And that’s when I turned my attention to the driver, and it was you.

A strange energy surged through my body, and I wanted to call out, but I couldn’t, so I followed you. I followed your little brown Mercedes up the winding road and past the dusty driveways. Finally we reached that little place in the mountains and both of us stopped at the black gate. You punched in the code and I could hear the dog barking. I parked the car on the sloping gravel in front of the house and watched you get out. You climbed the steps to the front door and put your key inside of the lock. The smell of trees and wilderness drifted into the house after us.

You took your seat at the table and rifled through the mail. Then she emerged from the bedroom to the left. She began to yell and I covered my ears to try and silence it, but that only amplified her penetrating shouts. I crouched on the floor, pulling myself inward, and let out a piercing scream. The entire room shattered like a wine glass, and I sat there trembling in the crimson dregs.

I lied when I said I saw you last night; I see you every night.

## Disenchanted

You toyed with life in your hands,  
Casting your pretentious shadow on a wall of despair  
Green irises glowed but the white so blinding,  
Stared me down,  
Watching my sins unfold beneath my essence

## This Little Pig

Poor little pig all packaged and chopped,  
Once you ate something that someone called slop.  
Poor little pig, born to be dead,  
In straw at night you rested your head.  
Did you have dreams of being much more?  
Perhaps a farmer or owner of a store?  
But now you lie here a packaged bundle,  
Much too cold for me to snuggle,  
In the middle of the grocery aisle,  
Most would think me vile.  
But they don't see your real self,  
All they see is meat on a shelf .

## Gertrude Stein

Otters float form her coat  
On the wood of her face  
Ruffles unravel, peeling layers  
Layers, not skin, not onion layers-  
Thoughts, feelings: layers  
Otters peel back layers  
Author peels back layers with a pen  
Dangling bits of thought from the tip of her cold, hard fingertips  
Words unravel  
Layers of words  
Sad songs  
Lonely nights  
Canvas unpainted  
Stories untold  
And words;  
Layered in the mind of the unraveling woman

## A Place in the Stars

Make me a place in the stars,  
But don't tell me to go.  
Make me a place between the twinkling brilliance;  
But don't ask me to leave  
Before I've finished here;  
Before I've played out every scene meant to be seen by these eyes  
Before every word meant to echo down the corridors leading to my  
frequently open mind is spoken  
Before every heart I'm meant to touch can be felt by my love  
Before I can taste all the flavors of life; both bitter and sweet:  
Let me stay  
But while I am still here, blindly groping my way down the opaque  
halls of life,  
Eventually coming to a stop where all of my predecessors ended up;  
Save me a place  
But be sure it is in the eyes of those who have not seen all,  
So that I may lead them towards things both great and tragic,  
So that I might help them through the tragedies, and show them how  
to humbly appreciate the great  
So I might lead them to the heartbreaks and direct them towards the love  
Before I have forced them to see everything for not only what it is, but  
also what it is not;  
Let me stay.

## Death by Silence

I have seen the pubescent minds of my generation drowned by the stupidity of their juvenile peers. I have watched as their naivety becomes their reality, and their stupidity consumes them. I have heard their hateful words, screamed out of spite and insecurity. And I have seen the results of their actions, performed out of pure idiocy, in search for attention, begging for love. They seek independence through rebellion and in reveling without worry as to what the consequences may hold. They indulge in the forbidden fruits of someone else's labor, not realizing the price is their dignity. I have watched the words roll off the tips of their tongues like acid rain off the roof of a car, not caring how it will effect the ground below. How their words can burn, like that acid, a hole right through the center of someone. They don't care that their oblivion can cause so much obliteration; that by causing other people to feel harm, they are inevitably leaving themselves to their own devices, in a forest full of hungry wolves. Their verbal blows push away more people than their punches ever could. They don't realize that once they're left alone, they're left to die. That as many people as they threatened to physically abuse, have mentally disabled their ability to fight back by refusing to show pain when their violence is present. They can't see past their fists and therefore think that only violence can cause harm. They don't see that silence is more lethal than any injuries they could cause. They can't hear that silence is the most deadly of screams, because the silence means it's over. Silence means people have given up on changing them. And ultimately the wolves in that forest consume them, like the silence of their victims, leaving the words unsaid to hang in the air like ominous chorus of ghosts whispering "Hushhh" as if to say, "Lay down your weapons, this battle has been lost."

## Today's Oppressed

I've seen the inspired minds of my generation extinguished. I've seen the corruption of conformity- the depletion of independence.

I have watched as sovereignty is broken down by the elite, the independent minds crushed by the hammer of unjust stereotypes and assumptions that is dropped upon them. They are filled with fear, the people once filled with pride; struggle to find themselves in the shadows of the pointing fingers questioning their futures, the fingers belonging to the laughing crowd, screaming their thoughts of insecurity, ridiculing their decisions because theirs were never supported.

Perhaps the judges are afraid of being judged, maybe the people who laugh, are laughing so the people laughing at them can be drowned out. But maybe we are all drowned out by the crashing noises of the sorrowful people, who are handed prescriptions in the hope that maybe they will be silenced and continue their roles in humanity, that maybe the pills they design in their labs will somehow be more helpful than the stuff they can get on the streets and from the liquid cascading from their bottles, filling them with the illusion that everything will work out, until they realize that to get this deception, that they must continue reaching for their illusionists, because their drugs and alcohol are just a mere sleight of hand.

But we are taught to resist these temptations, that the delicacies behind the opaque glass walls of our leaders, who teach us to speak our minds, but not speak too loudly as to wake the protestors of neglect, who will rise from the ashes of the previous people, speaking out against the injustice their generations faced, and who taught their children to do the same: their children will stand up shouting their rights. They have taught us that the delicacies behind those walls are what corrupt our nation, and that our words mean nothing, until they are spoken from the lips of people that the media pays to hear rant and our words will never be supported, because they hold too much truth.



I have watched as the powerful people step on the minds of my generation, and then pick them up again as soon as the cameras are turned on them, pretending to repair what they've broken, while they secretly try to mold them into the minds they want to have created.

There have been weapons of mass destruction built by brilliant minds of previous generations, but I believe in this generation, and its power- Its ability to create minds of mass reconstruction.

## Clone

The reflection she sees is not her own,  
It's the body she compares to all the others around  
Every night she comes home,  
Tries to squeeze into those double-o's,  
Refusing to believe that her size two jeans are "The right size"  
She hates the way her body is made,  
Resents every pinch of skin she can grab at  
She doesn't believe the people who tell her she's beautiful  
So she stops spending her lunch money on food  
She feeds the meals her mother leaves her to the garbage disposal,  
Telling herself that it is much hungrier than the ever growing crater in  
her stomach  
On the days when she's too weak to paint her fading finger nails,  
She tells herself that it will all be worth it in the end  
That one day she will fit into the immensely tight wedge that society  
has left for her  
One day she will feel as though she belongs- where a website  
determines your popularity,  
And a single number on the inside of your clothes determines your  
worth  
One day, maybe she won't want to belong,  
But for now she does  
So she will do everything in her power to become the people she will  
learn to loath,  
For now,  
She will become their clone .

## Words for Common Ears

Lost in your thoughts,  
A place with no road  
Somewhere to find,  
But nowhere to go

A sanctuary without comfort,  
A soul without thought  
A hole with no edges,  
A person who's not

Why fake your life  
With nowhere to turn?  
No one to trust,  
And nothing to learn?

Instead try indulging  
In things more delightful,  
For no one enjoys voice  
Of people so spiteful.

## **Tangled in Triumph**

While sitting in this pew, a question arises.

Every Sunday that I sit here, is it someone's recycled beliefs dangling,

Spewing from the lips of the charismatic priest, chewing each word  
from that "holy" book.

These legends condescending our actions, calling them sins,

Forcing implements down into our narrow minds where they expand  
into beliefs that what we think, say, and do is wrong until we come  
crawling back for our repentance.

He voices inceptions which echo down the corridors of our minds  
reminding us to beg for our hail marries.

His words are what bring up questions, making me feel indecisive.  
Making me question man's itinerary when telling us to believe in  
something greater; for what is man with no confirmable power greater  
than his beliefs?

## **The Hate Child**

I am my own ovary in the womb of society

Planted between the legs of hatred and injustice,  
Born to be the violator of my people's corruption.

# NOAH HEISE

Dirk loved to eat falafel.  
One bite and he was gone.  
The moist garbanzo;  
A taste so fond.

Dirk's dog, a dingo,  
Dutifully darted due  
To a dangerous demoralizing disaster!

The falafel was burnt.  
Dirk and his dog weren't.  
The garbanzo is now Carbon waste.  
The falafel is not fit to taste.

## **In a Pickle**

I got a pickled pickle  
That I picked up at the  
Pickup truck  
A porcupine picked it up  
A sound like a piccolo

## Juggled

“That’s what you get for juggling wolverines I guess.” The doctor stood over the dead body of the infamous animal juggler. Then he tended to the other two men who were also dead with the same scars and bruises. Gasping, he knew who juggled who. It seemed impossible a wolverine be so strong.

## Neato Taquito

Waiter there’s a bug in my taquito!  
To rid the taste I need Tapatio!  
Hold on. Do I see traces of gator?  
Sorry, I’m not tipping the waiter.  
As I watch from the paint chipped window sill  
The Department of Health and Safety milled.  
In public the manager was questioned.  
The loo I went to free my intestine.  
When I was through, I check my pocket watch.  
And still I felt a Sasquatch stanching my launch.  
I took a breath and I composed myself  
Just when I left I was mugged by an elf!  
Today was the worst day I’ve had in May.

## Nutter Butter

The sound was of churning butter.  
The bucket filled with nutter butters.  
A worker cried with ecstasy  
That he no longer had his knee!  
The assembly line spewing cookies  
So many you could fill a wookie.  
But problems happen and insurance is needed.  
The lawyers employer surely pleaded.  
After the incident things went normal.  
The boss upstairs stayed nice and formal.  
The conveyor belt cycled through.  
A smell of sweet butter filled the room.

## Oil Spill

Slick  
Oil is frugal  
Sick  
The villagers' oodle  
Gill  
The fish can't breath  
Gull  
The bird can't eat  
Still  
A silent sea  
Stall  
The sunken barge seeps  
Wry  
Is BP's face  
Wrecked  
Is the landscape

## Thanks-But-No-Thanksgiving

Granted, the turkey was juicy. It was not the kind of juicy like you'd expect. It was more of the turkey-from-large-farm-pumped-full-of-growth-hormones kind of juicy. What can I say? My grandparents are probably the biggest misers on the planet. To them, if it's a bargain, they buy it. Hell, the cranberry sauce is still in the shape of the can from which it came from. Plasticized and paralyzed to preserve freshness I don't detect. Like always, I had a Kraft and Jennie-O thanksgiving at grandma's house.

## Centipede

The voracious centipede is puzzled  
Why though?  
The endless chomping on  
Rolly pollies  
Slowly as guacamole  
The kids didn't know  
What was in for them  
When they uprooted the stump  
The centipede arose  
Still puzzled  
But even moreso was the empuzzlement  
It creeped  
Changing places  
The chomped notch of wood was gone  
The kids dropped the stump  
We now have a destroyed centipede  
The roly pollies are stumped



## Thirteen Ways of looking at Road Kill

- Among the Animals  
The only thing moving was  
The wheels of an SUV
- They were of three species  
All were mammals
- The mammals rushed across the highway  
The hot road the pantomime
- A man and a woman are one  
A man a woman and road kill are one
- I do not know which to prefer  
The dead squirrel  
Or the smashed rat  
Their last breath a whistle
- Icicles form on their fur  
In the cold  
If there was to be another car  
The body would crack not splat
- Oh thin truckers  
Why do you imagine diners?  
Do you not see the animals walking around your tires?
- I know guts spewing from the badger  
Oh I know not to drive next to the black & white skunk
- When the opossum parried right  
It was on the edge  
Just lucky to dodge
- At the sight of the rodent  
My eyes green  
I swerved sharply so I could see them

- He drove to Connecticut in a green Prius  
Once a deer stared at him  
He liked fresh venison
- The vehicle is moving  
The animals must be dying
- It was a long night  
With no headlights  
When it snowed the road will be snow dyed red.

2

2

Koalas

Ate

2

Leaves

Which

2

Wombats

Threw up

# BLAKE HOSMER

## Blood Red Roses

A funeral,  
a celebration of life.  
The blood red roses that are placed on the casket.  
A white room.  
The white,  
so blinding and will stare you down.  
The faint sobs of our loved ones.  
Packing up to leave,  
but we'll return.  
We always do.  
Maybe this time with one rose  
or maybe two.  
Know that we'll always remember you.

## Different Shades

Walking down a narrow strip of cement.  
Wind strikes my body leaving a draft.  
Wind carrying leaves of different shades.  
The leaves begin to mesh into a swirl of colors.  
Each leaf riddled with pulsing veins giving it everlasting life.

## Revival

The environment is on a downward spiral.

We aren't helping it.

We aren't nurturing it.

We aren't letting it breathe.

We just set buildings on top and suffocate the ground beneath.

We are smothering Mother Nature.

Drying it out.

Sticking her in a gas chamber full of the cars in the city.

Slowly killing it.

We need to open the doors to the chamber.

We need to provide her with love.

We need to nurture her back to health before we no longer have the chance.

Give her our word.

Give her our vow.

Give her life.

## **Mother Nature's Symphony**

Grey skies clothe our planet like a warm blanket.  
The only problem is, I'm not warm.  
I'm cold.  
Each drop that violates my skin sends a gasping chill down my damp body.  
I look up and sprinkles of specks cloud my sight.  
I look around me.  
All I see are bare trees reaching for the sky with naked branches.  
A sprout attempts to grow, but nature won't let it.  
I am silent.  
Every fallen drop a note in the symphony created by Mother Nature.

## **Naked Branches**

Rain falls from the sky kissing my skin with every drop.  
Looking up to the narrowing water that disappears in grey clouds.  
Drooping my head to the ground and seeing the lightly painted swirls  
of rainbows.  
Trees around me holding leaves are pounded away by every clump of water.  
Leaving the trees with naked branches praising the sky.

## The Creek

Ripples and plops surround a rocky surface of water.  
Little critters skit and skip causing waves to accelerate to the sides  
which then fade.  
Each rock different and unique in its own way.  
Some are stained with fresh water.  
Turning into dark masses.  
Others have a thin layer of dryness just reaching to breathe.  
The sun shines upon the water.  
Turning it into a swirl of glittery madness.  
Bubbles spout from every living creature and from the rough patches  
of serene water.  
Here.  
I am at peace.

## The Universe

Bright stars in a world of darkness.  
Hot flares of the sun's rays.  
The unforgettable sorrow within a black hole.  
  
What mysteries are held within the craters of the moon.  
The planets capture light as if it held no meaning.  
The universe, a place of light and dark that work together in a cycle of  
life and death.

## **The Reflection Perfection**

She was beautifully crafted.  
The image, perfection.  
Spreading love to all around her.  
She is a reflection.

She is the reflection of you.  
She's the light in darkness.  
She's your way out, she's freedom.  
She is to all, kindness.

She's with you now and forever.  
She's the light in your eye.  
She will never ever forget.  
She'll never say good-bye.

## **Relentless**

My face is plunged into my pillow. I'm trying to sleep, but my phone won't let me. Every minute a ding sounds and I am compelled to answer. Another text. I try to end the conversation, but she won't let me. Then, I fall asleep only to awake to another ding. She is relentless. I try to end it again, but it fails. So the only way to leave the conversation is to ignore it. I mute my phone. Close my eyes and listen to the sounds around me. I hear a rhythmed plop of water that amplifies through thin, metal pipes. My dogs bark in their sleep. They have vivid dreams of chasing our neighbor's kids. I then listen to the whistle of the wind flowing in through my window. I can feel the refreshing cool caress my skin. Then, I fade into unconsciousness.

## The Misunderstanding

A woman in San Francisco got off work. She came across a man standing by himself. It was her acquaintance John.

“Hey, Sam, why are you walking home at night?”

“Hi, John, I just got off work.”

“Oh...Wow, you're huge. A boy or girl?”

The last thing John saw was a fist getting closer.

## The Wild

To not show weakness is a key factor in the wild.

Kindness is a pointless attribute.

There is no honor in the wild for only the strong survive.

Dishonor is a quality in which every creature has so they may live to see tomorrow.

Loyalty will be your downfall for just when you think you've made a friend, they will turn on you.

If you were planning on trusting others and giving up your hard work, then generosity is the thing for you.

Remember, chivalry will not be so kind to you in the depths of the wild.



## **Jungle Store**

Crazed like animals.  
Rushing into one place like a watering hole in the tropics.  
Taking all they can carry and all they can afford.  
Things they don't need, but who cares.  
Fighting each other.  
Ripping things out of their hands.  
What is their reason?  
Why are they doing this?  
It's because, it's on sale.

## **Lost and Found**

Maybe it wasn't so smart to go in the woods alone.  
But who's here, a rock or a stone.  
I thought I heard a sound maybe a bird or a snake.  
I searched for the sound and saw a bush shake.  
I stared at the bush with eyes so striking.  
I found a pair so yellow and inviting.  
And so I went closer, a bad mistake.  
I was the person that it wanted to take.  
It came closer out from the dark.  
Maybe it would squeak maybe it would bark.  
As it came out I saw its face.  
I looked closer and said, "Chase!"  
He ran out and sat in the moss.  
It was the dog, the dog I had lost.  
I loved this dog and he loved me too.  
I said in tears, "I'll never lose you

# VANESSA ANGEL ILAR

*“You’re not ready for my world yet, but don’t worry they’re completely separate.”*

*-Savage Angel Ilar*

## When I Heard

When I heard the first breath from her lovely lips, the stars collided. Her voice sang brighter than the heavens, the Milky Way favored her for being a dreamer, and her hair was as endless as time. When my clammy hands outlined her moon-like face, liquid stardust streamed down her gentle cheek, leaving me gasping, yearning for that bright smile of blinding super novas. I decided at that moment that I’d do anything to make her happy, no matter how silly the task. I would crack open the sun and paint her fragile face with its yolk if that’s what it took. She smiled sadly at me through thick shy eyelashes that hid her knowing eyes. I only understood the depth of her sadness when the rusted bell cracked to life.

“Dreaming again. Staying again”. My towering teacher managed to say through a sigh that carried with him throughout childhood.

I coughed in disbelief, and when I looked at my hand I swore I saw stardust.

*“You have nothing to be ashamed about. Except maybe me.”*  
*-Savage Angel Ilar*

### **Child of Earth and Sun**

I was born of star dust and moon.  
The Sun herself dropped me onto Mother Earth.  
She raised me to be a dreamer,  
To shoot up and shine brighter than Venus.  
Only if people saw me the same way.  
If only they would let me flow my endless love to them,  
The way Mother Sun and Earth have for me.  
If only these people would let me take them beyond their dreams,  
For a dance that would never end,  
But to mankind I'm no more than a psychotic liar.  
If only my Mothers would tell them all I wanted to do was to show  
them love.

*“I will pull all the negativity to myself. Then we will have that much more love.”*

*-Savage Angel Ilar*

## **The Reason Why the Earth Breathes**

Waves from a waterfall tumble past her golden shoulders  
In such a manner that's unearthly and mesmerizing.  
Light kisses all around, hungrily and greedily radiating off her perfect being.  
Her voice booms with such lovely confidence,  
Leaving you to wonder if God is jealous.  
She, with all her breathless perfection  
Makes Apollo look like a cold, illiterate fool.  
Earth is not worthy of being home to such a glorious goddess  
My adoring eyes are undeserving to see such beauty.  
But, because she is kind,  
She allows all of us to admire and bask in her presence.  
All her flawlessness is the only reason Earth allows humanity to stay.

*"I'm sorry about the last few times I saw you. That actually killed more of my heart."*

*-Savage Angel Ilar*

### Because Men Slip by Like Time

Great grandfather,  
I saw you reading in my bathtub.  
Surrounded by a mountain of old, yellowing books,  
And when you looked up at me  
Your eyes twinkled as if the universe was trapped behind your slim  
long eyelashes.  
I was too intimidated to say a word,  
And when I finally mustered the courage to whisper a hello  
I didn't get the honor of a response.  
Instead you held out a stack of old books to me,  
And when I blinked,  
I began to cry,  
Because I knew you were dead,  
And the outstretched arm holding books to me wasn't yours,  
It was your daughters,  
My grandmother,  
No greats included.

*“I will be sorry, strong, and sad and whatever else  
we might need for us.”*

*-Savage Angel Ilar*

How I wish to be a tree,  
So tall and proud.  
My arms reaching, growing, trying to pluck  
The sun from the sky.  
My limbs rooted into the ground  
Trying to be one with the Earth,  
While trying to be one with the sky.  
Making my branches an open home  
For every living thing.  
Struggling every brutal winter.  
Trying to live up to my name as the tree of life,  
The main symbol of Earth,  
The ever giving tree.  
Producing the best oxygen I can for everyone.  
Only to be repaid by getting cut down,  
By being burned,  
Becoming furniture.  
Yet, I still love these beautifully misguided people.  
I still try to produce healthy air,  
For my delicate murders.

*“Because I would never be able to find someone worthy  
enough for you.”*

*-Savage Angel Ilar*

## **Under the Soil**

We grow under the soil,  
Cradled by Mother Earth.  
Arms and legs poking above the dirt  
In the form of leaves, stems and bark.  
Breathing in glorious greens, blues and browns.  
We try to grow taller and taller,  
A never-ending attempt to reach father sky.

*“I felt more of my heart shatter when they brought me in.”  
-Savage Angel Ilar*

## **Ruins**

Ashes fall from the murky sky and I look for my family. Any trace of a known object or land mark. That’s when I see her. She is the bright flame that caused all of this. I think that she kills all life, to let it grow pure again. She has tears in her eyes that burn up before they can fully be tears; scorch marks tear down her face, making her look unreal. And when she finally sees me she is afraid, afraid of burning me too. When I open my mouth to call peace, to give comfort I immediately regret it. A cold icy wind tumbles out and fills the newly ashen city in a storm of precipitation. She looks at me, robbed of breath, stunned. And suddenly, I’m the one that’s afraid, afraid I will put out her flame, and afraid that she will turn me into a lifeless puddle of polluted sadness. Her face magnifies a million times in awe, elated that she’s not the only one. Her blazing eyes reach my cold and isolated ones, and she turns a blessed pale and I start to melt. It is then that I realize that the both of us only create ruins.



*“Let me bear the scars for both of us please.”*  
*-Savage Angel Ilar*

**December 23, 2013**

I memorized every word and every crease in his aging face, and when it came time to go I wished that he would turn into the moon and I, the sun. That way he could be free. Free from the bars of a cell, free from mental illness and anti-psychotic pills. Free from fear and the black hole in his gut caused by wanting love. I wanted my dad to spin freely in the galaxy of wonders and endless dreams. I wanted him to soar high and play chase with me, the sun. I wanted him to never get tired, to keep orbiting his glorious moon dance of spins with star dust flaring behind him like fire. I wanted my dad to be free to gaze at the Milky Way, to know nothing of his delusional world of hurt. I wanted to free him from his own mind, to join the great unknown.

*“And that’s not fair to you.”*

*-Savage Angel Ilar*

My dad’s heart is bigger than our galaxy and I think that’s why people give him a hard time. I think that when God looks down upon all his creations, his eyes focus on my dad, creating a warm smile and that’s why daytime is bright. My dad is the moon; he gently moves the waves because he likes the sound. He picks me up out of my mistakes and imperfections and still loves me. My dad is a master of the arts; he is the one who taught me how to play chess, the one who taught me how to love. My dad is a man of many talents yet thinks he is useless. My dad is that book nobody picks up. My dad is what all the birds chirp about. My dad creates life through paintings and drawings; yet he thinks he brings death. My dad is a kind soul, a restless spirit that puts me first no matter how bad it makes me feel,

Because

That’s

What

Dads

Do...

*“And you’re the last person that deserves to be hurt.”*  
*-Savage Angel Ilar*

### **He’s A Fallen Angel**

Coffee stained lips force you to obey her every command.  
Her red, edgy nails can’t compare to the scarlet “A” tattooed on her  
sugar coated forehead.  
Snakes; under her spell crawl all over her high wasted shorts, basking  
in her temptation.

What you saw that night, that night of tangled bed sheets wasn’t her at  
all.  
She is a shape shifter, you saw whatever it was that you wanted to see.  
Don’t let it frighten you because, that’s what she thrives for.

Her skin is made of leather, smooth and dangerous,  
Her eyes are carefully charcoaled in black clouds.

That moment you give in, when you give yourself to her completely,  
it all changes.  
The façade disappears; her leather skin shows, smoke radiates off her  
and she is really a he.

He lures you in with whatever it is that you want most, and then eats  
your spirit.  
He leaves you to smolder in a lake of fire because he’s scared of  
burning alone.  
He lives off your fear, your sins, your lust and sorrows.

He has the slithering name itching with temptation.  
He is Lucifer, a fallen angel, a lost star.

# EMILY JONES

## 13 Ways to Look At Music

I.

Among 20 different bands  
The only thing moving  
Was the time bar

II.

I was of three dollars  
What a shame  
When there are three albums

III.

The song ended as another began  
Just a small part of a playlist

IV.

The instrument and the player  
Are one  
The instrument, the player, and the music  
Are one

V.

I do not know which to prefer  
The beauty of the musician  
Or the beauty of the music  
The way it pleases your ears  
Or deafens you there after

VI.

Music filled the long hallway  
With loud noise  
The happiness of the musician  
Going to and fro  
The music  
Shown in his face  
A contagious feeling

VII.

O young girl of twelve  
Why do you listen to rap music?  
Do you not hear how punk  
Can be meaningful  
And a beauty around you

VIII.

I know pop music  
And their meaningless breakup songs;  
But I know too  
That punk music is involved  
In saving lives

IX.

When the musician walked off the stage  
It marked the end  
To one of many sets

X.

At the sight of musicians,  
Walking on the bright stage  
Even the parents of fans  
Would cry out sharply

XI.

He drove across town  
The radio on high  
Once, a disappointment pierced him,  
In that he mistook  
Music of a commercial  
For a song

XII.

The music has stopped  
The party must be over

XIII.

It was a chilly afternoon  
It was raining  
But we were going to stay  
The people sang  
As the show went on

## **Look! It's A Dog!**

Soft fur  
Brush of love  
Wagging tail  
Long tongue  
Big brown eyes  
A bundle of fun

## **It Wasn't an Accident**

"911, what's your emergency?"

"Please help. I've found a dead body in my neighbor's house." A frightened man whispers.

"Is anyone else in the house?"

"I honestly hope not."

"We have dispatched officers to your location. Can I help you with anything else?"

"I'm scared."

"Scared of what, sir?"

"Scared I might kill someone else."

## Jimmy

*(Rewrite of Richard Kendall Muntittrick's poem "Unsatisfied Yearning")*

Around the giant red cage  
    Wiggles the bunny about  
And nibbles, and runs, and scratches  
    In order to get out  
Once on the gray carpeted floor  
    He straightaway dashes around  
He eats all the cords and paper  
    Back to the cage he's bound

## Haiku

It's odd how we hate  
The rain until it's gone for  
Another twelve months

Cold trampoline nights  
Gossip and stories of a  
Spring I won't forget

My feet are wet and  
Cold, but my hands are warm when  
They are inside yours

## H. D. Moe

Tired roads, tiled clothes  
A squawk of a newborn peach tree  
Colored pumpkins with sparkled cuts  
Tearing at the freckle of astronomy  
Kissing the cucumber's aunt,  
A creative knob on the length of feet  
Brings interesting weather to the mansion  
A cigarette puffed from yellow  
To the sky as a pencil  
Stabbed an innocent blade  
From the back of a shield,  
A fish quit  
With the disgrace it became as a father  
Lightning comes with the thought  
That you honestly didn't kill the  
Bus that went shopping at Burlington,  
To find that those shoes don't  
Come in his size.  
Drugs help you stay in school  
While jail tells you not to  
Pee in public places.  
Fill in the planks of plastic  
You built your tree apartment out of  
With gel that smells of  
Week old carcasses your  
Grandmother pulled out of the microwave.  
Now tell me, where is it you last saw  
That piece of hope you held  
That your pregnant kitten might  
Be the one for you



## Make It a Sweet, Sweet Good Bye

I brushed the pine needles away from your headstone, a smile on my face but a tear on my cheek. I sat a bouquet of your favorite flowers down next to you and kneeled down beside that. Just a few, simple yellow daisies. I had made your favorite sandwich and brought your favorite blanket. A warm breeze and bright sun warmed my weeping skin. It felt like you had your gentle arms around me and you took my cold hand tightly in your even colder one. You brushed my tears aside, reminded me in that sweet voice of yours that I was too beautiful to cry. I laughed lightly, knowing it would make you smile that darling smile I had fallen in love with the moment we met. The afternoon drifted by lazily until the sun saluted me goodbye and made way for the shining moon. The warm breeze had turned chilly and I knew it was time to leave. I didn't want to go but I could hear a distant lawn mower getting closer. "Good night." I whispered. "I love you." The wind carried my whisper away as a tear slid down my pale face. The street lights gave me sympathy as I regretfully left you once more.

## Bright Day, Bright Green Jump House

Four small children laughing, smiling, happy  
Friends forever, they always agreed  
There's the eldest girl, bright red hair, pale face, giddy laughter  
Next oldest, very blonde hair, bright blue eyes, missing teeth  
Next a little boy, messy blonde hair and a thumb in his mouth  
Then the youngest girl, light brown hair and  
A smile that becomes harder and harder to come by.  
If I could change the way I grew up I would.  
I would make myself more optimistic.  
I would enjoy the little things and appreciate the bigger ones.  
I would love the life I lived because I know now what it's like in other places.  
I've gotten a taste of what it's like to grow up and it's awful.  
A lot worse than the gross peas Mom made you eat  
And it's going to hurt more than when you dropped the pickle jar on your toe.  
And I'm not even there yet.  
I wish I could go back to lying there on that bright green jump house  
And cuddle my innocence a little while longer,  
Because I still wonder where I went wrong.

## Riedell

He looks somewhat homeless, but then again that is the hipster look.  
Dressed in beiges and browns, his foot propped up on his thigh, his  
notebook propped on his calf, writing god-knows-what. Every once in  
a while, he'll look up, and the little my blind eyes can make of his face  
is dark glasses and a short beard. Honestly, he's majestic, sitting so  
still, being so concentrated. His fedora is worn down and faded from  
the sun, but he wears it confidently. He walks this way, slowly, every  
step careful and intentional. He admires the life of the lifeless trees as  
I admire him. I wish I could see what he sees, see through his eyes and  
admire what's there to be admired. From my eyes, these trees have  
never seen life. From his, they have always been living, always will be  
living. He will always live in my mind as the homeless looking man  
who writes about nature at the park.

## Valentine's Day

"I hate Valentine's day." Lia told me with a sigh, putting some chocolates back on the shelf.

"Why is that?" I asked, frowning at the price of a bouquet of roses and setting them down as well.

"It's just a depressing reminder that I'll never be in love." She whined, crossing her arms over her chest.

"Come on, that isn't true. You'll be with someone soon enough."

"You're just saying that. You make it sound like it's easy."

"Well, it really isn't that difficult."

"For you maybe. When's the last time you even tried to get a girlfriend? Oh, that's right. You haven't."

"I haven't needed to either. I can't help it if I'm a ladies' man."

"Oh, shut up, Kyle. Just because you're perfect doesn't mean you have to go rubbing it in my face all the time."

"I'm sorry, Lia. You know I don't mean to. I could help you find someone if you really wanted."

"I think I'm fine alone, thanks."

"Then why are you complaining about it?"

"I don't want to have to try to be liked. I just want to be. Like you."

"That doesn't exactly work for everyone, Hun."

"There you go again."

"Sorry, sorry. We should talk about something else then. Do you want to go to the movies or something later? I'll buy."

"Alright, I can't pass up an opportunity to hang out with Mr. Perfect."

"You need to stop calling me perfect. That's not true."

"Oh, please. You love it."

"No, I don't. I gotta go now. I'll call you later."

## Wow. Cliché.

Sweet pink candy on a bright summer's day  
Laughing too hard and trying not to say  
Something too silly, something too cliché  
Now it's too late; you must be on your way  
And now I can't stop thinking about you  
Windswept hair and all the things you do  
Perfect smile and everything else too  
Your brown eyes are ones I can fall into  
Your talents exceed way far beyond mine  
I wish that I could spend all of my time  
With you by my side. You say you're just fine  
But hun, even perfect smiles can lie  
The point is I just wanted you to know  
I'll always love you. Please never let go.

## **That's Not What She Would Want**

The soft pitter patter of the rain on the roof of the parked car was a relieving change to the overly stressed man. Why he was stressed he wasn't even sure of, but it was becoming overwhelming. Maybe it wasn't stress; maybe it was the lack of company, the lack of drinks, the lack of motivation to feel any happiness. Here he was, Anthony Miles, 35 years old, nothing better to do than sit in his car alone on the side of an abandoned highway on a late Friday night. He had an endless day in the office and wanted nothing more than go home to his loving wife. That is if she had been home. She was never home, never would be home, and he felt his stomach tighten and his heart wrench. He glanced across the highway to the caution tape that was still there and the edge of the highway where dirt had given out and slid down the steep hill. He knew his wife's car had once been down there, containing their anniversary gift and her dead body. He looked down at the car keys in the ignition then back to the cliff. 'I could join her.' He thought. He sat there, trying his hardest to think of anything other than that. He subconsciously started his car, put it in drive and turned to the left. It started with the bumper, then the front wheels, then the back. For the first time in a long time, he was finally happy.

## I'm Not Okay

Even now, it feels wrong not having you here. Sitting beside me, there's someone new there. It isn't you and it never will be you. You gave me good advice as well good snacks and staying at your house was the most fun I had had for a while. Your giddy smile, your flirty movements, your constant messing up your hair; those were some of the many things I loved about you. Even though we were both shitty writers, we did it together and I came to enjoy it more. You put notes in my shoes and never spent as much time with me as I deserved. But it was okay with me, because you were happy with them.

I always disapproved of everyone you dated and yet you never listened to me and ended up getting hurt. Never the less, I still sympathized for you, like I had been for years. We were crazy kids. Do you remember? You were in my class in the 6th grade, the first time we had ever even met. I never thought we would be friends. I hung out with my brother because I had no other friends, but you and they were an interesting group that honestly freaked me out.

But the time came when I joined you and you guys changed me so much. I was different, my old friends not being my friends anymore and well here I am, still friends with most of the 6th grade memories. There were decisions I had made now and again that I regret to this day, but now it's too late. If you knew about any of them, you would just tell me that they're nothing and to just let it go. I agree with you, I really wish I could "just let go", but that's the problem, isn't it? It's always the problem. You can't just forgive and forget. You might forgive but you will never, I mean NEVER, forget if it actually meant something.

I can tell you every day that you're beautiful but you just brush it off with thanks. I could tell every single person I know about how beautiful you are and I'm not sure you would believe me. "Keep writing, come on." Your warm face is remembered as the task at hand is remembered too.

Last week, you left. It wasn't your fault; there was nothing any of

us could do, no matter how badly we wanted to. I couldn't cry then, wouldn't cry then, but I feel it weighing on me, and I know it won't be long before the tears do come. I realize now that even though we didn't spend even close to enough time together, we were still best friends in our hearts. And you will always stay there. I hope you'll come back. I don't know how you would, or even if you could, but I know that you will try. Damn, will you try.

There's "I <3 U" written on the table, and it honestly looks so much like your handwriting. Messy, large, but I've come to know your writing by it. I hope someday I'll be brave enough to send this to you. It's weird and kind of creepy, but you would lie and say you loved it anyways because you're my friend and you don't have to be honest about something so pointless and silly.

Even now, I'd rather be reading the silly things you write than be writing this. You and I both were writing random things to waste time; that was one of the best things, or when we would draw things on each other's papers, or write notes back in forth, or when we wrote our script together. That was probably my favorite thing we wrote. Not because I enjoy writing scripts, but because I got to write it with you. Both of us were terrible actors, but it was amusing to everyone else.

You came back. I don't know how, I don't know why, but I'm glad you're back. The seat in front of me in French was heartbreaking to look at empty. It's kind of heartbreaking to see you too, though. You left for a good reason, and knowing that nothing changed here, I wouldn't like to see you go back to that. You won't tell me why. I'm not sure if you were ever actually leaving. I don't know what to believe anymore. You've lied to me in the past, but it was never anything too important to matter. This is important though; your well being means the world to me, regardless of anything and everything. If you're having trouble at home, I would hope you would trust me enough to tell me. If not me, than tell your boyfriend. If not him, than tell one of your friends, just tell someone. You can't do this on your own. No one can, no matter how much they wish they could, no matter how much they want to. I'm here for you and I always hope you will be there for me. I love you so much.

## William Carlos Williams

I have hidden  
The keys  
To your car  
So you won't leave

You seemed mad  
Yesterday and I  
Felt Alone

Forgive me,  
I just love you  
So much

### **But it's So Early**

Tired eyes  
Watch tired people

Tired thoughts  
Of a tired brain

Tired words  
Mutter from tired lips

Early school  
Equals tired kids



## Low Gap Park

*Thirsty: adj. lacking in water (ex. This river)*

It's been months since this part of the bend has seen water. A light rain now and again isn't good enough. Dried sand, dried rocks, leaves, sticks, bottles, animals. Nothing is even brave enough to venture out into the lacking bed. An occasional thing flies by, lands for a moment, and, unsatisfied, leaves. One side of the rock is too hot while the other too cold. Even I don't stay for long.

The birds are conceited. They don't bother to notice their missing co-organisms and dead surroundings. Not one solitary shit was given about how there isn't the comforting trickle of the thin creek or how the only sounds were themselves and the momentary whisper of leaves. Laughter and footsteps make the bird pause for a second, but they soon continue their never-ending useless call.

# MAEGAN JONES

## Ambition

I may have been sitting in a dim room,  
But when the statistics stood up  
And the facts stepped in to the light  
I was appalled to find  
That 50% of girls aged 9-12  
Have already developed body image issues.  
At the time, I was a counselor for 24 ten year old girls.  
My girls, my 24 girls, my 24  
Smart, beautiful, funny, perfect little girls  
12 of them think they're ugly?  
I stood up, the air too skinny  
Those 12 girls  
Flawless innocence soaking in  
Size two magazines,  
Tight, white billboards with an airbrushed reality sheen  
Caking on facial frosting because  
"That'll make boys like me, right?"  
Too young, too young, two youths yearning  
Yearning for a negative neon pregnancy test  
Because he said she looked 'hot' that night.  
Rotting in bile soaked teeth  
Rotting in mile stoked dreams  
Wanted piled on perfection  
The SCREAMS  
Buried in a pillow of self loathing  
All because of Arianna Grande's lost inches on the waist.  
But baby, don't let it get to you  
Because no one this young, this small  
Needs that kind of love.

## Gertrude Stein

A hollow broach, with a stiff seed inside  
Tinkling only when shaken hard  
And the listener grasps for every whisper  
Elicit me a thorny thistle  
I will prick my finger and I will know  
Me  
Sickly yellow pears mush at  
The softest caress  
“Do NOT touch me” she said  
A life of empty pockets and stomachs  
A life of brown and dirty Paris  
A life of absinthe, absinthe, absinthe

## The Stranger

And you cry.  
And scream.  
And beat me with what you think is fact,  
But I've always been surer.  
I've always known I was going to die.  
And that has always been ok.

## Song of Myself

I shall sing a song of myself  
To celebrate the beauty that is me and is we.  
Haphazard herons in the great blue yonder squawking, squawking a  
great blue “look at me”.  
And look at you.  
Look how long your arms are and take the time to admire the strength  
in your ankles.  
Muster all your strength and walk to the window.  
Look at the shattered frost on your thin glass panes  
The frost is me, the glass is me, the curtains are me, the wispy fog of  
your warm beautiful breath is warm beautiful me.  
All because Grandpa Walt told me so, and I believed him.

## Vanessa

You are what the world can never be:  
Happy.  
You smile as if the sun has hit everyone,  
Not knowing that some have only ever seen dark.  
You kill them with kindness and compliments  
With no other motive than to just be nice  
You, my darling  
You still appreciate acorns  
You mourn maple leaves  
And you long for love.  
I hope with my entire being that you are never hurt.

## Old Dogs

Little paws,  
Perky in otherwise cold, dead leaves.  
Little ears,  
Eagerly tilting at new sounds.  
Puppies are so filled with wonder,  
But I can't wait for her to be an old dog.  
With old eyes  
And rough ears  
And the kinds of paws that know time.  
I can't wait for the dog  
Who doesn't whine when you leave,  
But still greets you by the door, panting, when you return.  
The kind of dog  
Who rests her head on your lap  
When you watch movies.  
And even if she's bored of her master,  
A zombie to a colorful screen,  
She's happy just to be in your arms,  
Looking up,  
With old dog eyes that say  
(Maybe a bit slower than they used to)  
"I love you, I love you, I love you."

## Neat Words Are Neat

Oh, the calamity of concavity  
And the malady  
Of a timid absinthe ovary  
The inception of macadamia  
Obliterates our butterbun hymns  
Copulate corporeal defenestrate  
The precipice of picadillo caterpillar polka dots  
Aruba, Micaruba holds androgynous alchemists  
And I, a toy boat in botanical pasta.

## Kamryn

Happiness was a collision on the corner  
Of “why not” and “who cares”  
From golden stares  
From a golden girl with golden curls  
And eyes brighter than the glare of snowfall.  
She was an American girl and she was smiling  
And all were graced from the fallout.  
Her embrace around your knee  
Looking up with giddy bubbles,  
Saying  
With pink pansies woven  
Exclaiming  
“I want to look just like you someday.”  
No you don’t.  
“I do. I want to be just like you too.”  
What does she see in me?  
What does anyone, for that matter?  
The answer hangs like a body from a tree.  
She sees what doesn’t exist in me.  
She sees someone who doesn’t cry.  
Who doesn’t hate.  
Who never forces a feigned smile  
Or a choked ‘I’m fine’.  
She sees someone who doesn’t fly lower than anyone else  
In the vast expanse of sky we call life.  
To that I tell her,  
“You’ll never be like me.”  
Because I know that she will be so much better.

## **Baritone**

I did not want you  
Simply out of want.  
I am not lonesome  
Because I am alone.  
I loved you because of the slope of your shoulders  
And your baritone laugh.  
I loved the way your eyebrow lifted  
When you smiled.  
I loved the way you once looked at me.  
And I hate the way you never wanted me.  
I did not want you simply out of want.

## Whimper

*(My Generation's Howl)*

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by social media.  
Selfie-stricken Starbuck girls hashtagging hashtags,  
Who, throwing bookbags down from school check their updated  
twitter follower count  
Who, abandoning essays behind facebook chat windows tapped in 'LOL'  
Who, checked his relationship status compulsively muttering  
"dump her already, damn it!"  
Who, instead of manning up the courage to tell her in person that she  
looked beautiful today left a comment saying solely 'hot'  
Who, being rushed to the emergency room with a broken tailbone and  
a cracked rib forgot to mention #doitforthevine  
Who, doesn't come to school the next day after a mean girl comments  
'ew' on a selfie  
Who, slice their wrists to relieve the tension after a facebook rumor surges  
Who, go too far when their nudes leak,  
and they can't afford any more self-loathing.

## Boozer

Leather lonesome jackets  
Moaning at crisp morning chill  
How easily one can forget  
His antidepressant pill  
The starting snow has not yet stuck.  
Muddy slush covers the hills  
Come close and load your bullets, Son  
I have now lost all will.



## Greaser

It was almost as if everyone else  
Turned into cardboard cutouts you see  
At movie theatres.  
The only people made of flesh  
Were me and you.  
I sat still, the pizza in my hand  
Froze halfway to my mouth still agape  
Sticky with long lost nectarines.  
The squawking of lunchtime gossip went dark.  
I only saw you  
In the silence  
You took a comb out of your back left pocket  
Using both hands over your head to tame your mane.  
A cool, half smile, as you stuffed the comb away  
And tugged your leather jacket back into place.  
We made eye contact for a fraction of a second.  
I lost all weight  
And gravity did not persuade me otherwise.

## Breathing

I was at Ollie's loft. I remember turning off all the lights in the apartment, grabbing my mug of hot coffee and sitting cross legged on his bed. I draped the soft sheets around my shoulders and watched the city breathing.

The room around me was black, but the city burned orange with headlights, streetlamps, and carefree hotels and hot dog slingers and street walkers who smiled and didn't care that their fishnets were ripped. Someone walked slowly, teetering on the sidewalk border between drunken pedestrians and heavy traffic. Man or woman, this being held an open pink umbrella over their heads, shielding from a rain that wasn't raining. They radiated life.

"Sarah, where are you? Why are the lights all off?" Ollie called out from the doorway. I could hear him set his keys down on the kitchen counter and fumble for the light switch.

"I'm in here, darling."

He hummed to the bedroom and turned on the light.

"Oh my god." He slowly, as if approaching a sleeping lion, gingerly touched where my long auburn hair was. He was silent for a long time, but he melted away and kissed my cheek. "Eh. You can rock any haircut." He moved his kisses down my neck.

"I figured now is better than later. Wouldn't want to clog up the shower drain after the chemo."

Ollie loosened his embrace. "What?"

I was silent.

"What did you say?"

I was silent.

"Come on, don't do this to me."

"The results are on the bookshelf."

As he hesitantly walked to the fluttering page, I started to cry. The city was so beautiful.

# ZACHARY KLYSE

## Munchausen's Syndrome: A Haiku Set

Headlights shining as  
we run from abusive mom  
she did us all good

We ran and left her  
taking her babies away  
incurably sick

I to you, sorry  
All that force-fed medicine  
I'm not afraid to die

Put faith in daughter  
like I should have to you  
Headlights shown in dark

## Wi-Fi Strength: Poor

I see the greatest minds of my generation corrupted, sabotaged by the internet.

Hungry, malnourished, craving another post.

They see image after image, contests, “Congrats! You’re the 100,000th visitor!”

“Shoot the watermelon three times to win!”

See, they implant the virus into your brain to make you slow.

It works unless you have some Virus Protection.

Blocked pages and pop up ads.

Random Cat videos or a man doing back flips or a fetish you wish to explore.

Spoilers and tags, there is little to no limit of what one wishes to do in the digital ocean.

Yet they slave away, making a pointless attention seeking post about how life stinks and is so crummy.

But they haven’t lived yet, so how can they claim to have a bad life?

And they have food in the pantry compared to those who eat out of trash bins and live off of free samples and discarded potato chip bags and day old fast food fries.

Or they spend their time alone behind closed doors and window shades.

Click ‘Open New Tab’ and type [www.OccupiedMinds.com](http://www.OccupiedMinds.com) and search your name.

You’ll be there.

Because you’ve been infected with its electro-tentacles, wrapping around your neck and chest.

Constricting you, squeezing every little breath out of you like the toothpaste from the unused tube because you haven’t groomed yourself, cleaned yourself, sterilized yourself in days because you say, “I’ll do it after this.”

But ‘this’ never comes does it?

No, it doesn’t.

You yawn but you don’t care, you got magic gliding out of your fingertips onto the cyber net cartridge.

That’s when I last saw them.

My friend.

My last words were, “See you online.”

## A Hero

There is no returning  
There is no going back  
She has changed, forever  
All the things she used to mean? Destroyed  
All the ways she made our times fun? Ruined  
All those faces you loved to see? Wrecked  
All the emotions she made with you? Corrupted  
All the songs she sang? Forever lost  
You can see it in her motions  
You can feel it in her writing  
You can hear it in her voice  
They have set their claws on our once beloved woman  
You know this to be true.  
Again and again, they tear into her, leaving her a withered, foul mess  
A train  
A balloon  
Were these not but simple additions?  
A cold hearted princess  
An unheard brother  
These were the beginning of her downfall  
Our cherished bookworm, forever forced, into something she never wanted  
As you knew her, is dead  
She cannot remain the same  
Her friends cannot be around her  
She has risen beyond any hope of redemption  
You can leave her  
You can stop talking  
You could abandon everything you once cared for her  
But you know, even if you do, she'll continue on, forever existing,  
taunting you with it's madness  
Hating you  
Crying out for you  
Lost memories, anguished and bittersweet  
You can never return  
You can never undo what was done  
You cannot unsee what was seen  
It will only get worse  
It goes on and on  
Until you pray for release from this torment  
Only you can seek it  
Only you can grant it  
A hero  
It's the only way...

## Spontaneous

We fly underground  
We are usually looked down upon  
Even if we are the kings of our cardboard castles  
Made with duct tape and construction paper  
We like to move, usually to nowhere  
We like to catch flying fish out in the desert  
But we are bitten by concrete jungle gorillas  
As we roam the vacant plains  
We occupy Earth  
We live in empty shells of the slugs that turned into snails  
On the day after tomorrow's birthday  
Which was two days ago  
Under the sun's guidance, we use flashlights  
To blindly see through brick walls  
We always walk separate paths  
But we usually stick together  
We are *no one's* everything  
But everyone's nothing

Hush now, quiet now, don't you fret  
Here is a place to rest your head  
Close your eyes, get some sleep  
Where to Dream Land you leap  
Sweet sweet clouds of nuts and drops  
Back to sleep, please don't stop  
I'm here now, don't please, baby don't cry  
I won't leave your side, never say bye  
So close your eyes, before the blade falls  
And blood coats all of the walls  
A heart and a lung, even some bones  
You are not safe in your home  
I can't see, but you know why  
My name is Jack and I have no eyes  
So when you drive your car at night  
And a boy asks you for a ride  
Be warned my friends, heed my words  
Or your neck is broke like a mockingbird  
My mask is the last thing to see  
'Fore I take those pearls of eyes for me

## The Sin of Sacrifice

To sacrifice is less than unholy.  
Children sing in millions of choirs, all of them lying  
A kiss is the only debatable substance  
Meanwhile the air chills to the bone  
Knees continue to hit the dirt  
Heaven was hurtled into the sea  
We walked millions of miles to get here  
Innocent cry as guilty ones hurt  
Where are we supposed to go  
Cadavers float to the light above  
Only the Lord knows  
Male and female bodies, stripped of innocence  
Lie broken. Like a He-Loves-Me-Not flower  
The sky burns scarlet, the streets the same  
A hundred years we could not see the splitting  
Protestors huddle with Congress, and killers with kids  
The spirit passes through you, leaving a faint chill so crisp  
Chests give final heaves to another life  
Tree leaves each a tiny supportive flame  
We loved him so... How could he cause the destruction  
But it wasn't him. It was us  
We selflessly dumped it here  
No! He did it  
No! We did it  
He did it  
We did it  
He  
We  
He  
We  
HE  
WE  
When it is all gone, we cannot stand it any longer  
Angel wings burn in Djinn fires



Just watch them crackle and break and separate with heat  
Rose Buds smells like grandfather's ashes  
Lungs fill with lies and polluted scents  
Eyes flash blue green brown grey RED  
Iris's bleed with small daggers of bitter blooded hatred  
And soon, the hearts open to thick red body water on your hands  
Its midnight, knives better than stainless steel  
And bullets fly and are flung into the grass and concrete and the walls  
The further we ran, the distance grew for them  
Heads chopped with the answers shrouded in question  
Where did we go wrong  
We know where it went wrong  
It already is too late  
The purge has come  
All is gone  
We see illusions and ghosts  
Repent  
It's all over  
As the last living thing gives its final goodbye  
We finally know the price of sin  
The Sin of Sacrifice

## Where to Go...

Newborn homophobes hide behind computer phones and text messages, prone to cause you to moan and groan because you feel alone. Shown up by the upper class mass that tells you to kiss ass as they slash you down.

Crash and bash against the glass plane  
until you realize you've gone insane, deranged.  
Blood trickles in your eyes, causing stings of pain.  
You've trained to control your anguish, but the fiery rage cannot be extinguished.  
The devilish smile runs in this subliminal mesh in the brain  
The membrane of society is weakened to the week's end.  
Lazy and hazy, it's shady.  
But for a bisexual, it's crazy  
People think gays and bi's are babies because we butt hurt  
Sure, we don't like this place, but where else is there to go?

It's not a one last show where you know  
Words have power.  
Power causes bullets to shower  
Physical and literal mineral based ammo used at the Alamo, load the magazines  
The magazines propaganda show our people we are not of the agenda  
Like we split Pangaea or cause dementia  
Its mass hysteria I say  
To this day, I claim no shame in my name or what game I play  
It takes two to tango, and I dip both ways  
Prison mates dip in the Kool-Aid but they need aid as they escape  
Escape from your lips was an accidental kiss meant for bliss and you  
exclaim, "Oh shit!"  
So you kick it out and run along your way.  
You don't like it here, but where else is there to go?

It's not easy to admit that you quit and leave on the counter your oven mitts  
The muffins are roasting  
Like your face as they boasting about the game, so they toasting

Knowing you won't be remembered, your aura, which was glowing,  
dies to an ember  
Wake up at the end of September and when December makes its  
come, members of you cut away  
And on New Year's Day, tears are becoming clear, revealing true fears  
of having your wings clipped like shears  
Your favorite song put on like a poncho, goes on and on and on  
It goes on and on and on  
Call the Doc!  
I must be sick!  
Go and get me my medicine!  
It's 5 'o clock on the phone again  
You need another prescription  
That's a mission you Commando!  
But going Commando isn't how you ask him to homecoming...  
I love you... Where'd you go?

[Untitled]

The sound of heartbreak is like guitar strings snapping  
And I'm the boy playing the bongos  
Because I'm trying to play with life in the same tempo  
But it's going faster than I can drum  
So I set my instrument down and pick up the instrument of my demise  
I look in the mirror but I am not looking through my own eyes  
I play at a different tune. I skip each other beat  
I shatter the mirror to not look at 'myself'  
I just want to escape the fiery pits of heaven and ascend down to the  
holy grail of hell  
But I can't go there so I'm stuck in limbo  
I was never good at games but damn it I'll try my best  
But my best isn't enough for you  
See that what bides us together  
That the screw, glue and nails  
My house is made on sand, but I'm not even on the beach

# NICHOLAS LAMONICA

## My Best Work

You're indescribable, like a...

## Pet Peeve

I hate it when people don't finish their sentences. At least you could

My eyes dart upwards.  
The wet crow stares intently.  
He looks pretty pissed.

## A Short Lived Peace

The path of water seems to flow endlessly, wedged between clumps of moss and dying trees, longing for life. Signs of life are found in patches of vividly green grass along the sides of the stream, neighbored by an assortment of big rocks, small rocks, pebbles and other props of nature. The sound of rushing water is constant; a never-ending but calming ambiance in an always flowing scene. The sun blankets the water in a glistening and comforting way.

To the left of the stream is a dirt trail hugged tightly by weeds and bushes. The path descends steeply from a field obscured by thick elm trees with thin, starving branches, seeming almost lonely as they stretch from their owner.

In the hill in the distance lies a single oak tree. Smothered in yellow, decaying moss, a bare patch of bark is exposed to the beating sun. Imagination helps to envision the beauty of the old oak tree in its prime. This tree overlooks the trail and the stream, almost as a watchful eye to the blooming sprout residing at its base. The young sprout, covered in a gold radiance of leaves leans towards the guardian tree, accepting its protection. It seems to hope one day it can become as tall and wise as its father figure.

## Insurance

Throbbing chest pain.

Bill shoots up in his bed, greeted by a tangle of wires attached to his wrist and upper chest.

“Where am I?”

He looked to his side; his eyes locked with his wife, Jane.

“Your heart gave out again... they put you on life support Bill!” Jane blurted out, tears streaming down her face. Her voice cracked with every word.

Bill laid his head into his pillow solemnly. He knew this day would come.

“At least we have life insurance.”

Bill smiled weakly. He hated to see Jane in such pain.

“I’ll be okay baby. Don’t worry.”

Jane paced back and forth frantically. Suddenly, she stopped in her tracks. On the desk laid a medical report, and at the bottom, a bill. Her eyes bulged out of their sockets in disbelief.

In that moment, the Jane Bill knew was gone.

“Everything alright?”

Jane didn’t respond.

She rose emotionlessly towards the wall, shuffling towards the electrical socket.

Jane sighed with relief.

“Thank God for life insurance.”

Rain batters the roof.  
The small puddles grow larger.  
False reassurance.

I am Ukiah.  
My mountains are very dry.  
Sure could use a drink.

A newspaper hat  
Flowing down an endless sidewalk  
Pitter patter of rain.

The grapes are falling  
Resting in dirt, peacefully  
Only to be squashed



# JOSE LUPIAN

## La Piñata

Hitting it till the death  
Kids screaming all around  
LA Piñata!

## The Boring Day in Class

The rain is falling  
The kids are crying  
Some are mad  
While others are sad  
In the distance it's snowing  
This class is boring

## El Chacal

El rio esta bien solo,  
Miro un chacal en el lado  
Me aserco y brinca,  
Brinca y se pirde el en rio de maravias!

## **The Water Spider**

The river is so lonely,  
When all of a sudden I see a water spider,  
Has I try to creep up to it, it jumps into the water,  
And it disappears into the wonders of the river water

## **The Fiesta!**

The skulls dance with no brains  
Colorful skulls and dull skulls to  
They are all different in color and personality  
They all seem so happy to  
Just rest in peace  
As if they hadn't rested in years,  
They all finally here  
The party starts with their families coming and going  
And they will always know that their family is with them!

## **The Operation**

The doctors trying to revive him;  
The poor man gushing out blood;  
The surgeon trying to save him,  
And the beeping sound fading away slower and slower and slower...

## My TWO Mean Parents

“Two,” the little kid said his first words.”

“HE SAID HE FIRST WORDS!!!” yelled the mother with excitement!!

The Father ran down stairs and waited for the little kid to say something.

“What did he say?” asked the father with excitement.

“He said, ‘Two.’”

“I wonder why he said ‘TWO,’” said the father confused.

“I have no idea why he said two, Honey,” said then mother. “I don’t know he must of seen that “two, two much twos!” I told you not to show him that show!!”

“Well isn’t my fault, that shows funny,” yelled the father.

“Yes it is because you were with him when you were watching it and now all he’s saying is “Two”, the mother said frustrated.

“Oh well, at least he knows how to say two right?”

said the father joking.

“Yes, but that’s not what a normal baby says!”

said the mother frustrated.

“And who said we’re normal?” said the father.

“I’m normal I don’t know about you babe,” said the mother with a smile on her face.

“I am very normal!” said the father.

“Two Two!!!” yelled the kid holding up his to little fingers.

“I wonder what he wants??” said the confused father.

The little kid stopped yelling.

“Do you know what I just noticed,” said the mother surprised.

“What?” said the father confused?

“He only yells TWO when we are arguing or fighting!”

said the mother.

“Wow I never noticed that,” said the father.

“We shouldn’t argue anymore,” said the mother.

“Deal!” said the father.

“There will be no more fighting in this house, Baby,” said the mother with a smile.

## **The FINAL!!**

By the time we got on the field, we were already and fully charged with energy. We were ready for the game and we want to win this final, to prove the other schools that Ukiah High School can be the Champions.

Every time we walk out there, we can feel their faces watching us. We can see the way the opposing team wants to crush us, but we know we have what it takes. Cleats and shin guards and hope in our hearts, we get in place for the game.

My heart is pounding louder and louder, I don't feel nervous one bit but I have faith in this team, this family. We have worked so hard, lots of practice too. I believe in my teammates that they will do just as good as I will do, maybe even better.

As the game starts everyone goes to their position and then finally the ref's blow their whistle. Yes, finally game time now it's on. The fight ensues; the battle for the ball is one that is not easily won. But then again, we've never lost. If we lose, we'll be the laughing stock of the league, but hopefully we win this game to earn some more respect, discipline, and the cup to show it off to our school. So let's go get this win and show them who the boss of this league is!

## **Beautiful Bathroom Water**

It's dark in the room;  
The bathroom is full of light,  
With people taking a shower,  
With shampoo and conditioner,

The water running out;  
The kids taking their time showering;  
Just watching the dirty water,  
Going into a tunnel full of wonders.

## Enemies from Across the Border

Juan Steiger was bored in his Rancho in Mexico, so he decided to leave to Las Vegas, Nevada to party. As he arrives to the casino he goes to some strip club and calls some friends to come and visit. After a while of Juan looking at the women, he decides to go to the bar. He orders a glass of Buchanan, with pineapple juice and a side of peanuts. As soon as he gets his drink, a tall African American with a white suit with a Diamond Rolex on his left hand and his Iphone 5s in the other hand, he points at the bartender and tells him,

“A glass of Buchanan for me.” I look at him and then just take a sip of my drink. He sits down and I notice him again and I say, “Hey, nice watch.”

He looks up at my face and notices my hair.

“Man, I like your blond dreadlocks.” He said.

“Thanks, so by the way what’s your name?”

“Franklin, yours?”

“Nice to meet you Franklin, I’m Juan Steiger.”

“Juan Stager?”

“No, Staiger!”

“Oh, Juan Staiger, sorry man cool name. Are you German?”

“Yeah, well half, I’m half Mexican and Half German.”

“Nice.” He said.

“So Franklin are you from around here?”

“No, I’m from a little town called Ukiah, It’s two hours north from San Francisco.”

“That’s cool man, I’m from Guadalajara, Mexico,” I said.

“So what’s your job over there?” he said.

I was very nervous, should I tell him or not? I should just lie.

“I work for a water bottle company in México.” After I said that I took another drink. “You, where do you work?”

“Oh. Just business.”

“What is it, drug dealing?”

We both started laughing.

“So, Juan?”

“Yeah?”

“Ever shot a gun?”

“Dude, I own like a million of them,” looks bored.

“So if you ‘own’ a million of them what’s your favorite gun?”

I take another drink and think about my gun.

“Favorite gun, um... oh yeah, probably the AA-12”

“Yeah, the fully automatic shotgun, good.”

“And you what’s your favorite?” I said.

“The golden Desert Eagle, and you know what, I even have it with me.”

“Bullshit. You don’t have shit.”

“Want to see it?”

“Yeah!”

He pulls out his golden desert eagle from his pants, as soon as he did that three of my friends were just arriving. Then I hear a gun cock behind me.

“Hey, puto put the gun down now!”

“You guys know who you fucking with?”

Three more guns cock from behind Franklin’s back, it was three armed men. I knew this was going to be a blood bath if a shot went off so I said, “Hey Franklin, I need to tell you the true man, I’m a cartel boss from Mexico, so if I was you I would put your gun down.”

Franklin can’t believe it.

“Wait, you’re the kingpin of the U.S.A?” I said.

“Yeah, and now I’m going to make the police clean your brain off the floor.”

Three shots fired not hitting either men, they run around like mad men shooting each other. The gun fires goes on for a while until Juan Staiger said to his men while taking cover behind a table,

“Stop firing!”

All the men on his side do, and later so does Franklin’s men,

“Hey, Frank! I want to make a deal with you, I will pay back what my men did to your business and we can all be a single corporation and maybe even take over the world.”

Franklin thought about it for a second and lowered his weapon.

“Guys put your guns down; I accept your deal as long as we don’t call ourselves The Swag Cartel of Vegas.”

“Alright then, but I own México.”

“I like you already.” Franklin said while laughing.

“So now what?” I replied

“Let’s finish our drinks and we will get back to business.”

“That’s fine with me.”

They both start laughing and sit and drink the liquor while the scene fades away.

### **The Sun Rays**

This day the sun is so hot

The day starts to get colder

Someone yells “No, I need the sun’s rays to power up my washing machine.

# MARQUITA MARTIN

## Break Down

Her body is shattering  
She's feeling hot all over her body, inside she feels cold  
She's unconscious, taking advantage of  
You thought that was funny, you think that  
every girl is okay with you damaging their feelings  
breaking their heart mostly their spirit  
Do you love your mother with that heart, your heart so cold  
that I could see your breath  
Count your blessings boy  
You'll regret killing these beauties  
You boys say that you will never be in love  
Immature little boys won't even claim their mistakes,  
their own kids, always be blaming it on the female, but his dumbass  
should've worn a glove  
Love could be so bitter sweet  
Women are the worst living thing to get revenge  
No father around to be strict or to be a good influence  
Or a father that's a drunk hitting the mom  
That girl will go for the bad boys that gang bang, cause murder scenes  
and cheap drug deals  
He'll lie to your face telling that they supposedly love you with all his heart  
Another innocent heart had been broken, she's staring at the mirror,  
tears pouring out of her eyes draining and about to run out of emotions  
Her feelings are dying out, her emotions are drying out  
Feeling weak but still beautiful  
Be the better person, don't be weak to get revenge  
Just do you girl, no more broken hearts for you girl  
Do your thing, never count on a man  
It's time for you to shine on these people that had  
been taking advantage of you, and the rest of these toxic clouds  
It's now time to create your world



## The One and The Mentally Ill

The Tickle feeling in my throat  
The suction in my cheeks  
Stinging hot feeling under my skin  
My eyes watery falling from my eyes  
So many thoughts, too many memories  
No one knows how you feel  
The heart is too crowded  
The brain so cloudy  
This illness is a disease  
Nobody deserved this....  
I don't...  
My head pounding  
It feels like it's about to blow up like the world trade  
I am nobody perfect  
Afraid of what people are going to say  
You can tell that I'm getting stronger by a tear  
As you can see no one can't handle the truth  
when it comes to this bitch name reality  
I don't want to keep living like this, and have this  
Feeling and die that way

## My Version...of Howl

I seen the best minds of my generation  
destroyed by social networks, the poison  
we drink that makes us numb, post-traumatic  
stress disorders and heartbreaks that will overdose

We drag our feet looking down at our  
hands that are always empty

Depending on others to do us a favor, we never  
doing these responsibilities on our own

We judge each other by how we dress and  
what music we listen to

So much haters, hating on everyone because  
they don't got what everyone has

Females deranged and damaged because of  
broken hearts, they will hold grudges for life  
and will never forget, they thought they were  
really in love

Young teen girls dressing provocative as if they  
were pretty women

Knowing there's a chance it's already too late

The ignorant and religious old timers are acting like scums

Inside the mind of my generation we are the  
struggles our parents conceived

## Complicated Fear of Thinking

The first time I saw suffer, I broke in millions of pieces.  
When you get to see suffer for the first time you will start  
thinking about what it's like.  
I cry when I think about it.  
When I think about it I feel like I'm having hard time breathing  
and trying to fight to get a grasp of air.  
I wonder what it's like with your last heartbeat, when I wonder  
I scare myself.  
I notice a lot of deaths in the newspaper and the news.  
I hear a lot of deaths from a phone call.  
I heard too many. Too much. I wish I was deaf.  
Is there really a heaven or a hell, are you just ashes in the air or  
rotten flesh in a wooden box.  
I can feel something cold running across my legs and my whole body.  
I wish I knew what it's like to watch over, but then it's like you're  
watching your little brothers, sister and mother crying every day.  
This is a scary thought.  
Ever since I seen her suffer fighting for a grasp of air, I couldn't look  
at elders the same anymore.

## PTSD

The images from my head  
Stuck from the past  
Never forgot waking up on a playground in a  
sleeping bag with my sister and my mom on  
a Halloween morning  
A lot of sadness and anger  
Remembering screaming, crying for my mother  
Living with a family of a completely different color

Now a day's I'm kind of okay  
Struggle is a everyday thing  
I try my best to live positive  
Although I get distracted from the negative  
People pissing me off on purpose just because  
it's entertaining  
That toxic cloud always over my head  
Making me depressed and hard on myself

Too many migraines because I worry too much  
It's hard as hell, its rough to be the oldest  
But as long as I win, I will become the greatest  
Success is my answer to my question of life  
Taking care of my family and give them what they need

Looking into the mirror,  
I sigh as I'm thinking; I'm a better person now  
Living with my mom and my brothers and my sister  
It's sad to know yourself as a angry sweet individual  
diagnosed with PTSD  
There's others out there and I'm not the only one

## True Feelings

I will get my way to you  
I've been waiting for you to be here  
I thought you loved me.....  
You got me high with your kisses and your embrace  
I'm sitting here texting you but no reply  
Why do you take forever to come home, I'm so tired  
So tired of your excuses, but I can't resist your soothing words  
You say I'm the smoke to your high, but I feel  
like you're not high enough  
I want to see you higher

I will get my way with you  
I just want you to be honest with me  
Do you love me in our world and reality?  
I'm always going to summon you of betraying me  
Get use to it

I've been through some shit, boy  
And you're putting me through it again  
What a life, boy  
You told me want to marry me and have our own kids  
You're breaking all these promises  
You're putting me through my childhood again  
Sometimes I feel like I'm doing everything wrong,  
I'm starting to hate me

You're so insecure, but I thought I was the only one  
You get mad when I put on makeup  
You get mad when I put on shorts  
You get mad especially when I got some guy friends  
I feel the same way when you ask me to braid your hair a certain way  
Or when you have these female friends

When you're gone at night to party with your homeboys, I miss you  
I hate missing you because I feel so obsess or thinking your cheating on me  
I know you love me with all your heart but you have to show me  
instead of telling me  
You said your so called real, but you ain't showing out to prove to me

I always tell you everything that hurts inside but you don't want to  
listen to everything I have to say  
I see you feeling guilt and starting to realize you have something good  
with me, I'm always loyal to you  
I know you don't want to lose me but you have to change your immature  
little boy habits sooner or later  
Sometimes I wish we could have been friends first but it was love at first sight

# BRITTNIE MILANI

## Insanity

The little white box  
sitting -over there- on the desk  
taunting me.  
What is inside?  
This rectangular prism-  
much more of a prison,  
keeping me outside.  
Just let me have a peek,  
a minute glimpse  
of that mystery you hide.

## Nonsense Sounds Nothing Like This

Jingling ears  
Catastrophic apparatus  
Cities of Halos escalate to rainbows  
Dancing on the sun  
Looming eyes safeguard the wise  
Eternal worship  
Twitching mouth  
Picking the particles of space  
Gold dripping tears  
Blinding  
The years behind mountains  
Incapable of flight  
Knowledge cripples the hat  
Ravens crackling  
Tangling ageless roots  
Death defying beliefs

## Something... Treasured

“Nature be damned!” He cries, slamming his fists into the soft wet soil. His tears spill over; his soul wavers in the shadows of grief, blanketed by anger. His sorrow cages him - feeling helpless- he could have saved her, he thought. But... He is too late; nature withholds Cassandra in the sky.

## The Life in Art

Butterflies cover the wall-  
a breathing coat of paint  
Their tiny wings-  
flaking dreams off like leaves in a breeze

## Mirage

I stand amongst the butterflies  
twitching slowly across my soul  
leave tickling kisses of their feet

## The “In” Crowd

With stitched mouths and eyes  
One, no longer an individual,  
is apart of that mass



## **Youtube Lyrics**

This song  
I sing  
is replaying  
all wrong

## **It Popped Up**

Jump stunt blunts  
Lazy triple daisy  
Snatching hearts in the dark

## **Dia de los Muertos**

Bubbly and light hearted humor  
A rumor of death at the door  
Sweet fruits gushing juices  
For in freedom there is more  
No fear of dying, your soul is already  
sky high and flying

## Roll of the Dice

Looking straight  
up and  
down

Fooling around

Kissing passion  
fiery and  
hot

Burning holes  
in their  
souls

Missing chances  
in first glances

Overlooking little  
mischievous dances

*William Carlos Williams*  
*Stylistic Imitation*

**Picture Past**

Caught, frozen still  
smile  
permanent  
sitting swinging high  
laughing  
my oh my does  
time fly

**Summer to Autumn**

Golden treasures  
spinning  
down onto  
the ground  
Some leaves caught  
in a  
gust of wind land  
in stream

## **Spreading**

Dandelion  
seeds flow  
on the breeze  
slowly  
floating through  
your hair  
across the yard  
to grow

## **Playground**

Skipping- hop scotch  
tossing  
pebbles on  
sidewalks  
on foot up  
again  
hurry to ten  
count back

## The Butterfly Infection

1.

The butterfly winds  
glittered tsunamis when they caught  
on the shore side

2.

Who truly sees all;  
God, or the backs of butterflies?

3.

Silence in the frozen fields  
no longer any laughter  
From my memories of chasing butterflies

4.

Uplifting spirits  
into the heavens  
freeing butterflies to the wind

5.

Long antennae and oversensitive legs lead the butterflies' wings to the  
next pollen fueled beauty.

6.

The brighter, the more poisonous,  
The darker, the more mysterious,  
The bigger, the more collected,  
The smaller, the more caught.

7.

Growing up, one doesn't think about the beauty of it. One's peers,  
with their noses up, disregard them when they've grown wings.

*Short Stuff*

You make me weak  
in the knees and it's spreading  
like honey  
all over me

Night skies  
Beautiful stars  
Tell me who we really are

Here I stand  
hand in hand  
woman to man

Memories  
follow me  
like my shadow  
Always friendly

Tickling my heart  
painting soft cheeks -embarrassing-  
pink butterflies

Hollow eyes stare  
at plastic bags  
hiding society's smile

Dim grey flight  
yellow and bright  
-a cloudy day

Bittersweet patience  
tastes of salty lips  
the stars show signs

Two is something I see  
three is all but me-  
I am alone

Hot heavy breaths  
clothes on the floor  
“You want more?”

Black petals  
Ashen rain  
Depression in thy brain

Tall and lanky  
a little kinky  
Something sweet is planned

Joking prods  
angry pokes  
Man, I don't get your game

## *The Zoo*

### **Missing the Pack**

There is no howling to the moon  
no prancing  
dancing  
    through the woods  
No more bathing in the sunny noon  
no hunting  
cunning moves  
For the wolf death is never too soon  
no breathing  
running  
    in the crisp forest air

### **Tigress**

Once fierce and might is now caged  
her highness has certainly aged  
Prowling days are long gone only few hours spent in the sun  
All eyes feast upon this unique beast  
but not a pair dare meet  
In her divine eyes you can see  
none can tame a beauty such as she



## Remember Me Not

I remember all the years you were with me  
I remember feeling empty  
I remember looking in the mirror thinking about how I hated me  
I remember not eating but my stomach eating me  
I remember standing just to fall again  
I remember how I lied to myself so sweetly  
I remember reeling into the darkness of my sorrow  
I don't want to remember this at all

## Mama Please don't Go

I remember when I found you, and how happy you were.  
I remember rolling in the grass and you pouncing on me.  
I remember thinking how lucky I was to have you.  
I remember a few years passed and you saved me.  
I remember sitting against your stomach as you sat on the couch,  
looking out the window.  
I remember being scared at night and you hugging me until I fell asleep.  
I remember going on walks, drives, and eating popsicles on the porch.  
I remember most everything about you.  
I remember that phone call most of all.  
I remember sitting next to you trying not to cry.  
I remember my head feeling light and my heart weighing down.  
I remember it only lasting ten years.  
I remember holding your cold head in my numb hands and watching  
the pink fade from your ears.  
I remember thinking how I wouldn't see your eyes glitter at the sound  
of chocolate wrappers anymore.

## Grace

She is my savior  
I have seen her  
She is so beautiful so small yet so strong.  
I like to think I am her hero because she calls me mom  
She calls me mom...  
I've seen her  
ringlets of gold  
sweet pink cheeks  
dusted with caramel freckles  
Bright green eyes that smile at me  
no matter how I think  
I feel her in my dreams  
soft and warm in my arms  
So fragile but it feels wrong  
How could I...  
...I be so blessed to have this joyous idea?  
She is my apocalypse  
I have seen her  
She is in the back seat laughing  
Her father is not in this picture  
the laughter fills me up  
but it can't stop the on coming truck  
My savior  
my apocalypse  
I didn't...  
I don't care  
because in that moment  
my mind thought I had lost her  
My black bird  
this little girl of crystalline  
She is my star she is my water  
my hopes  
my dreams  
she is my very last breath

I had to unbuckle  
to whip around  
and cover her  
No glass or metal would scar her

I am drawn to the forests behind the house. The moist fresh air  
attacking my modern polluted lungs, forces a smile upon my lips.

I finally touched the sky  
But I still don't know how to fly-  
on my own-  
No one told me  
how exciting and wonderful life could be  
Only talked of the hardships and left out the friendships

# OSCAR MONTELONGO

You have to forgive me:

I have punched  
Your face  
And now it's  
All bloody

I know today is the day  
You take your picture  
For the newspaper

Forgive me  
I don't hate you  
Your face was right there  
And you're an ass  
--

I have pulled  
The plugs on  
Your life support  
Machine

You were supposed  
To live for two  
More years

Forgive me  
You looked so peaceful  
And ready to move on  
I hope you burn in hell  
--

I have hit  
You with a  
Double-decker  
Red bus

On the day  
You were supposed  
To get a promotion

Forgive me  
You were my boss  
I was on drugs  
And you looked like an elf

## Nature's Beat

About an inch from your ear  
There is a droning sound  
Like a million bees  
Buzzing in the distance  
Like electricity  
Like a stinging  
Like a shock  
Like a plane  
Like a bug  
Like a basement light bulb  
Gradually amplified  
A constant, non-stop buzzing  
And the source  
A bird  
A small bird  
One perfectly harmless  
Humming bird  
Whose tiny wings escape  
The sight of human eyes  
Beating the air around  
Like a small tiny drum  
Only an inch from your ear

## The Boards

To stand on a stage is no small task  
A writer could try, but holds to his flask  
Big game of make believe, but with no relief  
And the players who play will suffer the grief  
So who am I and who are you? Who is he, she, we?  
To believe he is me, we must work as a team  
Though the fee you will find pays a small price  
It's hard on an actor to get it all right  
The fright feels bright like in flight so take off  
In the night, on the stage, it's the feeling of love.

So stumble to the stage and join my dream  
The rules are simple: I play you, you play me

## Everlasting Waltz

Crimson drains hastily  
Curtains are waiting  
The last final touch of the world  
It is approaching  
In no time alerting  
All who I loved will mourn  
We have danced our last dance  
And only by chance  
Have you entered first through the door  
But soon I shall see  
You are waiting for me  
And we will dance the first dance once more

## Journal Entry 44

Brink  
Of insanity of brains tender skin

Brick  
Walls to be smashed to let the flood charge in

Mind  
Over matter won't play Victory's fife

Mend  
Scars and blood wounds of life's ballistic knife

Battle  
Through the hard times and fight the way to peace

Bottle  
Up these emotions to cast overseas

Trick  
Death's deadly grasp to bend him at your will

Tic  
Toc goes the clock and the reaper's death chill



Absence makes the heart grow fonder  
Though I found I can't go much longer  
Having cherished those memories  
Being brushed by ocean Breeze  
Walking along sandy shores  
Humping fire, cooking s'mores  
A New Years perfect start  
Drawn to your easels hears  
But lead does fade away  
And soon you cannot stay  
So suffering smears the pain  
And I hate loving your name  
I want to start forgetting you  
My heart can't keep remembering you  
But how can I with your beauty? With grace perfect for a lady  
Flowing hazel waving hair that mimics water  
Drowning in your gazing stare until breathing gets harder  
Only your fingers fit into my hand  
And I hope one day you will understand:  
This Is Love

## Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 1/2?

Shall I compare thee to a winters' night?  
You are more delightful and more moderate  
Snow storms do cover naked twigs too tight  
And winters end comes on to short a date  
Sometimes too hot the drink of hot cocoa  
And often frothy chocolate do drip  
And beauty leaves again though to and fro  
By fate or seasons changing hands tight grip  
But your eternal winter shall not fade  
Nor lose the beauty which the gods bestowed  
Nor Reapers boast of you and tombstones grave  
So you and written word shall be betrothed  
So long as men can smell and taste stays true  
So long lives this and this remembers you

## Sunset Never Falls

Smooth sunset drips and smears the air orange  
And cloudless cosmos gleam their twinkling eye  
As heavens light through sky does dim its shine  
Burnt universe to leave the world star singed  
Soon night walkers flood streets on a whore binge  
And cold sets in to leave the weak to die  
The somber seas with waves that heave a sigh  
For blood shot moon stares down to cause your cringe

But heaven wakes to sip from sweet cordial  
So nebulas above shower silver  
And mornings paint the sky to spread purple  
For furry critters shaking their still fur  
In haling sun dew rays which heal the hurtful  
And Mother Nature's cycle still fills her

## Chronic

It's four in the morning  
My phone buzzed,  
A text  
Zapped the life back into me  
I wish it left with the rest of my dignity.

My eyes are swollen shut  
Only wished I could've kept them closed  
Though I know I chose the wrong choice  
But I choose to rejoice at my rum filled belly  
Which was good for a few laughs

I think.

Another black eye and a long night of drinking  
Another fat lie with the girls I'm sleeping with  
Because no one likes a good guy  
And no one likes the truth  
If it gets too ugly I just turn off the lights  
And let my instincts take over  
Because I have chosen first place  
No more finishing last.

I finally got my eyes to open  
Too bad I only saw regret.  
Woke up and still feel groggy  
My shirt puked on, soaked and soggy  
Foggy night doesn't compare to my mind  
Abused and under the influence  
Of booze and a hindrance to happiness  
Happenstance what the text said:  
"Go Die Asshole"

Put on my hat  
Step outside  
And do it again

## A Love Song

I remember putting in that suit for the first time  
    And I learned to tie a tie  
I remember seeing you sitting away from the dance floor  
    Because you had two left feet  
I remember grabbing your hands and pulling you up  
    They were soft and warm  
I remember that look on your face dancing  
    A beautiful smile and strands of hair falling out  
I remember a sweet citrus smell as I pulled you closer  
    And your eyes found their way to mine  
I remember that song from that night  
    As I stared into your eyes  
I remember that perfect kiss with you  
I remember a few weeks after, walking around  
    Holding your hand  
I remember a few months after, walking around  
    Watching you hold his  
I remember hearing that song all over the place  
I remember crying to that song every night  
I always remember how you forgot

## REBECCA ORTEGA

•  
Sitting in my living room  
The cool morning nestling over our house  
Los Joao sing and sing

•  
Spelunking plops  
Into the flaring river  
Blue boys smile

•  
Stretched out on Christmas stripped pillows  
Tapping and typing away  
My dog cleans his tiny toes

•  
The lone burning butterfly  
A flag against a straggle---  
Of white peonies

•  
Frogs sing hymns  
Through church-stained  
Windows

•  
La luz de tu pamela---  
Mis ojos sedientos  
A tus hombros mojados

•  
The curl of her hair--  
Brushes the page  
High School Sweethearts

**Sagrado**  
*(Sacred)*

They Thundered, Thundered, Thundered  
Felt it in the hollow nestle of your throat  
In the soles of the feet, up your breast bone  
Lightning dyed whirls, shaking gold treasures  
We celebrate your life, our life  
Your death, our death  
Mother earth  
Father of death  
Bring my roots up and out  
Over Crumbling Earth  
Falling Sky  
Winged Fire  
Trembling Water  
Celebrate me with your skin and bones and flesh  
Utter the language of your language in my tongue  
Crack the teeth--sugar white--into light shadows  
I am Sacred Spirit  
I am Human Dust  
I am Earth, Reincarnated

## Heavenly Bodies

I want to brush the stars from my arms.  
Dust the nebula sparks out of my eyes  
and finger the edges of bright curves, colored rusty.

I want to sharpen the skin of little moons,  
catch supernovas in between my teeth  
and attach strange courage to newborn stars.

I want to point out the space shuttles strewn across my jaded night,  
pick up solar flares forgotten by the Sun  
and place them into silver-lined pockets.

I want to furnish my solar system  
with rambunctious child-like wonder.  
I want to love my world.



## I Call To Me

I am a two-folded dimensional being  
    Burning with prideful ink on the tips of my battered fingers

I itch to let go and unfold like a furnace butterfly  
    That unfurls jeweled glacier wings

The space of my being explodes every time I breathe in  
    With grandeur and flight

I don't want to sit still in recluse  
    I want to jump straight up into life's blistered self like a  
    shattered bullet

Feed myself everything I want and taste it sweet  
    Before swallowing

Hear me storm with uncontrolled rage  
    And laughter  
        And tears

As the sky bleeds down on us with reverence light  
    And gives us a section of ourselves that we never knew

I listen  
    And wait  
        And listen  
            To the strange, awesome beating of my heart

And I tremble with nonexistent remorse

## Skins & Mirrors

Your skin is too mirrored to see your reflection  
Too full of cracks and sighing flesh and love taps  
Your skin is too wired to feel

A crashing of color underneath all that meat  
All these bones  
Too brittle to be saved

Your skin is too paper-tissue thin  
Barely holding together the being that should make you, you  
But not really  
Should have you singing like faith itself

Your skin is too pale to notice that you've been gone a long time now  
And it's only a possibility that you'll even come back  
At all

## Wolf Mandalic

Quaking in the underbellies of beasts  
Blood and muck and frozen air shiver.

The quick yip, the floppy eared look  
Adrenaline is crashing into the forest floor.

Sinew bunching & curving & steaming  
Under tawny fur pelts.

The silence is rupturing  
Snarls, howls, roars echoing frost-bit trunks.

Track crushed snow on the yawnings of jaws  
And blood melding with canines.

There's a split-second  
A freeze-frame moment.

Then the wave  
Teeth, bone and muscle

Keens, high like morbid whistles  
Crypt stillness

Carnage on the snowy banks.

## **The Girl with Sharp-Shooter Eyes**

She's a stargazer.

You can tell by the nebulas whittled into her eyes.

I taste star dust when she smiles at me, waving a tiny fist through charred smoke and the flogging smell of tar.

“Get in the cart, Jewish pigs!” crackles Hans.

I blink, and she's gone.

The heavy sign of Auschwitz creaks.

## **She Looks like a Craving**

She looks like a craving  
Sweet-salt and sugar crushed on her lips  
Thick flower honey melding her wrists together

She looks like Hiroshima  
Nuclear heels bloody with the ash of Japanese shadows  
Guilt pretty on her ochre shoulders

She looks like a field of dynamite  
Implosions monogrammed into the soft flesh of her eyelids  
Spines eroding away underneath her fingers

She looks like the Coast  
Breathe foamy out in the brine-smelt beach  
Bones coral stained & bleached

She looks like the champagne irises of Dragons  
Heavy and cold

## Lady Murder

Murder is the drawing breath.  
The very last word spoken out of tainted blue lips  
while the sun-drenched road overhead,  
shrieks with the sound of auto-tuned cars  
playing Jay-z and Kanye West.  
It's the desert filled with mud and ostracized dreams,  
The canyon hitting smooth glass and stone and sea.  
Murder is the hopeless lover.  
Holding tight onto rotting lungs  
who can't seem to draw enough breath  
when the very sky is melting like a glazed doughnut under the sun  
and you can't possible hope to God that someone will come and save you.  
It is the last lady  
The one who dresses in white  
and then forgets your date at one p.m.  
leaving you with an abandoned table and only fruit to chew on  
while you contemplate  
the meaning of life.

## The Boy Who Held God

I want to write,  
To the young man of arms.  
The one cocooned in big, Vietnamese leaves,  
And heavy rice fields littered with pit vipers.

The fifty year old man that is really an eighteen year old boy,  
with no name and no letters and only a heavy gun sleeping in his hands.

His war thickened wrists rest on the table,  
the one inside the 24-hour diner,  
the one that holds fluorescent light bulbs that make you look addicted  
to sweet ice and lemon,  
And serve strawberry milkshakes.

I want to ask him:  
What are you doing here, Ghost boy?  
Why do you cry when the taste of salt hits your lips?  
or the slice of apple pie you just ate settles hollowly in your gut?

He goes out to the back, and I, I follow him,

Oh, Lost boy of Never land.

What do you see when the night lights up with punctured stars?  
Where does your mind go when the pictures come back with a force  
like a hit from Mjölnir?  
Do they haunt your dreams at night,  
Guerilla Man?  
Volunteer Brother?  
Soldier Friend?  
Recruit Terror?

I watch him go out like a light in the dark, before he appears again  
from the light of his Zippo

A shimmered flick that tames into a red dot in the night when his  
hands steady from their butterfly shaking

I want to ask him:

Were you ever scared, Golden boy?

Did the heat ever dig deep like the rain of bullets drowning you down?

I realize though  
that this old,  
young aged Man,  
boy,  
ghost,  
brother,  
fighter  
and possible father  
was always scared.

Always jealous awake at 2:35 in the morning,  
to hide from his eighteen year old friends.  
Whose scratched bones are somewhere in jungle choked lands  
and whose names are etched only into his own scratched bones  
and a black glass gleamed wall  
and their own scratched family bones

So I leave.

I leave Him.

In the back of a diner,  
a cigarette held in between broken teeth  
and a hole the size of a quarter  
leaking out his insides.

## Silver Framed Girl

When she was two years old,  
she dreamed of dancing with the stars all night long.

Hugging the moon and the sun and the clouds  
Making birthday wishes on the flimsy seeds of dandelions.

She dreamed of singing with Thunderstorms on Hot days  
& laughing with the V-formations of Wild Geese.

Winter was her playmate & Spring her mother  
Autumn wrote poems about her while Summer braided her hair.

When she was two years old  
she dreamed of flying away with the leaves.

But now she's fourteen years old  
& dreaming is something she's always been able to believe.

For Vanessa



## The Jarring Tempest Hearts

I sat here with a heavy mandarin heart.  
Stranded in my intangible blossoms of the thought and weeping trees  
dripping with fruit.  
I watched you with an air of discontent--  
You, wrapped in your blithe garnitures and wistful thinking  
That I cannot fathom to understand.  
I wanted to touch you, to see if you would evaporate into orange  
smoke, like some sort of Japanese tree spirit.  
But something held me back  
Was it that heaviness?  
Curving through my veins and draining me of your image?  
Or was I just too leaden for you to hold me up,  
Without you falling to your knees.

## Algo Encantador

Se le rompe la piel como un arco iris  
que me trae la luz suelta hasta el otro universo,  
forzándose entre las elegidas estrellas a mis brazos  
hechos del cielo y planetas oscuros.

Me arrebató el corazón a pedazos hermosos,  
pedazos hechos de cajeta y sombra y la dulcería de mi vida  
hasta que no puedo respirar profundamente sin que sus manos estén  
contra mí,  
enamorándose con sus ojos clandestinos.

Me extraña como no se da cuenta  
de lo que le hace a mis pulmones volubles  
cuando me da una mirada de adoración infinita  
y al mismo tiempo dolor que caí hasta los pies.

Es mi cariño tornado de fe, destruyendo el cielo,  
y es mi oro de la maldita sangre,  
matándose lentamente.

## Something Lovely

Her skin breaks open into a slashing of rainbow hues  
that bring me the loose light of the next universe,  
Forcing herself through the singed stars, into my arms,  
made of pieces of the sky and eclipsed planets.

She snatches my heart into a million lovely pieces,  
pieces of honey and shadow and the sweetness of life  
until I can't breathe properly without her hands against me,  
enthraling me with those clandestine eyes.

It startles me how she doesn't notice  
the way my fickle lungs gasp when she gives me that look of pure  
adoration,  
and at the same time pain so deep it reaches to her feet.

She is my darling tornado of faith, destroying the heavens,  
and she is the gold in my cursed blood,  
poisoning me slowly.

## War Born Boy

He is born in between mud-dropped bullets  
and the figures of boy-men

Big earthed eyes open  
to the gasping mortar shells blimping the sky

His tiny eruptions of the lungs mix in  
with the explosions of wounded kids and snarling men

But somehow he is heard amongst the bodies of almost ghosts  
and found by green-grazed goliaths desperate for the Sun

They take him in,  
with pink-alabaster hands  
and bloody smiles  
and soft cushioned words

Cuddle him tight to young chests,  
where he can hear the beat, thump, roar of friends

Take him from heart to heart, thick arms to thin arms  
Raise him to eat willow leaves  
and watch the skies for thunder birds  
and hide when the rippling noise of M-16's come out

He is raised to be the embodiment of poor boys lost in caving jungles  
And he survives to be more than just a poster boy for War

## Empty Houses & Moons

Sorry whelps on the streets of sin city  
Fighting the alcoholic stink

Dredged up junkies hiding underneath  
Salted bridges and sweet high dreams & broken sinks

Cold dreamers reaching for frozen stars,  
Far away from the easy touch of fingertips dyed fraternal pink

No one believes that dirty hearts and stained wreckages  
Can become a normal thing, like twelve-ounce energy drinks

But anything is possible  
In this city of jinx

## SADE PEREZ

The silence of the trees.  
The whisper of the wind.  
Too loud but not loud enough.  
Everything goes silent,  
For a second.  
And then as if on cue,  
It all starts in again.  
The squeaking swings,  
The chirping birds,  
The rustle of leaves being crunched  
Under someone's careless step.  
I sit here,  
Under a canopy of leaves,  
Thinking about everything that  
I have done wrong,  
And for the first time in a long time,  
Not caring.

I wanted to tell you 'I love you.' It was right on the tip of my tongue. But I knew it was too soon. I wanted to keep you forever, but forever wasn't as long as I'd hoped. I wish I could still hold you in my arms, and still feel yours wrap around me, and never let go. If I could, I would. But I lost that privilege long ago. I didn't know what love was until you walked into my life and showed me. But now it's too late because I've already lost you. You're gone now and there's nothing I can do to change that. Though try and try I might, it won't change anything. Will it?

She looked in the mirror  
But the girl staring back  
Was not her.

Long ago lovers,  
Lost in each other's eyes.  
Caught up in the moment,  
Struggling for words, any words.  
Thoughts all scrambled,  
Hearts beating in unison in  
The utter still silence.  
Seconds passed, but  
It felt more like decades.  
Both too tongue tied to  
Say real words,  
Instead they both leaned in  
And with a kiss so familiar  
As if they had never parted,  
They both knew no words were needed.



I'd like to thank you for allowing me to find better.  
You were a visitor in my life,  
And a resident in my heart.  
I've learned to accept what is,  
Knowing I can't change it now.  
The pain is dull now, for I am no longer scared.  
And never again will I be frozen.  
Because now I'm done.  
Unconditionally and irrevocably  
I've wasted too many wishes on you.  
I am no longer waiting for you to step back into my life.  
I don't have time for temporary people,  
With temporary feelings.  
Your time is up.

You asked what it felt like to fall in love and I told you it's the most real thing you'll ever know. I know this to be true because I've been there too. When you're with that person you never want to leave and you wish time would slow just for you so you can cherish your wonderful time together. And when you have someone to love you feel complete and content with life because all you ever wanted is right in front of you. But when they love you no longer you feel like you've been broken into a million tiny pieces. But that's the thing about love, it hurts and it kills and when you find it you must be careful for love is a fragile thing and it can just as easily be broken. So when someone stops loving you, no matter how hard it is, let them go for that's what true love is. It's having the power to have your heart broken and still being able to love. You can still love and be loved in return though it will be hard. I know, I've been there too.

Maybe I don't want to lose you. Ever think of that? The reason I hold on so tight, the reason I still hold on now to something I should have let go of long ago is because I love you. I still do, even now after all this time. But you moved on so I guess it's time I do too. But I guess if I love you I should let you go. Because I only want you to be happy, even if that means I'm not with you.

\*

The books sat on the shelf shielded by a blanket of dust. Untouched for years, abandoned there to sit and collect protective layers. Each one in its own way special and unique and different. Each to provide a new adventure to the reader. Bringing tears and laughter or both simultaneously.

“Horizontal for attention, vertical for results.” That’s what he told me the day he showed me his scars. When I saw them, I thought what could possibly have happened to this boy to make him think of self harm as an ally rather than an enemy. Maybe it was the perfect image society had painted for all to follow. Maybe it was the way he thought he would never be good enough. “I had never known anyone who actually believed I was enough, and now you do. So thank you.”

“Do you care yet?”  
That note lay next  
To her lifeless body.

Life isn't about the destination. It's about the journey, how you get to where you're going. All the mistakes and wrong turns and bumps you run into on the way. All the people you meet and the strangers you fall in love with. And your favorite books and quotes that describe your life perfectly. The songs you listen to over and over again help push you on your way to that great ever after. All the crap you had to go through to get there and when you finally make it to where you want to be, my god, it's all worth it. Everything, all the times you made the wrong choice and got stuck somewhere. All the times you made the wrong choice and were forced to deal with your consequences. And in the end, when you get to your destination, you can finally be content.

She set the blade down  
A single drop of blood  
Fell to the floor

# ALEX RAFANAN

## Ink Life

Ink is black  
But is death?  
No it's white  
Like pages  
Beginnings, endings, words  
Flowers bloom black with my inken words  
Alluring ebony roses, dandelions, cherries  
Poppies, poinsettias, daises, camellias,  
Inks, the color of raven's feathers are unchallenged  
I've noticed the onyx vines slowly creep up the page  
Everything around me is black with ink and grey with pencil.  
I am writing  
What  
Love magic  
Mystery winter  
Answers death  
Whose death  
A man, a woman, an animal, a question  
I see differ than the rest of you. I see, not in color.

## **Punk Honnets**

Writer

Ink, it recycles ideas,  
Death well it chews it up  
Corridor, I muse with idea  
Anonymity, question fame  
Immortally making mortally a legend

Smoothing life is difficult  
Heaven crashed  
Hell's melted  
Those who've escaped purgatory's hall' run danger  
Classic chaos a demonic friend  
Angels of metal shatter relentless  
The reflections of pages catch my eyes

Life to death  
A scarecrow is a purgatory for nightmares  
Gothic churches prowl for light  
Punking taxing rebellion  
Lucifer haunts battlefields  
Michael is soul-revealing  
Azeal of destruction reeks of me

Smoothing life is difficult  
Heaven crashed  
Hell's melted  
Those who've escaped purgatory's hall' run danger  
Classic chaos a demonic friend  
Angels of metal shatter relentless  
The reflections of pages catch my eyes

## Word Smith

“All the world s a stage”  
The words of my smithery  
Worlds of fantasy, magic and  
Danger  
A joke or pun is my lines  
Stage, isn't that a world  
And the ink  
We make  
Are more impossible to weave  
Merely slaves to our  
Playwrights  
Players, actors, minstrels  
In lines  
It Shakespeare compiled  
“The entire world's a stage.”

## Levithan

7  
Heads says the bible  
“Devouring”  
“A kraken”  
Sailors whisper  
Wind storms  
Fury of god  
They agree  
But me  
I say they are the devil's pets  
For even the devil wants someone to play with...



## Spider Webs

Webs, waiting all night  
Criss-cross as spider  
WEAVES  
Arachene; trapped forever by her pride  
As the spider anasai fools us  
Turning us from predator to prey to prey

## Reading Souls

Kneeling  
Kneeling  
At a book self  
A girl grabs something

Something, simple and unique  
She grabs a diary  
Whos i dont know

But, I soon find out  
It's hers, but ... not  
For everyone who reads writes in its pages

Among the 9 layers of hell  
The only thing moving  
Was my curiosity towards it?

I was of the minds  
Like curiosity  
In which there is too much here

The Hellfire whirl riled in Devilish delight  
Tis one of the lest evil parts hell

Our SINS and our GRACES our one but the same  
So must humanity, the Angels and the Demons as well

I do not know which to prefer  
The answers to my questions or  
The answer to the questions I do not have  
“Who ruled before The Lord Morningstar?  
Who after”

Screams fill the corridor of the my corridors  
Screams of the eternally dammed  
Demonic entities solvate  
The poisons of our ancestors  
To and fro  
They implore  
For bargains and deals  
An inexplicable cause

Oh Man why?  
Do you dream of heaven or hell?  
No of us truly worth it  
There are other options

For I am a dealer of secret bargains  
And Lucid Prices  
BUT

They usually are worth it

When my guide flew out sight  
It was out of sight and out of mind

I was consulted  
By lord morningstar  
With a question

The answers to the questions I asked  
Or

The ones I never asked

The haunting stench of scorching feathers and flesh ravishes the star soaked night. A woman is curled up in agony. She makes no sounds or sheds any tears. You can hear the invisible flames enrapture against the taunt flesh of her back. After a few minutes later, and no visible witness, she gets up. She walks a few blocks to the abandoned nursery. A boy is there, he looks melancholy.

“How about you ma’am? How did you get the honor to Fall?” He says the last part bitterly.

# TONY RECENDIZ

## Connecting With Life

Nature Untouched Bliss,  
Breathtaking Like a Kiss,  
Through the Meadows and Forests,  
Whispers Can Be Lost,  
The Leafs Entrancing You,  
Only Now Does One Connect,  
Becoming One with Life Itself,

## Spring Meeting

She Was Under the Shade,  
Dressed in White and Blue,  
Scribing Ever So Quietly,  
Her Eyes Like the Ocean,  
Her Hair a Shade of Noire,  
The Sight So Breathtaking,  
The Surroundings So Unreal,  
It Was Almost Surreal,  
Locked Eyes She Smiled,  
I Waved.

## **Keep it Basic**

Though my words may not be profound,  
It is the simplicity of poetry that appeals to me,  
Simplicity is key.

## **Never Change**

The first time I.....  
The next time I'll.....  
Lessons from the past,  
Unchanged  
Changing the past,  
Would change you.

## **I Can't**

Dreams of monsters and demons have arrived,  
Every night is fight for survival,  
Paranoid and panicked over every single sound,  
Unable to leave home.

## **A Mother**

What I see before me is not a girl, but rather a woman,  
Nay,  
A Mother.  
Her tired eyes, soft hands, and warm heart,  
Show me that she wants to be taken care of rather than taking care of  
Another.  
She is everything that I would want my children to have,  
But I am getting ahead of myself,  
Still young and still very far from being a  
Father.

## **Rainy Day**

Dog, if you go outside you will be drenched,  
You will return with an awful stench,  
The stench that follows is so vile,  
So stay inside like the cat, it's been raining for miles,  
Stay please, don't go, a bathroom break is not worth  
Your B.O.

## **Micaruba!**

Calamity, calamity as far as eyes can see,  
The once virtuous town now lay in waste,  
I remember how the trees sparkled like emeralds,  
I remember the calm warm waters,  
I remember small quaint town with timid nocturnal life,  
Now,  
I remain here with only one thought in my mind..... Micaruba.

## A Simple Request

He never brought me that sweater, perhaps I should be mourning over a life lost rather than a sweater lost. He was my lover, and all I care about is that damn sweater. It is chilly inside our now empty home. Our pictures will now gather dust, the breakfast table set, but only for one. I still can recall each morning, the table set with a plate, fork, and cup of nice hot tea. I still remember the last breakfast; nice warm fluffy pancakes all drenched in maple syrup. I still remember the tea that was chosen by my love, our cozy souls preferred the tea that matched chamomile tea with a hint of honey. That was the first time I mentioned the sweater. “Honey” I said, “I saw this fantastic sweater at the local shop down the street”. He smiled, then spoke “Alright then, consider it done, for I do not buy many gifts, and it won’t certainly be your last.”

## Howl Imitation

I saw the minds of my generation decade by consumerism,  
conformity, maliciousness, and small mind thinking  
With heads hung high while spirits hung low some as low as the earth's core,  
Whose stupidity and ignorance allowed his fellow countrymen to parish  
For a cause that was so plainly greed,  
Who believes that's a different sexual orientation is a choice  
And can be saved with a book older then you and I times ten don't you  
know we all strive to be free,  
Who smokes self doubt and with each puff of smoke  
Only sinks further and further into a spiral of depression,  
Who undressed for a husband that was not of her own  
But in fact of a bachelor looking for his latest heart to break,  
Who passion was ignited through a glorious experience  
Only to have it extinguished by all those who doubted them,  
Who drinks till the bottle is empty and swimming in sorrows and  
Can't seem to find a shoreline for they will drown alone,  
Oh yes I have seen this cities face and it has seen our faces every day.

## Sunrise

Night Fall's the Cool Brisk  
Air Walks Past Me  
My Path Illuminated Across  
The Horizon  
Fields, Hills, and Trees  
Superfluously Indulged in a  
Combination of Orange and Red  
On the Horizon



## Family of the Past

We will all change, for the better or worse is hard to say,  
One of us is missing but is still here, never forgotten.  
One with a revelation, another an attitude  
One with a life all their own, another just starting.  
One with an extravagant house, another with an apartment  
One left alone by their lover, another by their side  
One with maturity, all together.

## Opposites

Your smile says it all  
A dash of joy on your face,  
Your smug says it all  
A shroud of pride on your face,  
Your eyes say it all  
Bliss shines and sings,  
Your eyes say it all,  
You dread this place and all who live in it.

## Cliffside Thoughts

Sitting atop the waves as they crash  
And break beneath.  
For I am the sky of which all I can  
See is a foamy crystal blue.  
Lust and sorrow are whisked away  
By salt and unity.  
So often do we lose focus of the true  
Beauty that is gracefully given to  
Us.

### The One Who Stayed

*To Katie and Nick*

After a long and tedious road,  
She has found the one to stay,  
She has found the one to cherish her,  
She has found the one, who cares,  
She has found love.  
Though he may be leaving,  
Just know it won't be for too long,  
He has you on his mind,  
He has a reason to return,  
He has a reason to stay safe.  
Nick, good luck in the military.  
Please return safe to Katie.

## Going South

*To Michela and Chris*

It's only been a short time,  
Since we all met,  
You are the perfect match,  
For one another,  
Starting a life with each other,  
Isn't always easy,  
But with each other,  
To keep afloat,  
Anything is possible.  
Michela & Chris, good luck down south.  
You two are lucky to have each other.

## Another Life

Here I am someone,  
Here I have power and confidence,  
Here I'm someone I wish I was,  
On the outside,  
Fierce, Demanding, and Courageous,  
Here my actions speak louder than any words,  
Here no one is a god,  
Here hard work and dedication thrive,  
Here is where no one can become  
Someone.

## Winter

She was cold leaving trails of frost wherever she went.  
Her skin pale white kissed with freckles of brown.  
She's alone, forcing people indoors when she feels the need.  
Showering the world in icy tundra of white fluff.  
Hair made of rain drops endlessly racing downwards to join the  
Wet world of pavement.  
Drowning the pollution out with an endless bed of crystallized snow.  
An endless love for all things living even though they all hid until she  
Passes.

## Hollow Peace

The idea of death is so scarce,  
It tends to be so dark and so bleak,  
Containing nothing more than sorrow and death,  
But as you have it, death is much more you see,  
It brings us joy to a life lived,  
Brings us peace knowing that a soul is free,  
Free from the torture and emptiness that comes with it,  
For them to see us sorrowful rather than joyful for their passing is pitiful,  
Nay,  
Shameful,  
So rejoice and rejuvenate for when one life is gone another is born,  
And so the circle comes back yet again,  
We Live,  
We Die,  
But that is Life and that is Death.

## **Give It a Try**

For some it's not easy,  
To pour themselves into a lengthy poem,  
To spill every last thought and desire,  
To drain every fear and insecurity  
For some it's not easy,  
But it feels great  
When you do.

## **Front Steps**

Lounging forest side has never been so  
Calm,  
Bathing myself in the luminescent gold  
Sun,  
Breathing out polluted  
Thoughts.

## **Money Talks**

Name your price,  
Nothing is free,  
Everything has a price,  
Empty your wallet,  
Nothing is free,  
No one is free,  
Not even me.

## **Learn Something New**

Learning is growing,  
When you never learn,  
You never grow.

## **Another Night**

A sweet slumber accompanied by a warm friend,  
Caressing one another,  
Our hands clasp tightly as if,  
It were for dear life,  
Breathing slows and time stops,  
Our restless minds are put to sleep  
For another night.

## **Too Easy**

Heart quickens as another life is lost,  
The first blood has been drawn,  
The smell is sweet and the taste is bitter,  
Inside your head I can see every last thing,  
Your next move has already been read,  
The next move will lead you to your death.

# FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ

Oh Young gangster with a gun,  
You are scary and bad,  
Too bad you live with his mom.

Young love and  
Beer bottle, they're the same,  
They don't last.

A man came to my house and asked if he could stay.  
I told him, "Mi casa es tu casa."  
Then the man asked for food.  
I said "Mi casa es tu casa."  
Later the man asked if he could use my bed.  
I replied, "Mi casa es tu casa."  
Then he asked if he could use my wife.  
I told him, "Era tu casa, now get the hell out!!!"

There were 3 beers  
But one was gone  
It was colder.

A man and a woman are one  
A man and a woman and a beer  
Are done.

The man is drunk, while  
The beer can is sober.

Corridos Buenos Corridos malos  
Unos matan y los otros cantan  
Pero todo acaban con “Tan, Tan”.



The door opened and gun shots flew by me, I dropped to the floor trying to dodge them. The cop yelled, “We got you, come out with your hands up!”

“Fuck you!” I yelled back.

I took out my 9mm pistol and let out 3 shots back to the cops. I waited there for about a minute and I heard a can hit the floor. Then soon after I heard them kick open the door. My heart was racing as I search for an escape. The only way out of this would have to be the window in the bathroom. I bolted upstairs to the bathroom only to find the door locked.

“Fuck, are you serious?!” I yelled.

I rushed to the hallway, hearing my heart beat in my ears. The sound of shouts and dogs barking reach me and for a second I froze, wondering if I can really do this or if I should just surrender. A thump right under my feet puts me back into motion. Brain racing, I think about the guest bed room, there’s a window, but it’s on the second floor, even if I made it I would likely break a bone. Too late to over think it, I have to act now, I ran to the second level hoping the guest bedroom door wasn’t locked. I went to the door. It’s locked.

“Shit!”

I don’t care. I kicked the door and it shatters. All those years of karate finally paid off. I ran into the room. My heart pounding so hard it vibrated my teeth. I went to the window. Pushed up on the glass but it wouldn’t budge. I search around to find something to wrap my hand with, a shirt should work. I turned back to the window and punch it as hard as I could. The glass shatters and falls to the ground in piles around me. My arm is bleeding but I have no time for that right now. The ground looked so far down but I had to jump, it’s now or never. My stomach seemed to fall faster than I do as I hit the ground. My ankle rolled and cracks, pain biting the nerves all the way up to my knee. Cliff skidded on to the lawn with the van.

“Get in!”

I obeyed and he took off before I could even close the door.

“Did you get it?”

“Of course I did. Who the fuck do you think I am, an amateur?”

I said, gasping, as I unzip my hoodie stacks of hundred dollar bills tumble to the floor of the van.

He looks up at me, with a toothpick in his teeth, grinning.

“Nice job, kid.”

## Enemies from Across the Border

Juan Steiger was board in his Rancho in Mexico, so he decided to leave to Las Vegas, Nevada to party. As he arrives to the casino he goes to some strip club and calls some friends to come and visit. After a while of Juan looking at the women, he decides to go to the bar. He orders a glass of Buchanan, with pineapple juice and a side of peanuts. As soon as he gets his drink tall African American with a white suite with a Rolex in his left hand and his phone on the other points at the bartender and tell him,

“A glass of Bacardi for me.”

I look at him and then just take a sip of my drink. He sits down and I notice him again and I say, “Hey, nice watch.”

He looks up at my face and notices my hair.

“Man, I like your blond dreadlocks,” he said.

“Thanks, so by the way what’s your name?”

“Franklin, yours?”

“Nice to meet you, Franklin. I’m Juan Steiger.”

“Juan Stager?”

“No, Steiger”

“Oh, Juan Steiger, sorry man cool name. are you German?”

“Yeah, well half, I’m half Mexican and half German.”

“Nice.” He said.

“So Franklin are you from around here?”

“No, I’m from a little town called Ukiah, it’s two hours north from San Francisco.”

“That’s cool man, I’m from Guadalajara, Mexico,” I said.

“So what’s your job over there?” he said.

I was very nervous, should I tell him or not? I should just lie.

“I work for a water bottle company in Mexico.” After I said that I took another drink. “you? “Where do you work?”

“Oh, Just business.”

“What is it, drug dealing?” we both started laughing.

“So, Juan?”

“Yeah?”

“Ever shot a gun?”

“Dude I own like a million of them” looks bored.

“So if you “own” a million of them what’s your favorite gun?”

I take another drink and think about my gun.

“Favorite gun, um... oh yeah, probably the AA-12”

“Yeah, the fully automatic shotgun, good.”

“And you what’s yours?” I said.

“The golden Desert Eagle, and you know what, I even have it with me.”

“Bullshit. you don’t have shit.”

“Want to see it?”

“Yeah.”

He pulls out his golden desert eagle from his pants, as soon as he did that three of my friends were just arriving. Then I hear a gun cock behind me.

“Hey puto, put the gun down now!”

“You guys know who you fucking with?”

Three more guns cock from behind Franklin’s back, it was three armed men. I knew this was going to be a blood bath if a shot went off so I said,

“Hey Franklin, I need to tell you the truth man, I’m a cartel boss from Mexico, so if I was you, I would put your gun down.”

Franklin’s can’t believe it.

“Wait you’re the mother fucker who’s been robbing my operations in Texas, right?” Franklin said in shock.

“You’re the kingpin of the U.S.?” I said

“Yeah, and now I’m going to make the police clean your brain off the floor.”

Three shots fired not hitting either men, they run around like mad men shooting each other. The gun fire goes on for a while until Juan stiger said to his men while taking cover behind a table,

“Stop firing”

All the men on his side do, and later so do Franklin’s men,

“Hey Frank! I want to make a deal with you, I will pay back what my men did to your business and we can all be a single corporation and maybe even take over the world.”

Franklin thought about it for a second and lowered his weapon.

“Guys put your guns down, I accept your deal as long as we don’t call ourselves The Swag Cartel of Vegas.”

“Alright then but I own Mexico”

“I like you already.” Franklin’s said while laughing.

“So now what?” I replied

“Lets finish our drink and we will get back to business.”

“That’s fine with me.”

They both start laughing and sit and drink the liquor while the scene fades away.

# ALLISON RUPE

## Learn to Fly

See me. See everyone you don't know.  
Don't just look on the outside.  
Really look at them.  
Don't look through them,  
You won't discover beauty that way,  
Look inside,  
Look at the secrets being harbored in their minds,  
Look at the value they carry as a human being,  
Why would you shame that?  
Why would you make someone deposes their worth?  
Why would you torture their mind with thoughts that you injected,  
Don't give them false values to live by,  
Don't think that your life experiences are more valuable than gold,  
You are a thought.  
You are a simple domestic thought.  
You are your own peace of mind therefore your place is not to criticize  
the reality of another person.  
You can over indulge in your simple complexity all you want,  
You can compare yourself to other mind sets all day long if you want  
to,  
But will that make you happy?  
Will you be happy picking and scraping at yourself for your mistakes?  
Will you be happy re reading into your numbers; on the scale, on  
paper, on your bank account?  
Will you be happy drowning in mint walls of doctors orders,  
Or black blue mixtures of eyeliner and cigarette ash?  
Will you be happy gulping breathes of liquor and fumes of poets  
muttering into microphones?  
Will you honestly be in love when you look into a strange mans eyes as  
he gives you your receipt and prescription?  
Will you find sanctity in properly functioning people,  
Or will you slip and slide and crash and burn down,

Down to the people who've tormented your mind,  
Down to your mindset of your mistakes and your flaws,  
Down to the people who told you will be never fucking good enough  
for any of their ill tempered shit and destruction,  
Down to your heart and soul and fear and loathing,  
Down, down to your sick and twisted obsession with finding the flaw  
in yourself that you a creation of the universe are.  
You don't need someone to tell you your worth,  
You don't need any one else to put a label on paper of your value.  
Define yourself through the things you do,  
Not the stories you read,  
Or the instruments you play,  
Or the music you think you like,  
Just say it.  
Say what you are.

### **Haiku for a Life Lesson**

Don't be seventeen,  
You'll pull an idiot move,  
And you'll fall in love.

## Tango Two Tall Shoes

Tango two tall shoes,  
Wind chimes rhythm and blues,  
Shaky after school,  
Tango two tall shoes,  
Blaze rock and roll,  
Cadillac decent dunes,  
Free bird silence notion,  
Tango two tall shoes,  
Buxom lip lifestyle,  
Stroke down the row,  
Babes breaking down the walls,  
Tango two tall shoes,  
Break glory days of confusion,  
Caustic matrimony of delicatessen,  
Sweet coo of the white winged dove,  
Tango two tall shoes,  
Tango two tall shoes,  
Break it up,  
Give me clues,  
Take the date,  
Let the river swim,  
Tango two tall shoes

## Love Me, Go Away

I would like to think I don't seek recovery.  
That I'm not a special basket case that needs their hand to be held  
every hour of the day.  
I would like to think I don't desire attention every hour of the day  
even though I'm deathly afraid of any male attention.  
I would like to be of some use to your little scandal.  
But that's not going to happen is it?  
So here's me, being a whiny little stubborn bitch.  
I need affection.  
I'm suffocating without your fluttering eyelashes.  
I am choking on the fact that I have no one to hold.  
I am dying because of the over powering weight I have on myself.  
I don't want to be a disturbance to your glass eyes,

Or your sugar coated mind.  
I don't want to be an ugly vision in front of you,  
I want to be something beautiful for you to look at,  
That's why I don't desire the attention I crave.  
I don't seek pity because no one can pity something they don't want to see.  
No one will show affection for someone as whiny and bitchy and  
annoying as me,  
I swear too much,  
I think too much,  
I listen to alternative music,  
My shoulders are too broad,  
My chest is too little,  
My stomach's too big,  
My mind too brittle,  
I can't even look at you right now.  
Stop, stop looking at me,  
Stop analyzing the words I'm speaking to you,  
This is not a cry for help,  
This is a plead to ignore,  
Don't think about a passage,  
Don't relate your life to a soap opera,  
Reality TV is another form of poison shoved down your throat,  
You're not a story book character,  
And I'm not a pageant queen.  
I won't over complicate it,

If you stop telling me I'm something else,  
My insecurity is nothing of your concern,  
I like knowing myself,  
Without any outside contributions,  
That'd just be foolish to believe a martyr like you,  
You might think I'm something else,  
That you want to love me,  
You might want to be the one percent,  
You might even want to tell me something good,  
Maybe you might share these feelings,  
But I'm not yours to seek counsel,  
Nor am I yours to criticize,  
I'm just yours for the sake of you,  
And If I can't help you,  
I can't help myself



## Insults

You can take them,  
You can take them all,  
I know you can,  
You're the one who said them after all,  
You don't realize what you say,  
do you?  
You don't think about the lives you affect,  
The harm you cause,  
Or the whistles that should be blown,  
You did just give me reason to believe,  
That you are just a natural born enemy,  
You don't know them,  
You don't know what you've done  
You call them fat,  
You call them ugly,  
You call them stupid,  
Thinking you're funny,  
Call me annoying,  
Call me a slut,  
Call me whatever,  
I won't let up,  
You're sick,  
You're wrong,  
You need to stop,  
Kindness won't take long.

## Give Me Permission to Discover

If I freely may discover you,  
The wonder that is but only you,  
Your sense of love,  
Your face when you fall asleep,  
What will you think of me?  
Can I join you?  
In spending our valuable time,  
While we're young,  
And if you let me,  
I can make our hearts combine,  
I wish I was where I would be,  
With you right here next to me,  
If I freely may discover,  
The way you dance in the lowlight,  
Then perhaps fate would be right,  
I wonder if you've ever thought like I do,  
Watching, waiting for someone who loves you,  
I know your past, after all I was a part of it,  
Now I'm beginning to wonder,  
If I can be a part of your present,  
It feels like we're in water,  
You can see me,  
But when words escape me,  
All is unheard  
The long glances are what I question the most,  
What thoughts or questions do I evoke?  
Is there an image in your mind?  
That I am in?  
Or is my name just something you whisper in the wind?  
I still have so many questions for you,  
How've you been?  
Who have you loved?  
Do you still want that tattoo?  
These are some of the questions I'd ask,  
If I freely may discover,  
You

## Ask and You Shall Receive

I feel as if there's something needed to say,  
Something I am the creature of,  
Why do I constantly crave the little self satisfaction of material things?  
Why do I hunger for a new physical object every time I look at myself  
in the mirror?  
Why do I smother my face in concealer, in a quest to make my face  
clearer?  
Why do I buy new perfume, in hopes that it will make me thinner?  
Why do I eat as a result of my jeans not fitting?  
Why am I so afraid to do my own bidding?  
Materialism is my own foil,  
For I cannot see any progress in my own consumption,  
Grades on paper do not define me,  
So why should I possess something,  
Whose worth is printed on a receipt,  
Why do I buy books, only to be read once,  
Then take the space,  
Learn the art to borrow,  
Perhaps to just only ask,  
But never fully receive

## In Conclusion

In conclusion, I have learned a lot through my life.

In conclusion, I've learned I can't stand your passive aggression.\

In conclusion, I have seen too many excuses with no outcome.

In conclusion, nothing you say will genuinely ever mean anything.

In conclusion, my lies won't matter in 5 years.

In conclusion, you should know that what I do will never be any of your business.

In conclusion, no matter how hard I hit and pray, you will never leave.

In conclusion, I'm not a fucking piece of work, I've been hurt.

In conclusion, violence is an answer when you're fed up.

In conclusion, I'm sentenced to life, not death by your standards.

In conclusion, my weight should not be my definition.

In conclusion, my decisions should not have to revolve around you.

In conclusion, you're never too fat to be in pain.

In conclusion, maybe next time you think about planting a bomb, remember who you will hurt.

In conclusion, you shouldn't always think that when you hurt a friend they will forgive you.

In conclusion, forgiveness can only go as far as the other person wants it too.

In conclusion, it's okay to quit on something you're not proud of.

In conclusion, it's okay.

It's okay to stop and think, even when you can't sit still.

# GABRIEL SUDDETH

## The Beginning

Once upon a time  
Nothing happened

And nothing continued to happen  
No up, nor down  
Nor future, nor past  
Nor hot, nor cold  
Nor death  
Nor taxes  
Nor Starbucks

Then  
Amidst the nothing  
Something appeared  
An infinitesimal something  
In an infinity of nothing

Then the something grew

Once upon a nothing  
Time happened

## The Sandman

Last night, for the first time  
Since you were dead  
You dreamed  
Of freedom, of happiness, of hope  
They said you could not dream in Hell  
But of course they were wrong  
For what would Hell be  
Without dreams of better days  
But a forgotten realm  
Of the forgetful

## First Rain

What's this I hear in silence' stead?  
The gentle prattle of soft rains  
    Which pound above my head?  
For many months I'd wait in vain  
Yet as I stand with happy heart  
    Amid the pouring rain  
These words which 'scape my tongue  
Taste tart  
    "Well it's about goddamn time!"

## Nature Be Damned

“Nature be damned!”  
Exclaims modern man,  
“I am far better than she.”  
She has a mountain three hundred feet tall?  
I have a tower which makes it look small.  
She has a lizard that breathes stinging breath?  
I have a pistol, which blasts fiery death.  
She has a flower that can kill with a taste?  
Stronger is my poison, using flower as base.  
She controls the weather; snow, wind, and heat?  
I have a thermostat; controls them for me.  
She has birds which soar through the sky?  
I have a rocket a thousand times as high.  
She decides when our time is done?  
I’ve changed that with my  
Wars, and nukes, and murders and guns.

## **Alone in the Dark**

Your shadow's your friend  
Never far away  
Looks out for you  
So if you're afraid

Alone in the dark

Remember your shadow  
Though hidden from view  
Is still there somewhere  
Helping guide you

## **Nights like These**

Driving home  
Pulling over  
Park the car

Sitting lakeside  
See reflections  
Play guitar

Leaning back  
Looking up  
Watch the stars



## **Sin (x) and Trig Dysfunctions**

The sins of none  
Are easy to fill

The sins of thirty  
Are half more still

The sins of forty-five  
Are radical too  
Though they all  
Are same, through and through

The sins of sixty  
Are a whole more than half

The sins of ninety  
Are lonely, not last

## **The Truth**

Some people think  
All poems hide  
Some deep, dark meaning  
But that simply isn't  
The case

Sometimes a poem  
Is only a poem  
Because  
The author just liked it  
That way

## **Music Lover**

A slender neck  
And soft curves  
The sweetest voice  
And smoothest skin  
And I know just  
What to do to  
Make her sing;  
Pluck the strings  
And let them ring  
A guitar's a beautiful thing

## **The Dangers of Driving On Rural Roads**

Deer stops, standing still  
Does it see some secret  
Hidden in the headlights

## Found Poem

One day  
While I  
Was just dicking around  
Writing things down  
In a way  
That I maybe  
Sorta liked

I suddenly found  
A poem on the ground  
And so  
Without a moment's  
Delay

I picked it up  
Brushed it off  
And put it up on a shelf  
In a place I knew  
It'd be safe

## **Path of Least Resistance**

Too many people go through life  
Already mostly dead  
They never lead, are always lead  
With hollow hearts, and hollow head  
Who simply slide along  
The path of least resistance

Does panic pang them  
When they die  
Or do they even realize  
Do they wake up in the afterlife  
And just continue on  
The path of least resistance

## **Friday Evenings**

Thanks Gypsy and  
The Golden boy  
Dance in the  
Lamplight

Right, left  
Side, heel  
Back

Left, right  
Side, heel  
Back

## Up

If you dream  
Stand up  
If you fall  
Get up  
If you fight  
Make up  
If you cry  
Cheer up  
If you're hurt  
Heal up  
If you believe  
Rise up  
If you can  
Stay up  
But if you don't  
Shut up

## Shattered Harmony of a Stranger

*(A found-ish poem)*

The Sun  
The Sun  
The Sun  
The Sun  
Slashed and stabbed  
At my eyes  
The Sky split open  
My being tensed  
The trigger gave  
Then – four more times

## **Strike Softly**

Life doesn't strike softly  
It sneaks up on you  
From a black back alley  
On a Tuesday night

Smacks you upside the head  
With an old baseball bat  
It found at a garage sale

Quickly apologizes  
Moves on

Leaves you to sort out the rest  
While you lie  
Battered and bruised  
Bleeding in the streets  
Wondering  
What the fuck just happened

## **End of the Road**

If life  
Is the long and  
Winding road  
We walk  
Death  
Is the long since  
Stagnant stream  
At its end

## Stargazers

We are the ones  
Who watch night skies  
Patiently gazing  
With starry eyes

We are the ones  
Who are out all night  
And don't go to sleep  
'Till the morning light

We are the ones  
Who dare to believe  
While riding out torrents  
Of venomous heave

We are the ones  
Who Strive to learn  
What we should love  
And what we should spurn

We are the ones  
Who drive too fast  
Listening to music  
Cranked up full blast

We are the ones  
Who find our own ways  
To discover a path  
Which leads out of  
The Maze

## The Wanderers

We wore the weather as we would our coats  
With wind around our necks, tied tight like  
Scarves  
And leaves which fell upon our heads like hats  
We wore the storm cloud's shadows for our  
Cloaks  
With lining torn from padded folds of fog  
And used the thunder's torch to light our  
Path  
We walked through marshes, underbrush, and trees  
And made our way past streets and over  
Plains  
Wandering for naught but wandering's sake  
While rain clung fast, ran slowly down our  
Sleeves  
With soft warbles, drip-drop-dripping away  
Making music at a wanderer's  
Pace  
And when we reach the end of wand'ring days  
We'll lay right down; the snow shall be our  
Grave



## Summer's End

Rope swings  
Bird sings  
Yoga mats  
Laid flat  
Lake swims  
Light dims  
Out late  
Past eight  
Drain drinks  
High jinks  
Boot dancing  
Romancing  
Camping trips  
Caressing lips  
Bonfires  
Desires  
Long drives  
Fun times  
Watching stars  
Drink from jars  
Good friends  
Fuck trends  
Guitar strings  
Simple things  
And summer's end

## A New Year

Ten minutes past midnight:

“We need more weight on the door!”

Everyone is yelling. Someone is crying.

“Jesus Christ, someone get over here!”

Four of us now. More of them.

Almost there.

Click.

“What the fuck?”

“Right? What the fuck was that?”

“Chris-“

“Jesus fucking Christ.”

“Chris, where’s Tyler?”

“Shit.”

“Where the fuck is Tyler?”

“What do we do?”

“We go back out there.”

The door opens.

Five minutes past midnight:

“Look, we don’t want any trouble.”

“No one’s trying to fight.”

Suddenly I see stars.

The offender disappears under

A mountainous mass.

“Chris, Chris, get off him!”

“No, you don’t fuck with my friends!”

Shove them out, down the stairs.

Chris is at the bottom now, yelling.

“Don’t touch them! I will destroy you!”

Five of us. More of them.

“Chris, get back inside!”

They keep coming.

A rock hits my head.

They keep coming.

Too many of them.

They keep coming.

Nine to one.

Tyler speaks;

“This isn’t going to end well.”

Midnight:

“Happy New Year!”

# MICHAEL RIEDELL

## Another Earth

What I have to tell you  
would be news on another earth,  
but it was done without blood.  
No one suffered enough.  
No one was or will be arrested.

One night, sitting under the universe,  
I reached above me and plucked  
a star from the sky.

It was warm to the touch,  
but cool on my tongue—  
and how quickly it melted!

Have you ever smelled  
breath better than mine, fresher?

I speak softly to keep the frost  
from freezing the room  
and forming an icicle on my nose.

I haven't been able to kiss since then.

Loneliness comes to one  
who swallows stars.

I never knew.  
I was not told.

I would warn others,  
But who would believe me?

They are too busy  
Waiting for the next plane to crash.  
They don't even notice the night.

This would be news on another earth.

## Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Book on Fire

*After Wallace Stevens*

i

Among all the books  
One burned most brightly.  
It was the one I had read.

ii

I was of three minds  
Like a book  
Burning yellow, orange, and blue.

iii

Thick smoke whirled in autumn wind.  
It was a small part of what was a book.

iv

A poet and a reader  
Are one.  
A poet and a reader and a burning book  
Are one.

v

Hell if I know which to prefer:  
The beauty of words  
Or of their shadows,  
The book on fire  
Or just after.

vi

Volumes filled the shelves  
With mismatched spines.  
The smoke of a burning book  
Drifted this way and that.  
The smell of that smoke  
Was poetry.

vii

O thin men of Ukiah,  
Why do you imagine flames as tongues?  
Do you hear the voices of the poets  
Echoing around the heads  
Of the women about you?

viii

I have heard noble speeches  
And driving, inescapable rhythms;  
But I have heard, too,  
That the burning book is forgetting  
Whatever it once knew.

ix

When a page of ash flew out of sight,  
I hoped it might begin  
Another lovely fire.

x

At the sight of books  
Burning with green flames,  
Even the illiterate  
Would cry out sharply.

xi

He rode over California  
In a Greyhound bus.  
Once, a fear pierced him,  
In that he mistook  
The shadows of someone's luggage  
For a burnt book.

xii

That bus is still moving.  
Books must be burning.

xiii

It was winter all summer.  
It was raining  
And it was going to rain,  
Yet the pages of a book  
Smoldered in its binding.

## Poetry

I asked the sparrows about you today,  
Or tried to.

I asked about form, about meter and rhyme.  
They flitted as they do from bough to bough.

I asked about sound, about song and rhythm.  
They chirped and twittered to each other.

I asked about the proper subject of poetry,  
And at that they flew away.

Yes, I asked the sparrows about you today,  
Or tried to.

## Fifty-Eight Reasons Why You Should Sign-Up for Creative Writing— Or However Many I Come Up With

Because I told you to

Because I would never tell you to

Because you want to

Because your mother wants you to

Because your mother doesn't want you to

Because your mother doesn't want you to but will surely come to love you even more if you do

Because you know how to write

Because you can write anything

Because right now the sky is falling

Because you can stop the sky from falling by writing a story in which you stop the sky from falling

Because the world is your oyster

Because paper can slide through the cracks of an oyster shell

Because there's a fleck of sand at the center of a pearl, and the pearl is in the oyster, sometimes

Because sometimes words come to you, unrequested

Because you hear voices

Because you want to hear voices

Because you have a voice, or want a voice, or need a voice, and you don't mean singing (though nothing's wrong with singing)

Because you need to take something

Because you have paper and pens and suppose they must be for something

Because something tells you to

Because you don't like to be told what to do, or what to think, or what to write

Because it the easiest way to make a world

Because you know we make our world

Because the world that's been made for you leave something to be desired

Because of desire

Because you long to be desired

Because when you look into fire you see more than just the fire

Because your mind dances like fire

Because fire burns and paper burns and words can burn too  
Because of light and heat  
Because at night you know there's a figure in the darkness  
Because you can see in the dark  
Because dogs bark and so can you  
Because dogs bite and so can words  
Because you've been told about sticks and stones and names  
Because you want to name things  
Because you know there are still things left to be named  
Because your hand holds so well the pen  
Because the pen is mightier than the sword  
Because there is no class for sword-fighting  
Because lightning strikes  
Because you want to be struck  
Because ducks quack and writers writer  
Because you might write  
Because you do write  
Because you write and want to be published  
Because you ought to be in a book because you ought to be bound  
Because you know there are few roads to immortality  
Because you know you aren't immortal and need to get busy  
Because busy to you means creating  
Because creating to you means living  
Because now is the time to live  
Because you're alive  
Because you hope to thrive  
Because you hope to grow  
Because you know there is only growing and dying  
Because you want to play  
Because you have something to say  
Because you want a say  
Because you want to have a good day



# CONTRIBUTORS

**Andrew Anderson:**

Age:15

Likes: Writing (Of course)

“Very kind, friendly and funny person to be around.”

**Emma Barash:** I've grown up with the city of Ukiah around me for the last fifteen years. I have watched the tall buildings that reached for the skies grow shorter and shorter as my viewpoint heightened. What used to look like a vast city that made me feel like an ant, now makes me reminiscent of Rapunzel, contemplating escape. I am without long locks of gold, however. I live with the kindest and actively mindful parents, who support me, and am comfortable in a community built around the presence of love. Very much unlike the poor, dragon-guarded, tower-bound princess. My undying love for writing has driven me into the waiting arms of 451, where the flames, Mr. Riedell, and my fellow classmates have been a furnace of warming inspiration.

**Alycia Billy:**

Intoxicated with madness, I'm love with my sadness

In order to understand, I destroyed myself

I want your lips, I want to kiss you

Shut your eyes and think of somewhere

We live alone, we die alone. Everything else is just an illusion

I wanna stay inside all day... I want the world to go away

She was a smart girl, until she fell in love

But now we have only confused hearts

You understand me? You make me smile

You need to accept yourself

Everybody has a story

Hello, my name is **Danielle Butow** and I'm a writing alcoholic. I have a creepy obsession with another author in this book; her name is Vanessa Ilar. I believe she is a beautiful soul who will be reincarnated into an angel. I have a huge thing for nerd guys that are into pokemon, as well as other hot nerdy things. I grew up in the small town of Lakeport and adore Abercrombie and Fitch. People would assume I'm a prep with how I dress and assume I'm smart because of who I date and assume I'm a drama geek with how I talk. By the way I'm none of the above: just meet me and I'll show you. If you're crazy enough to buy and or read this book then you won't care about my babble. I hope that this Bio doesn't haunt any of my future careers, but oh well. I like expensive cheese.

**Michael Dursteler** (Dur-stel-er): Captain Clark, co-leader of the Corps of discovery had over fifty ways to spell mosquito. His partner, Meriwether Lewis, had ten ways to spell watermelon. The great Mark Twain once said, "I don't give a damn for a man that can only spell a word one way." Perhaps if great men care less about spelling then the product of writing, it is not as important as we all think.... But is it really that hard to spell Dursteler? Michael Dursteler is a simple man (or boy, it is still uncertain which he is, a common case among teenagers) all he wishes is for his name to be pronounced, spelled, and read in the way that it has been said since its birth. It's a good name, and he believes it is the least it deserves. Michael himself could care less what you know about him. He is not interesting, or even complex, he only wishes someone, anyone, would just say his name right...

**Blake Hosmer:** I am fourteen, reasonably intelligent. I still don't know what the world has in store for me. I am the one who virtualizes my brain with the words and pictures I create. I am an artist in disguise, a mathematician in theory. At least, I want to be. My ideas carry my dreams and desires. I've experienced many things, every sport and instrument. They have no effect. My mind is my real instrument, pencil and paper is my real sport. I don't consider myself a poet or writer. I consider myself a creator, a conveyer of dreams and ideas. I am my own creativity that can never be copied.

**Emily Jones** is a part-time musician, part-time writer, part-time student, part-time blogger, most of the time sleeper. She's known for taming vicious Chihuahuas, spending too much time on the internet, and her famous procrastination skills. Growing up on the empty plains of Mars, she prefers not having face-to-face conversations because eye contact is a difficult thing to achieve. She strides to become a world famous musician and tour the world with her friends. She's currently living in the middle of nowhere as a bit better than average high school student.

**Maegan Jones** grew up in the suburban hell known as Antelope, CA, but moved to a rad town called Ukiah at the age of 10. She currently lives with her supportive parents, two beautiful sisters, brother, passive-aggressive rabbit, and wiggle-prone dog. In her spare time, Maegan enjoys reading, writing, acting, playing music, sewing dorky costumes for nerdy conventions, and aspires to be a writer/director "when she has to pay taxes."

**Zachary Klyse:**

In a world where grammar and the English language is butchered and the limbs and appendages are tossed into the trash.

In a world where people would read noise rather than listen to words.

In a world where 0's and 1's are the only things that matter.

In a world where people confuse there, their, and they're.

In a world where people still do the whole, "In a world" thing.

There is a boy.

A teenage boy.

A fairly handsome teenage boy.

A very nice and fairly handsome teenage boy.

A very nice and fairly handsome teenage boy that is somewhat talented with words.

He is the lone survivor in the Grammar Nazi's wake.

He was spared, but his friends were left to become what we all fear.

They become the members of the Cult of Swag.

They ruin our songs, and soil what was a beautiful and perfect sound.

And even to this day, the war is fought for proper grammar.

**Nick LaMonica** is a hardworking farm-handler raised in rural Ohio. Not much is known of this majestic creature; besides his devilishly good nun-chuck skills and good taste in scarves. This man once scared off a bear by simply wetting his pants strategically. If that's not a formidable achievement, I don't know what is.

**Marquita Martin** a.k.a. Quita:

I'm just a 19 year old that has my own hopes and dreams to become something bigger in life. I used to be a little brat with paint and Barbie dolls. I wish I was still a little girl so I would have nothing to worry about.

**Oscar Montelongo** has a great smile. He also loves you.

**Rebecca Ortega** lives in a tiny ass town with her family and pillow of a dog. She enjoys writing, reading, sick beats and not cooking. Her best friends are a curly haired freak who is way too cultured, a really sassy actress who is super dramatic but has quite a nice flair...and a shit ton of sass, a voluptuous tomboy who owns a gun and ain't afraid to use it, an adorable little thing who is super nice and a little compliment machine, and finally a loud, dark haired BFF who she's known since they were in diapers. She has weird tendencies, wears glasses and can be annoying as hell. If your cool with her you'll get along smashingly, if not...whatever.

**Sade Perez:** "I'm just a girl trying to find my place in this crazy world." The name's pronounced shaw-day... I'm 15 years young and I was born and raised here in this strange town of Ukiah. I have 1 dog named Sarge who doubles as my best friend. I also have a twin sister which is cool I guess. I'm very socially impaired and really uncoordinated and I have no friends. End of story.

**Alex Rafanan:** This student is a knightly bard. She is 14 summers, has slayed many demons, dragons and others threats to the small fiefdom of Ukiah. She was born to a magistrate and her husband, a baker. She is a favorite to his majesty King Riedell and his lovely Queen McCarthy, and is currently writing another tale of tale of mischief, woe, and magic.

**Michael Riedell** was born the summer after the Summer of Love and has been late for everything ever since. He has lived through too many wars, voted for none of them, fought in none of them. He claims he can do a double carve grind on the over-vert at the Ukiah Skatepark, but he skates so rarely these days, no one knows for sure. He recently released his first book of poetry, *The Way of Water: Perch Mountain Poems*.

My name is **Francisco Rodriguez**, I am 17 years old, and I live 3 blocks away from the high school in a apartment colored the same as my skin (brown). I have a obsession with Music, mostly Mexican music. I have a passion with soccer and boxing, and love screenwriting for fun. People say I'm a funny guy, I don't know if that's true or not, but I know I'm sexy, because that's what most people call me besides my real name.

My name is **Allison Rose Rupe** and I'm addicted to munchkin cats. I like coffee, and I really have a thing for giant burritos with extra sour cream. I love rock bands and teenage boys, like a lot. My humor consists of sarcasm and blonde jokes. Teal and aquamarine should color the world. I would live in band t-shirts if I could. My alter ego is a Zen yoga master who lives in the mountains of northern California. Food is life and smoothies are my lungs. I'm overly tall, my hair is naturally blonde, and yes I am serious. I like people and animals and Tokio Hotel and if you don't know that band you are doing something wrong. So basically to sum it all up I like boys and food. A lot.

**Gabriel Suddeth** is a simple man, who passively slides through life, apathetically viewing his surroundings as he goes. He currently resides in a rundown trailer in Redwood Valley with a nineteen year old, depressive, alcoholic, an ex-fighting Pit Bull, a Jewish giant, and a drug-addicted schizophrenic, who was abandoned by her manic daughter. He spends his time writing, playing music, acting, fighting hoards of angry gangsters, and generally getting into shenanigans. At least until the trailer falls apart.



# kindling

A 451 Anthology

**"It was a pleasure to burn."**

