

TITLE WAVE

The Squadala Anthology



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FOREWORD

Squadala. If you're wondering what that means, join the crowd. "Squadala? What's that?" I've been asked this many times this year, and I've never have a very good answer. Some words go beyond definition. And some experiences are beyond words.

The "real" answer is that Squadala is a word taken from some weird cartoon thing that I'd never heard of. You can find it online. A wizard is sitting on a flying carpet with his ridiculously long beard saying, "Squadala! Squadala!" Is it gibberish? Maybe. Is it a magic incantation? Who knows.

And who knows how we decided to name our class that. But we did, and--strangely--it works. We have spent a year writing all sorts of crazy things, less concerned for the "quality" and more concerned with the mere fact that we're writing, creating, bringing into the world something that wasn't there before. At our worst we've been writing gibberish, and that's alright. At our best, though, we've turned words into magic.

The book you have in your hands contains some our our better efforts. If the spell works, by the time you're done reading, you too will be chanting, "Squadala! Squadala!" The magic carpets and long wizard's beards are sold separately.

M.R.

5/13/15

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ANDREW ANDERSON

THE TRINITY BINDER

As the tape crinkles and comes off slowly, you could have faintly heard a countdown...10...9...8...the binder braces itself for the coming explosion...7...6...5...4...the paper flaps give way...3...2...1..., a blinding light of quizzes, worksheets, scan-trons, book logs, drawings, and plain binder paper. Then, a mushroom cloud consisting of English, Algebra, Spanish, Science, and History appeared before my eyes, but soon it dissipated into a fallout of torn and ripped pages of all subjects. But I could only say one thing: “Now my binder becomes death the destroyer of words.”

ODE TO FEAR

Without this mental function within all of our minds, much of life would be dead, a world of fearless idiots roaming the planet. They would be like lemming jumping off a cliff. Many people conceive of fear as a bad thing, which is common, but fear is not a bad thing, it is a warning to an unknown thing or a bad memory that you constantly fight because you fear it might repeat or make matters worse. Although fear can seem like a life or death situation, it's nothing more idea or an obstacle in your daily life, but like all obstacles it can be conquered. Things like public speaking, heights, shots, snakes and the dark can be (with a little time) become a distant memory, except for spiders, that fear never goes away.

THE GREAT FLAME WAR

I remember the Great Flame war, I remember the crater infested wastelands of chat-rooms and video comments. I remember when people stopped fighting in the real world, bought a Mac or PC, a sweet office chair and a lifetime supply of hot pockets.

I remember, instead of using bombs, poison gas & guns, people use to leave comments that caused the reader to explode in anger. The hate from the constant battling would cause it to leak out of the cooling-fan and choke the individual, causing him or hers lungs to bleed. And some words were so hurtful and horrible that is was like bullets from a machine gun shooting at the one that was aimed for, and sometimes the person who had given those hateful words pulled a gun on themselves.

I remember the Great Flame War with its destruction, so great that it left websites into fiery and hollow shells of once great institutions of distribution of knowledge and information. but although I remember the horrors of this war... I see hope. I see the next generation learning from these past experiences and make the internet what it was supposed to do, unite, not divide.

NO STRAWS

For some people in this world, first world problems are just part of life. But for those who come home and are burnt out for the day, one does not wish to make a meal. And those who do not want to make a meal need a back-up or else they will just starve. Luckily for those people there's fast-food. A great achievement of mankind, one could just order his or her meal for a "fair" price. But like all good ideas there are flaws, poor management, brain-dead employee's, and just crap food in general. These tales plague the modern consumer, especially for me. Mismatched orders, undercook food and of course no straw going with my drink. But today is different because I will make sure that my order will be the right order, my food will be well cooked and there will be a straw for me to use in my drink. So I ordered my meal, a bacon-cheeseburger, with french fries, and a Dr.Pepper. And then I paid at the window and got my food. And I drove off to the nearest parking lot, to eat what I had ordered. I opened up the wrapping of my burger and took a bite, it was perfect, it was not undercooked, the bacon stringy or burnt to a crisp, and was not plastered in lettuce. Then I tried the fries, they weren't soggy nor hard as a rock. Then I faintly looked at my drink, I searched frantically for the straw and hoping that it would not be like past experiences. Then I found the straw nudged between the seats, I grabbed it, tore the packaging off and put in the drink, feeling both satisfied and confident, I took a sip from drink, although it did have ice and a straw, my drink missed a key element, the soda.

THE POST-MODERN HAIKU

Forgot to make a Haiku
Frantically writes one
Here it goes

ANDREW ANDERSON AND JONAS ANDERSON

BUTTS

BUTT! BUTT! BUTT!
Have you heard about a butt?
Butts, butts, butts
They're totally nuts

Do you live in a hut with alot of butts?
Butts, butts, butts
It makes me want to struts
They're totally nuts

Do you have cold cuts made from pig butts?
I like pork rinds made by Utz
Butts, butts, butts
They're totally nuts

What's what's what's
Wrong with these sluts
They ain't got big ol' butts
They're totally nuts

Don't you dare call this poem to be smut
Because you're afraid of your big ol' butts
These Butts, butts, butts
Are Totally Nuts.

Collaborative poem by Jonas Anderson and Andrew Anderson*

**no known relation*

JONAS ANDERSON

OH, SHIT

“Wait,” I called him lazily, “Don’t shit in the- Oh- Nope, You’re doing it anyways.” I made my way to the neighbor’s.

“Would you get that thing off my- That vermin! Get that rotten animal out of my sight!”

“Well, your dog’s always shitting in my yard, It’s not my fault I chose kids instead.”

-1st place 2015 Squadala 55-word short story contest winner

THE FLY

A lone fly, nothing more than a nuisance really. Its buzzing intensifies when it nears an ear, and then abruptly stops when it lands on something. The vermin floats back and forth lazily bothering the room’s occupants, a couple, sitting close, meaningless words running back and forth between them. The buzzing intensifies.

bzzzzzzzzZZZZZZZ--

“Son of a bitch!” he yells, his hand darting towards the intruder on his face. The fly finds its resting place there, on the side of his head, hidden in his dark hair.

“Don’t talk to me like that, asshole!” Her hand, that had previously caressed his, flew swiftly to his cheek. She stormed off, satisfied with his reddening cheek and hurt expression.

“Son of a bitch.” he sighed, bringing his hand to his face, where he had been slapped, and had fly guts smeared. Today wasn’t a good day.

DANCE OF THE TREES

Trees dance a sorrowful salsa
howling partners
swaying this way and that
with the grace of an eagle
diving for its unaware prey

They are the most limber
of all timber
for those who dare to resist this ballet
are broken

Falling without sounds for their non-existent audience
the fall of a grand empress
the omnipotent ruler of the forest
has grown ignorant
in her infinite wisdom

Wisdom of birds or bees
of how they thrive with the purpose
of helping the flowers survive

Of the silent feline
who spends hours or days
stalking their innocent prey
by the bright yellow light
of a smiling sun
or the faint smirk of a mischievous moon
her pale caress both sensual and sexual

In the way she holds the forrest
only on certain nights when she feels it is worthy

Now the trees who allow the wind
to lead in its wonderful waltz
live to observe their vivacious village another day

THE TROUT

Under the pale blue sky
Like a nursery's painted walls
A young boy sits
On an old, rotten log

It juts out and over
The stream that trickles by
As clear as the meaning
Of each and every line

He leans over, to one side
To peer into the depths
To observe a rainbow
A fish that darts back and forth

“A trout!” He yells
In an excitement unmatched
“A wonderful rainbow trout!”
He repeats, smiles aplenty

LIFE OF A TREE

Life is like
a leaf on a tree
it's mother holds tight
until the wind sets it free

The spring's new bloom
is its birth on a branch
a playful summer
its young childhood prance

Through to the fall
when it leaves mother's warmth
to answer the call
of life to go forth

LOVER OF THE NIGHT

silver moonbeams rain down
from the lady of the night
who's exotic caress
mystifies me

it terrifies me really
like Rimbaud you are young
but wise and passionate
your beauty shines
to extenuate the beauty in my love

HAIKU

A single Branch
Laden with blossoms
the rest fall dead

green hillside
grey skies caress
ocean's rambling

colorful globes
threaten to escape
Birthdays

Bring to me
endless supplies of
spring flowers

PROOF

I don't know where this train is headed
I'm just along for the ride
A single pebble could derail it
I know, because you've tried

I'm not sure where the kids are going
Expectations have begun
Parents don't quite understand that
They have pushed us to the edge

So I begin to wonder
If this is real life
I jump in to prove to you
That I can survive
And I will thrive

Now I know what I want is
To live a life without fear
Of losing your affection
Or looking in the mirror

CONSTELLATIONS

I look through these frames
So I can see you clearly
I look to the sky
Connecting constellations in your eyes

In the darkest alleys
Of these filthy city streets
My mind can't comfort me
When you're gone

You look straight through me
Saying you'll think about my poetry
And I wait patiently
For you to hear me scream your name

Now lamps illuminate
These alleys that I've known
For far too long
And I must go home

I clean these frames
And see that you've been lying
I look to the sky
And see the constellations have all died

QUESTION FOR THE LITERATE

This is a question for the literate.
Does death have another name?
He is a friend I've thrown away,
that's come back to chew on a new piece of my life.

Not letting me recycle my tall tales.
He hadn't forgotten my legends.

I have walked down this corridor before,
however, there is no meaning this time.
Now that I've expanded upon my freedom,
observe that it does not tax my mind or soul!

Now if you were to orbit 'round us,
knowing there is no medicine to save us,
that you cannot win this battle,
question if this is literal or not.
For it is a question for the literate!

TO HELL WITH POWER & HATE & WAR

To hell with power & hate & war!
Humans destroy all that's beautiful.
There's never been a time when wars have not waged,
Nor a time when power was not the cause.
Hate is not something natural,
It is thrust upon us.

We teach our children
Not to embrace what's unknown,
But instead,
To fear it,
To hate it,
To wage war on it,
And finally,
To claim power over it.

To hell with power,
And to hell with hate,
Finally,
To hell with war!

ABIGAIL AU

UNFINISHED POETRY

lavender incense and sea glass.
fairies burn the edges of my fingertips when i slam the door too hard.
sirens in the silent night.
family heirlooms dangle from your ears.
that money box at the top of your bookshelf that keeps all your secrets.
your eyeliner that runs when you cry, down your cheeks, your neck, your hips.
the salty black tears that escape from your toes.
even the most beautiful people cannot beautify jealousy.
the voice that sounds like saffron and over-spiced blueberry pie.
you remind me of the hard candy from the bottom of my grandmother's purse.

I FEEL LIKE I'M IN AN INDIE MOVIE

quiet and invisible.
walking down the hallway looking down at my shoes.
wondering- unconfident, hanging by the threads i pull out of my sweater when i
get nervous.
waking up my eyes are crystallized.
the demons in my reflection do not soften their grasp.
i am nothing upon nothingness.
dont worry my eyes are just watery.
dont you ever fade.

THOUGHTS AFTER MIDNIGHT

can i take you into my thoughts?
can i take you into my mind?
can i take you into my lips?- dry chapped and angry
chase your dreams.
chase the stars.
reading the evening charm in the moonlight.
painting only with the colors of my night terrors and aspirations.
do you believe in magic?

WHAT WENT WRONG?

stealing quarters from your grandmother's coin purse to buy bubble gum
for the boy you like.
trying to catch butterflies with an umbrella full of leaks.
searching for fairies in the garden cause you have one too many wishes
that can't be granted.
the dulcet memories of my childhood.
memories of bumper cars and cotton candy.
memories of fake pearls and my mother's high heeled shoes.
the glamour of plastic teapots and little plastic tea cups sitting in the grass.
wasting time on cartoons and strawberry lip smackers.
trying to recreate these feelings and emotions at four a.m. in my bedroom.
because now-
it's like this...

PYRRIC LUMBERJACKS

what do you see outside of your silent words?
you see broken twisted, helpless shards of Destiny
what do you hear within the tumult of our memories?
the sound of lips and tongues and hidden things.
insanity is never courteous enough to resist our frail humanity.
for secret eyes to ever forget.
a wounded beautiful lost soul.
enchanted.
breathtaking.
wandering.
searching for a non-existent answer.

SAFE COZY ADVENTURES IN MY DREAMS

lust came to me in a moment.
tempered by waves of cool, cruel.
starlight of dreams and nightmares staring into.
myself, staggering, penetrating into the pores of my skin.
mother nature isn't fair enough.
to judge with veil-less thoughts.
snuck up on and wedged between stairs.
eating strawberry poparts staring for pictures in the ceiling.
have i been here before?
no.
only in a dream.

WHEN ONLY A MILLIMETER OF THE WORLD EXISTS

eyes barely open, barely awake. in the morning when it's barely light outside
eyes that flicker open
and in that second when your eyes unlatch
nothing matters
surrender to the moon.
rebel against the stars.
when only a millimeter of the world exists
no regrets to hold you back
nothing to fight back at your insanity
pouncing at mythical creatures that still linger
around outside of your dreams till you're fully conscious.

SURRENDERING MY SANITY TO YOU

my arm severed by a paper cut.
i am bleeding the ink of Eternity.
human nature, lofty nothings.
demure behind calloused fingertips and broken fractured apparitions.
paper bags over my spirit because i'm too afraid of judgement.
ripples of caramel and social anxiety.
saccharine compliments that make me wonder.

I ONLY DANCE WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING

sparks of bitter sweet flaws that dance across your face.
nefarious insecurities that do not show any mercy.
imperial reflections sublime as a mermaids patchwork.
allow your thoughts and memories of me be blown away
by a single puff of air that escapes from the brims of your lips.
crestfallen the moment i saw you cause i knew i could never be your somebody.

THE REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR GLASSES

looking through a telescope.
wondering.
what is beyond.
the stars.
the moonlight.
they're merely distractions for what truly lies within celestial oblivion.
i want to see past my bedroom walls.
but i am nowhere near brave enough to sustain a conversation.

SAMANTHA BENNETT

REMOVAL

You wanted to know how to remove the emptiness from yourself,
We just didn't know it cannot be removed
We said that hopeless devotion could not grasp the taste of the emptiness within
That the number of continuous beats of a heart deep in the soul that's dark and damp
We heard the screams, silent to the world covered by shadows made of gauze
You fixed the rivers of blood from flowing around the castle of destruction
We wanted to know how to take the light out of someone's soul,
We just didn't know there isn't light anymore
All the golden stuff has been sucked out by the ones we call family
We wanted trust
We wanted life
But all we have are skeletons at the bottom of a sewer ditch
Thank god that skeletons never knew how to break the bones of society

MOURNING

We lie until we catch a tale
So everyone can hear
The mourning light that shudders
We take the pills of fear

We smile while the mourners wail
So nobody with care
The casket leaves a bloody trail
We own our own affair

We children must weep
So the fire does not die
The flowers fell asleep
We flames can only fly

A LETTER TO A FRIEND

Dedicated to John

I'm writing you this letter, for my first try, and I have the notes to show it, but this time it's your birthday, so I had to get you something. Maybe a page in a book? Being as cheap and not-so-smart as I am, I came up with the idea to revise your poem. It was free and easy, (not to mention late) but soon I learned I payed with the most expensive thing, the ink to this pen that I'll never get back, and it wasn't easy at all. I thought that I shouldn't work in the bathroom on the toilet like you did, because let's face it, that'd be pretty weird. So I decided to not write a poem. But if I did, it usually wouldn't have you in it for you are the reason my thumb still hurts from bowling. But I never did write you this poem. This poem would've been about how deeply in love you were with what's-her-face, the hundreds of times you tried with her, and I'll admit it, you tried harder than I would've, but you never did give up. These words were never written in a poem (mostly because I didn't want to ruin your poem, even though you don't consider it one.) That's why I didn't write you a poem. Now if you asked me how amazing you are, I wouldn't waste my time to say how stubborn you can be sometimes. But to be honest, you've been a really good friend. But I never did write you a poem, you wrote one.

LOVE

When love starts is when the letter L begins
Like the white color of his sheets
you slip into after a long day with him
O like the harsh words that slid through his vodka-tasting lips
V like the moment when you finally said, "I'm done" as the tears roll down your face
how when it was your turn, the vodka tasted more bitter than it should have
but it just seemed to feel like the darkness inside of you
the numbing is what helped
E, gray like when the roller coaster of emotions
that decides the plumish its way down without finishing
Love is an emotional roller coaster that only goes down

DEAR USER.

Dear user,
I know how you found me
That market just outside of town
We both know how you got that
Scar on your palm

You got it because of me
Your knives edge caught
To the string coming off of your wrist

So why do you still
Wear me?

Oh I know
It's the only thing
That will remember him

Yes, I know about him too
He was what you thought was your first love
The way you cried yourself to sleep that night

I know what you've done

ALCOHOLIC'S REALITY

Soaked in what feels like yesterday
You're still surrounded
by the note someone gave you with
when they left you
You still read it
You need the reassurance
that proves your nothingness
that prove you won't even glance
towards the way he smiles
Cast a blind eye
on what you thought was reality
Because the truth is
there never was a reality
It was all the lies you told yourself
in the white sheets and the empty bottles clenched
in pale fingers
Dead eyes kept closed by
alcohol
A deep poison now running in the veins
of society
The grey matter is charred
down to a coal black
Your brain is burned to nothing
just like your body

MANY USELESS REASONS

Of the many reasons I love you, here is one
The way you listen the my sleepless voice
like it's the best thing you've heard all day
Or how the cigarette smoke from your clothes still has my scent
And even though no one else would care, you did
And when I tell you I love you
you still say it back
When they say it won't work
you prove them wrong every time
I love the way you make mistakes when you talk
your lips sound out the words
But do you think this all matters?
When the keys fell from my hand, and you turned your head
your hands were still up her shirt
and my hands were trying to wipe away the tears
you caused
after four years
We thought we could make it
But how long had it been?
how long had you placed your lips on someone else's?
The many reasons I loved you don't compare to the
many reasons that I will never love again

QUINCY BOYLE

BODY

Life is like a body
You start with the basics
Skull, ribs, little pinky toe then
Layer on the dripping meat
Pumping with heart's sacred stories.
You place inside the guts of the matter
Love, purity, temptation, intellect,
Finally you drape on the masking flesh
Over all that one calls real.
It's the facade then the story
Then the feeling then
The Dust of creation scaffolded
From the bones of Life.

DEATH UPON DEATH

Death upon Death
The invalids must throw their newfound hope as,
Asleep, doubt chews at the bindings of sanity
Talking endlessly, recycling endlessly
Draining courage from whatever legends we held dear
Even as we pass by amethyst corridors.
The sand of time prowls along our trails
Predatory gleam fleeting but expanding
On ever soundless tick of the clock, a silent tax.

IT'S LIKE THIS

Ghostly beings braid my arms
Into fantastical shapes
Bringing a genius into the world through
Eldritch pen and pencil.

Not everyone sees the future
In multicolored hues of violet green
But I zoom through your timeline
On a cosmic hotline.

The antmen are eating my liver
Because I am a black and white
Prometheus bringing radioactive
Songs to man's ear.

I can feel the drums
Tickling my nose with their
Feathery arm tentacles
To dust out the stink spirits.

I go crazy and take my mind apart
Looking for the reset button
But I remember, too late,
I lost that to Bast as a cat toy.

You think you know what
It is to be me?
Walk a mile or two in this head
And you'll find
It's like this.

DRIFTING MADNESS

Occasionally we stop and die
Floating on wheelchairs
Made of the roots of giants.
The Sequoias are singing, lamenting,
Joyful they dance in the valley
Of your oppressive happiness.

We do not know the mystic
But it knows us more than
The leaves that fall when
Demeter descends to the
Deadlands where
All of us wanted to live.

Don't lie, young brother,
Don't lie to your prostrated self
You lived in Death before
Death reaped you
Then, in Death, you found a twisted
Forbidden life.

I wanted to listen to your
Keening wails so I could
Hear the sound of Mystic.
I wanted the Magic.
Please, please, would you wail for me
Little brother?

PERFECTION

Kids looking in mirrors hoping to find something
Something they know isn't there but they look anyway
And when they don't find what they're looking for
They claw at it as if their bleeding fingers will fix their image

Spend all day staring at magazine pages full of photo-shopped
Aspiring to be the next sex charged bombshell
Showing off plastic gazongas and fat pumped butts
Because they don't know anything else

Red screen internet TV streamin' from wifi to mind
Taking up their time with 10 dollar a month
Sex, drugs, and forbidden thoughts
Read straight from a well organized top 10 comcast guide

We lose our self in the clickety-clack of
Texting while we sext away our teenage lives
Turning the "greatest years of our lives" into
The "top 10 reasons I lie about my name"

Caught in a vortex of supposed satisfaction
promised by midnight promos for the newest products
Hitting shelves near you before you saw the commercial
And hitting your coffee table at a thousand mph when it's done

It's all an attempt to search for something unattainable,
Unexplainable, undefinable, lost in a web of consumer culture
Rushing to produce the next consumer dream all
Bubble wrapped twice in checkmark Amazon packaging

They all want to see, hear, touch, taste, smell, and be
Perfection, not realizing that every day
They are walking in a world of masks and facades
Wrapped with a pretty little bow marked "perfect"

They take this meaningless word and slap it on every surface
Hoping the label overrides reality like
Baking a cake with shit instead of whole wheat
And thinking it'll taste sweet and creamy

People are putting on their masks so they don't have to show
Themselves to an audience wanting the same
Love and acceptance as you but
Just as terrified no one will see the beauty in their flaws

Stop reaching for what you can't have
Through every available media at your disposal
And reach for all things you can have
If only you took off your mask

The sound of the birds outside your cracked window, peace.
The taste of lips on lips helping the other breathe, love.
The rolling laughter of the waves on your toes, happiness.
Peel off the perfect and let out what's real.

LOFTY NOTHINGS

What do you see outside of your silent words?
You see broken, twisted, helpless shards of Destiny.
What do you hear within the tumult of our memories?
The sound of lips and tongues and hidden things.
Insanity is never too shy of a bird
For secret eyes to ever forget.

Lust came to me in a moment
Tempered by waves of cool, cruel
Starlight of dreams and nightmares staring into
Myself. Staggering, penetrating into the pores of my skin.
Mother nature isn't fair enough
To judge with veil-less thoughts

My arm severed by a paper cut,
I am bleeding the ink of Eternity.
Human nature, lofty nothings.

SHITTY POETRY

This is not a masterpiece, this pile of shit
 issuing forth from the wrong end of my
 twisted mouth
This is not the fairy song and dust you asked
 for in your naive letter to Eternity
This is not a promise to keep locked up in
 your rusting locket of a heart.
This is not what I wanted to say but what
 wanted to be said
Stop listening to me
 Stop listening to me
 Stop listening to me
why won't you leave an old man to grow young
 with mindful ignorance?

SEX

Inappropriate touching in school hallways
Darting eyes, forced breath, apprehensive sweet
She bites her lip and he bites her neck
Pounding beats of a frantic heart
 Jackhammer
 Abuse the skin and bloody pump
Sitting in classrooms watching the teacher
 walk and talk taunting you with lips and arms
Touch yourself while laying on the bed
Listening, listening to music you'd like to screw to
It is
 Not
 About
 Love
It's about the bite and the bruise and
 orgasm screams
Don't tell me you Love me, tell me you Want me
The taste of skin and blood and I'll tell
 you the same the perfume of your sweat
 an intoxicating mist of effervescent lust
Fuck me and I'll Fuck you entwining arms and
 legs and other Holy parts too powerful to name
Explode outward, inward, everywhere with the feeling
 that you are Wanted
Fat, skinny, tall, short, smart, dumb, sexy, flat, cardboard
cutouts it doesn't matter when all you want to do
 is
Want

TABOO EATING

Can I eat you?
I feel urges one would
Think was dark but
Darkness is defined
By minds leashed.
What is taboo?
Truly, undeniably,
Filled with the truth of it.
What is taboo?

Some would say Life
Is taboo.
Crawling from the rocks,
Animation is taboo.

Some would say Death
Is taboo.
Falling on us like a rain of silk.

With every action we take
Do we spit in the eye
Of some cyclopic god?
Do we curse unsaid laws,
Bend and break unknown
Edicts of flesh and bone?
How am I to Know
The will of something,
Some being?
I do not know
And I think...
I do not care.

PORTRAITS OF POETRY

Poetry passed me in the hall
This winter morning,
He knocked me on my ass
And spat gum
Into my hair

Poetry was dancing
Last week
Bare thighs and arms
Twining round the pole
Drunk men holding their boners

Poetry won the costume contest
This past month
Dressed up in tinfoil
And an orange street cone
It was beautiful

Poetry came to my house
This dawn
Threw me on the bed
Whispered in my ear.
We were late for school.

Poetry came to my dreams
Last night
Muddied them up with
Sex and food
But left out the soundtrack.

Poetry is an odd friend
always wanting
to fuck
to love
to eat
to shit
to steal
to mold
to run
to stop
to lie
to hate
to fuck

Poetry is an odd friend
But...
I don't mind.
The best things in life
Usually are.

MYSELF AN ANGRY SONG

I'm not an angry man on the side of a road somewhere in Mississippi
yelling about the day God gave birth to the tomato!
Why don't you believe me when I say I'm a horny bastard with
visions of naked women and feminine men running in the field
of esoteric sex?!

I don't think you quite understand the severity of your situation
sitting in the same room as the tick-tick-ticking
of a poet gone mad!

Boom-boom-Pa! Speak to me in words I understand or go away
so I can reach enlightenment!
Enlightenment's a lie I dreamt up that one day I asked God
why I was always always forgetting things and cried
in the first upstairs room to the left!

SETH BUTOW

TREVOR

You were always there
You were taken
Taken too early
My best friend
My brother
You were there like no other
Even when my life was down
You kept me going
You were my backbone
I miss you Bubba
Please come home
I miss you Trevor

[UNTITLED]

I saw the best minds of my generation disappear from this Earth,
I saw them screaming for help in life but never got any.
I have seen them glisten in the rays going up to heaven.
Whose eyes were always filled with joy, and are now overdone with depression.
Whose once strong beliefs against our Lord
were flipped upside down and changed at the face of death.
Whose face never seemed to be off beat, now pale and drained of all happiness.
Whose stories never failed to make us happy, now turned into their final will.
Why?

SQUADALA

I'm in the library with thousands of people, and I pick up a poem.

It all went dark except for the poem. It draws me in
with it's abundance of words. I seem to drift when I see the word
"Squadala."

I

come back from my thoughts on the last line of the poem
as it says, "Best Class Ever!"

POETRY

It's just like an essay
You just can't stop writing
It grabs you in with its inky paws
When all of a sudden you're lost!
It drew you in where nothing else matters but you and your paper
You have been writing for hours
But still nothing else matters
You pause for a minute to see what you have down
And there it is
CRAP!

COLLABORATION

Humans destroy all that is beautiful,
But that doesn't mean I can't have hope of helping you mend every thought
so you know that hope is a beautiful thing.
I know I sit here on my solo ice cream dates and then spew my bottomless
work bank to you could be the thing that kills me
But thinking about you, and about you going on the long journey to loving
yourself, is the thing that keeps me going.
Because I know the dust of creation, created me to know giving, and loving
is the way to pure happiness The reason I haven't lost hope is because
without you, I am nothing.
But until the day you realize your true beauty, I will keep pulling you closer
even if it may kill me because this is my way to happiness and my way of
feeling
Alive.

PAJAMAS

So cozy
So soft
So beautiful
How?
Why?
I love you so
Why can't I wear you 24/7
It's because of you my nights are Heaven
Please...
Just always be on me

PEOPLE SUCK

People are everywhere. They are everywhere and there is little we do about it. The human race so far is the top dog; on land at least. But we're trying to spread even more nonetheless.

It's for science. Haven't you ever wanted to see the bottom of the sea? Don't you want to look down on the world from above? Do you believe in extraterrestrials? Yes. Of course I do. But we have progressed enough. We haven't evolved in thousands of years. We need to work on that. We need-

"Jess, are you writing again?" my brother's voice disturbs the thought train in my mind.

"What do you want, Felix?" I answer slightly annoyed. I always lock the door to our room when I'm doing something and I want to be alone, yet he always gets in. I know he's going to grow up a robber or something.

"Is it the old, 'There are too many people. We haven't evolved in thousands of years' thing?" he asks while doing stupid hand gestures. God I hate him. Just because he has a 4.0 he thinks he's better than me. Ugh. Brothers.

"Go away Felix. I don't need your crap. Don't you have a party to ruin? Or maybe an elderly home to burn down?" Felix never leaves me alone when I want to be. Just because we're twins, share a room, and have some common interests, doesn't mean we have to be together 24/7.

Felix feigns hurt. "You wound me, Dear 'sister'. Parties are usually ecstatic when I bless them with my presence. And I burn down abandoned barns, not elderly homes. Especially the one grandma's in. She'd haunt me for sure." We both shiver when he says 'grandma.' She's more of an evil witch. "Anyway, I came up here to tell you: 'You've got mail!'" Felix handed me a light blue envelope along with a tiny pink box tied with an equally blue ribbon. The letter had a heart seal. What the fuck?

Did Felix just hand me a love letter? Me? The 'tranny' of the school. Something was off. I look at Felix's face. Slight amusement. I scowl at him and take my mail.

"Thanks," I mutter. Felix salutes me and walks out of the room. I look at the letter in my hand while setting the box on my desk next to my laptop. Maybe it's from a cute girl. Or possibly even a boy. What if our cousin Elle is just trying out a new way of posting her letters? The possibilities are endless.

I break the heart shaped seal and open the envelope. A pale pink piece of paper hides in between the blue walls. I feel a sort of comfort looking at it.

I take the sheet of folded paper, unfold it, and stare at the beautiful handwriting. After about three minutes of admiration, I actually read the letter:

*Dear Jess (is that what you're called now?),
You have guts. I always knew you were gay, I just didn't think you
would come out by going feminine. Dresses fit you, though.*

*I've heard some rumors that you are now a disappointment
to your entire family. Is that true? I know my family would say
that.*

*Everyone at school is calling you a joke now. That boys
shouldn't wear pink, frilly, girly things. I somewhat agree with
them. A guy in a little pink thong is just too much for the world
right now.*

*Listen, I've included a little gift with this letter, as you can
see I guess since this came with a small box(heh). If you wear it to
school, I'll know you got this. I don't exactly trust your brother.*

*Please look for someone wearing the same thing. They're
custom made, so it'll be hard to get confused. I hope you like it.*

Sincerely,

Me

*P.S. I'm not going to reveal my name until
I speak to you in person. Like I mentioned earlier, I don't exactly
trust your brother. See you at school! (>"> <:) ;) ;D*

The letter droops in my hands. I don't even know what to think of this letter. Is it supposed to be a hate letter? A support letter? I don't know! All I know is: something is waiting in the box on my desk.

I set the letter down and pick up the box next to it gently. The box itself was just a pearly pink surrounded by a blue ribbon. I tug on the ribbon and the bow on top slips away to the empty pink. Unnerved, I open the box.

I pinch a white ribbon to see what was inside. What I find was a small pinkish stone in the shape of a bird. Maybe a sparrow. I'm calling it a sparrow. When I held it up in the light, the stone's pink brilliance was blinding.

Outside a bird sings and I look out the window. There's a colourful bird sitting in a tree not too far from my house. I get up from my chair to get a closer look at it, sparrow still in hand, and the bird flies away. Did that bird see who left the letter and present? Maybe it knew secrets we don't. Maybe I'm going insane. Definately I'm going to go make some pizza rolls.

I tie the ribbon around my neck, tuck the sparrow in my sweater, and head downstairs to the kitchen hopefully void of life.

~~~~~

"So who was the letter from?" Felix asks me as we were getting ready for bed. We have a bunk bed. Two actually. They were for whenever we would get mad at each other and we wouldn't be close enough to strike each other. But tonight is just like any other and I take the bottom bunk.

"Didn't say. Why do you care so much? Afraid I'll leave you forever?" I tease as I take off my shirt. I put the necklace in my secret box earlier.

"Nah. We're twins. I'll always find you and bring you home. Built in Twin-Tracker."

"Ahh. Of course."

"I'm just curious. You've never gotten mail like that before and I just want to see how you're holding up. Gotta protect my sis, don't I?" Felix hugs me from behind.

"Please. You just want someone to brag or gossip to. You can't not talk to someone about your day," I retort.

"No, I just like to talk to myself as I write little lectures about over population and wear dresses," he says. I sneer at him. When he says he talks to himself, he actually means me; and I usually roll my eyes and let it go. For such a smart kid, he is an idiot.

"I'm pretty sure even you wouldn't want to hear about your day. 'You would not believe how many girls came up and asked for my number.' Lame, dude," I say as I climb into my bed. I reach for my little curtain to give myself some privacy, but Felix stops my hand.

"Really, though. Do you know how many girls asked for it though?" he asked. I groan and nudge him away with my foot. He laughs and climbs up the ladder onto his bed.

"Goodnight Jess."

"Goodnight, Loser."

~~~~~

At school the next day, everyone is in their usual cliques. Cheerleaders, jocks, gamers, nerds, stereotypical white girls, rich kids, hipsters, and my family away from family: the bloggers.

I make my way to the group and I am greeted by a few 'hey's and 'yo's, as well as the lovely typing of laptops. I sit down at a desk and pull out mine. Lucky for me, I got a new one this Christmas to replace the piece of crap I had before. Thank you Best Buy.

I pull up my blog and start typing away. My brother may be the smart one, but I am a whiz at computers and such.

We had a contest to see who could type the fastest in three minutes in my group. I won, but the other guy, Charlie, was a close second... by two hundred words! BOO YEAH! The prize was a little ribbon on your blog that said: 'Faster Than All Yo Fools!' Long story short, I wear the title proudly.

A pair of blue nailed hands slam my laptop shut; and right on my fingers.

"Son of a bitch!" I yell as I retreat my hands to my chest. I glare at the culprit: Sara. "What the Hell was that for? All you have to do is

tap on my fucking shoulder!"

"Wow. Kiss your mother with that mouth? And could you get any louder? Geez. Hey, Did you do last week's trig homework? I need answers," Sara likes to make my life a living Hell sometimes. Her short red hair was held back by a headband with devil horns. Fitting.

"No. Don't you remember? I transferred out of trig and into geometry. Go see if Dante does. He's still in that class, right?" I try to shoo her away, but instead she sits her skinny ass on my desk. I save my computer from the horrible fate of almost getting farted on. She would do it too.

"Yeah, He's there, but things have gotten bumpy between us since you left." Sara lays back and her top half lands on another desk. That student glares at her and moves away. "Your loss nerd," she says to him as he sat at a desk at the back of the room.

"Listen Sara, as much as I'd like to fix your relationship, I have things to attend to. I only showed you guys that you both had a few things in common; nothing more, nothing less," I lecture at her. As I was going to pull up another topic the bell rings signaling everyone to get their butts to class.

Sara moans. "Ugh. Fine. I'll see you later, Joel. Break sound good?"

I glared at her. "Jess," I correct her. "And no actually. I have someone to meet up with. Maybe lunch." I recalled the letter I got and touched my new necklace. I gesture at the door with my chin. "Now go! Disturb your own class. Do your job earning your throne in Hell."

Sara sticks her pierced tongue out at me and exits the classroom. I pull out my laptop once more.

My first class was Creative Writing - or as we've renamed it: Kingdom of Butts. I voted for 'Democratic Dufuses' but I was out voted drastically. Teenagers. They always want something immature. Thank God it wasn't named 'Dick's Dukedom'. A lot of freshmen voted for that, mainly boys.

"Morning class," my teacher greets as she enter the classroom. She wore her regular ensemble: tan capris, white blouse, black stilettos, and her dream catcher necklace was hanging down to her ribs. What people never expect in a teacher, her especially from how professional she sounds on the phone or in an email, is her cobalt blue hair. How did

she even get this job with her hair that color?

“Morning,” we all reply back to her. She has us reply to every greeting she gives us because she knows most of us would never speak otherwise.

Our teacher, she has us call her Nessie -???- , smiles and says, “Let’s get down to business. Say you’re a character who’s... I don’t know, skydiving for the first time in their life. I want you all to write down how they feel, if they’re going to go through with it, and what they’re going to do afterwards; or where they go if they don’t do it. Go!”

With that everyone was typing. I do a scenario where the main character does go skydiving, and the person he jumps with seems to be a really cool guy but is actually a psycho and planning the main character’s death. They get along great (seemingly) and prepare for the jump.

Finally it’s time for take off. The main character is nervous, of course, but his partner eases his nerves. With the plane in the sky, people safely buckled together, they open the door. The sound of the wind was deafening. The character takes one last look inside. Too soon, he was falling.

The guy pulls the cord and the parachute blooms. But the character keeps falling. The last thing he sees is a giant green and white striped flower, slowly growing and creeping towards him.

In the end, I have the jump buddy say, “The clips broke! Before I knew what was happening, he was too far!”

I hit submit right as the bell rings. I pack up my computer and head to my next class: English.

~~~~~

English goes by without a hitch. Other than a few notes that ‘somehow’ found their way to my desk. They were not polite. Not at all.

But now is break and I’ve an Anon to find. I clutch the sparrow at my chest and go onward to find the sender. I look in the cafeteria, then tri, the library, even the bathrooms. No one wearing the same necklace as me. I give up and go to the front of the school. My school has a large, expansive yard, filled with patches of flowers, weeds, and mainly trees. Great for when it gets hot. Good shade spots.

Today somebody is already sitting under my reserved kiwi tree, eating one with a spoon that he'd probably got from the cafeteria. I am a little mad. This is MY tree. I've basically claimed it for the whole year, kind of like how you go to that one seat in class.

The person gains awareness of my presence and stops eating. They look back at me and smiles. His eyes are a beautiful green. Like the clover we feed our bunny at home; her name is Celia. His hair is slightly wavy and a pale brown. And I mean pale, like a couple shades above blond. His cheeks looked squishy and covered with freckles. He's cute...

I look to his throat. No necklace. Disappointment fills my lungs. This wasn't my anonymous letter sender. So he isn't worth my time.

I sigh. "I usually sit over here. This is like, my spot. I'd appreciate it if you'd find another place to hang out," I say. The boy takes a bite out of his kiwi, looking my way straight in the eyes. He swallows and replies with, "I don't think so. I like the kiwis here." He looks around and finishes with, "And I like the scenery. It's almost as pretty as you."

The boy stands up, wipes his hand on his pants, and holds it out to me. "Hi. I'm Aaron. It's nice to meet you, Queen Sass."

I am stunned. Not only does he have the balls to talk back to me, he already gave me a nickname! What. The Hell? I puff out my cheeks and say, "My name is Jess. Not Queen Sass. And You're not making a very good impression." He just smiles. Oh God, it's a cute smile. An innocent one. Noooo. I sigh deeper than I have in weeks.

"Oh really now? Says the one who tells me to beat it," Aaron replies smugly.

"... Fine. You can stay. But only for this break, got it?" I clarify so he doesn't get the idea of coming back. Aaron's smile grows wider and he sits back down. I sit about two feet away from him.

"I would've gone somewhere else, but everywhere I went, people. Even the roof," Aaron explains. This school has an all access roof, like in the animes my brother watches. Imagine his delight. "Sometimes, I just think the world would be better off without so many people."

His comment startles me. I haven't met anyone who had the same ideas of people as me. Usually people thought it was a bit too harsh to think that.

"I know exactly what you mean. We are crowding the Earth way more than we should be. I always think, *Stop having so much unprotected sex everyone!* At least for a generation. I mean geez, there's more people than resources," I rant.

We continue talking, and eventually veer off from that topic, for the rest of break. When the bell rings saying get to class, Aaron gets up from his 'draw me like one of your french girls' pose and stretches. His shirt raises a little. I can't help myself; I look at his tummy. Something on his belt loop catches my eye and I freeze.

Hanging on his left belt loop was a ribbon. A bright red ribbon. And at the bottom of the ribbon is a sparrow, wings tucked in, and staring at me in it's bright pink brilliance.

"Well now, shall we go to class, Jess?"

~End~

# YESENIA CEJA

## CEMETERY

desperate hands crawling hoping for a little affection  
not yet realizing that they are far from the living  
confused looks  
crystal tears run down their absent faces  
I see them and they know  
they flash a haunting smile at me  
but I stand - unafraid  
because I know that one day I will be with them  
I will be part of the loneliness  
their mouths move but I'm surrounded by loud silence  
then I lay down - death joins me  
together we fade  
into the darkness of nothing

## SHOWERS IN POISON

I feel bloody tears  
burning - running down my thoughts  
I turn and plead to be left alone  
I am desperate for a soothing voice  
because all I hear are screeches  
a creeping sin  
entering my mind  
poisoning me



## **COLORS HAVE MEANING**

what is life without color  
without red poisoning apples and stained cherry lips  
without orange fall leaves and captivating sunsets  
without yellow creeping pythons and glistening sunflowers  
without green fortuitous clovers and indecisive chameleons  
without blue unreachable skies and endless seas  
without purple fluorescent lavender fields and obscure galaxies  
life is meaningless without color  
are you

## **FALL**

thick brown branches full of scars -  
which were scraped, tortured, and handled by greedy hands  
trees letting go of their blood red leaves - too weak to hold on  
blood has left its veins  
and now falls leaving sadness on the soil that soon will also die  
the wind blows the sheddings away  
as if this way they will be forgotten  
nothing is left but the dull grass  
desperate for a tear to moisten its roots  
darkness has sucked beauty out of the land

## MONARCH

monarch -  
beautiful creature  
blessed with excellence  
it evolves immensely  
starts off crawling  
on the wet dirt and the dense branches  
when it rains it squirms on the walls  
hoping for protection  
when it feels ready  
it searches carefully  
for its temporary home  
then it covers itself  
in a thick outer protection  
goes through its incredible changes  
when it's entirely done  
it escapes through its shell showing its true delicacy

## DYING SLOWLY

is my curse a scowling death  
mindless beings throwing away their souls  
silent screams expand all through the empty halls  
my lashes are coated in tears  
my dreams never change  
creatures questioning their lives  
trying to keep our world from orbiting  
blood is now a distant legend  
we have nothing to live for  
but we have plenty to die for

## **TRAVELING**

wheels turning  
none of the images are clear  
all I see are the blurry lights surrounding me  
bright - straight into my eyes  
all is unclear  
waves of thoughts and wonder  
enter my mind  
consuming me  
my life has ended

## **THE NIGHT ROUTINE**

the glow of the television is all she sees  
her mom walks in and wishes goodnight  
but this girl can't dream  
she has been devoured by her demons  
ones she wishes she wouldn't have to face alone  
but they come every night  
controlling her mind  
and she feeds on the ones she loves the most

## THE MAN ACROSS THE STREET

with his cheap coffee  
and his somewhat warm clothes  
he sits on nature

## POETRY

the words lay scrambled  
in a complex form  
and as i read them out loud  
the tongue dances  
the sound is pure music  
playing with the senses  
we all need poetry  
yet some give it a cruel denial  
rejecting the power it gives  
and its outstanding creativity  
poetry makes an untold story  
mysterious and bold

## BROKEN

his smile is welcoming  
but there is a darkness beneath it  
a demon taking over his body  
there is no shine in his eyes  
all i see is hatred  
hatred towards the world that broke him  
that took his mother away

he was once innocent -  
he had bright eyes  
and when you looked into them  
you saw constellations of hope  
you would feel safe in his arms

i'm trying to break through the walls he's built around him  
protecting from feeling anything  
these walls will never break  
and i will never see him again

# CHLOE CHEVALIER

## A WISH UPON A ROSE

It's a snowy day outside. People have their coats and scarves wrapped tightly around their bodies. There are no cars in the street and the snow is piled up. Children laugh and play, the storefronts are all closed. It seems that everyone is happy. But if you go down a few streets, through an alley, and up a long, deserted driveway, you will find yourself to be mistaken. There is a lonely girl, she is about 16, with long, black hair and pale skin. Her eyes are bright blue and wide. Her lips, plump and red. She's a beautiful girl whose father keeps her locked up in his mansion. He leaves her for days at a time, taking his keys with him. She has a garden of white roses on her balcony. She decides to make a wish. She knows it won't come true but she does it anyways. She wishes that someone would find her up in her father's mansion and take her to the city for just a day. Just then, she pricked her finger on a rose. A drop of blood falls from her finger, landing in the snow. She looks at the vibrant red circle against the pure white snow when she hears a yell. She looks across the driveway to see a boy about her age with blonde hair and hazel eyes running towards her. She wonders if her wish came true.

## THE MAN ON THE CORNER

There is a man at a street corner. He is wearing a satin tophat. It is a dark, wet night in the '20's. He looks around at the grimy, brick walls. A couple rushes by, the girl's heels clicking on the street. He begins to walk to the jazz club by the alley. He walks in and the music gets louder. People laughing, glasses clinking, heels all over the floor. People travelled from all over town to dance the sequins off their flapper dresses. He is a rather handsome man, so he does not go unnoticed by the ladies as he walks to the booth in the back.

Girls flirtatiously asking him, "How 'bout a drink?" or, "Come and dance with me handsome."

He ignores them because he has one mission. He must get to the back booth. He sees the teeth smiling at him, telling him to stop for only a second, think about what he's doing. He reaches the booth as the jazz seems to get louder and the people seem to laugh harder.

It's as if it's in slow motion when she sees him. The look on her face as she drops her glass and it shatters on the floor. The sequins of her dress shine and in that moment, she realized that you can't escape fate.

## WHAT IS FEAR?

From what freedom freed  
From what fastness unfastened  
What is fear?  
From darkness to light  
From dreams to nightmares  
What is fear?  
Is it the monsters under your bed  
Or the glowing eyes in your closet  
What is fear?  
Falling off a building  
Drowning in the ocean  
What is fear?  
The fingers of trees scratching at your window  
The creaks of ghosts on the stairs  
What is fear?  
I know what it is  
Do you?



## HOPE

H, the color of yellow daisies  
swaying in the breath of the wind

O, the opal that shines  
bringing beauty to the world

P, the purple heart  
spreading the love of thousands of souls

E, the green grass  
as you leap through the fields with joy

Hope is a rather colorful thing

# GHOST

She follows me everywhere  
When I turn around  
She's there  
Always watching  
Always listening  
She's so familiar  
I can't remember a time  
When she wasn't there  
We're so similar  
Yet so different  
I'm alive  
And she's dead  
No one can see her  
But I can  
She never talks  
But if she ever did  
I'd know what her voice would sound like  
She is me  
I am her  
My own ghost  
Is stalking me

## WHO

Who walks across the beach  
    with sandals on their feet.  
Who doesn't let things go  
    when they're over and done with.  
Who falls head over heels  
    for someone they can never have.  
You. Me. Him. Her. Everyone.  
    No. Let's start over.  
Walk across the beach barefoot  
    feeling the grains of sand under your feet.  
Let things go and don't drag it on  
    when it will make you hurt.  
Fall for someone who will love you unconditionally  
    and make your day better.  
Forget the sad, depressed, and angry people  
    Let them live their lives while you live yours:  
        Happy and blissful.

## THE GREEN LEAF

I grow into a big green leaf  
Watching people pass by me  
Occasionally stopping to sit under my mother  
I listen to their conversations  
I know all of their secrets  
The seasons change  
I begin to turn colors  
I feel myself slowly falling away  
I flutter to the ground  
I blow away into the wind  
Never coming back again

## LITTLE PEARL EARRINGS

Little pearl earrings,  
Did you come from the ocean? From a clam?  
What if a mermaid made you with her magical hands?  
Were you with her when she swam, oblivious to the fishermen above  
her?  
Did you travel far by her side?  
Did she take you home to give to her daughter?  
How did you end up in my hands? In my ears?  
Were you lost on the vast ocean floor? Does she miss you?  
What if there is no such thing as mermaids?  
Were you found by an ordinary human being?  
Did a sorceress cast a spell to make you magical? Maybe even cursed?  
Honestly though, who knows?  
There are about a million things you could have done before finding your  
way to me.

## MARTHA THE MOLLUSK

Once upon a time, there was a cute little mollusk, a clam to be exact. She was a rambunctious little thing, her curiosity always seeming to get her in trouble. Down on the bottom of the sea was a community of other little clams, which was where she lived. Let's call this little clam Martha. Martha's home, Pearl Union, was a sweet little town. Everyone knew and loved her, but they also knew about her curiosity problem.

One morning, Martha was drifting along the bottom of the sea when a shadow passed above her. It was a circular shape and naturally, she was very curious as to what it might be. She waited for a current to come so she could ride it to the surface and check it out. It came and gently lifted her up. She loved the feeling of floating. She looked around and spotted the UFO (Unidentified Floating Object) and let the current carry her over to it. She nudged it, trying to see if it would move. Meanwhile, her BCF (Best Clam Forever) Anna, had noticed Martha had disappeared to the top. Anna knew a lot more about the outside world than BCF did.

Martha was still confused as to what the UFO was when Annie said, "Oh look! It's salami!"

## MOM?

“Why won’t you let me go?” whined Melissa.

“I don’t want you to go to that party.” replied her mom.

“Ugh, you’re the worst mom EVER!” she said as she turned towards the TV and saw a little girl’s face flash across the screen.

“It’s the 16th anniversary of the day little baby Melissa was kidnapped and never seen again.”

# ANA CORONA

## LOVE

I'm all smiles when you're crossing my mind  
I think I like you  
And when we're talking for hours  
I know I like you  
Because your voice is addictive like meth  
You're a never stopping train in my head  
Sweet sweet pollution of words in my heart  
I think that I love you  
But this distance pulls us apart  
I'll cross the states 'till you're by my side  
Because I want you bad  
And I'm going mad with the time  
I'd kill to be in your bed  
Staring at the ceiling, looking for stars  
Dreaming of a love that reaches the sky

## LOVE 2

I always thought it was me  
That I fucked things up  
But the truth slips out of a smiling face  
It was you  
It was all you

## LOVE 3

I love you  
Sleeps on my lips, dormant  
One day, perhaps



## TAWNI

To everyone out there you suck  
A buttoad of you blow  
When will you stop kidding the world  
Now, make way for the princess  
I love Tawni Kerbs

## KIDS MY AGE SUCK

Guys, who needs them?  
They just keep you up at night  
With bullshit sweet nothings about how you're such a great gal  
My, do they know how to make a girl feel special  
God are they fucking clever with words  
They sew up these fake stories and feelings  
And watch you dance and stumble in their palms  
"Bailey you're great, I can never see you not in my life"  
But while you give them your back for just a split of a second to brag to  
your friends about what a great guy you've met  
They move along trying to score with another pathetic chick  
"Samantha I swear, I can never see you not in my life"  
But I thought  
I thought I was the one  
Bitch please,  
You were never the one  
You're not sexy you see  
Being clingy and desperate gives them a bore  
Being insecure and problematic drives them insane  
Bitch please, Control yourself  
You'll make a fool of yourself  
Dont give him a story about how you've dealt with one of him already  
Don't cry and complain can't you see that he's yawning  
Guys, why the fuck do they need to act like such assholes?  
Girls, why the fuck do they need to fall for such idiots?  
Kids, why the fuck do you need to want to be in love?

## BECAUSE EVERYONE LOVES SAD POETRY

what is an attempt, but a fail  
shame burns through your veins  
you don't always get what you wish for  
they say take matters into your own hands  
but these frail weak thin fingers shake  
wrap your thoughts on this feverish expression  
she looks in the mirror but this eyesight wavers  
with tears induced by pain  
there's a long deep inside her chest  
behind skin tight bones  
sadness protrudes from her jutting collarbone  
let's attempt to make this better  
what do you do when you fail?  
applaud because she tried?  
cry because trying wasn't good enough  
the gurney takes her away  
pills take away the ability to think  
she takes away the light in your eyes  
i'm sorry you found her this way  
tell them to stop trying  
you can't pump the sadness away  
is there a predicament in this situation?  
you can't take matters into your own hands if everyone's against you  
tell her I love her  
and I don't know what's sadder  
the fact that she tried to escape  
or the fact that she couldn't get her wish

## HATE THE WORLD

What is love?  
Is it the word you give to lust  
Is it the 4 letter word that you moan  
when your boyfriend of 1 month goes down on you  
Its what you say to convince yourself sex wasn't just sex  
That this thing  
This thing you have with this one guy is legitimate  
That This one guy you met the other night  
This one guy you jumped into the sack with right after formal introductions  
Was more than just a one pleasurable night  
That these things that you had with a handful of guys were legitimate  
That Anthony, Bryan, Chris, Danny, Elijah, and Freddy,  
Didn't just use you for your body  
Love, why do we claim to be in love  
Why do we let our knees go weak at the sight of a guy we'd die to let fuck us  
No its not just lust  
Of course I can be in love with my fuck buddy  
I mean I love his face, I love his body  
Have you seen his tanned six pack  
Fuck do I love his dick  
This surely means I love him, of course it does  
Stop being realistic and realize I'm in love  
Dont be a prude, stop being jealous  
It's not just sex, it's called making love  
Honey please, he's in love with your tits  
Its a 4 letter word and i'ts not love  
But last night he swore that he loved me  
Was he in the middle of coming?  
Yeah, but-  
Honey you're so dense that it hurts  
I think it's called lust, and he was lying  
Or maybe you're lying, guys aren't the only to blame  
Maybe your daddy issues fill up the void and cause you to declare  
your feelings with that one guy twice your senior over one lousy text  
One lousy text that gets replied with another lousy text  
a text where a 30 year old man declares to be in love  
with your 15 year old idiotic self  
And as you ride him into the night you scream you're in love  
Love love love  
Isn't love the greatest  
Lust Lust Lust  
Isn't calling lust love the greatest

## THREE'S NOT A PARTY

She stumbles into your life  
With a bottle of Vodka and a bad cigarette in her lips  
And I sit in my room  
Staring at a old dull blue lighter  
That lit those shared drags  
We went to such trouble  
Traveling through lies  
In hopes of a safe-heaven  
To blow away your bad thoughts  
But with her it's no trouble  
You run from my bed  
And find yourself in her place  
A small crooked smile that used to be mine  
With each drink you walk farther  
So I inhale and ignore  
It's sad to know I might be losing us  
She takes you to new places  
And I keep you locked in my room  
Because I fear I wont be enough  
I have rules, I'm barely 17  
And she's 18, she's free  
If I give you a good time  
She'll give you the best fucking time of your life  
I can't compete  
Admit it, shes better at this game  
Weekend after weekend you make your way to her  
And she gets you tipsy  
Then you find your lips on hers  
I dont know what to do  
Will you still want me after that  
Is she not enough?  
Am I not enough?  
I can't ask you to stay forever with me

## WHAT COMES AFTER LOVE

Dear Fuckface,  
Hey, it's been a while...  
But I still hate you  
You see,  
Acid is rolling in my stomach  
And I haven't felt this sick in a while  
My throat is heavy and empty  
My eyelids swooping down from the loss of water  
I'm feeling like complete utter shit  
Your name, Your words  
They're rushing through my mind like a current with strong winds  
And I'm falling down  
Sinking deeper and deeper in the mud  
While you sit in a red car  
My feet are tired from climbing up the slopes of our memories  
To that climax that destroyed me  
It must be a sweet pain  
Because I always think about it  
I think and think and relieve every word  
Hoping to drill them in my heart  
So I can finally escape  
I turn away and run, a chanting in my head  
"I don't really care, I don't really care, I don't really care"  
While my heart is screaming  
"You can't run away"  
And it's true, I can't run away  
But maybe If I stick a finger down my throat you'll get out of my stomach  
Because I know you're the empty air inside it  
It's you who's driving me insane  
Making me cringe at the thought of food  
So lets take a quick potty break  
And get the fuck out of my body  
Because I blame you for the dropped eyes  
And I blame you for the nausea  
I blame you for the heart break  
I blame you for fucking with me even when you're not here  
I blame you for everything that goes wrong in my life  
So thank a lot you piece of shit  
Go ahead and say "Ana it's time to move on"  
Because you're an inconsiderate ass hole  
Fuck You and Fuck Her

What, did you think I would not see you at the school dance?  
Did you honestly think it would be a piece of cake to forget  
Did you think that with your little words of advice I would be fine?  
Yeah sure I should move on  
It's not like you dumped me that very morning  
Oh no wait, silly me, Yeah you did  
It takes a real asshole to lie  
And to say to move on like its nothing  
So go away and jump off a bridge  
Slam your head on a damn rock  
Die for all I care  
Just get the fuck away  
Oh and if you cried to yourself and said it hurt  
I call bullshit because lying is pretty fucked up  
And when you get what's coming for you  
I'll cry and say it hurt me more than it hurt you  
Because guess what I'm pretty fucked up too

With Love, Ana

## WOW THE WORLD SUCKS

Who the fuck do you think you are  
Why the fuck do you lie  
What sick little thrill do you get out of mixing bullshit like batter  
Making hate lying cupcakes  
And feeding them to your so called friends  
Your friends who are so nice  
Your friends who see your side  
For a couple of nice guys they're pretty idiotic  
Eating up your forsaken lies like candy  
"Guys I swear, he was a bad guy"  
"Guys I swear I didn't willingly fuck him  
and then spread shit about how he came onto me"  
She could date the whole school yet she would still be an angle  
Fucking sucks that friendship is blind

## WOW THE WORLD SUCKS 2

Being sick sucks  
It brings out the worst  
Makes me contemplate death  
And I hate those fucking moments  
When the goddamn sneeze doesn't come out  
So much anticipation  
The tickling in your nose  
I fucking hate life

## KETCHUP AND BACON

Why do I feel so perfect in your eyes?  
Why does nothing matter when we kiss  
Lose myself in your arms  
As we're laying on your mothers couch  
The tv blaring incoherent words  
The Price is Right but almost no one gets it right  
Makes me wonder how luck has favorites  
Makes me feel like a shit ton of luck dust was dumped on me  
Because you're all that matters to me  
My dad once told me  
As we were cruising down the highway  
"Love is Blind"  
Well I say Love is Bliss  
And I love laying next to you  
With my ear against your warm chest  
Hearing your fast heart hammer behind your skin  
Your slender fingers intertwined with mine  
Your slender fingers bringing me a plate full of ketchup and bacon  
Everything feels so natural  
Everything feels like a dream  
I've never dipped bacon in ketchup  
You learn something new everyday  
I've never fallen in love  
I learn something new everyday  
I've never loved so fast  
I've never gotten trapped in one simple smile  
One lingering gaze  
Soft lips against sweet skin  
Kissing knuckles  
Forehead against forehead  
Brown eyes to brown eyes  
I'm hypnotized by the beauty of this feeling  
Bacon and Ketchup go good together  
I think we go good together



# GENE FILLMORE

## ODE TO SLEEP

Sleep.  
You are what we need.  
If we do not obtain you we go crazy.  
You hold us together.  
You keep us dreaming.  
We will have you stay.  
Let  
Us  
Take  
You.  
You, our most trusted ally.  
He who comforts us.  
Will you join our dreams  
Or  
Will you leave and shatter our hearts.  
You who show yourself to few, but also many.  
Will you show us how to sleep?  
Or will you leave us awake?  
Oh sleep guide us to dreamland.

## **PAIN**

I have had enough of this damned torture.  
I would rather find sweet love but pain is life.  
Name calling bullying all that and more I have endured.  
Pain hits everyone like a tank no matter who it is.  
For this have I endured.  
No shit I have all you who have endured join my rant.  
Pains sweet mistress you shall not hold us.  
For we have had enough of your torture, you bland witch.  
We leave you now for our dreams and sweet sweet love.  
For life's path may trip, push, pull and punch us.  
No longer shall we stay down and let you hurt us.  
We will outgrow you.  
We will keep moving.  
We will find loves embrace.  
Fare thee well.

## **I REFUSE TO YIELD**

I do not deny my gracious size nor do I care  
For it will be me who stays aloft in this hell,  
High upon forgotten plains in which we stand.  
With war now over and wounds aplenty  
I stand and I refuse to yield to death,  
For I will see home again before I bow.  
For if my time does so come  
A mighty fight for mine life shall begin.  
And if my life be so taketh away,  
Even in death I refuse to yield.

## **NOTE CARD WRITING**

Peace cannot be peace without a little war to make peace really wanted.

What is life but an endless stream of memories  
and events in the stirring pot that is our brain?

## **THE SWORD**

Swords can be the beast of war  
Or blade of peace and harmony.  
As swords of past and present fly.  
For the blade of the future stays beyond  
The reach of man.  
No matter how far the hand of man may reach  
We will never see the blade of eternity.  
For in our bountiful unity  
We can see the blade of now.  
For soon we grow blind.

## **THE TALE OF VIGNAR**

In the days of old mossy mountains, when the moon does shine  
and the grass does turn gray, the evil long forgotten returns to the land  
of Rocsnare. Rocsnare sinks and rises when a hero arrives and that hero  
is Vignar, man of stone. He will claim the blade known as Shredsong  
and thus battle the evil long forgotten to save the land of Rocsnare from  
sinking for eternity. When Vignar wins, green grass will grow and the sun  
will rise.

## TIME

When music dies and the writing stops,  
The world will become dull and null.  
When peace breaks war begins.  
Silence broken when gun shots rip.  
A new war one of guns or one of swords  
It will not matter war is war.  
But music will always live and writing will never cease.  
War will be in thought,  
But it will try to be real and loud.  
In times of old the sword in your hand could save you,  
Farmers were respected.  
That is what I would like to see.

## THE LAST DRAGON

The dragon race has been brought to extinction or, as it was thought when a dragon egg was found in a cave near Mt. Monk, The Silver Blood mountain. When the egg hatched out came a great green dragon, The last Dragon. This dragon would be protected forever all who hunt this beast would be arrested and imprisoned for eternity. It will be protected for eternity because this is the last dragon.

## **PAIN**

Shall we enjoy tea sweet pain  
Or will you make me suffer more?  
Please join me today, who knows what we will gain?  
Make me happy not a man so poor.  
Pain... sweet pain.

## **BOXER**

When one fights upon the night  
With training under way.  
Real men run with blows of might  
Until soon they begin to sway.  
For this is the boxers play.

**END OF NOTE CARD WRITING.**

## **WOLF OF WATER**

I am a wolf of water walking on a sea of wonder.  
Forever running ready to pounce, stalking my sea.  
If I find another on my path of unpredictable ocean.  
I now have a new companion for my metaphorical road.  
As I go, I find many a trash in my sea of wonder  
And I decide to go, to leave this spectral plane.  
I find my purpose for this journey, it is self reflection.  
As I wake to my boring day I find myself.  
A wolf among men and women.  
A leader and follower who would protect those who need it.

## **WHO ARE YOU**

What is it like to be you the fat man or the skinny man?  
For me it is like being a fat man with a fighting spirit.  
It's like wanting to run in fear but never budging.  
It's like a constant fight within my mind.  
It's like a man with so much to do.  
Always whining about what to change.  
My mind at war, my body at peace  
Always focused on what's ahead,  
Rather than what's behind.  
That is me.  
BUT WHO ARE YOU?

## **LIFE**

Who are we to doubt life?  
We the men who live for war  
Or the women who want peace.  
I know what I believe.  
Life is an eternal mystery left to discover.  
Warriors see life as a battlefield  
While scientists see life as a plain of existence.  
Few see life as a scenery.  
If so then my life is an open field ready to farm.  
Grow.  
Wage war.  
We must find our own field, our own land.  
Life is a giant of earth, water, fire ,and air.  
To put like swords.  
Life has many forms but three repeats.  
The broken broad sword covered in rust.  
The elegant katana clean shiny and eversharp.  
Then the normal sword not dirty, not clean.  
Not sharp, not dull  
Just there.  
Life is what you see.  
Explain yours and share to all.

## THE TALE OF HEAN

Hean was a man of many talents: he was a hunter, a seamstress, and a tamer. He was in the woods on foot to hunt for dinner when he heard screams and saw smoke. Hean ran back to his village only to see a dragon had burned down the homes he once knew and killed his once best friends. There was one thing left alive beside himself, a young horse. He named the horse Vertigo. After packing what he could Hean left and said, "Let's go, Vertigo, We must get to Kindersline." Vertigo neighed and let Hean ride. On their ride Hean noticed smoke. He veered from the path to check it out.

At the cause of the smoke Hean found a burned wagon. "Vertigo, stay put i'm going to check it out" he said. Upon inspection he noticed several burned corpses. It was an attack. Hean soon heard rustling in the bushes. "Goblins!!" Hean yelled. He speedily drew his bow firing arrows faster than ever. Once the goblins were dead he started to track the goblins footprints to a cave. There was a young boy trapped in a cage "Hang on. I'll get you out." Hean said in a whisper.

"Their leader might still be here," the young boy said.

There were footsteps and Hean went to hide in the shadows. The goblin leader came into the cave scared beyond imagination. Hean moved swiftly and assassinated the goblin leader. "Time to get out of here, hang on boy" Hean said. "Hurry I don't want to be stuck here" the boy said. So Hean untied the boy after breaking the lock on the cage. "Were you with the wagon that got attacked?" he said. The boy just cried and nodded, "I'm heading to Kindersline, you can join me, Once we get there I will tell the soldiers there what happened then they will help you" Hean said. "Call me Shax Haffroot" the boy said.

Their travel short, once at Kindersline, Hean took Shax to the soldiers and told them about the goblins. "See that is why I'm worried for the town," Hean said. He was talking to the head knight who led the soldiers at Kindersline everyone called him sir gumpis. "Well I will post watch patrols and have the boy taken to an orphanage for now say why are you here? What about your family Hean?" said sir gumpis. "A dragon gumpis i'm on my way to tell the king of these lands i'm sure king Desfro would like the news" hean said. "Go I will send one soldier with you he might need the extra learning" said gumpis. On the way to the edge of town Hean stopped by the shop district to buy supplies.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't Hean. I sold you that bow a few years back how do you fair," said the merchant.

"Dragon hit still determined to stay, Tross," Hean said.

"Well if there is a dragon git goin the king needs to know" said Tross. "Never the smartest here huh well the travel set" Hean said. Tross started packing the travel set bread, water, wine, fishing supplies and a good old fashion travel saddle. "Ok, that will be 4 gold pieces," Tross said. So



Hean pulled out 4 gold pieces and put them on the merchants cash case. "Better get a move on now, stay safe you dumb merchant" Hean said. "Yeah well don't die now hunter" Tross yelled.

So Hean caught up to the young knight his name was Quintis, a young rambunctious lad. "Hean I thought you would stay in your hole" Quintis said.

"Shut up, Quintis, we need to go" Hean demanded.

On their ride to the king Hean noticed a flying beast he realized what it was just before it attacked. "Harpy!!" Hean yelled as he drew his bow Quintis his sword. Quintis tried to scare the harpy but failed and got captured. Hean drew an arrow and shot the harpy mid flight and Quintis fell and landed in cow poop. Filled with embarrassment from the harpy attack Quintis ran to a river to wash his armor. Hean moved toward the downed harpy to investigate and found a mark he had longed to forget. It was the mark of Zanbor the tamer, for Zanbor if he could not tame the beast he set it free. "Why here of all places, Quintis hurry" Hean all but yelled.

Quintis stopped and ran back to the horses and they continued. By time they got to the castle the knights and soldiers were stationed in defensible positions. Hean got off his horse Quintis behind him the knights at the gate let them in. Hean and Quintis ran to the castle only to be stopped at the door by the soldier wanting to know what's going on. "What business have you here hunter, knight" said the soldier.

"We have news of a dragon attack we need to see the king," Hean said. The soldier hastened to open the door to the castle and rushed them in and whispered, "Not out loud now hurry". Hean and Quintis ran in to find the king and his court in a meeting. Altogether there were Chilken the galient, king Desfro, shendow the adviser and alexia the sorcerous head mage. Hean slowly approached king Desfro and told him the events that involve the dragon.

"And thats all, your kingliness" hean said.

"Then we are in grave danger go I will have troops go to every village in my kingdom thank you hean" said King Desfro. Quintis walks over to the sorcerous and said, "I'm sir Quintis of kindersline you are."

"Way too old for you knight now bug off" said Alexia. When Hean grabbed Quintis and took him to Chilken the galient, Quintis was yelling "let me go you moron". Once at Chilken, Hean asked "will you take and train this young knight sent by sir gumpis". "Hm sir gumpis was an old friend and I owe him for saving me from a ogre when I was young haha, very well come boy we have work to do" said Chilken. As they walked off to the scrambling knights and soldiers.

"Now I suppose I better get back to hunting after I rebuild my home" hean said both sadly and happily. On his ride back hean saw nothing the air was still nothing moved. He saw the wings of a butterfly

in restful peace “what is going on here” hean said. He kept moving and saw things dissolving into nothing Hean tried to make it back to the castle but it was gone. Hean looked everywhere. Then he looked down an arrow was in his chest he instantly started to fade out of reality and into deaths grip. Hean was no more he was dead shot down by a knight who mistook him for a bandit.

# ALYCIA FORD

## PREGNANT.

My eyes water as I gaze at the positive symbol on my pregnancy test. My dad will beat the living shit out of me if he finds out I'm pregnant and don't know the father!

I set up an appointment.

I come back later.

"Your abortion was successful... for only one of the twins."

*-3rd place 2015 Squadala 55-word short story contest winner*

## NIGHT CRAWLERS

There are dead people in my bathroom.

They look for me to feed their souls.

I never try to leave,  
because they are trapped with me.

## WINTER

Let me stay inside, It's my excuse for not leaving.

Give me tea of all flavors,  
and the person I love.

## RED SOCKS

much more than the ordinary  
close to maroon  
good for everything  
warm  
saving from the cold  
dark air at night  
while I lay  
cradling my toes  
making sure none of my piggies  
go to the market  
yet I step on them  
forgive me  
I love you  
red socks  
don't leave  
cuddle with me  
save me from monsters  
from devils outside  
don't let them fade you  
misspelling your creativity  
soaking up dead rain

## WHAT'S UP WITH YOU?

I'm trying to forget you.  
To knock myself senseless.  
You've crawled into my veins.  
I've lost company.  
I've been chained and stabbed over and over!  
You watch me as I bleed.  
You are a curse  
Dragging me by the hair,  
as it rips from the roots.  
You kill me not instantly,  
but you take your time.  
Making sure I have nothing left.  
I dont understand why you hate me so much..  
You are my pain.  
but I am in love.  
My mind has been kidnapped,  
kidnapped by someone who hasn't seen me in weeks.  
I know you have someone new,  
but you used me once more.  
and I'm stupid for this time using a needle,  
a needle to shoot you in my veins on purpose.

## HOW YOU'VE BETRAYED ME

Slow breaths.

Listen listen quietly listen  
heart beats heart beats heart beats keeps beating these beats  
fingers these fingers moving each movement  
move so I can move to follow each movement that you move  
and love so I can love very love that you love  
love each moment that we have and love every movement I make  
let me take ever fear from your fearful eyes that fear the fears in mine

Listen listen again quietly listen  
stop with your boredom because I never bore your boring  
but I get it I truly get what is to get about getting this  
you want to leave but you can't leave what you've already lost when you  
lose the things you need to leave you can't simply just leave  
but to ask you to stay stay stay is not okay because you can't stay when you  
want to stay away from my mind that can't make you stay so go away  
go away but don't play cause when you play play then I see myself fade with  
my days that you don't stay

Listen listen for god's sake listen quietly listen!  
to the words that you fell in love with but no you did not fall in love with me,  
no not me,me,me,me,me but this poet is who.  
you fell in love with a poet, this poem, me the poet.  
but if you would-

Listen listen quietly listen  
you would hear what I've been hearing for years.  
you would see what I've seen and been seeing because it's such a sight  
remember these memories of the first month before all these months  
when all you wanted to do was read my poems these poems  
my poems, the poems that poetry set me to  
you took every poem I ever could write write write just keep writing  
my love for you was all I could ever write!!  
Love Love for YOU but you do not love the love that could write for you.  
you did not love the writing but you loved the jewels that I hung to your neck  
neck, wrist, fingers, every finger I could place something.  
taking 2 min to pick it out instead of spending hours hours hours hours hours  
THESE HOURS! MY HOURS! THAT I WILL NEVER GET BACK from  
writing these fucking poems about my insane love for you.

## WHO IS POETRY?

Poetry is my name and I live in the dark alleys of your town. Some people visit me so I can do what I do best. My talent is the most mysterious of them all. Some mysteries were made to be discovered.

As I am rolling a quarter through my fingers, I notice a girl, she was wearing a dark coat and it was drenched by the sparkles that fell from the sky. She looked at me and walked closer and let out a breath of smoke and dropped her cigarette on the ground into a puddle of still water. She put her hands in her pockets and I watched her pale face. Then she said, "I am looking to come closer with my thoughts. I need to find myself and feel free to write and feel free to live. I need to be free to write whatever, because I know I can do anything with a pen and paper."

Without saying anything I placed one of my hands on the top of her head then the other on her chin and without hesitating I snapped her neck and watched as different colors of fog danced above her. Almost an aurora borealis in this dark but not big enough for everyone to see. I quickly grabbed my pen from out of my shirt pocket then clicked it. All of the colors zoomed as quick as light into the tip of my pen, capturing these lights of fog.

I placed my hands back on her head once more and I placed her neck straight and snapped my fingers. Her eyes slowly opened. She looked like she was hungover or maybe exhausted. She thanked me and took the pen of colors.

I did not see her until her hair was grey and her skin was wrinkled. She dropped a ton of notebooks on the ground and they were her writings. She lit her last final cigarette from her pack and dropped the match onto her books and I watched and they flamed to a burning light show. I looked back at her and a tear fell from her face and she floated and turned to colors. Her memory danced in the sky.

## SONG OF MYSELF

I will be flawless  
but my heart makes the mistakes  
my legs show my pride  
my arms show my emotions  
my head shows my decisions

Who do I want to be?  
There seems to be no perks in being a wallflower..  
it's come to the point where it's been overused by every preppy teen.  
when do i know who I am?  
am I being labeled as something else?

I don't want to be human.  
what have these humans made?  
Am I just another voiceless person that can't do anything to fix how our  
world has become?  
I can do nothing because nobody wants to listen to a teenager.  
nobody believes teenagers are people have voices.  
I am forever trapped because I refuse to grow up.  
Because growing up is giving up.



## GRANDMA?

It's been awhile since I've seen her. After the tragedy I don't think I could ever go back. You see, about 2 months ago, I went to my grandmother's house for the weekend with my girlfriend, Amy, of 3 years. We were visiting because my grandma isn't doing so well so we decided to visit. She let us sleep in the guest bedroom. Amy never really liked my grandma. She always said how my grandma would just creep her out a little bit, and I don't blame her. My grandma always looked at everyone with this creepy smile. She wore fake teeth and it looked like she never cleaned them ever. They always had food stuck between her teeth that was mixed with some sort of grime. She never really talked that much. she just stares at you with that same creepy smile.

It was late when we showed up so we immediately got ready for bed. She lives in a small town, a town that you would just pass through, without even noticing. After Amy and I got into our sleeping clothes, we laid down in a bed my grandma had in her spare room. I tossed and turned in the bed and eventually fell asleep. I woke up and heard scratches on the floor. I thought it must have been the trees brushing on my window. This is silly, I'm a grown man who is scared of a stupid fucking tree but even though I am grown, it didn't stop me from pulling the covers over my face to make sure nobody could see me.

I woke up the next morning, I didn't even realize that I fell asleep. My grandma was making pancakes like she always did when I visited. She made the best pancakes in the world. I have never left her house without being stuffed with food. I woke up Amy and we went into the kitchen and made our plates. By the sink we could see my grandmas nasty dentures soaking in liquid that has began to turn a kind of yellow color. We ignored it and ate our food. my grandma didn't eat any food. She just sat there with us and we talked about politics and stuff like that. My grandma is not the most interesting person in the world. We spent that day just hanging out at my grandmas house and helping her with any house or yard work that she needed done. I watered her flowers and she occasionally looked outside her window to make sure that I didn't miss any flowers and I made sure that I didn't. After a long and tiring day, I began to get ready for a shower. I turned on the shower after a while of difficulty trying to turn it on. I got in and rinsed my body off and began to wash my hair. I noticed there was some kind of foul sent. It wasn't coming from the air. I think it's coming from the water. It smelled like something rotting. I guess its just a really old house and the pipes are rusted or something. The smell wasn't that smelly but it was still noticeable. I quickly took my shower and got ready for bed. Amy took her shower after me. when she was done she joined me in bed and I stared at the ceiling in the pitch black.

Then all of a sudden I hear someone trying to scream but they don't have enough breath in them to shout. It sounds ever so faint but still there. Amy hears it too and we try to ignore it. The sounds get louder. Amy gets up to go ask my grandma what it is.

She takes a while to ask her and when she comes back she's shivering and trying to catch her breath. Her skin looks pale. I ask her what's wrong and she gives me no answer. I lay her down and wrap my arms around her. She's shivering. For hours I tried to ask her what's wrong. She wouldn't say a word. I think she went into panic mode. I stayed up most of the night with her. She just kept shivering. I didn't want to wake up my grandma. My grandma is really old and I'm sure she would be pissed off to have to wake up for something we both couldn't fix. I eventually fall asleep.

The next morning I woke up and my grandma was making eggs and bacon. She was making turkey bacon. I went back into the room to see if Amy woke up yet. She hasn't. 10 minutes later my grandmother calls out that breakfast is ready. I go to wake up Amy. She's laying on her side. I call out her name. She opens her eyes. She yawns and then shoots me the same creepy smile my grandmother has.

## COLOR

How dare you write about the colors of your head!  
You have no proof of any of this.  
My mind could make it anything it wants yet you choose to watercolor my  
ways of understanding.  
The color is a source of your own sights and I cannot attach the wires  
right.  
So explain to me in words.  
Show me this mental Polaroid picture of assumption.

## COMMON LOVE

She leaves her common sense and gains a defensive heart.  
He assaulted her soul and left her a corpse.  
His soul is foul and impure with burning flames  
They both are living for each other.

They haven't seen each other in ages now,  
But one day in March,  
He knew that he had hurt her.  
His face turned blue.  
pouring memories back into his heart one last time.

## THE POWER OF MUSIC

My playlist of one band  
loving the album  
every song is greater than before  
nothing compares to the first listen  
the next listen isn't as good  
until you finally get tired of it  
and find a new band  
and a new first impression  
a new love

## KITTY KITTY KITTY

Railroad tracks and shivers on my legs.  
Stars come out and the moon plays.  
We are followed,  
by a creature of all grey and hollow.

Cops show up and we run away  
Just not the kitten it stays  
Maybe it's a sign.  
Everything leaves sometime.

# ARIELLA HEISE

## SALT

salt crunches, a melody of sharp clicks  
salt dances, allegro, unique and unwavering  
salt shines, luminizing a glorious ballroom  
salt compliments, weaving friendships  
tying them off tight

salt sprinkles over the day, like the sun  
rising over the sea  
salt is chalk, embellishing  
decaying through its work  
salt grinds and breaks down throughout the ocean

an endless rotation  
infinite swirls of scales and tails  
the sea is nothing without its component  
salt  
none prevails

## AN ODE TO THE SUN

oh sun  
you sting my eyes with reality  
with your brilliant sparks  
you give star burns upon my skin  
oh massive grapefruit in the sky  
squeezing happiness upon earth  
your violent rays beat down  
crisping us like toast  
the clouds,  
our butter  
oh rotund lightbulb above  
an idea is always above us  
and when you are below  
are minds are at rest  
controlling all of our system  
ruler of the sky  
rusty torch leading a dark alley  
crazed flame ignites the pitch black  
bursting energy that never ends  
you will continue to grow  
becoming a holy pomegranate  
destroying  
ending  
oh invisible energy  
in the sky  
you will never  
be gone  
just a constant  
change  
of hue  
and matter

## **EARTH**

E: green A: black R: white T: blue H: grey

E, a vast earth, green tinted blades clothe our planets flesh cynical spays  
torment all living wonders, emerald love lingers,  
a palace of hopes, but no dreams.

A, agitated charcoal abstract and rambling sweetly,  
slowly distracting a ghost stealing a soul.

R, invisible and non showing, so brilliant, too immense to be true.

T, trust worthy, a friend through lost and found,  
a timeless hug, a book with yellowed pages, but a healthy spine.

H, foggy and unclear, dusty and sharp,  
like excess rosin on the strings of a cello.

## HOW PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE ELSE CHANGED WHO I AM

I never thought of acting as a very difficult thing until I got the role of Anne in “The Diary of Anne Frank” at Ukiah Players Theater. I had never experienced what it is like to push yourself to your emotional brink. I had well over two hundred lines to learn but that was the easiest part of the process. As part of my character development, I often had to imagine what it would be like if my family got taken to their deaths right before my eyes, which was not an unusual event at that period in time. It was very difficult to yell at someone that I adore or to kiss a good friend of mine and try not to develop feelings for him in real life. I learned that there is a difference between being exposed to something and being immersed in it, for example, a play about the Holocaust. It’s one thing to take two hours out of your day to watch a play and feel sad afterwards, but it’s a whole other experience to have to go through the emotions of fear, grief, hatred, anger, love, joy, and pure depression every night. I would go home wishing that I could forget about it. I didn’t want to tell people how my rehearsal was because it was horrible, I felt horrible. But there is no other way that I should have felt, the Holocaust was horrible, and not being able to concentrate in school or sleep at night because my mind was so focused on the death of six million Jews was something I had to go through in order to put on a life changing show.

After all the pain there was a reward, I was able to expose people to true human relationships, how cruel people can be and how beautiful others are. How is possible that such a person as Anne Frank lived in the same world that Hitler had. I can’t explain how lucky I was to teach people this lesson: no matter how dark the times may be, you can always seek beauty in the world.

In my life I can honestly tell you that I have never had to struggle to live comfortably, but I have been surrounded by a community where people do struggle constantly and I am aware of what goes on outside my white picket fence. This whole experience has changed who I am. Before this, I was convinced that self reliance was the only option and that I didn’t need a shoulder to lean on. I thought that talking about how I felt was a waste of time. Being at such an age of change, it is crucial that you learn to get help when it’s needed. I am lucky enough to have a loving theater community that has supported me through one of the most important and intense experiences that I will ever have.



## RABBITS WEARING SWEATERS

two rambunctious rabbits went out for the day  
they put on wool sweaters and went on their way  
the rabbits were off to find carrots to eat  
when to their dismay they only found beets  
the rabbits moods went from happy to muddled  
so beneath a tree, they sat and they cuddled

the rabbits looked above to the sky  
they wondered if their mother made pie  
they began to head back home  
when to their disbelief they befriended a gnome  
the gnome was wise and he wore a red hat  
the gnome warned the rabbits to stay away from the cat

the rabbits didn't listen  
their pride seemed to glisten  
they hopped on towards old man Alfred's house  
they weren't very aware of the cat, nor the mouse  
the mouse stopped running with a sudden jolt  
the cat ate the mouse, the rabbits were able to bolt

the relieved rabbits felt hunger in their bellies  
they knew that their mother had lots of jams and jellies  
the post adventure tiredness had done them out  
they hopped on home without one single pout

the two rabbits had learned a lot that day  
to be humble, brave, and to -sometimes- obey

## UNWANTED ANSWERS

say a name a dusted wish  
retrieve it from the sky  
a secret word not to unleash  
for then someone will die

decrease this answer way beneath  
a quite unwanted soul  
I find myself exploring here  
the night is black as coal

I found what I was looking for  
why am I not fulfilled?  
now there's nothing to discover  
I'm thoroughly unthrilled

## POETRY

I met them while I lay asleep. There were seven siblings. They went by the names of Sadness, Revenge, Anger, Love, Happiness, Confusion, and Hope. I stared sadness in the eye. He seemed to float down and stick to me like a snowflake. Sadness began to melt away, but the faint scent of him lingered. Revenge ran past me. Speeding by like a rocket. I felt Revenge exhale, and he continued on running far away from me. Anger captured me beneath its blanket of rage. Anger wouldn't let me go until I stopped struggling. The only way out was to calm down. Love swept over me, I didn't notice love until she was gone. Happiness gushed through every ceiling crack and space beneath the door. Happiness filled me up with energy and danced with me for an eternity. Confusion sat upon my head. No matter how many times I struggled to take confusion off, it wouldn't budge. Hope trickled down slowly and sweetly, sometimes it would pour, and sometimes there was just one drop. I spoke my farewells to all my new friends; Sadness, Revenge, Anger, Love, Happiness, Confusion, and Hope. All with the last name of Poetry.

## **METAPHORS:**

-life is a constant strive for perfection. an impossible goal that always seems to be within your reach.

-friendship is like a mutated cherry. no one knows if it's one cherry or two.

-adults are like technology, extremely helpful and extremely unreliable at the same time.

-art is like an eyebrow. everyones is different and they express most everything

-good memories are like a straw hat. fraying at the edges but you still keep them.

-imagination is like a sealed glass jar. you can not retrieve the contents, but you can see them.

-religion is like a letter in the mail, in can hold good or bad news, you just have to open it with the right attitude.

-the moment is like a clock, constantly ticking away.

## **GUN SAFETY**

“You’re safe now, but the kids can’t touch it, they don’t know anything about shotguns.”

“Honey, don’t worry, I put it right under my pillow. They’ll never find it there.”

From afar, the married couple hears the sound of their son’s voice, “Mommy, Daddy! I found my Christmas present!”

A gunshot sounds.

## HAIKU:

falafel my heart  
my inner israeli  
eats liberated

oak tree overpowers  
covers the sky  
charcoal, baby blue

extension cord  
my heart to my soul  
powerful spark

dreadlocks head to toe  
empty kombucha bottle  
birkenstocks

trampoline spring  
high above the ground  
I am the king

# JESSICA MARIE HERNANDEZ

## T

the stars were dancing in your eyes  
because  
the sun was your mother  
and the moon your father  
and the flowers are your family  
you a bundle of joy  
you what everyone wanted to be  
nothing short of the most kind soul ever created  
the way your hair flowed as if  
it was the wind  
and all of your tears were rushing rivers,  
your sweet words were like honeysuckles  
you just as wonderful  
as the Earth we're bound too

## PEOPLE

wrecked minds wrap around the vineyards  
as we walk unknowing of  
what was to come  
the monster came out  
no longer we lived



## LATE NIGHTS

late nights  
nights full of wonder with you  
you, who are you  
a memory  
memories fill my mind like life fills the ocean  
ocean full of mystery  
mystery that was in your deep brown eyes  
eyes that you hid behind until  
the real you came out  
out came the lies when I thought I trusted you  
you a liar, nothing more  
I want nothing more from you  
you and your deep brown eyes  
that late night  
late night full of wonder  
with you

## ESCAPE

You're listening to me  
as my rhythm changes  
and your thoughts stray  
carefully you distinguish  
the words and their meaning  
to you, you relate them to yourself  
the genres change vastly  
throughout the day  
depending on your mood  
on your feelings  
I am your escape  
your cure from the world  
music I am and  
listener you are  
the words I sing are rivers flowing  
into your brain  
forever to stay

## LOW GAP

cigarette carton  
in the barbeque  
disgusting

## KENWOOD

tear soaked pillow cases  
were burnt to the ground  
during the summer when  
the daisies were black and  
the grass a crunchy yellow  
when the sky was dark grey  
and your hair was thin and weak  
your glasses filled with fog so  
every minute you had to stop  
and rid them of the unwanted crap  
your hands were dark with ash  
from trying to save him  
your heart a dark blue  
because you weren't able to

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and suddenly everything changed  
the stars don't seem as bright as they used too  
and I no longer stare at them  
every Tuesday night  
and the wind must have blown you away  
instead of the leaves  
my bed is still haunted by your absence  
and the taste of your lips still linger  
I can still feel your fingertips  
and the way the river flows seems like your heartbeat  
and the bees have become an annoyance

the stars no longer remind me of your eyes  
or the color they are  
and your eyes that used to remind me of the stars  
are no longer mine to remember

## MISSING

he sat in the back of the train  
on the left side  
hands always folded in his lap  
and sleeves rolled right below his elbows  
his grey eyes wandered and watched  
the blurry trees pass by  
he was relatively quiet and caused no trouble  
everyday for years he sat there  
yet we never spoke to each other  
always nothing but a slight glance  
then one day he wasn't there  
the seat in the back of the train was empty  
for the first time in years,  
the wandering grey eyes were gone  
so I took his seat in the back of the train  
and watched as the blurry trees passed by

## UNCONSCIOUS

are we awake  
are we asleep  
dusty stars holding tomorrow's night  
to infinity  
but not beyond  
forever the secrets are in your brain  
red nails scratch the surface  
of your skull and claw away at your thoughts  
come back here  
says the mischievous man  
the hat on the street that you kicked  
useless?  
eh forget it  
tree branches whined down your fingertips  
and into the ground  
forever to stay  
conscious minds wait and watch  
while I do not think but go  
fallen angels stand in the streets  
swirls of color marked in your head  
twisting and turning  
you walk down the street and admire  
the discrete paintings and shattered windows  
the clacking sound of your black shoes  
echo in the dark  
dawn breaks and you can see the sun shine  
behind the run down building  
you left with one memory  
of the man on the street with the hat

# VANESSA ILAR

## SILVER FRAMED GIRL

*For Rebecca Ortega*

I use to wish on flimsy dandelion seeds  
and laugh with the formation of wild geese.  
I know this because  
she showed me while summer was braiding my hair,  
calling softly to me through confidant stardust stained lips.  
Together we flew away with the leaves.  
We screamed our dreams into the stars and  
squished them beneath of cheeks at night.  
She told me stories of men who cried when salt hit their tongues  
and women who looked like hiroshima.  
We tied our hair back when the booming of bone cracking poetry began.  
I clung to my story teller like sap on windshields  
refusing to be scrubbed away from her planet.  
Admired her sharpshooter eyes  
and dreamed of her scarves and skinny jeans sitting to the left side of me.  
Dreaming of her creations,  
her sun people,  
of her salads at lunch time.  
She told me at fourteen that  
dreaming was something I was always able to believe in.  
I'm sixteen now  
and the moon and the sun and the clouds don't fit in my arms  
anymore.  
I can't smell homemade tortillas on her blue zebra print backpack  
and I haven't seen the brilliance in the earthly skin she didn't allow  
makeup to touch.  
It's been a year and  
I sit in the same spot in the same creative writing class wondering  
if I can still believe.  
if the ocean before the poetry slams will love me as much as they did with  
her around  
I wonder  
if she still thinks of her silver framed girl.

## FLOWER OF PROSTITUTION

In the hazy light trapped in the mirrors of my catastrophic room  
the rhythmic laughter of philosophers cringe with glee against foggy  
windows.

I beg you to possess me.

There in the quilted fortress of blankets,  
add me to your collection of crackling leaves flamboyant with rusted life.

Make my plain body bend at rebellious angels.

Circus-like acrobatic master of silk sheets,  
childhood memories at 4:30am go to sleep freak.

Adult fantasies alone at night.

Stay awake darling,

let me taste the trail of your bitter past dripping with the sound of snapping  
pens.

Shimmering crows feet, neglected scripts, I see a million versions of her in  
your jaded irises.

Pour me in the holes of your pores,

watch the blue and apricot madness release desirable sighs and irresistible  
smirks,

passing flirtatious hair follicles down the expired staircase of reincarnated  
paint.

Chip, chip, chipping, fixed.

Hold me close and don't breathe turning

purple, purple, black.

I promise to leave before you can flutter open your dilated eyes.

Fade away, fade away, creature of night, creature of pleasure, creature of  
corruption.

Whisper in your slumber

fade away, fade away.

Earth lit skin disappearing before the sweat can dry,

before it even had time to mingle with mine,

before we ever had time to collide,

before time ever had time to time time.

Timing the wavering beats of hearts lost in the shattered mirrors of my room.

Sew me to you.

Stitch, stitch, stitching, snapping of ukulele wired hearts.

Fade away,

lost voice muttering the differences between lust and love.

Please just fade away.



## KILLING ANGELS

My feet are cold  
and brain unresponsive.  
You control my blood flow  
and I control nothing but worn down words.  
Burst my lungs  
and watch my face recreate the rainbow.  
I want someone there  
to watch my absence from existence lower the population.  
I want you  
to see the face that use to gaze  
with the same tenderness the mud has for stars,  
become lifeless.  
I want you to see how fast my permanent smile fades from the minds who  
swore to never forget.  
See the rapid decomposition,  
the words pouring out my body  
burning inky streaks over coffee-stained skin.  
I want you to be there when the heavens go to war.  
I want you to see the hatred and regret in God's eyes  
while he supernovas his universe  
and rips the wings off his saints.  
I want all to feel and understand what I felt,  
wear my withering hair as a ring as you take your place as ruler of  
creation.  
I want you to feel the torment,  
the weight of the one sin you swore to never commit.

## I MET A BOY WHO

cracked sea shells with his smile.  
I spent my days lining his lips in salt  
while whispering the secrets the ocean taught me.  
He would aggressively shrug me off  
like aggravating sand in undergarments.  
I kept twisting my way back  
crashing into him like high tides,  
each time wrapping seaweed  
around his chest  
so that when the mermaids came they'd give him a kiss or two.  
When my eyes filled with longing  
he'd screech at me.  
Grumbling that  
he has always hated the ocean.  
That my brown eyes reminded him not of honey spilled on deep mahogany  
table tops under pale skies in cheap diners that were too bright,  
but of polluted rivers infested with spider guts.  
With every forced insult,  
I followed him closer, cautiously,  
like children chasing waves.  
I wanted to dissolve in his layers  
of white sea foam,  
to tickle his forehead with the cold water from my vast beaches of adoration.  
The harsh coastal breezes told me  
that he lives in the cave of his own self destructive soul.  
Pulling sand from between his toes and  
kissing wishes into stale air as he remembers  
my pale lips and sun baked skin.  
Dry heaving into oblivion.  
He whimpers,  
"I always loved the ocean."  
His smile cracking the plaster of his crumbling ignorance.

## FALSE HOPE

They sang over my screams,  
tying ribbons in my hair  
to forget the way their grey clammy hands crushed my neck  
in that basement of false hope.  
Tearing at my dress  
with the same intensity they regarded my insides.  
“Beauty only shows in fear”  
they said,  
bitter lips forcing my legs apart.  
Stripping me of dignity  
they left me nameless,  
ashamed of being something as filthy as human.  
They devoured pure naivety  
and restocked shelves with self-loathing.  
People came to them  
seeking help,  
never hearing my faint whispers and screams over their angelic voices.

## COLLECTION OF DINKY POEMS

Dance me to the end of love.  
We will greet the sun  
and before we learn to say “I’m sorry”  
I’ll hold the stars over your eyes,  
and the sea will be washed up by our smiles  
because loving you was everything.

\*

You are made of colored rain.  
Of fallen things melting into Earth.  
Winter was our first greeting.

\*

I am hoping to fill in the black hole that has declared her forehead as its  
home.  
Smooth out and broaden the narrow mindedness,  
I want to rearrange her molecules  
and hang out as a final project on the corner of the moon.  
I want to part her lips  
and breathe in all her venom.  
I want her to tip my body and drink from my heart,  
using me for whatever feels wrong,  
whatever feels wrong.  
I just want to help.

\*

Polluted eyelids,  
open up and spill your rust  
into muddy rivers.

\*

Bite my frayed edges,  
Fingertips digging into ribs.  
You’ll never be mine.

## INDECISIVE LOVERS AN OLD ENGLISH PROJECT

Nobody told me why  
he couldn't have cared.  
I was desperate,  
he'd lost his mind.  
Somethings wrong with him,  
he was inordinately vain.  
He often woke in the night  
and the darkness was desolate.  
He reminded me of a can stuck in a sand bed,  
self conscious about his injury,  
reduced Dracula to dust;  
he's not dead.  
It's a morbid subject  
and  
I'd go off and drown myself.  
He staked me out,  
marked me as his property.  
Said I was the only girl he would ever love,  
he was like a bottle of alcohol  
and something pleasantly sweet  
then he neglected me.  
Women are a sin by definition.  
My funeral would have been held next afternoon,  
hush your mouth,  
don't pester him.  
I was far too old and too big for such childish things  
and the sooner I learned to hold in  
the better everybody would be.  
There was a faint scratchiness in his voice when he said,  
I shall never marry.  
You're still too little,  
all this is strange to you.  
How could you take such a risk?  
I was desperate  
I tortured myself and decided that if I married,  
I'd go drown myself  
until a sudden shriek shattered  
the humiliation of  
my resentments.  
I was desperate  
and  
he couldn't care.  
I  
looked back  
and  
there he was, returning to me.

## GOOD HOUSE CATS PURR

*After Allen Ginsberg*

- I saw the worst minds of my generation restored  
by the captivating laughs of innocent sirens lifting each other  
to the highest point of evolution that's found in the worn out  
paragraphs of books long forgotten by the people of pollution.
- Who found comfort in sleeping in the arms of tree roots  
and tilt their heads back to savor the songs of the worms  
rather than the songs of hallucinogenic leaves. That no longer  
whisper out of chipped mouths and nostrils  
at 3 am under flickering streetlamps in abused parking lots.
- Who learned to prevent the waves of destructive lust  
forced upon the feeble minds of the easily infatuated. Leaving  
themselves to become an unashamed philanthropy with the  
beautiful ability to scream "enough with the people pleasing!  
bring in the gleeful scent of self awareness."
- Requesting through quivering lips  
for the shivers of toxic angels to consume their insecure atoms  
and transform them in the cocoon like process of digestion to a  
much sweeter and enlightened form of self.
- Who look back on the future  
as if it were just the facts of every dandelion seed blown from  
their 5 year old lungs  
lingering with the forgotten winds of broken off four leaf  
clovers left in the fields of unevenly chopped grass.
- Running through meadows of mud and bones that beg to be crushed  
under the weight of anything other than the colossal sense of  
not being small enough.
- Who do crush these bones with the delightful sensation one receives  
from stripping each other of the innumerable exceptions found  
in the magazine displays of grocery stores.
- Who watch the sporadic firework displays  
in the sunken eyes of women and men learning to love  
themselves, giggling at each other with cheekbones and  
dimples radiant with knowledge and unfathomable adoration  
for the art tucked in the simple breaths of those who inject  
poison and carve the map to death into their thighs.
- Who look up at the blank skies of their souls  
and create their own constellations for the sake of adding  
another burn to the demons

that chant discouragement.

Who spill nebulas into the colorless galaxies of others  
because they understand the importance of unity and  
taking time to trace the aimless paths of slugs in the weak  
moonlight of their smiles, memorising the lines of their  
neighbors palms as if it could teach them how to find home.

Who constantly battle with the introverted impulse to  
hide themselves in the consistent flows of I'm sorry's and  
don't mind me's but instead douse themselves in gasoline  
and bask in the flames of the 7 billion faces that inhabit this  
lovely planet.

Who are bold enough to throw themselves in a cage  
with their darkest aspects of self and float out as a gentle  
caress of happiness that turns everything they cradle into an  
radiating energy of light hearted concern for those who love  
too much.

Who heard the sweetest minds of my generation go from howls of  
pain to the purring of a house cat.

# TAWNI KERBS

## DARK CIRCLE BENEATH THE EYE

Two crescent moons illuminate below neighboring Earth's  
Grandmother's antique china cabinet is missing its plates  
Gentle porcelain shatters after falling for the reflecting milky tiles  
What an awful sound it is to hear a heart break  
Sleepwalking through a school day  
One sees tree leaves burnt to a burgundy crisp  
Daydreaming of meadows and road trips  
The slow ticking of a clock reminds them  
It's about time for another jolly cup of ink

## STRANDS OF SAND

Imagine viewing all of your thoughts through a retro television screen  
Having frustrated authority figures slap the sides of it a couple times  
Whenever the static snow scrambles away your ambition  
Because you're unable to escape the bridgewater sofa  
The elder's cry, "These young lazy's will end us all!"  
Your favorite show takes place at a distant beach  
Where surfer's listen to rock and trucks serve tacos  
Aloha skies and Tapatío colored bikini's  
You challenge yourself to swim there very soon



## THE HERBS AND SPICES AISLE

The universe offers us a plethora of its flavors crammed into jars  
Resting aside one another on shelves in alphabetical order  
I stand in awe, overwhelmed by the collision of scent  
April's amber beams shine through storefront glass  
Altered slightly by the striped awning throwing its shade  
A plum lady meanders along with her drooping limbs  
She struggles to push her mountain of nutrients in a cart  
I smile at her, she smiles at me  
We engage in a lively conversation about tea

## I ABSOLUTELY CANNOT RHYME, BUT HERE'S SOME TRUTH

Cherish those damned bicycle rides young children  
Tree climbing is your profession of today  
Popsicle stick jokes written on your résumé  
Visits to the park with the intention to play  
Remember not to eat the yellow snow  
Feel free to roll down those summertime hills  
The thing is that when you grow  
Your ultimate favorite memory  
Will be a time you didn't pay the bills

## BEAD CURTAINS

I'm hesitant to walk through you now  
Never once fooled by your charming plastic  
Guarding the entrance to an entire room of suffering  
It's malignant to keep so much hidden away  
But who wouldn't understand?  
In this already terrible home we live in  
How many have walked through before?  
Recklessly dropping their candle-light,  
Setting fire to all of your secret belongings

## WHAT A RIGHTEOUS SUNRISE!

This orb of literal galaxy dust is not rising up for us today  
This sun is rising for the deer that made it home  
The flowers that didn't get stepped on  
The flowers that did get stepped on  
This sun is rising for the water tides generated by the moon  
This sun is rising for the honey bees feared by weakasses  
The butterfly cocoons that are hatching  
The sun does not wish to deal with our shit today  
Neither do I

## WANDERLUST VICTIM

Delectable creature carrying a knapsack of enigma  
And a constant longing to be elsewhere  
Wanderlust is what the doctor's diagnosed you with  
Explore me?  
Explore many.  
Disappointed at the distance between you and the horizon  
Your arms stretch out to reach every continent  
Your legs demand to walk amongst the unknown  
Both sewn down by commitment's needle and thread

## SYNESTHESIA IN THEORY

Your name tastes like how it feels to fall on my face  
Intertwining fingers sounded like blurry vision without glasses  
Our conversations were spelt out in every shade of temporary  
Each step we took was in the making of a piano masterpiece  
Hearing about your day showed me the tasty view of aurora borealis  
Our swimming dates felt like the color of watermelon on my tongue  
Blushing was the soft beat of marigold  
No longer talking was the discovery of a black hole  
Good-bye was how the universe began

## SWEET PANDEMONTIUM

My citric thoughts jam together like marmalade  
I sometimes wish my life was as neatly aligned as the white tiles reflecting in  
the shower  
What has become of the old cul-de-sac  
Where summers seen through child eyes were spent in warm basketball  
wanderings  
And we bought warheads from men who drive trucks that sing  
Making as much money as they can for a living  
We didn't know it, our biggest concern was the ice cream  
Once more I'd like to visit the carnival within your embrace  
I want to ride the horse tornado dabbed with lustrous candy lights and the  
giggings of daffodils  
I feel as though I have dissolved into the steam emitted from my father's  
cooking  
Floating in a tasteful reverie  
Tights and boots and blackberry smoke  
She is the epitome of happiness these days  
Blanket upon blanket upon blanket  
I ask comfort to suffocate me  
Each conversation with the counselor makes me feel as though I'm being  
buried alive

## COMPILATION OF SOMETHINGS

Life is like a meadow encountering the storm  
Satan's servants sitting on the living room couch  
Your grandmother protected with clear plastic  
Deer gathered in the cemetery  
A bus ride passing by the same places every day  
All of the children circle around the trampoline  
Watching you turn into a somersault  
You can hear cheering  
It's so amazing watching the opening of the Lion King in french  
Sometimes you still feel bad about the summer your dad spent hours  
Trying to teach you how to dive into the pool  
But you were too afraid of the bottom  
The music that plays in Denny's when you sit across from your mother  
Drinking hot chocolate at two in the morning  
Have you seen the look on someone's face when they're doing what they  
love?  
All of the baby turtles are so brave  
Rushing into the waves one by one  
Oh yeah, and life is like a meadow

# ZACHARY KLYSE

## HALL OF FAME

Oh stranger! Oh stranger!

You do not know of such placebo that has been place upon thy soulless  
mindless disemboweled corpsed shell of a coward

Tongues in bottles of rum to silence the weak with drunken intentions  
The brain on the shelf to collect dust and rust the inner mechanic gears of  
insanity

Hands clasped together fingers woven like a spider's web of deceit and lies  
and scars tossed atop a wedding cake

Still beating hearts inside open ovens warming the house as if it were in love  
with the commoners that come and go out the home as if on fire was their  
abode

Oh stranger Oh stranger

You do not know of such placebo

The stomachs in the refrigerator cooling on leftovers next to the beer battered  
liver sauteed in oil and red wine with rosemary and tequila and lemon juice  
Eyeballs glued to the television and ears to the walls listening in on another  
fight happening in the next room over of a father disciplining his child with  
the wrath of a god and a belt

Spinal cords in the walking stick and umbrella bin and skin coats on the rack  
beside the fingerprintless doorknob

Oh stranger Oh stranger

Feet on the doormat with their toes hiding the 'wel' in 'welcome'

Faces pinned and plastered and framed on the hallway walls with lips parted  
to catch the full taste of a last breath

Balls of hair resting under the couch and bed to create nuisances for the  
cleaning bride carrying her second unwanted child

Oh stranger Oh stranger

Blood drops in martinis

Oh stranger

Fingers in the pickle jar

Oh stranger! The intestine ribbons

Oh stranger

What placebo has been placed upon your genitalia in the shower never to  
cleanse the horror that it has been used on people of all ages and gender and  
ethnicity and race and consent

The placebo The placebo

The taboo of veins used like puppeteer strings the marionette mites  
gnawing at your conscience under the waxing crescent moon  
Breasts inside the television on all the channels that is possible to observe  
and watch and give respect to for free  
The tabooed placebo tattooed into the wood oak desk the limbs lay in the  
shape of pyramids and other obtuse angles  
And the thoughts trapped inside envelopes seal away in unstamped letter  
unable to explain why  
And the voices echo and roam the halls searching for the lungs hidden  
away inside the closets that had birthed their form meaning sound and tone

Oh goodness the horror  
Oh goodness the honor  
Oh goodness the privilege  
Oh goodness the placebo  
The placeholder...

## **TINY GLOWING SCREENS**

The television is off  
The cell phone is buzzing  
I sit on the porch  
my bag of moons glowing  
I see another house's lights  
they flicker with depleting power  
I miss my family  
I miss my friends  
But when the sun burnt out  
We were all left with electric light  
Tiny screens...  
Oh so tiny screens...

## HAIKU COLLECTIVE

Luna's demise  
oceans receded quiet  
the sun's rebirth

Dandelion  
off side of the freeway  
Toxicity

Bird strut calm  
pecks at worm in ground  
gun sound click

Low income housing  
latino kids get dinner  
at the gas station

The cadence  
bubbling creek bed low  
murmuring toad

The very grape fields  
The racial integration  
no longer cotton



## A LAND TO PROTECT

As I  
dive into  
the ocean deep  
Before me  
lies  
a community.  
Life.  
Fishes swim  
in unions.  
Crustaceans  
patter though coral  
reefs and anemones.  
Peppered across  
my line of sight.  
Like sea salami.  
Eels  
slither and wiggle.  
Angles baiting.  
Sharks brush my legs.  
Slimey.  
Cold.  
Rough.  
Everlastingly refreshing.  
Fingers cling  
to rocks and observe  
the patterns and indents,  
the carvings and sculpting,  
the product of gentle  
currents.  
Dolphin sonars  
ring in my ears.  
The taste  
like a bittersweet memory.  
Welcome it says,  
to me,  
to pseudo  
Atlantis.

## HOPELESS ROMANTIC

She rubs her hand against his cheek.

“I love you so much,” she says.

He replies, “I love you too.”

Their lips touch each other’s, making sensual and loving contact. Her body fills with bliss, contentment, and most of all, completeness. She opens her eyes, looking at a computer screen.

## OVERACTIVE IMAGINATION

I always loved going to the downtown district and going to the stores. I don’t buy anything, I just loved to look at the mannequins and create stories for them. There’s Jordan and Samantha and...

Hey... Who’s the new guy? A-And where’s Tawnya? Tawnya! Where are you?

She’s not here said the man flashing her wristwatch.

## [UNTITLED]

His isocele brought down inside the clay  
The powerful beast called out to his deceased kin  
Only his echo and the cold snow winds responded

He laid down near his deathbed  
Which was his birthplace  
He was the last of his kind

He had seen wars between man and beast  
Men with spears destroyed the young  
Even before they had their first breath

The green one had grayer scales near his eyes  
His snout was wet with soot, blood, and tears  
A few stars poked their way out of the setting sun's sky

He laid on his belly with wings by his side  
His violet eyes closed slow  
The last thing he saw was a single snowflake on his right claw

A warm orange glow came from where his tail spiked  
The rock split from under the mighty one  
And consumed him in fire that melted no ice

Green scales made the fire crackle and spark  
The howl of the wind carried back his cry  
And tries to take his ashes

But no ashes came from this fiery burst  
The dragon did not poof into dust  
He melted back into the clay

Nothing was left of the last dragon  
The crack repaired itself  
The orange glow faded away

Nothing remained of the dragons influence  
Just myths and outdated information  
At least until Gaia decides they can return

## [UNTITLED]

The steaming white-gold mountain is created  
Lumpy, it is sprinkled with snow  
All sides of the mountain is dappered with the flakes  
All is peace  
Until He uproots the very top  
digging his way to the core  
hollowing out the white fluffed earth  
bringing pile after pile out  
After His destruction, he floods the mountain  
The hot fluid fills the hole and spills out down the side of the mountain

Innocent people  
Ignorant to the disaster  
Some get caught in the flood of beige magma  
Submerged and drowned in the searing swarm  
A father is picked out  
Out of all the inhabitants of the land  
A single father is chosen  
He is pierced by a mighty silver metallic force  
lifted into the air high above the white brown landscape  
He sees more distraught people  
More land violated  
More of His work

The father is speeding down back to earth  
He is brought down into the mountain  
He drowns to death with regret and brown in his heart  
The father's children huddle with their mother  
She cries in agony watching her lover's torture  
The father is raised up into the sky once more  
His corpse dripping hot and steamy  
And is lifted out of sight of the people  
A loud noise cracks the silence that followed the vanish  
A loud bellow from the skies above  
This cacophony rang a familiar sound  
And it said,

“Hey Junior, can you pass me the potatoes?”

## THE WEIGHT OF A LAST BREATH

My head lies down on the soft green grass  
I can feel blood pooling around my shoulders  
I smile  
Two butterflies dance above  
One with white wings  
And one with black wings  
The black one lands on my nose  
Its tiny legs tickle my nose  
I lose feeling in my legs

The white one lands atop the black one  
The wings are torn apart  
My grin grows wider  
Nature is so beautiful  
I am glad these are my final moments  
My arms go numb

The white butterfly takes off to the sky  
It is as if I could feel its weight lifted off me  
I could feel the white wing beat's wind  
The gentle fall of the black butterfly's wing  
It falls like a leaf  
On my cheek

These wings will help me get up

At least these can help me get up there

## THE DROUGHT INSIDE MY BODY

Mother is like the greener grass on the neighbor's lawn.  
As you stand out there, a hose in hand and a thumb halfway over the nozzle,  
you see the neighbor wave.  
You're polite and wave back.  
The plain red collared T-shirt he wears is somewhat wrinkled.  
Just a large crest over his belly.  
You watch in a state of allured awe as he twists the spigot on, and  
a cascade of rainbow filled droplets hit each and every  
individually lush green dagger that stabs the earth below.  
The doppelganger rain rejuvenates the blades,  
making them grow a few centimeters taller, a tad shade greener,  
and the grass just a little sharper.  
It's so green, even the purest emeralds you would see could not achieve this  
color.  
You smile as you look at your lawn.  
Brown, dusty, ant infested, and Death looms over the lawn as if he owns it.  
Mud bubbles pop and splatter your already dirty shoes.  
You stop the flow of water and the lawn from being the new Jackson Pollock  
and sit in a chair. Staring at your work and your outstanding neighbor's.  
Each time you blink, his glows an even greener shade.  
As yours darkens a color palette browner.  
With all the strength you can muster, you go over to his lawn.  
And begin to pull out the weeds.  
It's your job after all.  
You yank and pull and stretch and pull even more.  
Weed after weed, unwanted plant after unwanted plant.  
After one is plucked, you toss it to your lawn.

## THE FLOOD

The setting sun on the ocean  
is blocked out by the stormclouds above Ellis Island  
What had once appeared to be a calm aquatic inferno  
glistening in your eyes with solidarity  
turned into a squall from the abyss  
Armored Kappas swam out the crevice  
beating his drums with frozen eels  
The skin on the drum is blubber from manatees and blue whales  
The frame, coral reefs and bones, colors unimaginable  
A ghastly torrent wafts the shore  
Once Twice Four times  
There is no beach  
Mighty castles buckle under the great force  
Ships become new Titanics  
flipping upwards in two  
sprinkling the people like rain from the sky  
sharp like broken dreams and glass  
As if Poseidon had reached his hand in companionship  
and we spat in his mouth  
With crashes and slips and slides  
the earth rages

A red watered civil war is fought  
A red watered civil war is lost

# MAHEALANI LAROSA

## THE SOUND OF WAVES

if I could decide  
what color poppies were  
then I would choose  
the way a smile tightens  
at the corners of a mouth  
or the way freckled shoulders  
shrug their golden slopes  
I would choose riding down the street  
on a bicycle  
waving arms in the air  
or a lemon soda bottle  
abandoned on the grass  
the daffodils under the  
PRIVATE PROPERTY  
sign by the bus junction  
some books about a lonely  
girl  
equations on a blackboard  
in the garage  
under the grapefruit tree  
shingles slipping off the roofs edge  
as a barefoot child climbs up to the sky  
a cliff's edge by the rolling sea  
the sound of waves  
breaking  
crashing  
killing  
the sound of waves  
swallowing  
sheltering  
covering  
the sound of waves  
mellow  
whispering sweet nothings  
to wary open ears  
poppies would be a joyful dangerous thing



## **MANEUVER**

I maneuver your velvet eyes  
that melt me like icing  
purple melancholy shimmers  
contemplate profound dreams  
whirl in glitter  
spinning mermaids in a  
sea of riddled lies  
a hazel metamorphose  
a squeeze a tang a slaughter  
of liquid clouds  
nostalgic angst  
soaked in a gaggle  
of molding sludge  
delirious with a neverending melody  
of clicks and lolling tongues  
flee from swirling tentacles  
the gravestones splashes with paint and  
pink tissue paper  
weak roses climbing  
the rotted staircase to hell  
forgotten light fading  
into the absence of darkness

## MURMURING

gossamer trees swathed in  
murmuring violet rays  
bask in the dank memories  
of cacophonies and art  
of growing snowflakes on the windowpane  
skeleton trees outside  
wisteria vines tangle your brain  
a dissection of conscious to unconsciousness  
consciously unconscious caution  
shuddering in icy bliss  
the pale sun soaks you with lightbulb light  
fluorescent beams wither and smash  
on the broken tile  
liquid silver clouds cry to the black flame moon  
washed over from stomach flu and car exhausts  
witches on broomsticks  
of immortality  
and let the lion out of the cage on the chance of  
seeing the unseeable, impossible is now possible  
melancholy dreams  
a dreary reality of robots and screens  
smiling eyes in old car parts  
crinkling corners of squished apartment buildings  
burned down in a thin layer of plastic  
a branch, a bone snaps and  
all is nothing for the lack of death and love

## RAIN PUDDLE

from the depths of a watery blue abyss  
come raindrops flying upwards  
like needle points stuck to chains of thread  
thread looping and curving  
stitching my dry lips into a never ending smile  
smile for the camera and say goodbye  
fall backwards as the shutter clicks  
and you are encased in black cloth  
cloth sprinkled with mold, torn  
on the edge of the skeletons cold white frame  
frame of the picture with my fake smile that  
crackles and warps in the sun's harsh glare  
glare at the ones who defy your  
vulgarity, grotesque and full of false pride  
pride for the ocean, rolling like the tongue  
while you speak away the white wash wave  
wave hello to your next door neighbor  
a girl gone wrong by society  
dark eyes and black lipstick  
lipstick smudges on a mans thick neck  
a warning to the wife of his deceit  
bright pink and sticky like candy  
candy as sweet as the rain smooths  
and shapes my face  
face the challenges or disappear  
disappear like leaves on a puddle  
a puddle that sinks into a watery blue abyss

## LOTTERY MACHINES

candles blown out  
moon snuffed  
by the lulling ocean  
rusting fenders  
soaking in a mess of  
chocolate eyes  
bright blue shining through  
trust yourself to make a move  
but you're frozen  
in place  
no face  
cial expressions  
depressions  
successions of  
rythimized words  
overtaking the  
baking minds overheated with  
lies  
not a surprise  
broken glass  
scattered on empty walls  
splashed with  
shining blood  
drip drip drip  
lottery machines  
catch dreams  
ice cream  
screams

## OY SONG-ET?

hush cried the velvet  
in gruesome demise  
as he climbed up the spire  
and hissed in my eyes

he spat out the words  
with such nasty fines  
i cringed as the spittle  
landed smack on my chest

he cackled with glee  
as i winced in strong pain  
he insisted i agree  
and ripped open my brain

i screamed as my skin  
came off of my head  
i knew he must win  
but i thought i was dead

he yelled out once more  
do you give yourself to me  
i mumbled back to his roar  
i can't even see

he giggled and swooned  
and gobbled me up  
his mouth a far moon  
as i floated in upchuck

this is my warning  
im also saying goodbye  
you should be in mourning  
or at least you should cry

## DEAD BODY DRIVE

its like an echoing laugh  
bouncing towards the sky  
the clouds are disintegrating  
so we fall down and cry

the flowers are wilting  
the covers are smooth  
the flowers are dying  
the covers have moved

when they were seated  
the hymn started to play  
the funeral was white  
oh this sad sad day

the puddle was melting  
the chocolate was nice  
the puddle was filling  
the chocolate was ice

we drove to the forest  
the bridge covered in moss  
your smile so proper  
the world is so dross

the rain was flying  
the heart was dead  
the rain was killing  
the heart had fled

your blood was orange  
as grainy as rust  
cars metal was poison  
arms covered in dust

the day was walking  
the skull had to win  
the day was sleeping  
the skull with a grin

grim as the trees  
purple leaves on the ground

your eyes closed like scallops  
you wouldn't make a sound

the cats were hanging  
the hole had gone slack  
the cats were howling  
the hole was now black

so when you go out  
be careful and wise  
when you go out  
the sun may never rise

the story was staring  
the end was clear  
the story was over  
the end was near

## **KITTY CAT**

there once was a lazy cat  
who laid around and got fat  
he jumped in the air  
got caught in a snare  
then hit with a baseball bat

## **SEXUAL HARM**

young girls walking home from school  
an old man started to drool  
grabbed by the arm  
sexual harm  
everyone called her a fool

## **A PARANOID WOMAN**

A woman was walking down the sidewalk  
when she realized there were eyes on her feet.  
Hello the woman said.  
The eyes just blinked and stared up her skirt.  
Thats rude, she said and ran home, proceeding to cut off her feet...



## SIDEWALKS ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

concrete sidewalks  
kept company by daffodils  
unpopulated

## OUT BY THE RIVER

bare feet  
close to crushing  
a butterfly

## ENCORE

take a bow  
wilted flowers on the stage  
encore they scream

## MUERTO MI QUERIDO NINOS

dying children moving sideways  
till you buy yourself a generation  
a dead product that you want  
to answer  
write to get away  
stay away  
boys  
girls  
lose it  
heart that will hate  
everyone you left behind  
tomorrow you  
have to be  
the world  
an empty  
empty  
empty  
shell  
made for the humans  
of a different region  
sectionize  
the brain  
grey matter  
black matter  
evil purple sparkling  
dust in the eyes  
eat it  
pine needles and a scalpel  
to dissect an aurora  
a solstice made from the dead  
but it was  
really  
meant  
for  
dolphins  
riding the backs of bleeding  
flowers

# KAYLAH PARDINI

## FLASHBACK TO SUMMER

The hot sun beating down  
The smell of lemon filling the air  
A little girl prancing around the yard  
Her mom tanning while making mac-n-cheese  
The misting air from the sprinkler  
The little giggles erupting from the little girl  
Her long, lemon filled hair swaying under the sun  
Smiling profusely as her mom brings her a bowl of mac-n-cheese  
Surprised by the sight of hot dogs in it  
She giggles even louder as her mom smiles back

Finding a lizard  
Catching it and wanting to keep it forever  
Rubbing its belly till it falls asleep  
Constantly in awe of the little creature  
Those blue eyes never leaving the sleeping lizard  
Bringing it in the house to show mom  
Being told to get that “thing” out  
Still with a bright, toothless smile on her face  
She walks back outside in her bathing suit  
Admires the lizard while it sleeps a while longer  
Then  
Eventually letting it crawl off her palm  
Into the freedom of the green branching jungle  
Of her daddy’s garden

## **WATER**

the crashing, foaming Waves  
Always changing it's own mood  
Transforming everyday  
the feeling of Eternity when you look at it  
with each Ripple that hits the shore  
another life soaking into the earth

## **VOWELS**

A, the red blood dripping  
from the silver blade  
of the hard life lived

E, the swaying green grass  
with the gentle wind  
each tinkling in silence

I, the yellow sun  
crisping the faces and shoulders  
of youngens playing in the fields

O, the orange traffic light  
that's never seen between  
the red and yellow shining bright

U, the purple vase sitting still  
day after day  
never moving  
always obeying its master  
containing brilliant flowers and never given credit

## BEAUTY IN A MILLION DIFFERENT WAYS

Blue diamond eyes  
Everything you do is  
Amazing in every way.  
Ultimately perfect.  
Title of mom, wife, and best friend don't give you enough credit.  
Imperfections that make you even more desirable.  
Friend is a huge understatement of what you are to me.  
Unique in a million different ways.  
Love is what inspires you, and you inspire me.  
BEAUTIFUL is what my mom is.

Cat prancing around  
cinder block garden in front  
front door with rock path

~

Round curve of the road  
big boulders; beautiful pond  
sun reflecting off

~

Gated pasture  
doe's looking toward us  
little roads; thick grass

~

Simple driveway gate  
two electrical poles  
lineman living here

~

Blackberry bushes  
overflowing in the road  
past the white fence

## SETTING THE HOOK

The sudden crack of my skin  
The smooth line being tossed  
into my heart with a soft ka-plunk  
Setting the hook with a smooth whip  
You have me hanging on the end  
of your line  
It's now up to you whether you  
keep me, or put me back.

## DR. SEUSS POETRY

Once there was a boy named Jimmy  
He had a rat that loved to shimie

He walked along the street  
Found a parakeet  
Then the three made a musical beat

The day was long  
Even with the tune of the song

They grabbed their stuff  
Let out a big huff  
Then they saw Hilary Duff

They screamed and they shouted  
The place began to get crowded  
As they all got pushed to the back, they all pouted

They clawed and they scratched  
As it turned into a wrestling match  
With the snap of their fingers they were gone through the hatch

## TURTLE

Sitting in the dark rock crevices  
Watching the world in silence  
Never bothering anyone else  
Just want to be left alone  
Smooth and graceful  
Pushing itself through the mucky water

Perched on a rock in the sun  
Movement approaching  
Ka-plunk!  
In goes the little, shy creature  
Water wetting the hard dry back  
Clawing his way to freedom

On land, he could risk being caught  
In water, nobody can catch him  
His green shell one instant warm and dry  
Next, dark and slimy

Little kids love him when they can catch him  
The whole while, trying to escape  
Back into the dark safety of the sunken trees and rocks



## THEIR WALK

The pitter patter of the rambunctious children running across the wet, compact sand near the water constantly overlapping. The couple continues to walk while they murmur to each other. They walk past a decorated area near some big rocks that say, “Welcome to the 25th reunion!” They laugh together at some of the people there and how people change drastically between graduation and their class reunion. Laughing and blushing, the girl grabs the boy’s hand and leads him to a small swell near the coastline on the other side of the beach.

Their hands warm together as the wind whips around them taking the girl’s hair on short journeys. Looking into the almost still water, they see all kinds of beauty and life. Admiring all the creatures, the boy points out the mollusk. They laugh together talking about the little community of salt water creatures. The boy pulls left over salami out of his pocket, from their lunch, and breaks off little pieces to drop into the water to see if the baby crabs will attack. Fascinated by the sight, the girl lets out a gasp. Smiling in happiness, the boy no longer stares at the water, but instead the beautiful girl beside him. Her bronze hair whipping slightly around her head as her blue eyes never leave the swell and her lips part slightly in amazement. They both sit on the sandy shore, hand in hand, as close as can be, watching the waves push and pull for hours.

## OF THE MANY REASONS

Of the many reasons I love you, Dad, here is one:

The way your strong form wraps  
around me in a tight hug.  
As if sticking all the broken pieces  
back together.

Of the many reasons why I love you, Dad, here is one:

The way we dance in sync as you  
lead me to the beat of the music.  
All the while in concentration,  
but smiling.

Of the many reasons why I love you, Dad, here is one:

When you fool around with me by pushing me  
or sticking your finger in my ear  
The moments together that we laugh  
so hard we cry.

Of the many reasons why I love you, Dad, here is one:

The sound of your voice as you call me  
baby girl.  
Because I will forever and always be...  
your baby girl.

Of the many reasons why I love you, Dad, here is one:

How supportive and proud you are of me  
Because I would never have gotten as  
far as I am today,  
without you.

Let's face it, there's too many reasons why I love you as much as I do.  
And all of them together just make me love you even more.

## HANDS OF THE DARK

Walking alone through darkness  
Constantly looking back  
Afraid of the inevitable  
Wanting to keep pushing my muscles to pursue  
But the thought at the back of my mind keeping me on edge.  
Wanting to drop to the ground and curl into a ball.  
Still standing,  
I push myself forward  
Can't be seen in pain  
I don't want their sympathy  
No more  
Now walking in a body that doesn't even feel like my own  
Yet,  
Still going  
Each and every additional day  
The hands of the darkness are pulling at my clothes and hair  
Leaving bruises and scratches  
Reaching for and holding tightly onto the exhilarating blue sky  
Clinging to the soft color  
Running from the night  
Yet choosing the stars...

## THE FINAL NIGHT

The whispers sweep across the deserted playground. A bird walks along the gravelly dirt pathway in search of food until another drops from the darkness and attacks the hungry bird. Squawking fills the silence followed by a screech ending the victim's life. The dark bird continues to peck it's meal clean until it feels satisfied. Then he lifts himself back into the hidden darkness of the abandoned playground which was once filled with cheery, playful children. A bench that used to be polished and a light, shiny brown, is now only splintered black wood.

Here sits a pale white man with salt and pepper hair, wide red eyes, stiff posture, thin lips, slim body, black jeans and a black coat covering all. He does not move much. He stares out of the darkness to the city streets where teenagers and business men walk, the homeless sit and the joggers run while pushing their babies in strollers.

He gets up as the sun sets and the world begins to fade to black. When he gets a craving for something more; out of the ordinary peace he feels when the darkness takes over him. The force of want within him propels him toward the street. The garbage littered concrete, only being walked on by the bravest of the night. It may be a businessman that had to work late, or a woman who did not have the money for a taxi because she spent it all at the bar, or even a man with his boots poking out of a cardboard box. He creeps up next to them. Asks them for directions because he is lost, then he slits their throat, catching their limp body and dragging it back to his hidden darkness behind the steel bars and abandoned playground.

~

Staring into the mirror at her blue v-neck, yoga pants, running shoes, dirty blonde hair pulled into a ponytail and her big green eyes staring back at her, she heads for the front door. Putting in her ear phones, she sets out on her evening jog. From street to street, she keeps her pace. Until she comes across a man in a long black coat, whiter than white and his breath fogging up the air as he squints at a piece of paper and road signs on the corner. He raises his hand, signaling for her. She unplugs one ear and asks him if he is okay. He tells her he is just lost and needs help with directions as he pulls a knife. Her eyes go big as he threatens her. To show he is serious on his threat, he slices a small cut across her cheek. With fear in her eyes and blood dripping down her neck and soaking into her t-shirt, she follows him. He pushes her down near the bench. She grabs a stick inconspicuously and when he makes her get up, she stabs the stick into his neck and turns to run. She trips over something thick and heavy. She scrambles to compose herself as she sees not one, or two, but many bodies all lying dead around her. The man struggles with the stick, but pulls it out and continues to go after the woman. She stumbles to her feet and runs as fast as she can, for as long as she can. Ignoring the stream of blood drying on her face, she

runs into her home, spinning around and locking the door all in the same heatbeat. She reaches for the phone and calls 911 as she slides down the wall into a ball and speaks as calm as she can to the operator. They send officers to check out the scene.

~

The police finish the investigation with over twenty dead bodies. They determined the suspect guilty of the crimes. He was pronounced dead a few blocks from the scene where he tried to chase his victim, but the wound in his neck put him down before he could catch up and cause any more damage. The woman is recovering from the trauma and the slight wound on her cheek. Case closed.

## CASE 6-82

Detective Riley approached the scene with a rock hard, emotionless plastered face. The paramedics loading up one dead and one unresponsive patient. Staring down at the ground's debris of glass shards, chipped pieces of bricks and crumbling rock. The ambulance sirens fade into the distance as one of his men come over to brief him on the situation.

Detective Galloway walks up saying, "One man dead, one not responding, \$200,000,000 in jewels gone. No weapons left behind, no bullet casings, no witnesses, but there was something left behind. Whether it has to do with this case or not, but some of the guys found a tooth laying on the ground."

Shaking his head with a crease in his brow, he dismisses Detective Galloway. He walks over near a tree, alongside the scene. No fresh, stand out marks, except a small splotch of clear liquid.

He examines it once more then walks over to forensics. He states, "I want anything and everything swabbed and tested from here. We have no witnesses, no nothing. I want something! Now get to work and I want someone to take a look at that tree over there. I think there's saliva, which could give us a huge lead."

~

Pulling up to the office in his patrol car, he walks in. Throwing his jacket over the back of his chair, he takes a deep breath and lets it out as a long sigh.

Detective Pratt comes over and sits on the corner of his desk and says softly, "You okay? Tough scene?"

He looks up at her blue eyes, fair skin, and dirty blonde hair pulled back in a bun, and says, "I just don't get it. How could there be nothing? And to add to it all, the unresponsive victim was my little brother's best friend. God, I didn't even get a chance to find out who the one under the plastic was."

Detective Pratt places her hand on his cheek, tilting his chin up so he looks her in the eyes, "It'll be okay. I'm sure we'll get to the bottom of it. You just need to relax and get your mind off it for now."

He nods as she gets up and walks back to her desk, sits down and starts typing again. His phone rings. He picks it up. "Detective Riley. Uh huh...Yeah, I'll be right down. Thanks." Getting up and starting to walk out the door with his jacket in his hand, he calls, "Pratt, I'm going down to the hospital. Edd Holt, the unresponsive victim, just woke up and I want to get to him before anybody else does."

~

Walking through the automatic hospital doors, he approaches the receptionist. "Hello, ma'am. Detective Riley." Flashing his badge. "Can you point me toward Edd Holt's room, please?"

“No problem, right down the hall to the left and it’s the first door on the right,” she responds with a look of curiosity and speculation on her freckled face.

He walks in, raising his badge and speaking softly. “Hi. Are you Edd Holt? My name is Detective Riley.”

“Well, so I’m told,” he says with a creased forehead.

“Alright bud, do you remember anything at all from the past 48 hours?”

“Nope, None at all. Sorry I wish I did. Believe me.” Annoyance appearing all over his face.

“Alright, thanks for your time.”

He responds with a low bye mixed with a sigh as he closes his eyes in defeat.

Detective Riley walks out, calls Pratt and gets an update on anything new. She informs him that the deceased body from the scene seems to be a random bystander that just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The swabs taken from the scene have not given us anything new. The only thing that was discovered was a DNA sample that does not match anybody in the system.

~

One year later. Detective Riley walks into the office. His beard giving him a look of despair. Still walking tall and strong like the man he is, he picks up the case files, drops them into the box full of forensics and the unknown DNA swab. He walks over to the case file room carrying the box and walks down the row till he spots an open space for the unsolved case of 6-82. He walks out empty handed. Slows to a stop before Detective Pratt, long enough for them to hold steady eye contact, then break away as the thud of his boots lead him back to his desk and her eyes move back to the computer screen with no words spoken aloud.

*The End*

# BECKY PEDERSEN

## STAND TALL

I have heard the clicking of the cleats on the ground  
I have felt the rush of a perfect pitch  
How it feels to let it fly off my finger tips  
I have felt the confidence that come with success  
I also know the disappointment of being unsuccessful  
But though all things good or bad  
My love for the game will forever stand tall



# FEAR

Fear.  
The fear of failure,  
That's the worst fear.  
But in order to succeed  
You also must fail.  
They say that in order to conquer your fears  
You must face them.  
Try until you succeed.  
That means you will also fail.  
You will never not fail.  
We have to learn to accept failure.  
We have to learn to realize that failure makes us who we are.  
Even extraordinary people failed.  
But the difference between ordinary people and extraordinary?  
Extraordinary people don't let fear or failure get in the way  
Of their dreams or goals.  
Don't fear failure, embrace it.  
You have to fail to succeed.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO FOREVER?

Best friends forever, right?  
That's what we'd always say  
We made a pact forever  
But you turned your back away  
Scared that I had lost you  
Hurt and torn apart  
I feel traded like I have been stabbed right in the heart  
How could you do this  
You have torn me right apart  
Thanks for the memories  
They will forever be in my heart

## EVERYTIME

You say things you don't really mean  
They get my hopes up  
And like always, you let me down  
Like a ton of bricks falling from the empire state building  
But of course my stupid trusting self  
I let you do the same thing over again  
Until finally I walk away  
I find someone new only to find their just like you  
Hopefully this time it will all work out, but I say this everytime

## I'M TRYING

I'm trying to get you to miss me  
To feel the pain of emptiness I feel  
The constant thought of you  
Not a minute goes by that you're not on my mind  
Why can't you miss me like I miss you

I walk by looking like I don't care  
But inside my heart is aching for you  
Just say hello  
Do you even care?

We used to have such fun  
Laughing and cowboys and indians playing all day long  
But you act as if none of it had happened  
Please tell me think of those times  
Tell me you haven't let them slip your mind

All I want is to be friends again  
Really that's all just being in your presents is what I want  
Just remember those times  
And I know you'll miss me  
Just remember and you'll see

## HIGH DIVE

Life is like a high dive  
When you are looking at it  
It doesn't look scary at all  
But as you climb up  
It get scarier with each step  
When you reach the top  
Wanting to come down  
You just let go and learn to enjoy

## DONE

As I stood there, anger building rapidly inside,  
I looked at you disappointedly, and then I realized: this was it.  
This was the end of whatever was going on.  
I walked away grabbing my things.  
I turned to my mother and left the building filled with conceited liars  
and fake friendly people.  
This was the night I couldn't fall asleep.  
I was too preoccupied about thinking how good it'd feel to prove you wrong,  
To beat you at your own game,  
and leave you behind like a child does when he gets bored of his toys  
And then you'd see me differently, someone you shouldn't play mind games on.  
I was ready to use fire against fire, but I'd make sure  
Only you'd get burned.

## PLAN

Tick tock tick tock  
There goes the clock buzz  
Before you can react you go into shock  
Your eyelids scream  
Just press snooze  
But your brain is screaming  
Get to work time is ticking on  
Put your feet on the ground and get going  
You only have so many hours in your life  
Don't waste it dreaming  
Spend it on doing  
Because a dream without a plan is a wish  
Have a plan and your dream will become a reality  
So get up and get going  
Time won't wait for you  
So go catch up  
Pain only last for a little  
But glory last forever

## ABANDON

Old floors creak, wood seeps, windows wide open  
Wind blowing in rushing past my skin  
Time stands still  
Abandon inside, this place was left behind  
Just like my soul  
As the wind blows I pray my soul will drift back to me  
But it never does  
When you left you took very thing  
You took what makes me alive  
Why did you take this from me?  
As if you didn't hurt me enough?  
I stand here day after day  
Month after month  
Year after year  
Nothing changes  
You're gone, and you hold my soul  
My soul and heart you carry in your back pocket  
All I have is the wind that whispers my name  
And reminds me of the the pain

## **SOCIETY**

They say that worry will lead to a younger death  
The pressure will throw you over the edge  
By the time they realize you're drowning  
The earth has orbited around the sun a thousand times  
Why is society like this?  
They lash all the things you're "supposed" to be at such a young age  
Stressing kids and chewing up their minds  
Expand your future so you can survive

## **TRYING TO THINK**

I am trying to think  
Please don't disturb  
Oh what do I do?  
I'm so lost and confused  
I'm tired of these feelings  
I wish they'd go away  
But more, I want them to always stay  
Because losing them I would no longer feel pain  
The pain of missing you

# SADE PEREZ

You had a drink, and another.  
And next thing you know, you're  
laying in a bed with a boy you  
don't know in a room you've  
never seen. And you start to think  
that maybe you shouldn't have  
given in to the boy with the vodka  
lips and acid tongue, whispering  
intoxicating words of lust not  
love into your drunken ear as  
you blow cigarette smoke out the  
window. Maybe he thought you'd  
stick around but he doesn't know  
you're not the girl that stays for  
breakfast.

-A useless poem about a one  
night stand



It's 1:26 in the morning and I can feel your breath on my neck and your heartbeat against my chest and I want nothing more than to stay here with you, and never leave your side. And I think of the color of your eyes and how they are as deep and as blue as the ocean and I would drown in them all day if I could. And I think of how your laugh is my favorite sound and I want to hear it everyday for the rest of my life. And I think that's what love is, and if that is love then I want to love you forever. Baby let me love you forever.

I could tell you that I can't live without you. Or I could tell you that I need you. And maybe I should tell you that I don't ever want to lose you. But I realize now that I don't think that anymore. I know I don't need you, I thought I did for many years but that's because I never got a taste of life without you. Now that I have, you're nothing but a fading memory. I no longer need you to feel complete and I know now that you never completed me you just made me feel less empty. I can't do this anymore.

-A super cliché poem for a super cliché boy

“Why?” he asked as his fingertips slid over my scars. “Didn’t it hurt?”

“It hurt like hell. But if you could choose between hurting yourself or getting hurt by someone else, what would you choose?”

“I wouldn’t.”

“Well, sometimes you have to hurt yourself so you can’t feel the aching pain in your chest when they decide they don’t need you anymore.”

“What happened?”

“Just a bunch of bullshit to tell you the truth, but if I’ve learned anything it’s that you have to stop loving people before they stop loving you. And if you don’t, you’re left wondering what you did wrong and you’ll look for your answers at the bottoms of vodka bottles and in the mouths of drunk guys at the bar who pretend to care about you. And you’ll blame yourself over and over again until one day you realize you had it wrong the whole time. It was never your fault, the only thing you did was love someone with your whole heart without making sure they could do the same. And you let them take it when they left, leaving you with nothing but broken promises and a counter of empty bottles.

-Don’t do this to yourself again.

Maybe you gave him more love than his heart could handle.  
And you can't blame yourself because not everyone will have the same heart as you.  
And sometimes you've got to be your own hero and save your own heart  
Because sometimes the people you can't live without can live without you.  
And maybe you will feel like your whole world is collapsing in on you  
But when you fall in love you will finally understand  
why storms are named after people.  
So maybe he was your first storm but my god, will you experience so many more.  
So don't you dare say that your life is over,  
Because, my dear, your life is just starting.

Don't let someone fall in love with your naked body until they've fallen in love with your naked soul first. Do not strip yourself bare to the first boy to whisper the words "I love you" and make you feel special for the first time. And don't you dare sell yourself short of anything less than what you deserve. You are a work of art. You are to be marveled over, my dear. Don't accept anything less.

## FOOLISH

I didn't know  
that you were watching.

I didn't see you  
standing there.

I didn't hear you  
screaming.

I didn't feel you  
hurting.

I didn't see you  
breaking.

I didn't hear you  
falling to your knees.

I didn't feel you  
leaving.

I didn't know  
you were forgetting.

It was almost sunset on that late August night. I sat on my porch with your sweater draped over my shoulders. It was the one you gave me the night at the fair when I spilled soda all over mine. Your scent was fading from it but there was nothing I could do to bring it back. My mind was overflowing with memories from when we were together. I haven't seen you in months since you left. Do you remember that? I do. I know you're gone and no matter what I do I can't make you love me. But I still miss you every single day. And what am I supposed to say when I'm all choked up and you're okay? I can't find the words to say what I need to say to you. And every day it rips my heart open. Time after time.

## LET ME FORGET

I am trying to forget  
the color of your eyes.

I am trying to forget  
how you looked when you  
smiled.

I am trying to forget  
the way you drove.

I am trying to forget  
that you ever touched me.

I am trying to forget  
that I ever knew you.

I am trying to forget  
the smell of your skin.

I am trying to forget  
the calluses on your hands.

I am trying to forget  
everything you ever said.

I am trying to forget  
the things you never said.

I am trying to forget  
the way you said my name.

I am trying to forget  
the way you made me  
feel.

I am trying to forget  
the sound of your voice.

I am trying to forget  
everything we did.

I am trying to forget  
the seats of your truck.

I am trying to forget  
the way you looked at me.

I am trying to forget  
your name.

I am trying to forget  
you I swear I am.

I need to forget  
you.



# JORDAN PORTERFIELD

## I AM TRYING TO LET YOU IN

I am trying to let you in,  
to break off from the  
clean white cage  
of my ribs,  
and let the blood  
of the wounds you give  
drip down-  
and stain their pearly surfaces

to let the places  
you touch be claimed forever,  
and the bruises you  
find disappear  
and return to where  
they came from,

to not flinch  
every time someone moves  
around me,  
and forget all  
that I have had  
stolen,

to tear away  
the skin that is  
my shell,  
and hand over to you  
every organ I need to live;  
but you already have my beating heart

to rip off  
each and every ligament  
that makes me whole  
and replace them  
with our laughter on Sunday mornings;  
you left to cook the eggs,  
and I left to make the  
toast that you can't  
help but burn

to replace the  
glow of my soul  
with the pale  
light shining  
through the window  
as we drive,  
the music low enough  
that we can't  
hear it.

## SONG OF MYSELF

I make myself, and ruin myself.  
So my day is full of construction and destruction,  
and I never run out of work.

My arms are empty, and my  
    head full,  
ground down into the soil,  
    meant for a spring that is  
    always late.

I am a product of the century of protests  
    and brutality.

Purples and greens and creases line me  
and prove I have lived, and  
have been shapen by this  
    “new world”

but it is often the new things that are easily broken,  
not having been accustomed to their given shapes

and, although I stay in for winter  
and do not follow the cricket songs  
    in summer,  
even I die in fall.

## FALSE TRANSLATION - RIMBAUD'S "MEMOIRE"

The past; comes with the flames of defiance,  
the assault of the sun borne against the corpses of youth;  
The sound, a flute of lost time, and origins  
murmurs don't dwell upon us, we yell in defense;

guardian angels- none... gone in the current of our march,  
measly rulers, and heirs, and lords, will cower, will break. She  
leads, the event continues as the sky is lit night blue, appeal  
to our requests, or suffer the consequence of broken  
arches in the doorway to your heaven.

## STOLEN LINES

"How vain a mask to wear a bullet like a gem"  
How cruel was he who shot me  
Not with something as humane as a gun  
but with those less than,  
those promises of love and a ring  
those goodbyes that sounded like nails on a chalkboard  
and the hellos that made my heart skip a beat  
the treasures and jewels of time well spent  
and innocence lost  
the breaking of foolish pinky swears  
and the shattering of snowglobes  
when summer came  
the smoke in the mirrors and his  
missing reflection  
But it was I who tattooed the print of his lips to mine  
and placed that bullet on a chain  
around my neck

## FROM HOWL

I saw the minds of my generation  
    turned into crumbling dust.  
Droven by not only one another,  
    but their parents as well-  
    or lack of.  
Clinging onto bottle glass and alleyway  
    cardboard,  
following what they mistook  
    as taillights.

## HAIKUS

wind chimes hang  
from bleached rafters,  
praying for the family.

\*

From house to street  
Two black pairs, dark, foolish  
and circling neat

\*

like erasing,  
the words are gone but the  
marks are still there

## OUR PARENT'S BRANDS

The obnoxious-phone-talking people  
are walking side by side, keeping their distance;  
past the pub with cheap liquor  
and loose drunks,  
Where everyone's drinks are laced with thoughts  
of lost loves  
and old, bearded men who speak  
as though jazz is etched into their very being  
ask the scared loud mouths if they  
"wanna pizza their minds",  
and a hush falls over the crowd  
when people start heading home,  
and that slow song comes on  
that everyone knows makes him think of his ex-wife,  
where dusk and night are entwined  
and the traitors exchange knives  
from those sabotaged backs,  
and everyone knows that death is unavoidable  
and heaven may very well be a rumor,  
so they drown every last subconscious thought  
with the same wine and vodka brands  
that their parents used to drink.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISAPPOINTMENT

When you bite into me you will find that I am filled with sand  
and an irony aftertaste.  
And when you pour that out you will find me stuffed  
with pit ridden cherries  
and the sharp bits of oyster  
that cause dentist appointments when they come in contact with jaws.  
And when you bring out your dinosaur-bone feather duster  
and rubber dish-washing gloves  
you will find that I am lined with  
rivers of smog  
and cancerous exhales.  
And when you pry me open with metal bars  
you will see that the things I tried to become were much better  
than the things I am.  
And when you stand there,  
open mouthed and glossy eyed,  
and after you realize that I wasn't a mud encrusted ruby  
and that shoe polish doesn't work on people,  
I will apologize, not only to you,  
say "nice try,"  
and begin cocooning myself once again.

## THE MOURNINGS ARE FOR ME

Everything is going stale,  
one hand is clutching my  
warm drink  
while the other, left in the cold,  
is turning pink.  
My mother use to tell me  
not to talk to strangers,  
but then she would let a new one take her home each night.  
The flowers are blanketed  
by their own mother, frost,  
and do not know  
the awfully wonderful joy  
that comes from leaving your family inside.  
Strangers smile deceptively as they pass me  
and make me feel like Johnny Cash's first wife-  
the one that stayed home alone with the babies.  
My classmates drive by in their heated cars as they listen to the radio.  
I know that I am no one to them.  
I am not the quarterback or most likely to succeed,  
and my parents didn't leave me  
with a very good name.

## THE PIGGY BANK HEART

My heart was full of pennies, and his is full of dimes. His coins are of more value than those that are in mine. Then one day, I was feeling particularly wise, and asked him how much it would cost for a coin; thus began my demise. His face flashed with hope and knowing, but I didn't know how far we were going. He said it would cost one kiss and a little promise but I agreed before hearing him through. So I gave away that kiss, and many other things, for I did not know that the "little" promise would cause me so much pain. The promise was simple, and easy to do; "whenever I shall want more, you will open up your heart and let me in the door." The deal was already sealed, my heart had been bound and when I returned home that night this is what I found. My heart was an empty vault, even before he robbed me my pennies were scarcely found, and now all I had left was a silver dime upon the ground. His lies struck me like a hammer, and my heart was cracked in two, so if you ever meet a dime hearted boy, you now know what not to do.



## UNTITLED

Overhead, death is circling.  
Life throws us in, already surrounded  
by tired corridors  
and reused questions.  
Our knees drop and beg, as if this  
ritual is a part of their itinerary.  
Layers and Layers of medicine  
cannot stop those who chew at  
the redwoods that we call home.  
And can-do taxes,  
will only paint us more legends  
of farway heroes.

## UNTITLED

Men and Women are full of  
sadness, the atmosphere  
poisoned with despair

They breathe a sigh of it out  
only to breathe  
another's back in

Their veins are blue  
with the blue blood  
of their blue hearts

And their shoulders  
have been drooped  
by those who are now strangers

## ODE TO MY FATHER

Turned off T.V.  
Yet nothing but static  
yellow/orange glow  
upon kitchen floors  
and wooden cupboards  
Small apartment, but  
always adding more.  
Those cherished are far away  
on a beach, and left you alone.  
Muffled coughs are heard  
through the paper thin walls  
and peanut butter  
on white bread is for dinner  
because you cannot  
turn on the stove.  
A sloppy ponytail  
and faded blue jeans  
She rips your clothes into rags,  
although she never cleans.  
Excuse after Excuse after Excuse after Excuse  
and lies mixed in between  
“I was in the army.”  
Well I’ve seen war.

# DIEGO PULIDO

## ENTITLED TO THE EARTH

my roots run deep, they say much  
branches surfacing, entitled to the earth  
grasp for air,  
as if oxygen wasn't water,  
and hydrogen not hate  
aware of their dues,  
not worried with their worth  
size the same as stars,  
and of the same dust.

my roots run deep, they go far  
fried with hot rays of sun,  
and soaked in large amounts of sweat,  
they move forward, towards the future.  
ancestors of spirits,  
hold up of the same atoms.  
old enough to challenge a tree  
with the same connection to the earth as they to the sun.  
my roots run deep.  
through the blood of my father,  
milk of my mother  
in the love they have made,  
life they have made,  
my roots run deep.  
drenched with the struggle of my people,  
their sweat,  
worries,  
and their concern for the future.  
staying aware of the present,  
they remained in the future.  
still in touch with the past,  
they remained in the moment.  
with no need to say that they completed their goals.

## MA

your wrinkles give me hope.  
carved into your gentle face,  
    they show me your story,  
    your struggles,  
    your memories.  
    show me more about you,  
    than the words,  
    you speak will ever tell me.  
    the stories that you tell are already told within them.

as for your eyes,  
they are a different story themselves.  
    hold weight,  
    and bury me into your memories.  
    light they give off,  
    pulls me in, and enlightens me,  
    with compassion.

as for you hair,  
it curls around your head,  
    itself a burrow for your egg.

as for your stature,  
not much different than mine,  
    small but strong.  
    an embodiment of anger,  
    and happiness as well.

## STINKING BUS AT THE BUSYARD

I sat,  
staring at the road,  
and at every store that passed.  
I was about three rows behind the driver,  
and as she drove, she stopped, stopped, and when it came to my stop,  
she didn't.  
The driver must have forgot, I thought,  
but I didn't have the heart to tell her.  
I just stayed still,  
and flowed with the bus.  
As soon as we got to the last stop,  
I was the only passenger left.  
I pulled my head over the seat,  
and told her.  
I was not left with the stinking bus in the busyard.

She saw me,  
said hello,  
and I moved up to the seat next to her.  
She asked me why I was still riding,  
and I told her bravely she had passed my stop.  
She said oh,  
and proceeded to ask me where I lived:  
she gave me two options of possible addresses.  
Not recognizing either, I chose one.  
Luckily, I chose the right one and I was dropped off right where I lived.  
I then got off and skipped home,  
happily happy not be left with the stinking bus in the busyard.

## BY THE SEA

she confused the sunroof for a moonroof,  
but I'm not sure she was in much confusion.  
the moon was shining brightly and sticking out of the sunroof,  
I was going crazy thinking the same thing,  
thinking the same thing.  
knowing our minds were attracted, infatuated,  
I became her, she became me  
we clicked.

## BY THE SUN

the sun was yellow-orange,  
and looked like a basketball hanging over the mountain.  
from my perspective you could of confused it for one,  
and one could of thought of it as a last second shot,  
the way it hung in mid-air. a tease.

## BY AND BYE

our movements were subtle but our intentions weren't,  
like the sun and the clouds,  
we had no balance between sides we chose,  
emotions we chose, the light always shined through,  
or the clouds were always in sight. no in between with us;  
thats the way the gods would of chose it though.  
they were loud,  
at least in our minds.

## RAIN

The rain was always been peaceful I just wonder whether or not it ever  
came to peace with itself  
if it did I just wonder how it went,  
how'd it happen?  
and if it never happen I'm just wondering why it didn't,  
it always seemed at peace with me.

The rain was always been peaceful I just wonder whether or not it ever  
came to peace with itself  
and if it didn't, I just want it to know, it has always been at peace with me,  
even, if I like him, have never been completely at peace with myself.

I want to know now why it hasn't,  
why it couldn't,  
and why it will.  
He tells me it has always been,  
even if I like him have never openly admitted it to anyone,  
or, anything.

I say okay,  
even if I like him,  
am still searching for something I possibly can't have,  
and it possibly only is because I don't want it it enough,  
or it not enough for me.

The rain knows enough to not tell everyone it's secrets.  
it keeps some things veiled,  
and says that's the way it's supposed be.  
you wanna evaporate as quickly as everyone else?,  
he says,  
and not come back as fog next time around?  
then do so,  
he says.

## ODE TO MOTHER EARTH

mom, no one talks of you like their other moms. no one talks of you like that at all.  
maybe the animals, when they talk amongst themselves,  
but definitely not us. not at all.  
i wonder why, i wonder how.  
i wonder when?



# JAZMIN RAMIREZ

## EYE

I say goodbye to those distant eyes that don't answer back  
those eyes that were once so heavenly and now  
they're just dull and lifeless  
those eyes that could tell you a thousand secrets  
but could keep millions  
I come back at night and those same eyes  
greet me scared and frantic searching for something,  
but what?  
I calm them down with a cup  
of tea and a late night movie  
I wake up and search for those gorgeous blue eyes  
but they're gone without even a simple goodbye  
I lay in my bed until dusk  
hoping that they would come back but they dont  
I get up and go to the mirror I look into the windows of my soul  
they're laced with tears and a thousand other emotions that I can't decipher  
and I realized how those eyes felt.

## ANOTHER EYE POEM

When I look into those eyes  
I see the sadness and pain of rejection  
when I look into those eyes  
I see the anger and hatred of being second  
when I look into those eyes  
I see the vulnerability trying to hide  
when I look into those eyes  
I see everything that she holds inside  
when I look into those eyes  
I see me.

## HATING YOU

I am trying not to hate you  
but I've been trying so long  
I don't think it's been accomplished  
you make my insides turn  
and howl whenever I see your face  
you make my head hurt whenever  
you try to talk to me  
I hope to one day see you begging for  
my forgiveness and for you to feel  
what I feel  
I want you to be hurt  
by a dragon with razor sharp teeth  
no I want you to be hurt by me, How I've been hurt by you  
I want you to feel what I have felt  
you turned me into a monster  
I will show you the rage I've held within me  
because I really really  
hate you

## WEEDS

You want to know what my problem is?  
well my problem is that no matter how many times you try to destroy  
me  
to spray me with venomous words  
to rip me apart with your hands  
I'll just grow again  
and I know that you will never pick me up and admire me  
because you'll always choose any flower over me, the lifeless weed.

## **FRIENDS**

Tell me about yourself  
whoever you are  
or who you want to become  
you don't have to lie  
please tell me the truth  
it's alright if you don't say it today  
maybe tomorrow  
meanwhile we wait I'll tell you about me  
who I am  
actually no I don't know who I am or who I want to become  
while we wait to figure out who we are we can become friends  
hopefully when we do figure it out who we are or who we want to become  
we'll remain friends

## RUNNING INTO PAIN

Every problem that was once a hurdle  
is now just a tiny speed bump  
and you run and run trying  
to fall again and again  
to feel the pain  
but when you  
fall you just get up  
and there's a trace of a scar  
but there's never blood  
you try and try to hurt yourself  
because you want to feel you want to care  
but all you're left with is the same tingly  
sensation you once thought of as pain but  
it's the cold welcoming numbness that fills you up instead.  
In the winter rain as the clouds above  
gave a sign of death  
and as the stars would orbit  
moving from place to place  
I began to question  
the meaning of life  
I wanted to know the  
secrets of living  
I of course didn't know and  
I became hateful and angry  
I began to recycle my feelings  
and hide them in the shadows  
that was my soul  
I watched as my mother  
abandoned me in the  
purple corridors that was  
my mind leaving me to fend for myself,  
and to discover my hatred for living  
I watched as my father  
drowned his sorrows with medication  
that couldn't be bought at a pharmacy  
he said it made him feel calmer  
he said it allowed him to reach places  
he had never been before  
he said it contained the secret to living  
I too wanted to try this  
magical substance  
he was right it made me feel calmer  
and I was able to reach a place  
father has never experienced, It was called death

**A: RED**

**E: BLACK**

**I: IVORY**

**O: ORANGE**

**U: GREEN**

A, Red spicy warm liquid gushing out of his head  
E, Black velvet couch from where his body once use to lay  
I, Ivory like the gloves used to pick him up  
O, Orange like the casket he lays in  
U, Green like the grass that grows over him.

## **GROUP POEM**

Oh gypsy boy of the sun  
you sting my eyes with reality  
with your convincing fire lips  
you burned my heart to ice  
you engulfed me in the thrashing  
flames that was your soul  
and just left me there to burn

## I AM NOT AFRAID

I am not afraid...

bring with you your monsters, ghouls, and witches  
witches with their big noses and their harsh black eyes  
who speak in whisper whenever you walk by  
your monsters with razor sharp teeth ready to eat me whole  
your ghouls who makes everyone unhappy when he's feeling down  
talk to me with those words that sting like acid in a busy street with no place  
to hide  
your darkness, your Void  
just swallow me whole, but I will fight my way out of every mouth, every  
pair of hands, from the belly of the beast, from every broken promise and  
dream  
from everything you've ever held against me  
just know that I will find my way out of this madness of the labyrinth that is  
life  
I will succeed because I am not afraid

## BURN

Her icy stare burns me to the core  
I lay on the ground like ashes  
ready to be blown away by the truth

## HER NAME IS POETRY

She has been on earth  
longer than anyone else  
she follows some in  
hopes that they have  
something for her  
she listens and let's you  
ramble about your problems  
she might only appear in the  
middle of the night  
knocking on your door  
waiting to be let inside  
she might get scared when  
you present her to large crowd  
she hides away in a small book  
not knowing when you'll  
come back to talk to her  
some more  
it won't matter to her if  
it takes days, weeks, months,  
maybe even years to come back but  
she'll always be ready for when  
you decide to tell her more  
her name is poetry

## **SNAKE**

I sit up on the branch  
waiting for you to open  
the tank and when you  
do I'll slither my way  
out and I will finally  
be free

## **SNAKE PART 2**

He lures you in and makes you  
bite the apple  
he looks at you with those eyes  
that could turn you into stone and  
watches as your teeth sink into the  
flesh of the apple  
he wraps his arms around your body  
and you can feel how cold his skin is  
he smiles at you before his fangs attack  
he swallows you whole  
then you're gone  
he moves onto his next victim  
almost as if you never existed



## BIRD

I want my wings to be  
gorgeous with an  
assortment of colors  
from the deepest purples  
to the brightest yellows  
I want my problems  
to be left on earth as  
I soar through the sky  
I want to fly away when  
things get tough  
I want to feel free  
I want to live in a tree  
if I could I would be a bird

## BRICK BY BRICK

I will break you brick by brick  
to take down the stone wall  
built around your heart  
to set you free from  
hatred and anger  
to let you live outside the box  
to let in light to that  
dark mind of yours  
I will build a foundation  
in your heart to make sure  
you will survive  
the emotional earthquake

# AMELIA ROBINSON

## PICKPOCKETED POEM

We are spider webs of deceit silent as the storm rages  
And inside steamy windows  
The aromatic musk surrounds us  
Worn out paragraphs born locked up  
Broken in a cocoon like process murmuring through an icy bliss  
Insufferable bleakness prison cell of a mind  
Drinking in the medicine of ignorance  
The deafening silence  
With mechanic gears of insanity  
Fake poetickyness is keeping me on edge  
And meaningless statements of love and hate  
Grimy judgements with a dusted wish  
The shivers of toxic angels  
Just broomsticks of immortality  
Trying to hide your vulnerability  
With pale, chapped lips  
Consumed by fire  
Unwanted souls, black as coal  
Silvery memories escaping into a blistering and festering stark reality  
Probably made up and probably hate us  
With the excessive recycling of puns  
Burnt on the breaking of words  
Insufferable bastards in padded white walls  
Get a grip on reality  
You are my backbone  
We kill people who kill people  
This is not a way to live  
To let our knees go weak or fall to the shaking ground  
In slow, slow suicide, death doesn't feel like floating  
With vodka lips and acid tongue  
I'm not with you  
Ignoring beauty so thoroughly unthrilled with all of this  
Slap my face with evidence of my wrong doings  
My punishment is having to live

## DEAD POEMS

Crumpled papers knee deep surround me  
Wading through a sea of lousy metaphors and cliché happily ever afters  
Similes about life from someone who has barely lived  
Misused monstrous words just for effect  
Tying alliteration but stumbling over my own tongue as the words trip over themselves  
Broken pencils from frustration of random ideas on paper  
Thoughts about an adequate childhood and hopes for a perfect future  
Letting words and letters flow through me as a failed art  
A stream from my uncultured soul  
Speaking worthless nonsense  
Writing solid stupidity with too much confidence  
Comparing life and death to shivers  
Pretending to understand concepts I know nothing about  
Too many scenes of dirt roads with crunchy red brown leaves  
Of picturesque beaches with white waves crashing over the golden sand  
Or deep forests full of secrets  
Dark branches whispering about the dying world  
I am surrounded by dead papers  
I hope for better words

## LOCK AND KEY

We are born locked up  
The key is hidden, buried in the hope of never being found  
Our day, old month, old year old selves  
Oblivious to the world  
Know something is being kept from them  
But as our soft heads fill with words  
And people and places and emotions  
The feeling of deception is all too quickly forgotten  
Our minds develop and the key is long gone

There are a few people who feel the loss  
Who know something is missing  
And strive to find what it is  
And buried deep, deep down they find the key  
And unlock the chains that bind their mind  
And learn a new way of thinking  
A new level of clarity appears  
And all biases and hatred and arguments  
Are lost in the soft humming of the wind  
These people know a different world  
Mindless kindness and fighting for good  
We envy those people  
Who found the key  
They know who to know, to understand  
Those people, they die unlocked

## WHAT A BOTHER

An old woman was trying to pick up her toothbrush when she realized she had no hands.

“What a bother,” she sighed as she went to go look for them.

She found them hiding in the closet.

“Not again,” she sighed.

She reattached them and went back to continue brushing her teeth.

By the time she got there they were gone again.

“What a bother,” she sighed....

## HAIKU:

boy and backpack  
dark jeans long legged stride  
expertly not rushing

\*

white sky  
silhouettes of grapevines  
lost in the mist

\*

dying trees  
cling to each other  
the river rushes on

\*

turning pages  
words seeping in  
a paper cut

\*

a symphony of  
growling stomachs  
almost lunchtime

\*

hairy legs  
cold in the water  
swim season

\*

long lashes  
covering curious eyes  
questions

\*

warm weather  
living at the pool  
sunburnt

## LIFE IS SHIVERS

Life is shivers  
Goosebumps and attempts to throw away  
Endless memories and forget  
I chew on cold thoughts and recycle phrases  
Into a bottomless word bank, pale fingers shaking  
A plethora of legends tumble out of  
My aching mouth and  
Prowl around endless corridors  
Until they curl up to rest  
Lies and falsehood gather like  
Layers of fabric around quiet wallflowers  
Worlds fall out of chapped lips,  
A peaceful aura or utter cacophony  
Wires broken and fuses cut  
Treading upon grey brown earth eternally  
These words and stories haunt one's very existence  
A harsh scratching of pen on paper  
Describing another, better life  
Until the realization hits that this is all we have  
Foreign sounds echo in my fragile ears  
Of lost thoughts and hidden secrets  
Trying to decipher meaningless poems  
And understand the images plastered to the insides of thin eyelids  
Wishing to unsee  
Silence gathers and folds upon itself like a gathering snow drift  
And we are all hidden in the white blanket  
Of comfort and dreams  
The mumbling of ghostly apologies and  
Demolished sentences that fill up our lives  
Then come crashing down upon  
The crowded world of question and possibility

## TELLING SECRETS TO THE CLOUDS

We told our secrets to the clouds  
And as they floated below the bruised mountains  
Our troubles washed away  
We asked questions to the moon  
And made up answers floated through our connected minds

And then the questions started to change  
And with time the secrets got too big  
And the clouds became clouds  
And the moon didn't know all the answers

The purples and blues of the mountains faded  
And we forgot to notice the sky  
We forgot the answers from the moon  
And the secrets that once brought us together  
Blew away in the wind

And then the sky disappeared  
And the bruised mountains became buildings  
And the clouds replaced with smog  
And we couldn't see the moon

We kept our secrets bottled up  
And didn't want to ask questions  
We worked hard and weren't happy  
And suddenly an answer came from the moon  
Go back to the sky

And the smog lifted and the clouds gathered  
And the sun set over the mountains  
And we listened  
As the moon told us stories  
And the mountains kept us safe  
And we told secrets to the clouds



## I HEAR SYMPHONIES

I hear you in my head when everything is quiet.  
The way you say the smallest word as if it is the world,  
The way you ask unanswerable questions,  
And think a different way.

You don't talk that much,  
Which makes every word a treasure,  
The way you think and think deeply  
It makes you understand

I like the way you think  
How the thoughts in your head are a mess,  
But it's the kind of messy that makes you feel at home.  
Words piled on top of words and more words.

You speak an art.  
No.  
You speak music.

The soft melodies of the flute,  
The hard sound of the horn,  
The soothing clarinet,  
And the steady beat of drums.

When we talk,  
I hear symphonies, full orchestras  
In simple phrases, short sentences.  
Paragraphs of music.

You speak in rhythm,  
To a beat no one else can hear,  
Music in your head,  
In mine too.

The art of words,  
Of music.  
Poetry.

## HAVE YOU SEEN MY SOUL?

They say the eyes are the window to the soul.  
You have looked into my eyes.  
Have you seen my soul?  
Struggling up towards you,  
Reaching out.  
Lifting up.  
Silvery memories escaping  
Into you.

Down the road from my house there is a creek.  
In the spring the clear water runs up smoothly against the mossy rocks  
And baby salmon flit in and out of sight.  
I like it there.  
A maple tree marks the path down.  
I remember when I was the same height as the tree.  
We have both grown.  
One branching outward, breaking free  
reaching for the sun.  
I'm not sure how I have changed.  
My eyes went from brown to green.  
Did my soul change colours too?

In the summer when I was younger,  
I would pick cherries at my grandmother's house.  
In my mouth the sweet flavour would explode  
And by the end of the day my face would be stained with cherry juice,  
I would have a stomach ache, but I would be smiling.  
Can you see it in my soul?  
Cherry stained cheeks and happiness?  
Is that all that I am made of?

One night I woke up in complete darkness.  
And the thought occurred to me  
I am so glad I can see.  
Colours and contours and beauty.  
If my eyes did not function,  
I would be a different person.  
No pictures running through my mind of things I've seen and places I've  
gone.  
Would my soul still be alive in my useless eyes?  
I would be changed.

Sometimes I think about being born into a different life.  
Of poverty or starvation or perfection.  
Not having enough money to buy dinner  
Begging to go to school, to learn words and numbers,  
Not having a place to call home.  
Having too many places called home.  
Instead, here I am.  
Too privileged in comparison.  
Experiences really do change you.  
Shape you.  
Mold you into who you are.

Look into my soul.  
One last time.  
It will come to greet you.  
Floating up and up and up.  
Read me like a book.  
Memories folded up and put away,  
Filed alphabetically.  
The way I like things.

This is a good way to be.  
I am grateful.  
For just how things are.

# FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ

## KIDNAPPED

Ricardo was walking down the street of L.A when all of the sudden 3 men in ski masks rushed at him from a white van. They put a bag over his head yelling at him with ak 47's. A little boy was walking, seeing everything, all the driver did was winks at the boy and drives off. The driver had his destination in mind, so he drove there with his hostage. He arrived and cops were already surrounding the destination. They took a sharp left on an abandoned street they got out and got into a Suv and burn the white van and they disappear.

Ricardo woke up, chained up to a chair and the only sound he hears is the chains on feet and hands, as he struggled to get out. At the same time a voice told him,

“Do you know why you are here Ricardo?”

“No! who are you?” asked Ricardo.

“Ricardo, Ricardo, You don't get it do you?, where were you 7 years ago today?” asked the man.

“What?” Ricardo was thinking, then all the sudden remembered.

“I was on the other side of the country, not here!” said Ricardo.

“Yes, yes!, and you did what?” said the man.

“Business trip,” said Ricardo

“Lies!!!” A man approached Ricardo and waterboarded him.

“Now tell me why you left the states for?”

Ricardo starts coughing, and tells them, “I had handle a little bit of business trip with a woman by the name of Juana.”

“Yes, and what happened to Juanna?”

“I had to get rid of her, she couldn't keep quiet.”

“About what?”

“She was a loud moaner,” Ricardo grinds as he said it.

The man snaps his fingers and water boards him again.

“Ok, ok, I got rid of her because she compromised the mission, by...” He took a deep breath and continued, “By telling Van Sneijder all our secrets,” Ricardo said out of breath.

“And what would you say if i said Van Sneijder was my accomplice?”

“I thought you were loyal to our Juarez Cartel, you're working with the Russian mob.”

“Ricardo, stop changing the subject. There's something I know and want it to come from you. Who do you work for?” the man said.

Ricardo look relieved, “Sergio.”

“Whose Sergio?” he ask.

“That's my name. I work for the CIA, and I was put on a mission to capture you,” said Ricardo.

Then men with CIA vests came in from every corner with assault rifles pointing at everyone. Ricardo walks towards the Cartel Kingpin; “Your name is Javier Fernandez you going to prison for working with the Juarez Cartel, Russian Mafia, Extortion, Racketeering, money laundering, contraband, and the murder of thousands”.

“Sergio, Right? You will not see the light of day once my men know what you did” said Javier with a serious look to Ricardo.

“That’s where you’re wrong, actually you will not see the light of day, for an eternity. Your men will be happy knowing you’re gone and they’ll spend all your money” Said Ricardo with a more serious gesture. Take him away,” said Ricardo.

Ricardo was relieved to know that all his enemies were caught and most of all, he keeps all the money from the Juarez Cartel, and nobody, even the Bureau knew what Ricardo was up to.

## SOBER JOE

Woke up in a puddle of booze, beer bottles, and tequila bottles everywhere, got up with a massive headache knowing I had to go to work. I barely had an eye lid open, walking to the near gas station store to buy cheap dark coffee, with a usual dollar lottery ticket and a donut on the side, to ensure my sugary rush of happiness. Although this donut was a week old, it woke me up just knowing I might get diarrhea. Got in my rusty truck and hoped this day got better because it had gone terribly. Unfortunately, I was wrong. A mile away from work my truck started to make a funny noise and stopped on the freeway. I started to cry and work started in 10 minutes. I made the choice to start running in my business suit. 15 minutes late I was ten feet from the door and got a call from my boss, knowing I'm late. I ignore it. I opened the door and I bumped into Josh, my boss.

“Hey, sorry I'm late. My.....” I said.

“Work's canceled, Joe. I've been calling, but you haven't answered. Don't worry, just go home man,” said Josh as he patted me on the back.

I was relieved and angry, more shocked to know I was killing myself to get to work and it was canceled. I saw a bar and I was tempted to go in, but alcohol was the thing that got me here so I decided to go home walking. I traced my steps backwards and saw more things just fucking up my day but ignored them. I passed my truck getting towed away, and I got home. All my furniture and alcohol was gone. This was the best part of my day because I became sober that day.

“And that's how I became sober,” I said in my A.A meeting.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE ME?

It's like waking up knowing you're good looking when you're really not.  
It's like listening to corridos whenever you can, and shout a grito here or there.

It's like dressing your own way and not jumping on that bandwagon.

It's like practicing mon-fri soccer than watching soccer on TV saturday and playing on sundays.

It's like making a joke and making someone's day

It's like having a good time with your friends.

## CRASH

A Bright light appears, the man pulls over to the sound of a crash.

He gets out and sees two vehicles a car and a truck.

The car had two people a mom and a child, both dead,

he checks the truck, beer cans everywhere  
and becomes sober as his body lays inside.

*4th Place*

*2015 squadala 55-word short story contest winner*

## SONNET 47

Shall I compare thee to a winter day,  
Thy snow is more lovely than your face,  
Rough rains make you queen of may  
And winter storms are never a chase  
Sometimes too ugly my eyes cry  
And often is you dark complexion dimmed  
And every scream, you scream i hate  
Because of your man arms untrimmed  
And for sure you need a fade  
Although you're not the oldest  
Nor shall sitting on the couch get you paid  
When eating only your belly is grow'st;  
So long as men can breathe, or my eyes can see,  
So long lives this, I say fuck thee.  
Karma is like herpes,  
it gets around.



A beer is like a corrido  
they both always end.

\*

Snickers is like sex  
they both satisfy.

\*

10:20 glare in my eyes  
in the forest  
where the butterfly flies

\*

Colores que identifican mi cultura  
su aroma sube su dulzura  
y yo como mi aventura

\*

Su Aroma sube  
en cada paso  
mi primera primavera

\*

A Mexican is like a swiss army knife  
they both are useful.

\*

Drunk or Hungover, we both know you're not sober  
so take a shot and let the tequila takeover  
this is sunday in later october.

# RICKY RODRIGUEZ

## KNOWING YOURSELF

Dream, little man  
sleep off the insufferable bleakness  
life means nothing  
So drift into a state of meaningness  
Where someone actually loves you  
Where you can love yourself  
But, as usual, you can't love others  
A dog approaches  
Weeping as dogs shouldn't  
You keep dreaming  
A small child screams  
Yearning for comfort  
You do not oblige.  
SHE appears  
Looking tired, sad, and lonely  
You piss out "Good riddance" and spit on the ground  
She smiles and floats high into the sky  
Beaming as she never did  
You become jealous, as you tend to do  
You burp "whore"  
and awake into your nothingness of an existence  
Did you ever think that it might be your fault?

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX

This box stands before me, taunting me. I know that I shouldn't just get up and look at what's inside, but I can't help but feel obligated to rip it apart and appreciate its contents. I guess that says something about who I am as a person. I'm the kind of guy who hates to have things kept from him, but can respect the boundaries of the keeper. For example, this box, in my mind, eagerly awaits for me to open it and check out its insides, but I respect my writing enough to not spoil the surprise. This gives my journal an extra flare of mystery.

## MOVING IN TANDEM

Our name is lost in the alleyways of endless  
Hollow tree trunks, deep in the woods  
Of a forgiven solitude wandering down  
The fixated thoughts of my mind  
Why do we hear the bells ringing?

It seems that our hour is nigh  
Not in the lands of dead men but  
In the fresh crevices in my face  
Inns of wounding words and sexist serpents  
“sssstupid ssssssswiine”

Frolick my friends and hear the painful  
Echoes of the snake  
Echoes of the bull  
Echoes of our pulsating souls  
You can't hear the mockingbird.

The rush of swift smooth slithering  
Mario music plays in the background  
“DA-DA-DA-da da DUH duh”  
Labyrinths! Mazes! Mindfucks galore!  
We sing, We say, We die.

## YOUR...

Your beauty has no limits, it's limitless in its- No, no, that's not genuine.

\*ahem\* I've been watching you for some time, your hourglass figure is robust and evident. I long to caress your- God Dammit! Now I just sound like a perverted stalker! ... From the top.

\*ahem\* your shimmering golden hair makes mine stand on end. It flows like glistening rays of sunshine, inviting me in to- this is the same poetic mumbo-jumbo as the first! SHIT! Why is this so hard?! I just need to be real with her and tell her how I feel.

\*ahem\* My love for you hasn't diminished one bit since we first met. The intoxicating perfection of your body has drawn me closer and closer to you; coaxing me to keep trying- Wow, that just makes me sound only interested in her looks.

\*ahem\* Your intelligence

\*ahem\* Your strength

\*ahem\* Your butt? Yeah... yeah that works!

\*ahem\* Your butt is such a perfect shape and size that even Michelangelo himself couldn't have crafted a better work of art. Will you go to the dance with me?

## PASSING STRANGER

Passing Stranger! You do not know the severity of our existence. Not “our” in general, I’m specifically speaking of you and I for without our existence at this moment we would not have existed at any other point. And I can tell just by looking at you that, without your existence, Someone somewhere would have been a lonely, lonely morsel. And without me there would be none to comfort your from in this time or the next, or any... and any. Your peculiar beauty puts me in a zombified state in which i would follow you to the corners of the universe. Please, share some of your astounding looks with me, so that I may delve past them and discover something even better.

## DAT HEART

“Man that women’s opinions get me rock hard.”  
“Seriously, I want to take her to my house and talk to her all night long.”  
“God, her gigantic vernacular makes me want to rock her world.”  
“Hey there boys, hear something you like?”  
“Heck yes! You and I should have a heated debate about gun control!”  
“Or, if you’d like, I could enlighten you on the linguistics of parakeets.”  
“Hmmm, how about both?”  
“It’s a deal!!”

## MAGIC

Hey, nice umbrella!  
Thanks! It’s magic.  
Oh yeah? What does it do?  
Nothing, other than protect me from the rain and it doesn’t even do that very well.  
So then how is it magic?  
What do you mean?  
If it doesn’t do anything than how can it have magical properties?  
Huh... I guess I never really thought about it that way.

## DEAR COMPANION,

You have stayed with me  
used me as your vent.

Given me your time,  
now I'll give it back.

I have come to know  
the shape of your palm.

New partners await  
for your warming clench.  
Share with them yourself  
for they are all you need.

Give them all your heat  
and with them you shall stay.

Love another with  
the soul I've come to know.

Kiss them and you'll see  
love is what's received.



## A CAT

A cat  
Specifically a fat cat  
A cat that has everything done for him  
and lives without guilt.  
A cat without “dreams” or “reality”  
but a merge of both.  
A cat who does nothing  
and is loved by all.  
A cat that spends his time sleeping,  
so much sleeping that reality and fiction become one.  
A cat whose vision is severely tampered with,  
whose constant sleeping transforms his vision into  
a Van Gogh painting.  
A cat whose only reason to wake  
is to fall back to sleep.  
A cat who knows not the definition of responsibility  
but does not care.  
A cat who loves all food  
and vise versa.  
A cat... cat.... who.....  
*ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ*

# MITZI RUELAS

## VIBIN'

The sky was looking like a hippie  
big creamy clouds the shapes of dinosaurs  
reflecting off of the faces of little ones  
who were to struggling to wake up  
their mouths widening into a yawn, turning  
into a smile as they stretch their arms  
and begin to wake up slowly  
the grass was looking vibrant as ever  
enveloping the bees in the cocoons of the  
flowers that grow upon the grass  
the pond reflecting the sky, giving to the  
grass, and refreshing the people  
and the moon, shining down on those who  
have no light, beckoning little ones to close  
their eyes and dream, allowing those  
who are sinning to be forgiven,  
and the demented minds  
of those lost souls finally found.

## BREATHE

Just breathe  
inhale everything  
but feel it within your soul  
take in the love around you  
and after you cry your heart out,  
just smile.  
laugh because you can finally  
be happy  
find the best type of music out there  
and your thoughts will be so positive  
your mind will relax finally  
eat a damn cupcake if you want too  
treat yourself to something good  
wear something you would  
never wear before  
be the best you can for you.  
sink into your soul  
tell yourself every day that  
you're happy  
and soon you will be.  
just breathe  
inhale everything.

## BLANK PAGE

You're a mystery  
a blank page that I want  
to cover with ink  
I want to read your every thought  
know your intentions  
I want to know why you get so impatient  
why you can't go a day without smoking  
why you find pleasure in fighting other people  
I don't understand you  
I want to crawl inside of your mind  
drink your favorite memories  
indulge your happiness  
I want to be in your dreams, like you are in mine  
I wanna be the smoke that fills your lungs  
the smoke that changes your image  
and makes your eyes droop low  
...  
weeks pass, and I finally give up  
I no longer have the energy to daydream  
about what we could've been because  
it's a silly thought that I wouldn't  
even want to happen,  
but in my dreams we would have been perfect  
and your eyes, every time I look into your eyes  
I see the child of you, the baby of you,  
the sweet part of you, the sad part of you,  
the person you are inside  
I see everything in your eyes.  
when I want to have deep talks with someone,  
I think of you  
but things have changed  
and I don't think of you as often as I used too.  
because you're not what I want anymore.

## WE ARE TREES

He's different, like a tree with various colors  
but when he's sad, his branches droop  
and all colors fade to black  
then he sees her and his leaves light up,  
shaking themselves from  
the dust that's built  
he wants her all to himself, the way a  
sponge absorbs everything  
he wants to hear her laugh when his leaves  
brush against her cheek  
he wants to go back to the memories  
that kept him up at night  
when he thinks of all this together,  
he shines brighter  
and that's when she notices him  
she notices the way his leaves are  
more vibrant than others,  
his branches are stronger than ever,  
she sees a change,  
but now her leaves are curling,  
her branches are rotting  
her colors are bleeding  
he watches this process,  
and now he's pleading.  
he wishes this wasn't real, he wishes  
he was dreaming.  
her lungs are burning, she's  
slowly disappearing.  
now all that's left is his screaming.

## THINK ABOUT IT

Everyone has insecurities, everyone has something  
negative to say about themselves  
If you really care about what someone has to say about you  
you need to open your eyes  
look at yourself, the smallest details, and start loving them  
do you make yourself laugh? yeah? you're funny as hell  
love yourself for that  
no one gets your humor?  
that doesn't matter just as long as you do  
If you like dancing, do it  
If you like singing, do it  
If you like cooking, do it  
If you like rapping, do it  
don't ever let anyone tell you to stop  
doing what you love  
and don't ever change yourself for anyone  
because in the end the only person who's  
gonna be there is you  
you're not gonna want to pretend to be  
someone you're not  
don't ever try to impress people  
who cares about the other people  
don't even get shy, don't ever be shy  
and never stop trying

## T I R E D

I am so tired  
tired of waiting  
tired of waking up  
tired of stress  
tired of shady people  
tired of the cruel shit people do  
tired of judgemental people  
tired of the way humanity has become  
tired of the way no one takes life seriously  
tired of not following the right path  
tired of making my mom cry  
I say I'm tired of everything  
but really I'm just tired of myself

## F L O W E R S

my whole body is numb  
my thoughts are tired  
my eyes are low  
my lips crave ice cream  
I look around and admire the world  
everything is beauty  
am I...dreaming?  
I feel like I'm being hugged by small flowers  
the ones that cover your head  
when you feel dizzy  
I'm being carried by clouds  
they tickle me and make me laugh  
I close my eyes and my mind explodes with  
vibrant colors and soothing thoughts  
I close my eyes and drift to a long peaceful sleep

## LOVE > HAPPINESS

I think happiness is like love  
it's not always gonna last long  
and something is gonna fuck it up  
but the thing is, it always comes back  
it's always gonna be there  
you might not feel it all the time  
happiness comes around  
and goes around  
just like love  
some days you swear you'll  
never be happy again  
but that's because you  
don't feel the love  
you have to create your  
own love and happiness  
don't ever depend on anyone  
else for your happiness



## BRUISED

I look around to my peers and I feel bruised  
bruised because I've been fooled and lied too  
bruised because words hurt more than anything  
bruised because this world is so fucked up  
and I can't comprehend why  
so many people were raised to be racist against other races  
bruised because I see more news  
on riots and protests than I do on peace and love  
bruised because families are starving around  
the world and I can't do anything to help  
bruised because when I was a child I thought  
everyone loved each other and life was easy  
bruised because more citizens are being killed by  
police than they are being helped  
bruised because men think feminism  
something to joke about  
bruised because people have so much hate in their  
bodies that they want to destroy everyone around them  
bruised because the only happiness some  
people find is in doing drugs  
bruised because we just had a fire alarm at school  
because a teacher burned their toast  
bruised because their are problems around  
the world that we aren't aware of  
bruised because more and more teens are  
depressed and have no way out  
bruised because babies are being born into the wrong  
hands and aren't loved for who they are  
bruised because people still joke about  
rape like it wouldn't happen to them  
bruised because their are problems that can be solved  
but aren't simply because everyones  
given up on themselves  
bruised because I no longer care anymore  
bruised because this is a sad, sad world

## EYES

The beating object in my chest it hurts,  
as if I am continually being stabbed by memories  
that make me scrunch up my face and make me groan,  
wishing they never happened.

It breaks everytime I see faces that are blank,  
lacking expression or anything that shows  
that they're alive, what if they need someone?  
what if that someone could be me?  
when I saw those eyes they were saying so much,  
and all in one swift movement I turned  
away from them and had not acknowledged  
that they were screaming for me.

I chose to walk away and leave you to  
whatever the fuck you were thinking.

I swear I whispered to anyone  
nearby to kill me, just end it  
because those eyes, instead of someone  
older I saw a child  
who just needed someone, who was  
breaking to the core,  
begging for anything, I saw hunger.  
those eyes will haunt me everywhere I go.  
I can't picture anything else but those  
sorrowful eyes and holy fuck  
those eyes were just..murderous,  
lonely, unapproachable.  
maybe I'm imagining it but for a second

I swear you almost smiled.  
not with your lips, but in your eyes.  
I saw so much I will never fully ever understand  
what goes through your head, I  
dont know how you reacted after I turned away,  
but I do know that I wish I did things differently.

# ALLISON RUPE

## BABY BOX

Baby Box, beat box, boxing,  
Lil scoot, big rub, inkling,  
Hop scotch, road block, baby box,  
Baby Box, hot log, june bug,  
World play, mu-mu, horse tug,  
Siamese, Symphony, Baby Box,  
Baby Box, Baby Box, what'd you do?  
Cinder blocks, rain drops, heart stop,  
Shake n' bake, moon scape, Baby Box,  
Baby Box, eyelashes, green grass,  
Ship shape, playmate, eco-made,  
Boom Box, synth harp, baby box,  
Baby Box, dunk, flip flop,  
Little Box make your heart knot,  
Make my heart stop, Baby Box,  
Baby Box, Mrs. who, who me,  
My kinda box, wait n' see,  
Puny stitch, croquet tree, Baby Box,  
Baby Box, little foot, odd primates,  
Fig tree, helmet head, big things,  
Fries, animals playing, Baby Box numbing,  
Baby Box, Baby Box, you're the one,  
Tune locks, hit and run,  
What could I do to catch you, Baby Box?  
Baby Box, un stripe, ticky tacky height,  
Sweet stout, crude might, play write,  
Stupid heel, big butt, Baby Box,  
Baby Box, cornwall, hourglass,  
Springbok, whisper, heavy on the whisker,  
Cold soup, game change, Baby Box,  
Baby Box, zit zap, witch trap,  
Paintball, egg salad, trap god,  
Bananas, exotic dirt, Baby Box,  
Baby box, Baby Box, itch is good, didn't you know?  
Little Miss Box, who told you so?  
Bring it out, Mr. Baby Box.

## DON'T THINK I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT

You do not have to perfect everything taught to you,  
You do not have to regurgitate information  
that has already been spoken for your knowledge,  
You only have to be in charge of your own mind,  
And give it the power to think and have thought with grace,  
Tell me about your ideas, your knowledge, and I will listen,  
Meanwhile when speaking you make sense of it yourself,  
Meanwhile your silent gasps of air form the words,  
From your tongue, to your lips, you present covert solutions,  
Handed down parchment of reconciliation with trial and error,  
Meanwhile eyes solidify images out of mortar  
from the mold your spoken thought has given them,  
Taking that recognition to new untouched levels of both understanding and question,  
Whoever you are,  
You possess the basic skills,  
And knowledge to understand and expand upon,  
The premise of basic facts or theories handed to you for your disposal,  
You have a choice.

## HOPE DRIVING HEARTACHE

*“You don’t know what we can see  
Why don’t you tell your dreams to me  
Fantasy will set you free”  
-Steppenwolf*

We dream in colors like the stars,  
Everybody’s thinking too hard,  
Always never asking us what we want?  
Life in a different font,  
Leaving, leaning, wanting, taking, searching, holding,  
We don’t know where we’re going,  
All we know is what we got there’s no going back,  
No time to wait- shining sun time to pack,  
Take it with stride and stand you’ll never get all this in just one plan,  
Listen you’re not allowed to throw your dreams down the can,  
Omniscient, time, trick, chicks, 300 ways to shop for a book,  
Vivacious effect how do you forget to look,  
Even to see these people who love you,  
Replace those who can’t stay true,  
See these dreams can set you free.

## THOSE GIRLS

I love those girls,  
those girls with daddy issues,  
and a bitchy attitude,  
with long faces,  
and cheap last names.

I love those girls,  
spoiled to rotten decay,  
who cry about it all,  
just to feel something.

I love those girls,  
who walk and talk,  
all pretty and neat,  
three dollars for the gloss,  
three thousand on their feet.

Those girls,  
who get lonely,  
sprung up in an elevator because that rig felt too good.

I love those girls with pouty lips,  
stick thin hips,  
or those girls,  
with fat soft hands,  
who stuff their face craving a man.

I love those girls,  
used up but sell for new,  
stretched out trues worth more than a kidney or two,

Those girls,  
innocent and dumb,  
not sure how to drink rum.

I love those girls,  
with daddy issues,  
and a bleach faded smile.

I love those girls,  
with small breasts and big thighs,  
whose laugh sounds like a cackle,  
or a baby when it cries.

I love those girls,  
those virgin saints,  
who look so puffed up,  
from all their midnight solo ice cream dates.

I love those girls,  
with bubble butts,  
and athletic ability,  
those girls who can do cartwheels around me.

I love those girls,  
who get a DUI,  
at high noon,  
420 is for bitches.

I love those girls,  
with bodies so fat they make you swoon,  
who crave it fast on the sidewalk,  
crossing their legs so hard their eyes roll.

Those girls,  
my girls,  
looking for a feeling,  
grave digging on Saturday night,  
the gray goose getting to their system.

Those girls like me.

## GYPSY BOY

Men in trousers barefoot in the powder mud,  
Ripped jeans tormenting me with their paint stains and powder pockets,  
Let down your curls young boy,  
Come down to the river,  
Dance with me for a minute,

The forest speaks to you,  
Don't deny the presence it holds,  
Breathe with me old man,  
Lets get back to nature under the suns grace,  
Tides come and go,  
But I hope you'll stay here,

Young men with deep set eyes,  
Needing me to decipher their dreams,  
Maestro teach me something,  
I need repentance for my choices,  
Give the gift of energy,  
In pearls wrapped around my wrist,  
Holding me close because nature's my only woman,

Grip life by the hand,  
Tug at the heartstrings because we all need to be a child,  
Bite the tongue of fear,  
Let it bleed because fear only looks sexy when she's drunk,  
This countryman will give me spiced rum,  
For lessons on his wife,  
Because he forgot how to love her when he came back from war,

Beautiful old man reading the bible in a burgundy filled faith,  
God hasn't left him yet, his credence still unbroken by the eyes of man,  
Don't eat the fruit sweet man,  
You're beautiful when you're naive,

A charming twenty-something painting pictures stepping in acrylics,  
The concrete his canvas,  
Being painted like those french girls, or something like that,  
In this moment I envy his muse,

Drummer fellow giving me permission to open my narrow eyes,  
See the good in me when no one else will,  
Jesus doesn't bleed for me,



Don't make me worth a kill,  
Glow with us, ignore the man screaming wasted time,

Intimate men with their emotions set free in feats of fists and graveling  
voices,  
All their faces turning green,  
Howl up the river,  
Unglue your body for one second,  
Feel something other than regret,

Baby's never in the corner,  
He's knitting outside in the oaks,  
The leaves soothe his anxiety,  
The colors of autumn curl his hair at the nape of his neck,  
I dare you to quirk your eyebrow again,

While curls is walking down the highway,  
Thumb out with a flannel around his waist,  
Give a taste of living,  
Chew on adventure,  
Spit out the shells of integrity,  
May my spirit keep you warm,  
Gypsy boy of the sun.

## WHY YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND

I always knew you were sick,  
I just didn't think It'd show up as I was closing a book in my life,  
That you are supposed to be in the sequel to,  
At the present moment,  
You are still here,  
I hope you will always be,  
Its hard when someone tells you a surgery will fix everything,  
And it ends up making everything worse,  
I'm not religious,  
But I'm hoping to God, or whoever will listen, that you will stay,  
Even for just a little longer,  
You raised me,  
You loved me,  
You've always been there,  
I don't know if you ever felt like I took you for granted,  
But I'm sorry if you ever felt like I did,  
I could apologize all I want,  
But the point of this is for you to know I love you,  
That cancer's a cold bitch who doesn't know how to love,  
Like you do,  
Thank you so much Dad,  
I Love You.

## SYMPTOMS

Why is saying sorry more acceptable,  
then not throwing that girl to the ground,  
and grinding your fist into her salty teared eye?

Why is it okay to require forgiveness after that little boy was molested on  
the playground,  
why is it okay to engrave fear into the minds of young women,  
instead of morals in men?

Tell me why it's okay to be treated horribly,  
and just feel ashamed when someone of power finds out,  
they tell you "go to a therapist",  
like taking tylenol for a headache.  
it's treating the symptoms not the cause.

We have been conditioned to treat and numb our symptoms,  
while the cause still breaks our backs everyday,  
if someone is sad,  
we hand them a tissue,  
instead of healing their broken spirit,  
by getting rid of the problem.

Instead of asking why that kid in the back acts out,  
we send them to the office,  
so that we don't have to be responsible for the solution to the root,  
we leave them as mixed numbers,  
not a whole solution.

Instead of compliments,  
people say they are speaking their mind,  
when in reality they choose to criticize,  
I didn't know that a black pan couldn't be brown for a day,  
why does it matter if a cat wants to howl,  
how does it affect you if that boy wants to dress like a girl,  
so that he can feel beautiful too.

Yes it is a right of earth to have your opinion,  
it doesn't mean that opinion is law.  
If you don't want problems,  
don't be the cause of one.

## GIVE IT ALL

*“A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference.”  
-Winnie the Pooh*

If it's such a bad thing,  
a bad thing to show affection,  
show affection in love and understanding,  
understanding that people go through hard times,  
hard times where maybe that time isn't the best time,  
the best time and the worst time time is always here.

Here, in his arms, in her heart,  
heart beating because love and passion is really the earth's core,  
earth's core full of pounding emotions and lips that might just want to touch,  
touch as reassurance because some people need that,  
people need that warm hand on their shoulders,  
shoulders that can carry a portion of the world.

The world can be wholesome with a little consideration,  
a little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference,  
all the difference with someone, somewhere, something,  
something that seems bigger than just us,  
us those people who are staring with wide eyes,  
wide eyes resting on lovers and mothers,  
mothers and fathers brought us here for something good.

Something good can work from this if we try our hardest,  
hardest times and the best of times,  
the best of times to comfort are in the hardest of times,  
the hardest of times won't be so bad if people show a little compassion,  
a little compassion, a little consideration, a little thought for others,  
makes all the difference.

## KEEP ON KEEPING

My future's looking pretty clear,  
out of one lense,  
I know one part,  
but a lot of it is that, really, I'm not that great with goals,  
goals these things that haunt me when I'm driving home,  
goals these things that are bitter reminders of my procrastination,  
impatience, impatience, that's all I ever seem to be,  
will I make it? I dont know.

All I know is that I've got a lot on my plate,  
but maybe that's what the meal plan's supposed to be,  
hunting for a main squeeze,  
when I'm trying to fit in my jeans,  
working two jobs trying to stay afloat,  
cash flying into direct pay,  
and I'm sitting on my stairs trying to cool off,  
the heat's not the only thing making me sweat.

Future's a mystic chick,  
she grabs all of us at one point or the other,  
she likes to pull me in three directions,  
how am I only supposed to pick one again?

Wobbling in heels,  
rush into class,  
got off the graveyard two hours ago,  
hand in an essay I wrote on lunch breaks on my phone,  
teacher thinks I have my shit together,  
sometimes I hope it'll be like that,  
we do what we can to stay alive,  
I do what I can to live.

# KAMERYN SCHAT

## NEVER END

My love for you will be a  
never ending story  
My love for you will never  
fade.

You carry my heart and soul  
you are the air I breath and  
the comfort my body so  
desperately needs.

When I'm happy I want  
to make you happy  
When I'm sad I want to  
go to you for comfort  
while my head rests on  
your shoulder the tears  
dry up and my throat  
unties it's knot.

When I'm confused, I  
go to you for advice,  
you are the smartest  
person I know.

When my heart feels like it's  
missing thousands of pieces  
I go to you to find them.

I love you with all my heart.  
My body, heart, soul and mind  
crave every contact you could  
provide.

## NATURE

What is nature?

Nature is a place to let your mind in the soft breeze and blazing sun  
Nature holds all the secrets to Earth's creation, it also hold all of your secrets.

If you sit outside and just sit, think, cry, whatever it is you're doing, even just your still silence is a conversation with nature.  
Nature speaks through gesture.

The wind blowing you from side to side could mean guidance  
The waves crashing against the rocks could mean anger or sadness,  
maybe even excitement.

The leaves falling from the trees smashing into the Earth could mean death,  
or even freedom. The way the bird chirps could mean whatever you make it.

We do not know what nature is trying to tell us, we just sit...sit...and embrace.

## BABY

Baby I know I don't tell you I love and care for you as much as you deserve  
to hear it

But baby, I'm trying.

I know I get really angry over nothing and pick pointless fights with you, I  
over-exaggerate

But baby, I'm trying.

I know you think I'm too jealous and overprotective, possibly even  
suffocating to you

But baby, I'm trying.

I will spend endless decades trying to fix my flaws to make things better for  
the both of us

Baby, I won't stop trying.



## THE CRAZINESS

The craziness in this world is always going to be mysterious, so many unanswered questions, with only the slightest of hope, of one day being able to answer every single question.

Everyone is curious, everyone wonders if how and when to every situation this world has to offer, In my opinion I think there is always going to be unanswered questions, who is going to ever be able to one day answer all questions?

After questions are finally answered, people will find newer questions to ask, more and more each and every day, more. Decades of questions, asked in one day. Who will answer?

## HOME

The moonlight was shimmering on my back,  
Hours after the sun found its cave, minutes  
go by and the stars glisten in the sky.

These steps are too wet, too hard, too cold  
But I don't care. There is gum and gunk  
suck to every step. But I don't care.  
I'm out of breath, it's so cold, my inner  
air exits my body and turns to fog.  
I take a seat, right next to an empty  
whisky bottle that a homeless man left  
behind minutes before I came dashing  
at full speed.

I was so confused so scared. I had to bolt  
out of my house at full speed in hope of  
running out my demons. I can't be at home  
anymore I'm never going back, I can't bare  
to hear the yelling, the shrieking, glass breaking.

At night I used to ask myself, what do I do?  
I asked myself this for years and finally the  
best thing I could come up with was to simply  
run.

I catch my breath, open my eyes and look at  
the beauty the sky has to offer. Out of my entire  
life I finally feel relaxed I never want this feeling to  
end. I never want to leave these steps  
I finally feel at home.

## HE WON'T TALK

Blood sits upon the bottom of my foot  
making each step leave a bleeding stain  
So the man that's all shaded and dark  
can follow me wherever I go.  
I will make it easy for him to seek me  
out. I enjoy the anxiety, my heart racing and  
clenching, releasing pain at each pump.  
He follows me day and night,  
He hates the street lights  
Why doesn't he speak?  
Why does he just follow?  
Why won't he answer me?  
He is right there.

## I DON'T WANT TO

I don't want to think about you  
I don't want to cry over you  
I don't want anything to do with you

My heart has shut out your love  
My brain burned all my thoughts of  
you, I don't want your face stinging my  
eyes anymore

I hate that I have to see you everyday  
I hate that everything reminds me of you  
I just hate you

Hate is yes a strong word, but  
I couldn't mean it more than I do now  
Your existence suffocates me and  
I'm moving on  
Moving on

## GET OUT OF MY HEAD

I can't get you out of my head  
You are so cute and nice  
your chubby cheeks are like little  
gumdrops, your eyes are glowing tootsie rolls  
your lips are smooth and big

I like looking at you and smiling  
you make the corners of my mouth  
spread from cheek to cheek  
you bring out the happiness but body  
is keeping in

You make me so happy,  
when I think of you butterflies emerge  
from my stomach banging on the walls  
screaming, let me out

I haven't felt this way about a guy in  
a really long time  
I am so glad we started talking  
you are what I look forward to  
each day now

I don't want you to leave my thoughts  
you make my thoughts come alive  
you make me come alive  
I feel alive when I'm with you  
Myself. Free. Happy.

## DEATH

Death doesn't sound so bad  
to me right now being alone  
in a dark space, eyes closed,  
no thoughts clenching around  
your skull. It is almost like sleep  
No worries, no emotion, no  
movement, just sleep.  
The world won't bug you anymore  
your thoughts won't kill you  
anymore, your heart won't trick  
you, and society won't drown you.  
The world suddenly becomes  
a day in the past that no longer affects  
you. You are buried  
and all alone.  
You're safe.  
Death is safety.

## PEOPLE COME AND GO

People come and go  
Your heart heals and breaks  
I don't know why I want to  
have you so bad, I thought  
I knew what I wanted but I  
guess I was wrong  
Love is a crazy thing you know?  
You love it, then you hate it  
Life gets in the way, or it doesn't  
People simply come and go  
but life keeps going

# TAYLOR SILVEIRA

## SECRETS

Well I'll give you some foreshadowing—it flooded that year. Throughout the winter of 1988, it rained so much people had grown accustomed to kayaking in the streets. My neighbor, Maya Hodges, would climb up on her roof, sit, and throw things at them. Rocks, sticks, water balloons—whatever was handy. She climbed up there and laid down when firemen began to evacuate the neighborhood, after the water had invaded the first floor of every house on Spiceberry Street. She was always doing weird things like that. She stood out, wherever she was. Whether it was at school or one of our family's annual Christmas parties, she was always some kind of glorious pariah. We played together as children, and she was weird back then too. She didn't tease me for being a boy and having cooties, she didn't run when I pointed a stick at her with an earthworm dangling off the end of it. She picked it off the stick with her fingers and lectured me for removing it from its "home". So she hid away on that roof, laid down on the other end of it so no one would spot her and force her to come down. Men were helping families out of their houses and escorting them down the street. Her family assumed she had already been helped, because she was nowhere to be found. I noticed her on my way out because I could hear her prying a wooden ladder that had originally been attached to the side of my house off the wall. I walked over to my window and watched her hop up, rather skillfully, and didn't say a word. That's because I knew that if I had, she'd throw her blue dust on me and scream, "You'll pay for this, Conner!" Just like she had when I poured salt on her snails when she was eight and I was seven. The day I turned thirteen, we stopped talking. There was no reason for that—we just did. I saw her every day for the next three years and never uttered a single word—until the week after the flood. A year later she vanished. Everyone said our small town was better off without her, or that she was a witch, or that her family sent her off to a mental hospital. While the high schoolers theorized and the police searched and her family grieved—I was the only one who ever *knew*.

There are people who try to be different. The ones who are overly expressive or emotional, that put their personal problems on display. They'll change their physical appearance, dye their hair, pierce their tongue. They'll be visually loud about it, decorate themselves with colors and trinkets. Then there are the people who decorate—and they should—because that's who they are. Well that's who Maya was.

I can hardly remember anything before 1980, but if I have it right, she was naturally blonde. She was eight years old when she first had the desire to dye her hair, and of course her parents wouldn't allow it. So she got some cherry flavored Kool-Aid, and did it herself. Her mother was

livid. She spent hours scrubbing that kid's head with soap, and if I'm *still* remembering correctly, she used the hose in the front yard for everyone to see. When Maya turned fourteen, she colored her then strawberry blonde hair with neon blue dye. She wore it up in a bun, electric strands carving the shape of her porcelain skin. She got one of her "temporary friends" to pierce her tongue, ears, and nose. That's what she called them, temporary friends. She wasn't too great at making them, but when she needed something—well, then she was. She got hold of eye make-up and did a great impression of a raccoon. It was either red, purple, or black lipstick every day. She dressed unconventionally too, more so than every other kid did back then. The "rocker chick" look was the last thing she was looking for, and somehow she managed to dress like one without giving herself that reputation. She wore fishnet stockings and long skirts that stopped halfway down her calves. Instead of leather jackets, she preferred lacy shawls, like the ones Stevie Nicks had in the 70's. One thing she wanted but never got was a tattoo. However, that didn't stop her from making people *think* she had one.

At one point, even I thought she had a tattoo. Turns out she was drawing it on with heavy black ink every day before we went to school. Sometimes I walked to school near her, but never with her. Some days I didn't see her on the way at all and assumed she was just ditching. Then I'd arrive and become deeply perplexed to find her just sitting by the front doors. Upon those rare occasions, Maya was at the school before everyone else, as though she'd just transported there with the simple use of magic. Because it rained a lot in Belmont, Oregon, the school was all indoors.

One particular day in April of 1985, I watched her from across the room in a science class we both happened to be in. The tattoo was of the sign Gemini, and when I asked her about it later on, she said she'd taken such a liking to the sign because she had a secret twin. I was so in awe of her and confused by her at the same time, I wasn't sure whether I should believe her or not. When she saw that I was actually attempting to mull over the substance of her words, she burst into a fit of righteous laughter that reminded me of church bells. Her lipstick had faded because it rained on the way home from school. She threw her head back and her pink lips spread into a perfect arc, I can still feel how transfixed I was in that moment. The sun escaped from behind a clearing cloud and her blue hair glistened. It was a rarity to see her in such a candid moment, and I took a picture of that moment with my eyes. I've tried working it out onto paper but I'm horrible with art, so I've settled for just relying on my memories. That's okay, because this one is in pretty good shape.

Anyway, in that science class, someone spilled some kind of chemical on her hand. It happened to be the hand with the tattoo on it, and the ink began to run. I had never seen her panic before that day. And to be honest, it scared the living hell out of me. I wanted to run out of class after her, but I wouldn't even know how to speak to her. She baffled me day in, day out, and I knew there was nothing I could do to make her feel okay.

As kids we played together, unless it involved a playground. She



would never go near one, and it took me a very long time to figure out why. My window was directly across from hers, and over the years, I witnessed a lot of strange stuff. Most of it included the arguments she had with her parents. They got into loud, furious, raging arguments, even when she was just a little girl. They went on for as long as I can remember. Everyone thought she had such a perfect family (a married mom and dad, little brother, and a dog.) I suppose a lot of people actually did think she was trying to be different, or searching for attention. They thought that since she had a “perfect family” and a “nice home” she had no reason to present herself as the lost person she turned out to be.

Well they didn’t see it the way I saw it, and the way I saw it was from my window into hers. I think her mom drank a lot. They got into fights almost every day, up until the last day I saw her. Once, her mom threw a glass vase at her and it shattered on the wall. I thought the vase represented Maya herself, purple and fragile and scattered upon the floor. She had this very fierce thing about her, but to me, she was still very innocent. Instead of playing on the playgrounds, she sat in the grass around them and weaved crowns of daisies. She made wishes on dandelions and collected their stems. I asked her what she’d wished for and she’d tell me that of course it was a secret. And well, she was right; if she’d told me those wishes then they absolutely could not have come true. It’s the little things.

A week after the flood we were allowed to come back. The water had receded but there was a lot of repair work to be done. The Hodges must’ve gotten there before us because Anna came out of her house wearing fishnets, a long red shawl, and green leather boots. She resembled a rose—green, red, and curled up into herself. I found myself approaching her and speaking before I could even process what I was going to say. Then the anxiety attacked my stomach and I felt nervous for the first time in ages. I wanted to escape into my house where I could draw the shades and look away from the intimate details of her life, where she wouldn’t drench my thoughts in curiosity and a little bit of sorrow. “Did you stay up there all week?” I’d asked stupidly.

She looked surprised; it was the first time I’d spoken directly to her in three years. Her mouth opened slightly and her eyes widened. Then she composed herself, summoning her seemingly apathetic exterior.

“Up where?”

“The roof, you used my ladder. Did you think I wouldn’t know?”

“Not that you wouldn’t but simply that I just didn’t care if you did. I leaned it back up against your house.” Her eyes flickered over to the ladder, she looked anxious, too. As if I cared about the ladder.

“Well, when did you leave? You didn’t leave with the rest of us,” I pushed.

All I got in response was a cold hard stare, and then she turned around. She began walking back towards her house and pulled her hair free of its tie as she did so. Clusters of beautiful blue poured onto her shoulders

in layers, it was mesmerizing. It just kept falling as she pulled more strands out and I thought of a waterfall. Six words ran through my head in that moment, and I don't think she said them, but maybe she did. *Some things are better left unsaid.* Then I knew—Maya Hodges had bewitched me.

I didn't fall in love the way other teenaged kids did. I didn't fall in love the way people did in general. I didn't get butterflies looking at her; I didn't think she was just the most beautiful girl in the world. I didn't wonder about how she felt about me, I didn't look forward to the next time I'd see her. And above all, she didn't make me happy. No, she didn't make me happy, not in the least. I fell in love with the mystery of her, with the things I didn't know. I fell in love with the songs she played that danced from her window to mine. I fell in love with her incomplete sentences and lingering words and poetic metaphors. I had a lot of conversations with her that year, none of which that I will write down. I will only write down what I feel is important for you to know. And those conversations, the perfectly soft words and flawless syntax of her enigmatic language—they were all private. They were insignificant, personal, little details that I'll keep strictly to myself. That's how she wanted things—kept to herself. A few were permitted to make it all the way to me, but not many. Maya liked secrets.

Well I wanted to know about her. The hunger for information had never been so strong. She made me into an apprehensive philosopher. One night, in December of 1988, she used my ladder again. She must've propped it up against her house earlier that day, because I certainly didn't do it. At midnight she scrambled down the ladder. I can't be sure whether she knew I was watching or not, but I wouldn't be surprised if she did. Flustered and at a loss for time, I jumped from my window and felt a sharp pang on the bone of my right ankle when I landed. A few curse words I had always tried my best not to use made their way through my teeth as I hopped along after her. I tried so hard to be quiet. She stepped into the woods, not far from Spiceberry Street. I followed her for ten minutes, leaves threatened to crackle under my feet, branches dared to snag my skin and draw curious blood. There were no streetlights, only the moon, and it was dim that night. The stars had gotten stage fright; they lacked the audacity to shine. Crickets had all fallen asleep and the sound of creek water trickling along was silent too, somehow, and it was driving me insane.

Then without turning, she muttered the words, "Conner, I know you're following me."

It made me angry. It angered me how she could always know everything, and I knew absolutely nothing. She knew things that she couldn't have. She knew every last book I read, she knew every place I had been and when I had been there, she even knew the last meal I had had. And as for me, well, I'm not even sure I knew what her favorite color was. Then she did turn around. She flipped her hair over her shoulder and shot me a mysterious smile, it lasted only for a second and then it was gone. I felt that maybe if it had lasted only a few moments longer, I'd have been able to see into it. But with Maya, everything was always locked away. I was lucky enough to witness her make a mistake, and only because of that mistake did I ever

discover anything about her. How horrible it must've been, not ever allowed to make one single mistake until the fateful year of 1988. Then as she turned to leave me standing in the cold, dark woods, she hummed a quiet tune. She left stomping on tree stumps and singing little songs about what a happiness it is to wonder, and I think she was quoting Edgar Allan Poe. As she skipped away, a single sentence whispered through crisp midnight air chilled me to the bone. "Some things are better left unsaid."

I began asking around about her. Of course no one knew a single thing. Anyone who did claim to know something was either creating a rumor or repeating one, and I wanted nothing to do with that. People told me that she had a Ouija board, or that she had magic spell books locked up in her closet. One even said that they snuck into her room once and found a crystal ball sitting in a silver chest. I can advocate for that one, as I know for a fact that there is indeed no silver chest in her bedroom. Maya was different, but she wasn't a satanist. And when I heard certain things or contemplated certain theories, I knew at once whether they could hold even the tiniest bit of truth. I didn't know her at all, but in some ways, I knew her the most. I had thought about asking her parents about her. What I really wanted to ask was what all the arguments were about. But I wasn't audacious *or* insensitive, so I left that alone. I felt that I had been handed the reel of a kite and begun running with it, but the kite just stayed. It was sitting in Maya's arms and the string never ran out, I just dragged it along after me and I was going places, but the kite never would. The kite never could.

Then in January, 1988, Maya accosted me at my locker in Belmont High. She began asking me personal questions, and then answering them before I could even open my mouth. I remember one of them was "Does your locker combination have some kind of significance to you? I know mine does, and it's obvious if you look at the numbers. Although, admittedly, yours does look quite random and insignificant. 22—32—42. Two times to the left, once to the right, and twice more to the left. Is it just because they were easy to remember?"

I think she just did it to toy with me. To this day, I cannot understand how she came to know so much about me. She knew my *locker combination*. Something I had not ever repeated to anyone simply because there had been no reason to. And she knew it, down to every last turn and number. Once again, I was struck with anger. It started in my head, like a fire, the flames leaping and scraping the walls of my skull. Like an arsonist I lit one down in my chest—it spread to my stomach and I got dizzy. Slamming the metal door closed, I took two large steps towards her so our faces were nearly touching and said, "Well Maya, I know about you too. You might think you're so careful and mysterious, covering up your tracks. With your little quotations and bottles of hair dye, you seem so unfathomable. Well it only takes a *little* digging. You make yourself seem so powerful, did you ever think of what would happen if I asked someone *else* about your secrets? Because I barely had to scratch the surface before all your bricks came tumbling down."

I must've caught her off-guard. When I think back to that day, the way I went about discovering her doesn't seem as tricky as it had back then. I'm not sure how she fell for it, maybe my anger looked like something else. Maybe it had passed for sincerity. But she slipped up—once. One little mistake is all it

took. I watched her face drain of its color and her eyes grow wide. I watched her lips part, I watched her begin to emotionally tremble as she said, “You know about Molly?”

One Christmas in 1986, my father put together a bike for me. He didn’t buy it—he put it together. It looked flimsy and rusted, but it worked, and that was all I cared about. When the bell for sixth period rang, I was out of the school’s front doors before everyone else. I snatched the bike from beneath a large rose bush I had claimed as its hiding place and took off. My heart was beating for information; my blood was thrumming with adrenaline. The gray clouds above me rolled in quickly, rumbling and dampening in the air in threat of rain. I found myself at Belmont’s public library. Then I found myself inside its basement, flipping through all the H’s and M’s in the filing cabinets. I found a newspaper article on Molly Hodges. The sound of heels hitting a set of creaking wooden steps tore me from the trance the article had put me in. I stuffed the document into my backpack and rode home with it. I barely noticed the pouring rain.

I had no clue that Molly was going to be her sister, kind of even doubted if they were blood related at all. I told myself it couldn’t be that easy and I’d start from the bottom and work my way up. I guess for once, I just got lucky. It was dark by the time I got home. I cast the bike aside on the front lawn and threw open my front door, stomping with wet, heavy boots through the house without thinking to close the door behind me. My mother looked at me, disgusted. My father called after me and told me I’d better turn the hell around and explain my damn self. I didn’t. I took the stairs two at a time and locked the door behind me. Plopping down at my desk, I pulled the newspaper from my backpack and spread its contents out on the surface in front of me. The headline read “Tragic Death in Belmont Park.”

*“Jennifer Hodges, mother of Molly and Maya Hodges, sat on a bench approximately ten yards away from the play equipment in Belmont Park. Her children of eight and six years were playing tag when Maya Hodges ran into the back of her older sister. Molly Hodges fell from the top of the equipment (eleven feet) and her head came into contact with a metal bar. She was deceased immediately. ‘It was very clear that it was an accident,’ says the grief-stricken mother. ‘Maya absolutely did not mean to push her sister. They were just playing.’ A service will be held for Molly Hodges on November 13<sup>th</sup> in Belmont Cemetery.”*

Images of a green-eyed young girl with an unfortunate shade of red hair came flickering back in my mind. Only I remember her as Maya’s friend, Molly. Not Maya’s sister; certainly not her sister. But of course—Molly was her sister. Molly *had been* her sister. And then Maya killed her. The arguments, the broken vase, the kept secrets—the years of wondering I had done and the thousands of stories told about the girl who lived next door to me—they all came together. The disbelief and the shock and the horror I felt in that moment wrote pages on my face. The article showed right there in my terrorized eyes as they lifted and met hers. Maya’s eyes, outside my window and inside hers, showed the same. I didn’t mouth a single word to

her or hold up a single sign. She knew her one mistake had let everything come unraveled. The eye contact we held felt like a knife twisting in my gut, and it just *kept on* twisting. She turned her light off and I couldn't be sure if she stayed in the room or not—but somehow I did know to go outside, and then I got my answer.

Outside the air was frigid. It was a *cold* January night, and I could see myself breathing. The moment the front door shut behind me I heard leaves crunching and sticks snapping. Lying in the middle of the street was a black shawl. I will never know if she intended to leave it behind or simply hadn't noticed she'd dropped it. She disappeared off into the woods and I tried so hard to catch up, but she was fast. She got a head start on me and I could barely see her in the distance, she always picked the darkest of nights to make these little trips into the forest. I took off after her—and I may have ran faster than my bike could've carried me. My calves were aching and my throat was burning, my chest felt like it was going to collapse. This all went on for a very long time, and I had no clue whether she was running from me or leading me somewhere.

I had the strangest premonition in that moment—and all I could think of was the flood. The very sound of the rain hitting my window was effervescent in my ears; the feeling of the thigh-deep water was unreal. I felt that I was wading through the woods at blinding pace, and it made running harder. It was like a dream, those terrifying ones you get when you're running from something horrific but your feet just won't go, like you're caught in quicksand. I called after her a few times. I have no recollection whatsoever of what it was that I said, but by the end of the night my throat was in shambles. The air had sliced it with a violent razor, breathing and shouting was too much in the gelid air. After a while the trees became less consistent; they had ceased to scrape at me and I had ceased to crash into them. They cleared up and I could see Maya a little better. She was wearing a short white dress with black stockings and knee-high silver boots. Her hair tossed to the left and right. It was the only bright thing around us, almost as if it fed off of the moon. The crack of ice from far away seeped into my mind and I saw everything that happened next as if I had watched it through her fictional crystal ball.

I hadn't been aware that we were running alongside a lake, but we had been for some time. It had probably frozen over the December before; 1988 was the coldest winter Belmont had seen in years. In that precise moment, I thought that she had run onto it on purpose. I had theorized that she was trying to lose me. I definitely weighed more than she did, so perhaps she had trusted that her petite frame wouldn't break the ice. Only now, I've spent many years reflecting on everything that happened up until that night—and I've developed a hypothesis. Maya didn't want to lose me; she was trying to get me somewhere. Of course I can't know for certain. But I believe with all my heart, mind, and soul that she had heedlessly stepped onto that ice. She was scared and oblivious, and that cracking sound came as a surprise to her, too. Our eyes met as her body fell from beneath her, she was petrified. Maya had not intended to run onto that lake,

she had not intended for the ice to shatter. She had not *wanted* to fall into the freezing water—she had not *wanted* any of it. The eye contact also told me one other thing—she had not wanted me to save her. Maya hadn't wished to die, but if she was going to, she did not want to be saved.

I would have done it anyways, I would have dove into the lake and fished her out. But I was still very far behind, and the mythical flood was weighing me down. She gasped as she fell—I saw it. Now you may ask how I was too far away to get to her on time and also close enough to see her breath, and the answer is the same to all the other questions you may have developed. I don't know. My vision was acute during the last moments of her life—who knows—maybe she lent me some of hers. It was very dark but I saw her so clearly, and the hair—it was glowing. Her last breath lingered above the lake for several moments after she had plunged under the surrounding ice. She was trapped under other layers of it, freezing. I continued sprinting and could think only of Ophelia. As I trudged into the water, I thought of her flowing down the river with flowers beside her. That week's English assignment internally echoed from wall to wall of my skull. Lines from Hamlet ran forwards and backwards and sideways. The freezing water shocked my body to its core but I trudged on, searching for her in the ice.

*“When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;  
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element: but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.”*

Maya rose to the surface after my rasping, unavailing attempts to retrieve her. She was there in the water with white roses of ice splayed around her. I stepped out very, very slowly. I couldn't look at her—but I did. I was overcome with grief and wonder. Of course Maya would go out like that. I sat by the lake contemplating her for hours. I cursed myself for pushing her at the lockers. I cursed her parents for never letting her live down what she did to Molly. I cursed her for deciding to run out into the woods in the first place. I cursed the moon, too. Just because I could.

I am now a forty-three year old man living in Wells, Maine. I couldn't stay in Belmont any longer than I absolutely had to. I have a wife and four children, and I suppose you could label me as “happy.” I am an absent-minded person, and my wife hates me for it. I can never seem to recall what she asked me to pick up from the grocery store; I've even forgotten to pick up the kids a time or two. However, one thing I will never forget is Maya Hodges. I'm sure everyone who graduated from Belmont High forgot that “witchy girl who lives on Spiceberry Street” a few months

after she disappeared. So I will remember her. I never told anyone how she died—or even *that* she died. Maya liked things kept secret. Not just because of what had happened to her but because she loved for people to wonder about her, and that is exactly what everyone did. I sat out by that lake for hours—and I didn’t even have a jacket. I will never know where she was taking me, what she would have told me—or showed me, for all I know. I returned silently and cried myself to sleep for the next year. I watched police go in and out of her house for weeks, and one night I observed her father crying on her bedroom floor. Of course there were occasions when I felt that I needed to confess, that I couldn’t put them through the agony of not knowing what had become of their last daughter. But if I was going to do anything for anyone, I decided it should be for the girl who drowned. So I never told her parents, I never told mine. To this day, I haven’t told my wife anything about her. The only one who will know is you. I cannot stand another day of wondering. I cannot roll over all the “what if’s.” I cannot ask myself what would’ve become of it if I had let her alone, or if I had never pursued her at all, or if I had never opened my mouth that week after the flood. Maya was a walking mystery. I suppose she sunk to the bottom of that lake and I suppose remnants of her soul are still there. Walking through the halls of the school and hearing excited teenagers speak of the “witch girl’s disappearance” all but killed me. My former best friend even mentioned her once. He had said something like, “She probably just ran off on her own, she never did care about anyone else. She was an ungrateful bitch and she doesn’t deserve all this attention,” and I all but killed *him*. But of course I couldn’t, and of course I had to move on—to some extent. I’ve dreamt of her and contemplated the ideas of the afterlife, and long since decided that all that is too much for my small mind. A man may think he knows something about the universe and God himself, until he tries to fathom the dimensions we inhabit and don’t, and all that lies beyond them. Then, he knows nothing. So I’ve remembered her for years and now I’m asking you to do the same. And well, I guess the moral of the story is—some things are just *truthfully* better left unsaid.

# SUSAN TOGNOLI

## FOR THE GIRLS WHO'VE BEEN ABUSED

The boys, they call me Lolita.  
They come to me with their dark hair  
and beautiful cheekbones.  
They say "Lolita, baby. C'mon, hike that skirt  
up, yeah, show me those  
stockings."  
"Lolita, you kill me! Turn around  
sweetheart."  
"Lolita, go grab me a beer. You're  
the best chaser I've ever had, Honey. You  
taste like cherry soda straight from the shop."  
They know everything of my shaky,  
wandering hands, peppermint lips  
olive skin.  
But nothing of my anxious soul, my love  
for 7-up, my eyes that cry salt.  
The priest, the one with sins falling  
from his eyelashes, he tells me girls like  
me are not meant to be loved. We are  
candy, made to be devoured.  
I go home and I put on a long t-shirt  
and I paint.  
I paint the boys' dirty hands, their  
cigarette lips and eager but dying eyes.  
I do not tell them I turn them into art.  
I do not want to scare them away.  
Girls like me, we have blood draining  
out our eyes. Desire hides in the  
crevices of our palms,  
to us love is the color black.



## FOUR THINGS I'D LIKE TO SAY TO YOUR FACE

I.

My brain is broken.

It cracked like an egg the day I learned  
what it feels like to know I'm not  
enough.

It hasn't healed quite right since.

Faltering on all the words that should  
have been said,

collapsing over the ones that were.

(The word damaged plays on a constant  
loop in my head)

II.

I'm an ass,

we've established that.

Jealousy coats my veins like a thick black tar.

I am incapable of communicating  
the way you deem a lover should.

But I never used the threat of infidelity  
as a cheap shot to try and fix you

(Take what you need, give nothing back  
in return)

III.

You know nothing about me  
except that I am built upon the words  
"I'm trying".

I am inside out, upside down,  
and all turned around.

I am still trying to find my place,  
still trying to find my name,  
still searching for a face I recognize  
whenever confronted with a mirror.

But you never bothered to learn these  
things... Did you?

(All of my anger tasted like you)

IV.

I am not the girl you claimed to love.

I am the person learning, however  
slowly, to love myself.

I am the person you will never know

(Good fucking riddance).

## HE'S GOING TO LOVE YOU

So many types of girls, but I can only think of four. One, the woman that tastes so sweet but leaves a stickiness that won't leave. The second, a docile dandelion that blows away and leaves you forever. The third woman, she is animal bones that crush under your jaw. Our fourth woman of the evening, is like home. But how many of our women are confident? What is confidence? First off, it is being able to say "Fuck you, I'm the shit," without opening your mouth. Say it with your walk, with your smile. Say it with your entire being. Confidence, though, isn't just a switch that can be flicked at a moments notice. Start by saying you are not a girl. You are a hatchet. You are not a hole, but a whole mountain. You are not a fool, you are a survivor. You aren't a pearl. You're the fucking Atlantic ocean. You aren't just "a good lay." You're a straight razor. I want people to look at you as if they had never seen a woman before. Only I, though, have red, red hands and much bitterness. I tell myself I am a child from the moon, being raised by the sun in a world walked by stars and a sky drawn with flowers. But I'm not. Maybe that's okay.

## I WISH SOMEONE TOLD ME THIS

No guy is going to get you naked and be like,  
"Sorry, I thought you were like five pounds less, nevermind."  
He's probably going to put his mouth on you  
wherever you let him and that's that.  
Any guy that doesn't completely worship  
the naked body of a woman he's into, anyway,  
is an asshole.  
Or a teenager.

**“I SAW THE ANGEL IN THE MARBLE AND CARVED UNTIL I SET HIM FREE.”**

Vincent Van Gogh used to eat yellow paint because he thought it would get the happiness inside him. Many people thought he was mad and stupid for doing so because the paint was toxic, never mind that it was obvious that eating paint couldn't possibly have any direct correlation to one's happiness, but I never saw that. If you were so unhappy that even the maddest ideas could possibly work, like painting the walls of your internal organs yellow, then you are going to do it. It's really no different than falling in love or taking drugs. There is a greater risk of getting your heart broken or overdosing, but people still do it everyday because there was always a chance it could make things better. Everyone has their yellow paint.

## PLEASE DO NOT TAKE PICTURES OF THE ARTWORK

The world is weird when it comes to art  
because everyone expects  
there to always be music to listen  
to and movies to watch and video  
games to play and cartoons to plop  
their kids in front of and watercolor  
paintings on dentists' walls and  
gaudy desktop wallpapers but  
No one wants to...pay  
artists?

## SURREALIST JOCK

A varsity jacket but it has three arms  
and it's melting.  
Your football shoulder pads have grass growing out of  
them and they constantly hum.  
You shove nerds, not into lockers, but into  
other planes of existence.  
Your football is always singing, singing, singing.  
The astroturf changes colors beneath you  
and whispers the name of every person you've  
ever loved.

## FROM MY SUBCONSCIOUS

Your silence was deafening.  
So loud most nights that I couldn't  
sleep or remember a time when an empty  
bed didn't feel like a death sentence.  
I've been talking to the moon in a  
catatonic state about you.  
If she ever whispers your name, don't  
be scared or surprised, I tell her  
about you every night. Her children,  
her starts, they want me to give up.  
But they aren't like me at all.  
The stars are not small or gentle,  
they're writhing and dying and  
burning. They aren't here to be  
pretty. But maybe I am.  
They want me to learn from them,  
but I want to be be a princess. I can, however,  
take away this note. They taught me  
not to compare you to a garden or a  
sunset, because you were never something  
pretty to look at. You were the blood  
that ran through my veins. You kept  
me alive. Now it's the dead of night and  
my eyes won't close. The entirety of the  
universe is running through my head.  
Only those with fading souls are awake  
with me. I've been trying for far too  
lon to talk to you, but what does a  
clumsy little candle say to the staggering sun?  
I melt as you approach.

## WHICH WAY IS NORTH FROM HERE

I remember something, Anne Frank said.  
She whispered to me that dead people  
receive more flowers than the living  
because the regret is stronger than  
the gratitude.  
But I can't help but think that to be  
simply something to say.  
It's romantic, to receive flowers.  
People receive flowers everyday.  
And who cares if they happen to be dead?  
It is for morning and graciousness. To remind  
the spirits that they are remembered and loved.  
They whisper to whatever God that the most romantic  
thing a human being can say to another human being  
is let me help you vomit. No human being has ever said this to me.  
And I keep going to god, too clean as though God is  
frightened of muddy feet. If I am missing a hairpin  
I don't go at all. Please describe your vomiting;  
It is like a psalm for me. A place where  
wilderness might be new. Other people's dirt makes  
a lovely frock. Grant I be forgiven in the gush.  
I loved my dead. I loved him like a mouthful of  
whiskey. He numbed my lips as well as my heart  
and like bourbon, he burned the whole way down.  
I just want to feel those lips whisper against my neck  
that there's nothing under my bed, nothing in my closet,  
nothing waiting in my hall. I'm surrounded by nothing. I  
cannot escape it.  
I'm not afraid of death. I don't want to die. I just want  
to not exist for a while. I like to think that when  
we die our bodies turn into the Milky Way.  
When I become death's gift, and he asks me what I regret  
I'll say my only regret is not telling enough people to fuck off  
because I'm jealous. You have fucking galaxies in your eyes and I  
can't find a single star in mine.

## HER

She drives you fucking insane, but her hair floats in the ocean like a pacific ghost. She paints flowers on her walls, hates coffee even though you love it, runs down hallways screaming she never wants to grow up. Her fingers curl around yours with the security of a child, her eyes are the size of moons and you taste the sky on her tongue. Sometimes she reminds you of a girl you loved in high school, a girl who's skirt was as soft as clouds when you folded it up over her legs, a girl who kissed the space over your heart and filled your head with her name but this one is different. You can dance in the rain and steam up the windows of her car, share beds like little kids, chase after each other in the wind. But none of it is ever enough, because her freckles are cocaine and you spend every waking moment shaking, waiting for your next high. So you fold yourself around her at 4 AM, pretending you could protect a girl whose skin is as breakable as water and you press your nose into the forest of her hair. Daisies. Fucking daisies. And your tongue explores her in the movie theatre like there is no one else on the entire planet and this is it, you think. This is all there is.

# MICHAEL RIEDELL

## THREE BIRDS

I had three birds, three.

The first one I released  
Flew east  
Began a fire  
That burned the morning sky.

The second flew west,  
Vanished  
Over a green ocean,  
Hasn't been seen since.

The third I kept here.  
Come closer.  
You can hear it cooing  
In my hands.

I had three birds, three.

Two I lost.  
One I saved for you.



## RATS IN THE WALLS

There are rats in the walls,  
In traps, in my mind.  
There are rats running round  
Till we hear the snap.

There are rats in my mind,  
In my dreams, in my walls.  
There are rats, there are rats,  
Kill them all.

There are rats in my dreams,  
In the walls of my mind.  
Set the trap, hope for snap.  
It is time.

There are rats in the mind.  
I'm their king, in my dream.  
They run around in my mind  
Trapping me.

There are rats in the walls  
Hear the sound in my mind  
In my dream scratching me  
I'm their king, scratched blind.

There are rats, there are rats.  
I'm their king, follow me  
To the trap, take a nap  
Eternally.

There are rats in the walls,  
In traps, in my mind.  
There are rats running round.  
O to hear that snap.

There are rats in my mind,  
In my kingdom, in my walls.  
There are rats, there are rats,  
Kill them all.

## THE NEXT LINE

I was a poet about to begin  
another line, a sword-maker poised  
in the moment before the hammer  
fell, an architect with pencil  
just about to touch down into  
another line, a chef with spatula  
ready to stir—such smells  
were in the air: hot steel and  
onions. I was a murderer  
about to point the gun, a cop  
flashing my badge, a boy  
readying the bat for the swing,  
a tailor nearly to the hem  
with the next pin, a mason,  
hand holding the next stone,  
bringing it into place. I was a poet  
about to begin the next line,  
the line that would assure readers  
the world waits to be made.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF RULES

The one who cooks does not clean.  
The one who dreams need not wake.  
The one who takes shall learn to give.  
The one who lives shall die.

The one who flies can also walk.  
The one who talks shall learn to hear.  
The one who fears fears what's within.  
The ones with fins should swim.

Those who win today may lose in time.  
Those who rhyme should write their words.  
Those loved by birds are loved by God,  
But God loves everyone.

The ones who laugh have many friends.  
The ones who weep lack faith in God.  
Those lacking faith in God aren't fools.  
The rules admit it's hard.

The one who smiles has found his peace.  
The one in fleece is ever warm.  
The one who's born was bound to live.  
The one who gives is blest.

The ones who rest shall have their strength.  
The ones who bank shall have their wealth,  
But health is worth a world of coins.  
A loincloth is extravagance.

The chance to learn is why we're here,  
The chance to learn and love, that is.  
So bliss to those who read this book.  
And clean if you didn't cook.



## CONTRIBUTORS:

### Andrew J. Anderson:

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**Jonas Anderson** is male, 5' 7" or so, 113 pounds, and incredibly handsome. He enjoys long walks on the beach and serenading all those around him with his trusty guitar, Jasmine. He adores puppies, but cats get on his nerves. He writes and plays guitar for indie rock band *To Be Announced*. More than anything in the world he loves his guitar and writing music. Many of the included works are songs that he wrote and will be performed by *To Be Announced*. He thanks you for reading.

### Abigail Au:

Abbie is a majestic fairy mermaid prince. She earns her wage by reading palms and all that gypsy bs. She can't drink orange juice because she has canker sores on her feet. She gets hit on by creeps on the subway craving for a footlong. She is extremely afraid of social interactions and un-covered coughs. P.S. these are just HUGE GIGANTIC lies (except for the social interactions and coughing part). I'm actually so boring i try to ditch myself.

### Quincy Boyle:

These are the things said about me. No joke.

Ricky Rodriguez- "An ego almost as big as his heart."

Vanessa Ilar- "A magic man who creates shivers with the simple phrase  
"one woman waterfall"

Michael Riedell- "He memorized all of 'Prufrock!' A freak, obviously..."

Gene Fillmore- "The knight of Kindersline in which I would trust my  
books."

Allison Rupe- "Oh, sweet lord baby Jesus in a manger, this chillin thinks he  
can actually do an okie impression."

Zachary Klyse- "He laughs like a witch, but he has no black cats. But I'm  
still afraid he will kill me mid com-"

Seth Butow- "I did track with Quincy once, then I took an arrow to the knee."

Andrew Anderson- "He realized one of the books I have is late, and now  
he's going to to hunt me down because he works in the library. I  
won't be able to sleep at night because I fear he'll be there  
watching me and plotting to kill me."

Alycia Ford- "My father won't stop looking at me type."

Mahea LaRosa- "YAY, WRITING STUFF IS SO FUN! HAHHAHAHHA...no."

**Seth Frenier-Butow** is an open-minded, huge-hearted, motivational kid who is willing to do anything to protect his friends and family. He is a sweetheart from the start and has such an outgoing positive attitude. He is the nicest kid you will meet and once you do meet him, he's hard to forget. He has a temper so don't make him angry. He is a one of a kind MGK lover who will sacrifice anything for a special girl in his life. He is a kid you will want to spend the rest of your life with. He's straight up an Original Gangster.

### **Kylee Caudle:**

For what it's worth, I think that you are a wonderful person. I will tell as many bad puns as I need to to escape the crushing pressure of society (and to piss off my friends). I wish to live in any world that is not this one; I want magic, hope, and more nature! If anyone ever asks me, in this year of 2015, "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?" I am going to say, "Sorry, I don't have 2020 vision." Remember everyone; the world is your stage, so don't be afraid to get out there. My stage is the shower but still. I would doodle in her if I could but! Honestly, I have no idea what I am doing, in this class or in the 16 years I've been alive. I hope you enjoyed this collaboration of all of Squadala's special poems and stories. Have a very dandy day, my dear. And now, the weather. \*music starts playing\*

**Yesenia Ceja** is an awkward 14 year old girl who spends her free time writing crappy poems and watching tv shows on netflix. She dreams of attending a semi-decent college where she will be able to fulfill her dreams of becoming a writer. She will write books about a dystopian future which she will force her family members to read. She will grow old and her only company will be her 7 cats.

**Chloe Chevalier** likes cats and noodles, and people say she has a quiet voice.

**Ana Corona (Wolff)** is in a polygamous relationship with Nat Wolff, Billie Joe Armstrong, M Shadows and a buttload of other famous guys. Burger King is her palace and she drowns in ketchup while floating in bacon. She's a walking contradiction, but no one really gives a fuck. She plans to live with her soul mate Kiauna after she barely graduates High School in Ukiah, better known as Oui Land. She's training to be a cow. Tawni Kerbs is her babe, and partner in ditching. Ana typically hates the world and everyone, misanthrope huh? But she's recently fallen in love so the world is all rainbows and bacon shaped flowers through her red eyes. FTW.

**Gene Larry Fillmore:** Knight of the Pencil Order, Defender of the Information Kingdom. If you cross his path with bad intent toward books and writing, he will beat you with his pen blade. But if you cross his path with ideas, he will hand you a magic notebook that when finished will turn

to a book. This glorious knight has his allies such as sir Quincy Boyle the knight and the witch queen Alicia Ford. This is the man of the Pencil Order of the Kingdom of Information in the Land of Writers.

**Alycia Ford** is a young, crazy, open-minded, huge hearted, free-spirited young woman. She loves nothing more than to relax, listen to music, write poetry, speak her mind, and live to the fullest. She loves Korean music and loads of other genres. Alycia is someone you could go to for anything, she is always willing to listen and be there for people. She is also definitely a person to go if you're looking to have a good time. She likes to skate and go to concerts. Music is where she finds her true self. Alycia is always happy and always looking to put a smile on people's faces. She is young, wild, and free. Farts.

**Ariella Heise** was first introduced to the land of art and creativity when she fell into a large vat of toxic paint, therefore explaining the strange hue of her soul. From then on she has spent her almost fifteen years of life trapped in a dungeon filled with a pensive gorilla, watercolor paints, Chopin radio on Pandora, and hope for humanity. If you bring Ariella into a civilized building she will immediately find her way to the roof, only to scream at the top of her lungs, "I am a woman! Hear me roar!"

**Jessica Hernandez** is a sweetheart. She is one of the nicest girls you could meet, everyday in class she walks in with the brightest smile on her face. She has such a positive vibe, and she is definitely a person you could talk to. Jessica has beautiful hazel eyes with bright blond hair with vanilla skin, you would never guess she is half Mexican. She loves to have fun, hangout with friends, and simply live life to the fullest. Jessica has a huge heart. Even better, she has the mind of a teenager, and the spirit of a child.  
-Kam

**Vanessa Ilar:** I wrote a poem about her once. She's having me write about her because she's so shy. Whenever people ask me what she's like, I tell them she's a fairy. A ball of sunlight that just happens to be human. She is lovely, she is sad, she is tragic, she is a fairy, and all the illusion of her world is tragedy and beauty.

**Tawni Kerbs:**  
She's a little used to it.

**Zachary Klyse**, the man with a power. He stands on the rooftops at night, looking over the city below. He is the sole protector of all those who try. Candles burned in the night when he left, and the angels wept for forgiveness. Suddenly, a darkness encased the whole

town. They have returned once more to ravage the land for their own selfish needs. But they will not go unopposed. The very handsome and talented boy, now man, has returned. With the power that is knowledge and intellect, he is waging a war that could easily be lost. Yet he fights.

Why? He has to prove them wrong. Zachary is our hand-made hero. The architect of our last stand. Everyone! Men! Women! Children! Grab your commas and semicolons! Your parenthesis and your hyphens! Your quotation marks, conjunctions and verbs! We MUST fight back against the uneducated horde. This mere 17 year old is our only hope...

### **Mahealani LaRosa:**

I'm a ghost because I feel like it. I describe myself as a dead limp sea cucumber. I'm also very snarky if you couldn't tell. I like tea and sushi and books. I write poetry and act and dance. The ocean is kind of my thing. I like colors and flowers and rain. Trees are a great place to sleep. Compliments are the greatest gift. Humans are delicate creatures, easily frightened by blood and spiders. Stupid humans. Hummingbirds are attractive, unlike me. I'm a short little child who was adopted by a cat clan at the age of 6. I got no style. Music is a pretty nice thing that I happen to need to live. I laugh too loud and think too much. Chocolate is the best thing that happened to this world. I suck. I hate this. ADIOS AND HAVE A FANTASTIC LIFE.

**Kaylah Pardini** used to think that poetry was a way of expressing something in a creative, hidden, metaphorical way that has a meaning. Some that could be longer than others and some whose meanings could be easy to decipher while others could have many meanings. Now, Kaylah knows and believes that poetry is anything you wish to say from the heart. You don't write poetry to convince somebody of something or to teach them something. You write it because it's what your heart tells you and what you wish to express whether people agree or not.

**Becky Pedersen** is one of those kinds of people that wishes she was like Peter Pan, who could never grow up and would fly around all day.

### **Sade Perez:**

"Of all the people you have kissed she was your favorite because she didn't flinch when you curled your hand around her neck and tightened. She said, 'I break the law because I've never broken a heart and for once I want to know what it feels like to be the brick and not the window pane' And when she's drunk she'll dress up for you, all lace and straps and stockings. When she's high she'll dress down for you all skin and skin and skin."



### **Jordan Porterfield:**

“-and that’s Jordan Porterfield. You don’t want to mess with her. She’s Captain of the cheerleading squad and the mathletes. It may look like she has everything, and that’s because she does.”

- If I Was in Mean Girls,  
by Sara Moreno and Marcella Rodriguez

### **Diego Pulido:**

Life’s just beginning for me.

You’d think the amount of freedom you have as an adult is more than the freedom you receive as a kid. But is it? I’m busy wondering. I have reached adulthood and am feeling more trapped than I ever did as a kid. I’m feeling much more confused than I ever did as a kid, and for the most part, maybe I’m missing everything it meant to be one. Is being free being a kid? I don’t know, but we’ll find out as I look inside my heart. Peace.

**Michael Riedell** is a teacher, poet, songwriter, playwright, lounge, gardener, reader, sleeper and dreamer. He laughs at his own jokes and rides his skateboard to his classroom when no one is looking. Last year he put out a book of poetry, *The Way of Water*. This year he had a one-act play, “Disturb the Universe,” produced at Mendocino College. And just last weekend he won 80 cents betting on the Kentucky Derby, so he’s pretty sure he’s a winner. He’s heard that a teacher lives on through his students, so kids: Brush your teeth and be nice.

**Amelia Robinson** is a mermaid.

### **Francisco Rodriguez:**

Poems are not my thing.

**Ricky Rodriguez** is a man of many words, noises, jokes, stomach rumbles, muscles, showers, smiles, loves, hugs, kisses, arm wrestling competitions, glares, winks, video games, hobbies, friends, and family members. He is the luckiest Mo Fo on the face of the planet, and he tries his best not to forget that.

### **Mitzi Ruelas:**

My name is Mitzi Ruelas, I am very open minded and will not judge anyone, unless you sleep with pants on.

I wanna stay 5’2 forever.

My biggest goal in life is to have faith in myself and everything I do.

I love all types of food, and cooking is something I really enjoy.

I believe everyone makes really bad mistakes at some point in their life, but that doesn't make them a bad person.

Without all the good and bad in life these poems wouldn't be written.

### **Allison Rose Rupe:**

So I'm going to write my bio in first person because I'm a rebel. Hello to whomever is reading this. I'm going to talk about myself for a few seconds. I love writing poetry that's awkward to clap for because of its meaning. I could live in the desert and never get bored of seeing sand everywhere. I really like when people play the banjo because it reminds me of dirt roads and happy people. I enjoy the company of nice people. Love knows no bounds, and I think compassion is better currency than any other monetary unit in the world. I still believe in the American dream, and in the power of people. I hope you have a wonderful day, or evening. Thanks for reading my words. (Apology to my older self reading this if you're embarrassed.)

**Kameryn Schat** is a white girl with sass! She's a rebel at heart and isn't afraid to express her hateful feelings toward people. She kicks ass at softball and has eyelashes longer than your mom's chest hair! She's full of positive vibes and has a sick music taste of rock, reggae, metal, and rap. If you don't like Kampow then you need some special help. If you think she's ugly, they give out free eye tests at our clinic.

### **Taylor Silveira:**

My name is Taylor Silveira, but most everyone calls me Tay. I have a love for astrology and literature, and find peace in cloudy weather and Stephen King novels. Writing is my favorite pastime, and I hope to be an author some day. I specialize in short stories, but I enjoy poetry as well. The art of storytelling is something that I feel is very important to society, and it's up to this generation of writers to keep it alive.

### **Susan Vivian Tognoli:**

I started writing poems when I was in like 6th grade. I don't know how old that is. At first it was only haiku, small little things. I still write mainly small things, but occasionally I can write something close to two pages if I try hard enough. For a little bit in the class we were writing short stories and I honestly hated it. I really hate writing stories because it like....makes me feel like I'm rambling about things that don't matter (like this for instance hohoho). I've been trying to take some of my more rhythmic poems and turn them into little songs I can pluck out on my Ukulele. I'm a Senior and about to graduate and I'm so sad I didn't take this class sooner, it has made such a great impact on my life and I feel so in touch with my creativity and I can honestly admit that I'm talented at what I do. Because of creative writing I found out about Poetry Club, and because of Poetry Club I was able to go to slams and meet new people. If you have any doubts about joining a creative writing class, please just do it! It was the best thing I could have done and I'm so grateful for all the opportunities I've been given because of it.



# TITLE WAVE

## The Squadala Anthology



Andrew Anderson, Jonas Anderson, Abigail Au, Samantha Bennett, Quincy Boyle, Seth Butow, Kylee Caudle, Yesenia Ceja, Chloe Chevalier, Ana Della Corona Vargas, Gene Fillmore, Alycia Ford, Ariella Heise, Jessica Marie Hernandez, Vanessa Ilan, Tawni Kerts, Zachary Klyse, Mahealani LaRosa, Kaylah Pardini, Rebekah Pedersen, Sade Perez, Jordan Porterfield, Diego Pulido, Jazmin Ramirez, Amelia Robinson, Francisco Rodriguez, Ricardo Rodriguez, Mitzi Ruelas, Allison Rupe, Kameryn Schat, Taylor Silveira, Susan Tognoli, Michael Riedell

