

YOURS TRULY

The Postscript Anthology

2018-19

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Foreword

It's a common complaint among older literary types: People these days don't write letters. "Letter writing is a dead art," I've heard many times. So it's a fine little irony that when given a shot to name our 2018-2019 Creative Writing class, these very cool young writers chose for their new name "Postscript."

Every writer knows the problem. We pour out what we have, trying to hold off that over-anxious inner editor while we just get our thoughts onto the page. (When it works well the feeling is liberating, freeing. When it isn't going well it's like getting an appendectomy with rusty garden clippers.) And then, when you think the writing might be pretty much done, you remember something else. Something you forgot. Something that needs to be said. You're forced to begin again: "P.S...."

In fact, this intro was a forgotten something I had to do at the last minute. This year's big change for me was sharing this class with Kyle Kirkley. His fiction skills are daunting--truly impressive--and I knew the day we interviewed him for an English position at UHS that he'd end up teaching this class. I wanted to be mad, but I can't help but be his fan.

Losing this group to him was hard. After a Winter Break gift exchange (I got the Orb of Power from Daniel!), all these amazing students headed to another room. "Hey, how'er you guys doing over there?" I've asked the occasional student since then. Of course, they always report doing very well. Zero surprise there.

The book you hold in your hand, *Yours Truly*, is the culmination of true and dedicated writing, undedicated but fortunate writing, plus lots of laughter and goofiness. It's a showing of progress we've all made, and a preview of writings to come from these inspiring minds.

For every P.S. there can be a P.S.S. Expect more. We haven't heard the last from this crowd. I'm eager to read whatever they discover still needs to be said. Truly.

Michael Riedell
4-29-19

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Avery P. Barrett

Love Is...

I first met Sasha, just like everyone else, on the day she was born. But it wasn't until she was years older when she truly recognized me. It was twelve years in fact. She sat in English class with her hands folded over her pink notebook, scrunchie in her hair. The teacher called on her and she spoke: "Love is when you care about someone more than you care about yourself." A pleased smile stretched across her face as she was congratulated for a well thought out answer. But at 12 years old, Sasha's only knowledge of Love was what she read in Sarah Dessen books over the summer, sitting by the pool, polka dot bikini adorning her bony body.

I was with her when her mom would curl her hair for school dances, listening to Whitney Houston and Shania Twain. And after, when she would dance in the cafeteria with her girl friends, trying to impress boys with their cherry lip gloss and innocent dance moves.

Her first kiss was under the dogwoods in spring of her last year of middle school, walking to the park with friends. Years later she forgot the name of the boy who first touched her lips, but she always remembered mine. I stood by her through every kiss, and every heartbeat flutter. I was there.

On her first day of high school, her mom spoke to her as she got out of the car.

"Have a good day sweetheart!"

With a groan, Sasha answered "I'll try mom." Within the next four years, I was by her side like never before. But I was far from her mind when she felt the touch of a boy for the first time on the night of prom. Romance encapsulated in the backseat of his truck, and I was nowhere to be seen.

And for awhile, things were hard. I rarely saw her. She thought of me often with the disdain of juvenile angst. I was the enemy. She thought I would never hold her hand and her heart. But she was wrong.

Because not too long later, the cute boy with brown hair smiled at her from a seat over in her first class of college. Chem 200 to be exact. I was the only thing on her mind after a few dates, standing in the falling orange leaves, stars above them. He asked her to be his girlfriend. She, of course, said yes. With every word falling from his lips she adored him more and more. For the first time, I held her hand in mine.

But I had to let go. She spent every weekend in bed, curtains drawn, TV on, unable to escape the uncomfortable company of her own melancholy. I left Sasha completely for the first time ever. Her vision of me blurred. She thought I would never hold her again, as if she didn't deserve it. Months passed and she couldn't remember my face.

But when she came home from college the following summer, I was there. I was in the kitchen when she laughed, and truly meant it, with her mom as she prepared a home cooked meal. For a while, I was only near her when

she spent time with her friends; dancing at clubs or dancing wine drunk in the living room. Soon enough I was with her when she started dating again, and this time, as she would say “it’s for real.” And she knew me like never before. I held onto her heart and her hand as she met the boy of her dreams, and I slipped the ring on her finger when she said yes to marrying Charlie.

I walked beside her and her aging mother down the aisle, as the veil covered her eyes and light was vibrant around her. “I love you, Sasha,” she whispered as she released her to the joyous crying man at the altar. I knew I would never, ever leave her.

I was with her every single day after that. For the small moments, like painting the new house on Sunday afternoons, and for the big, like a year later, feeling the heartbeat of her little girl, Emily, as she pressed against her skin for the first time in embrace. I was with her for the happy, when she stepped into her new office, the door labeled with “manager,” and for the sad, in the chapel, staring at photographs of her mother and a coffin surrounded by roses. “Love is the way she undoubtedly supported me, like it was the only thing she could do. In the end, it might have been the last thing she could do,” tears running down her face, hands shaking, speaking to a room of grievers.

I was with her as she sat on the porch watching the sunset with her husband and daughter. “Emily, we are so proud of you,” he said, wrapping his arm around her and smiling with delight, “only one more day of high school.” Sasha couldn’t help but beam.

I stood by her when Emily got her first job, and when Sasha retired from hers. When she sat at the wedding of her only daughter and when her two grandchildren arrived. When the man of her dreams spoke his last words to her, “I love you, Sasha.” “I love you more, Charlie.” I sat beside her at the high school stadium, sun blazing down on the graduates, watching her grandson walk the stage. And a year later watching her granddaughter do the same.

When she struggled to remember who I am. Residing in a helping home, needing the assistance of others to ease her shaky hands and forgetful mind. I stayed by her, when her grandchildren visited her and told her about their lives, even though they perhaps didn’t want to.

I laid beside her when her family surrounded her hospital bed. She smiled until she couldn’t smile anymore.

At the funeral, Emily spoke about me. “My mom taught me what Love is, she never failed to hold a smile on her face. She carried sunshine on her shoulders and is quite possibly the kindest woman anyone had the pleasure of knowing. I remember her telling me, ‘Emily, Love is everywhere you look. It’s always around you.’ I know now what she meant. Not a day goes by when we don’t see an act of love, when we don’t feel a string of passion kiss our hearts and dance like butterflies in our stomachs. Even on days when you feel like the world is ending, my mom taught me that I am never unloved. And neither are you.”

Of course, she was right, I will always be there.

To Grandpa

It was Halloween
The sun had just met with the friendly mountains
Hugging the valley
And through the new darkness we walked
My brother, desperate for candy
Ran passed the old redwood tree outside our house.
I chose to walk this night.
As the darkness grew heavier and the moon greeted us,
I noticed you lagged behind.
Alone.
I could hear the odd fabric of my homemade mermaid costume
Crumple as I fell behind with you
“Thank you for coming Grandpa.”
My youthful hand reached for yours,
Wrinkled, much like your face when you smiled.
We passed the redwood tree once more.

I always knew with each year
These trees gained a ring.
Each year, maybe you gained a ring.
You are much older now,
And I am sure you don't remember that Halloween,
Or the one before, or even my name.
With every year you gained a redwood ring
With every year you become more lost
In the redwood forest of your aged mind.

A Poem About Fall

I want to feel how children feel
When they jump into a pile of leaves.
I want to feel the gold of autumn
Take over my soul.

Driving Home

The night air chilled our fingertips.
Detour after detour of winding roads and vineyards,
Your silhouette against the blurred redwoods in the background.
It was just us for miles.
Just us.

On the way to my house,
The pieces of your heart lay on the dashboard for me to hold.
And in the moment when your smile was lit up by city lights below us
I knew my home was not a place, but a person.
The roof above my head is the way you tell me not to worry
Even when anxiety suppresses me.
The fireplace in my parlor is your laugh against the cold March night,
Filling me with warmth.

You are more familiar than the house I have inhabited for years,
The house I have grown up in and grown out of;
Where we made pasta in the kitchen.
Where we cried in the dining room and laughed at the piano,
Struggling to play black and white keys.

And that same night when we arrived at my house
I never wanted to leave,
With your words dancing in my mind.
Because no matter where I am,
I am homesick without you.

To Ginsberg

I am singing
The people walking down the street are singing
The men huddled on empty street corners finding their fix are singing
Little children in line for ice skates are singing
We are singing.
And you, somewhere, are singing.
But the sound of our singing cannot heard over the endless screams of the earth
To the pain of its own destruction.

Allen,
You had the world spinning
Nabokov would praise your name
And the dancing bare feet of lovers would praise your name.
How did it feel to have the Earth on a string?
And to know what you owned is cracking from its very core.
Your outcasts are wearing blue ties,
And your artists are dying in the streets.
We keep singing,
We keep howling,
But the world remains silent.
Another headline of musicians taking their final breaths on unread
newspapers,
Another man behind bars screaming, screaming, screaming,
Where are you now to save us?
To hold our hands and turn our uneasy tears to art that shocks the masses
Art that flips the screaming world to sing
To sing as we unite.
As every man, woman, and child comes unhinged
As we all turn the prophecies that have defined us since birth on our heads
It is time for the moon,
It is time for us to howl.

The Box

Tears from midnight conversations gone rotten,
And the joy of letting go,
Singing offkey
Hands waving back to the winding road below us.

It was rare spirited moments like these
That drove the cracks through the sides
Of the box that held me back for so long
And the words of my father
And the demands from the people
Constraining me
Holding me captive inside

But somewhere it all changed.
My back still aches from the confinement.
Rare moments became often smiles
My heart became full
It was more than the sun shining.
It was walking alongside the river
Holding hands
Realizing that I loom large
I never realized how long the box held me,
But I know the day I broke out
I watched my spirit seep out the sides.

The sun shone through the trees
And we spoke our hushed melodramas.
Our cocoons were shedding
In that moment, I knew
You broke out of your box too.

Stranger

I wish I could meet her
And I know that's selfish of me to say
Her laugh probably sounded like honey
And I'm sure she listened to the kind of music that you feel in your soul
as you sing along.
She would hold both of your hands in hers when deep rooted secrets
became truths
And when tears escaped your eyes, there would be a glint in hers too
Which I can't help but assume are green, the thorns of rose bushes
She probably loved green
To sit and embrace everything the Earth gifted to her
Hand wrapped,
Adorned with a bow on top.
The moss would shroud her
Her shaky hands picking out handfuls of grass,
A childhood habit.
The flowers would tangle in her hair like vines on old brick buildings.
She might have been an old brick building,
Each red block a story forever untold.
The walls would whisper her first kiss,
Sweaty palms, nervous glances, a bump on the nose
Riddle her teenage melodramas,
Sneaking out of bedroom windows, scrunchies turning ponytails into art
Sing the stories of her falling in love,
Summers spent watching golden tides, saving pennies for dessert.
But a brick building is just a brick building
And I am missing someone I have never known

Reflection

I have seen the lights of New York
Floating like lightning bugs underneath metal wings
I have seen Florida February beach days,
And June Wisconsin storms.
I have felt the love from my mother
Sitting at the foot of my bed
Watching her little girl grow up too quickly.
I have seen the cobblestone streets of Rome
Holding souls in soles with every heartfelt tip toe
Of young European vacations.
I have stood on the sidelines and watched people grow;
Tears from cold, empty hands of teenage girls,
Become giggles over afternoon coffee.
I have watched snow fall on the pines
And boys fall in love
And my parents never giving up on love
Even when my father's absent mind
Leaves the coffee pot empty in the morning.
I have heard singing,
Somehow building a home
Out of the walls of loving sound around me.
I have seen flames extinguish
On birthday celebrations of youth,
I have seen the minds of my grandparents wander
Lost in the woods of their Redwood ring age.
I have seen brush strokes of beauty in museums
And spray-paint-crime on brick walls.
I have seen the world,
And I cannot wait to see where it takes me.

New Beginnings

It was early January
The new year had been ushered to its seat by giggles over glowing screens
And the blossoming of early romance.
It was the first time in a long time that I awaited what lied on the road
before me with anticipation;
Hoping for another hushed conversation about life's enigmas,
Followed by the tug of full body laughter over mediocre milkshakes.
For another dance with my mom in the crowded kitchen,
Screaming the lyrics of songs we barely know.
For more nights of happily boisterous friendship silencing solitude.
Jokes that made heads turn and the whites of our teeth to play peekaboo
with each other.
Hugs, running through the warm rain, letting myself uncontrollably smile,
Holding onto every moment like a hammer and nails in my hand
Building them to be unforgettable.

And that night, I watched the road twist and turn playfully in front of me,
In front of us.
As the soundtrack of our beginning played.
You held my hand in yours and I could feel every inch of me smile.
The words fell off your lips to the beat of the music
And I knew you were afraid to lose the fleeting moment before it had even left.

What a feeling
To see the road in front of me so clearly.
What a feeling
To look at you from the passenger side,
Only hoping for more moments like these.

Mi Cielo

I have spent my life looking for the bright spots
Moments of clarity to break from shaky nervousness.
Searching for a flower to blossom through the weeds,
Birds singing on dim, gray mornings, clouds blocking the sky.
Searching for rare snow under the California sun,
Leaving people rushing happily to windows and doors
To marvel at frozen water falling from the heavens,
God blessing cold hands and faces with something to laugh about.

And when it did snow, I thought of you.
I remembered the warmth of every moment,
How each word that falls from your mouth
Makes me feel like we are watching snow fall
Letting the bright spots take us over and make us whole.

I never liked the winter,
But now it is all I can think about.
I can only think of the chill in the air when we stood on my porch
Rose in one hand, yours in the other,
I was speechless.
Winter enveloped us in comfortable coldness
That only seemed warmer by your side.

And as spring rolls around
With flowers on the trees and honey in our hearts
I will still have California snow on the ground by my feet.
You are my bright spot.
You are the snow that keeps me turning to windows and doors,
Smiling as it falls around me.

Amanda Bednar

mother nature.

(catafalque - the framework supporting a coffin)

you are my catafalque
i, a walking funeral.
you have seen more
than i ever will.
nobody appreciates the subtle
bumps and divots
but i would walk a hundred
football fields
just to keep you there.
you never leave
like the burden of guilt
and one day i'm sure
you will
swallow us whole,
let us float like a rock
straight into the abyss.
you love us
even when we burn
poison into your skin,
tattoo roadways
on your back.
you are the catafalque,
the world, a walking funeral.

fifty seven.

america wraps herself
in your beauty.
it was time
for a wakeup call.
where one man's dream
is another man's
nightmare.
burn them.
take them down,
america's eyes are too pure
for the revolution.
our mad poet's club,
meets every wednesday.
with mile-long scrolls
and a thirst
for change.
meanwhile
the face of insanity
bathed in city lights,
sweeps itself under the rug.
the people want to feel.
and they did,
oh, they did,
when the gavel came down
like shattered glass,
the fog lifted
in the bay.

the avenue.

rain or shine
you wait
like a statue,
wait for a time
that may never come.
we cut you
and bruise you
without a second thought.
if scars made a man
you'd be adam,
hiding in the garden
waiting for eve
to pull love straight off the vines.
you curl into yourself
like a hand
grasping barbed wire,
weeping thick tears
of sugar water
to display in my grandmother's
favorite bowl.
i made my home in your heart,
rooted myself so deep down
that now,
i don't think i could ever leave.

never take a writer's advice.

"you can't wait for inspiration. you have to go after it with a club"
-jack london

i came after inspiration
wielding my club
in an attempt to
bend it to my will.
it laughed,
mocked my scare tactics,
and continued on
about its day.

untitled.

they love with war,
each word laced in cyanide,
tossed into a trench of dying men.
each whisper is an atom bomb
dropped onto the world
with subtle grace.
memories flicker like
old movies,
propaganda for a different possibility,
waiting to spark a forest fire
within the world.
when the bombs stop overhead
and the trenches are clear,
when the smoke rises
and the tanks are put to rest,
eye meets eye
and suddenly
the war is over.

sugar.

millions of seconds have passed
since you did,
but it feels like yesterday.
you had an old soul
and a love for growing tomatoes
hidden under
cheap windbreakers
and bone-crushing hugs.
you were like no other
and nobody could ever replace
the person i have lost.
it was sixty
or maybe even seventy
years' worth of seconds
you spent with her.
three wars,
one tour,
and i hate to think of
what might've been
had you been shipped home
wrapped in red, white, and blue.
i don't talk in past tense anymore
because the past was exactly that:
tense.
for me.
for you.
nobody went untouched.
i no longer say goodbye
because i said that once
and look where you went.
you became the sun,
the water,
the earth,
preserving the flowers
i found on the beach.
i took them home
to remind me of you
but they died in the trunk
of my car.

one in every eight days.

empty halls
stained red with the sound of silence.
speak up.
just a little louder.
foot sticks to linoleum
sticks to cement
sticks to metal
sticks to bones
that absorb the souls
of the chosen ones.
crying under bed sheets
and whispering into deaf ears
prevents nothing.
today,
we weep for the fallen
because we are the fallen
and it will forever live on
in newspapers and books
and television and in the hearts
of every student.
i said i wanted to die a legend,
but not in this sense;
feeling nothing but
white hot hatred
branded into my chest
in the shape of the crosshairs.
look at us now,
making history
six feet under the ground.

poetry is.

like a drop of wet ink,
you don't even realize
it stained your hands
until it has covered you.
good luck
washing it off.

ROSES.

i am a toy gun
but i guess you were
the real thing.
i pulled the trigger
thinking nothing would happen,
but look where that got us;
bleeding out
on the floor.

red.

an unwelcome guest,
you crawl up my spine,
wrap your hands around my waist,
seal the deal
with a kiss of death.
i hate you.
i love you.
the ghost of
what could have been.
i would cry myself to sleep
for the rest of my life
just to have you gone,
but i know that
without you
none of my wildest dreams
could possibly come true.
you are a part of me
i guess i just can't change
and i bow to your presence
in happiness and in pain.

eighteen.

i've fallen in love with these four walls,
its blood-soaked, tear-filled eyes,
handfuls of atom-bomb revolutionaries
piled on yellow tiles of fear
and ready to take form out of the american system.
you told me to go to war with my words,
change the world with paper,
wouldn't that be great?
send letters of love to the koreas,
stop the war on life we've started.
nobody comes out victorious
except for the aliens sent down from space.
they laugh at the sight of big bad americans
weeping at the feet of a bomb, begging him for mercy.
i'll drive myself straight off a cliff
if we ever reach that point.
at least then i'd know i had control
over something as i died.
you'll peer into my coffin,
eyes swollen shut, skin peeling bit by bit,
fleshy mosaic tiles clouded by radiation,
and you'll sing me into the grave
with your smoker's cough leading the quartet.
i'd like to take the time to thank you all
who showed up to my funeral.
i'm glad you survived this long and i'll miss you.
hopefully we can all rot together
in the same plot, same cemetery, same open grave.
who can help you now?
certainly not the government
or the teacher i had in high school
who asked if aliens were real.
i hope your children are doing just fine
because they are the future,
flying their freak flags because their friends are six feet under,
unrecognizable,
while blood courses through his veins.
thanks a lot, uncle sam,
banning people from being people,
laughing at their rainbow tears,
attending their funeral and spitting on the casket.
i hope one day i get the chance to do the same to you.

we hide behind our masks because the world says we have to.
why can't we all just get along?
where are our poets?
screaming, shouting over the
rat-tat-tat
of gunfire
in the american school system?
i looked towards the future and saw blood
on the linoleum and that scares me to no end.
you have no idea.
maybe i'm too young to understand
or maybe i just don't watch enough fox news
but explain to me why we're in a crisis.
i can't stand the thought of breathing another moment
knowing it could be my last.
i'm tired of this war on existence.
please,
just leave me be.

Alondra Beltran

Russian Roulette

Wendy has a routine, and rarely does it ever get disrupted. She wakes up at six in the morning, before her husband does, and showers. After her shower she is in the kitchen making breakfast for the both of them. By the time her husband wakes up at seven in the morning, breakfast is ready. They eat together, sitting side by side, silently. He kisses her cheek before he returns to their bedroom to get ready for work. Then Wendy starts cleaning the kitchen. Her husband comes out of the bedroom at 8:30, and by that time Wendy is in the living room, reading a book. He kisses her forehead and leaves for work.

Wendy spends the rest of the day alone until six p.m., when her husband returns. This routine was established after they got married, and her husband got the promotion, and they moved into their little luxurious apartment. Wendy is meticulous about the routine she follows to maintain their apartment. After her husband leaves for work she cleans their bedroom and then the bathroom. Lunch is at noon and then a run-through of the kitchen where she takes note of what they have and don't have. She sits down on the large dining table and gets paperwork done. Then on most days she is at a small cafe with a group of her girl friends. Sometimes she has an appointment to get her nails done, or for the dentist, or she has free time. Wendy always makes sure she's back home at five p.m. at the latest to begin making dinner. It's absolutely necessary that she follows every step to this routine because everything has to be perfect. Nothing can be out of place, ever. She has to know ahead of time if any changes have to be made in the schedule. Her husband knows this, has for four years, and yet this afternoon he gets home an hour earlier than usual.

"Honey, I'm home!" he says. Wendy slowly stops cutting the tomatoes and stands still. She can see him without actually seeing him-- he's dropping his briefcase next to the coat rack and taking his blazer off to hang it. This time, she doesn't greet him with a hug. She doesn't even turn around when he walks into the kitchen.

"What are you doing home so early?" she says.

"I thought I would surprise you."

"Why?"

"Is it not something I can do?"

"It's not something you normally do."

The last time Wendy's husband surprised her was a couple of years ago. They have been together for four years and married for two of them. They don't have the most romantic relationship, even though in the beginning he would send her gifts and pay for dinner. Gradually they came to the realization that there was no need for little surprises,

when they knew that they loved each other. Both of them were fine with a simple, quiet relationship. She loves him and he loves her. There really is no need for small gestures. Small gestures means disrupting the routine to do something unnecessary. Coming home early disrupts the routine. Her husband arrives at five and not six in the afternoon, when she just started making dinner, when she's not ready to see him yet. This is not fine.

"You know I start making dinner at five to be ready at six."

"I can help you with it."

"I always make us dinner. Every night, unless we have to do something different."

"Of course, I know this, but I can still--"

"No!"

Everything is wrong, wrong, wrong. Now they don't get to finish their routine, where they sit together during dinner and talk about his work, and what in the house needs a touch up, and what happened in her book. They don't get to wash the dishes together before they settle into the living room to watch a movie or a TV show. All of this happens when both of them follow the routine, the routine they set up years ago that works out for the both of them. Routines are meant to be followed, but now her husband broke theirs. Why does he insist on continuing with their evening like it's not ruined? Wendy begins to tremble, trying to suppress the feeling that wants to take over her. She still hasn't turned around to face her husband, staring down at the tomatoes with wet eyes. She tightens her grip on the knife.

"We have a routine."

"Okay," he says, "what about it?"

"Routines are meant to be followed."

She hears him step closer to her until they're standing side by side. "This isn't that big of a deal, Wendy. So what, I broke our routine to see you, my wife?"

"You don't--you're supposed to understand--"

"Wendy, are you feeling okay? Do you need to lie down?"

He's not taking her seriously, she can tell. It's almost infuriating how he asks *are you okay* and not *how do I fix this*. He knows about Wendy's particular issue with routines, knows that her previous boyfriends and husbands were insensitive. Everyone is insensitive, she thinks. And everything is supposed to be perfect in the house, in her life, with her husband. He was supposed to be the one. The one who understands because he didn't question, or mock, or do anything, really. He was the one who nodded his head and the days went on. Perfect.

That's why Wendy has to do something. She let her previous partners get away with it, even when they really hurt her. But her husband is different and deserves a different treatment.

He says something to her. So she responds. Wendy feels so much better seeing his white shirt turn red.

I Never Felt Guilt

If I told anyone who cared about you,
They would sketch us.
Draw you, the victim
And erase me, the bad guy.

Not a Simile

I wish I was like Moses who
Parted the Red Sea with his hand.
Instead I am a person
Stuck in the middle
Of a school of fish.

Only I Can Call Kazoo Players Annoying

My eyes twitch as I'm
Welcomed by the same song played
At different tempos.

Intervals

“Water,” she says.

We link elbows and I count one step, and another one, and a couple more until I don’t have to stand anymore. The two of us sit down with cups in our hands.

My heartbeat is in my toes. Everything is pulsing.

We drink water and watch the crowd. They never lose their energy.

But they pause. We lean forward. Then: total chaos.

“I don’t know this.” She agrees. So we sit and wait for the next song.

72 Degrees

The world is going round.

Sure.

I can see it moving.

That's not possible.

Of course it is.

Are you sure?

See the clouds?

Duh.

Focus on them.

Okay.

Good.

...

Do you see it?

Kind of.

Yeah?

No.

It's like. I'm squinting.

Right.

And I only focus on the clouds.

On the clouds.

Wait. Pick one.

Picked one.

Look at it.

Looking at it.

You're mad. You're squinting.

Huh.

Is it moving?

Running away from me.

It's supposed to.

And that means...?

The world is going round!

Just like that?

Just like that.

In the Bus

The bus driver smiles at every passenger. The group of girls giggle and try not to be too loud. An elderly couple sits in the back, holding hands. Two friends share earbuds and watch a video on one of their phones. A lone woman sits with a crisp paper bag. A young man with a black backpack on his lap stares out the window. A businessman holds tightly onto his laptop.

Out of the Bus

The wind gets stronger. A train of elementary school kids step on the crunchy leaves. A jogger picks up his pace. A bearded man pauses on the sidewalk to pick up his corgi's scat. A mother waits patiently with her young child. A young man exits the bus only to trip when he's on solid ground. He looks around, face red. The young child smiles at him.

Haiku

restless child in a
patient mother's lap
his personal playground

*

the frog meets her eyes
a creature of habit
hops away

*

the little bird
hides out
in the dark of night

*

summer heat
your worst enemy
melted ice cream

Untitled

it was probably a
coming of age moment
or after it
like in the movies
when it's nighttime
driving away from home
with the car windows
rolled down
the music turned up
and everybody yells
not so insignificant
anymore

Jacob Burton

Green

The plump needles covering a pine tree
The grass that tickles bare toes
The buttery treasure inside an avocado
The thorny stem of a rose

The Cave

We were college students at the University of Colorado, her name was Elizabeth, Eli for short, and my name was Brandon, “B” for short. We had been dating for two years and we were enrolled in the university, everyone knew us, and loved us as a couple. We loved to party together, swim and work out, but our absolute favorite thing to do was hike; we’ve always loved hiking. We did it every weekend we could. Eli had planned to go that weekend and she was unusually excited about it. The drive was about an hour long on a paved road and what seemed to be forever was just another 2 hours on some dirt road with nothing but trees surrounding us.

Eli pulled over to a wooden shack with moss and dirt all over it. She said, “This is where we start hiking” as she started to unload the car. She told me to leave my phone in the car she exclaimed, “There won’t be service anyway B.”

I still wanted my phone to take pictures, but I was not going to argue with her, not here, not ever. She locked the car up after we grabbed all our gear and we were on our way.

After about two hours of hiking uphill, downhill, through creeks and bushes, I started to get a weird feeling Eli had no clue where we were. “Eli do you know where we are?”

“Yes, of course, I do!” she said in an angry manner.

So we started out again in the direction she told me to walk in. Another half hour passed, and I started to get worried again, thinking we were definitely lost. We hiked these trails all the time, and I didn’t recognize this one at all. I asked once more if she knew where we were, and her response had me at “Ummm.”

“Ya, so I lost the map and I don’t know where we have been going...”

“Awesome,” I said sarcastically. I took a deep breath and said I was sorry and asked if she remembered which way we came from.

“Yes...yes this way. I promise.”

I trusted her, and we went off in the direction she pointed towards.

It was an hour till it was completely dark outside with nothing but our little flashlights to enable us to see at night. It was getting colder outside as the sun set behind the Rocky Mountains, such a beautiful sunset but goddamnit we were stuck here and I knew it. Eli proceeded to ask me what to do next.

I exclaimed, “Let’s walk up this mountain, get to the top, and try and look down to see where the little shack is, and get back to our car!” I knew we would be able to see the shack out of everything in the night because I remembered the big light outside of it that was on and super bright even in the day time when we got there.

She agreed, and we started our journey. After an hour of scaling

uphill towards the top of the mountain, we were tired and scared. It was pitch black and gloomy outside.

It had been at least six hours of us stuck in the woods. We had absolutely no clue where we were, nor could we look at what time it was or call for help because our phones were in the car. I was walking in front, Eli behind me, strolling through the woods, the next thing I knew, me and Eli walked ourselves off a canyon cliff to the very bottom. As we tumbled down the hill, I noticed very big rocks were coming down the hill behind us. We must have knocked them out of place when we fell. We finally hit the bottom of the canyon. When we thought it couldn't get any worse, the rocks came tumbling down the hill, now more than what was following us down. I braced myself and Eli for the impact of the rocks. I closed my eyes and BANG, the rocks collided together, forming a little cave trapped us in. I sat on the ground, hopeless, knowing I had absolutely no way out. Eli and I were going to die in this little cave.

An hour went by and she started to move around and then finally wake up. She had a look on her face like she had just seen a ghost as she asked where we were. I told her the story about how we ended up being trapped in this little cave after falling off the cliff, and she looked around with a panicked look. She started screaming for help. I tried to calm her down by reminding her that screaming would do her no good. We were in the middle of nowhere in a cave, no one could hear her. I took my jacket off and wrapped it around her, I could tell she was getting cold. I laid down on the rough and rocky dirt with only my hands as a mini pillow. I encouraged her to do the same. There was no way we'd be able to get out in the dark forest we were trapped in and morning would be our best option.

I could hear the birds singing and the trees around me, swaying back and forth. Little cracks that broke apart the boulders were letting in minimal light, which gave me a clear view of the cave we were in. I woke Eli up and began trying to push the boulders apart to create a crack just big enough for Eli to escape from to run for help. It didn't work, they were way too heavy. I sat back down and took a few deep breaths, thinking about what else I could do to get us the hell out of there. Something popped into my head, finally. We always brought a small shovel that folds up small enough to fit in our bags. I thought that if I could dig a big enough hole into the ground, I could get to the other side and be free. I began digging.

About two hours went by and the sun started to beat down on the rocks, causing the cave to become hotter and hotter. I finally dug a big enough hole straight down to fit us, one at a time. My next objective was to dig straight in the hole and go under the rocks. Then, once I was far enough, start digging upward until sunshine came to me. Altogether, the digging took me five hours. All I had to do was dig straight up and hope we could make it out. Thirty minutes went by and I started to finally reach the top when all of a sudden the ground above me started to tremble like it

was going to fall on me, so I crawled out as fast as I could. When I got back to Eli, I turned to look at the hole I created as water began to shoot out. I must've dug too far into a creek or something. We grabbed our backpacks and threw them away from the shooting water. It was going up and out of the cracks into the sunlight through the boulders and back into the creek.

I sat down, hopeless and wet. Eli came over to comfort me and said that everything would be okay. I had my doubts. On one hand, thinking this was where we were going to be for the rest of our lives, but on the other hand, I still had hope for a happy ending. I heard a very unusual and unsettling sound coming from what seemed to be super close to our enclosed cave. I looked out through the cracks and saw a group of wild bears fishing for food in the creek. I told Eli to stay silent and stay still so the bears didn't hear us and try to attack us, thinking we were food.

It started to get dark outside, and I could tell that the sun had set. We had come to the conclusion that we were going to die, so we laid our heads down and started to fall asleep. In my sleep, I heard what sounded like two helicopters circling the forest above, I rushed up and looked out through the boulders to see if it was real life or just my dream. As I looked out I saw that it wasn't my delusional state and that it was in fact, real life. My first instinct was to get the flare gun from my backpack. I made sure it was loaded and that the helicopters were still there. I stuck my arm out between the boulders as far as I could, pointed it to the sky and fired it away, hoping they would see the spark fly high into the sky. I didn't hear the helicopters for a good five minutes. Just as I was giving up hope once again, I heard it landing in the creek by us. The only thing I could do was scream for help louder than I ever had before. Thank god they found us.

I woke up Eli and told her that we were getting saved, and she began crying tears of joy through her sleepy eyes.

Two days later, I woke up in a hospital bed, Eli lying there next to me. The doctors said we both went into a fear-induced coma in the little cave. In total, we were stuck for forty-eight hours with no food and minimal nasty creek water. We waited for two weeks to go back to the same spot to hike the rest of the trail we missed out on. Funny thing is, I found out that we just took a wrong turn near the beginning and ended up taking a path that had never been discovered. It headed absolutely no where the whole hike.

NYC Homicide

It was a warm July evening in New York City. The day had been slow, but around 5:15pm, we got a call of a homicide on 15th by the post office. It was a thirty minute drive from the office to 15th street, but we got there in a hurry. Cops were swarming the place, and I could already see the family of the deceased on the side of the street yelling and crying for their loved one. I made my way over to the body where investigators told me it was homicide by bullet to the head. The person who had been shot was identified as a 34-year-old male who was recently released from prison. His name was Robert and he had been sentenced to 10 years for annoyance and molestation to a minor. He had recently been released from prison after an 8 year term for good behavior, and he helped with the community when he was in prison.

He wanted a new life.

The girl was 14 years old at the time of the rape. Her name was Lenet. She had long blond hair and bright blue eyes. Before she got raped she was super involved in school, attended all her classes, and was friends with everyone. After it happened, she started to close herself off. No longer was she helping her friends with homecoming dress shopping or going out for smoothies after school. She didn't attend school very often. It got to the point where everyone thought she moved away.

Lenet's dad was a very angry person after this incident and didn't seem to let it go after 10 years of his daughter acting like it was okay but it wasn't.

The day that Robert got out of prison, Lenet's dad, David, was waiting outside the gate for him, as caught on security footage outside the prison around 2:45 pm. They then went to David's house where traffic cameras caught them leaving after heading towards Staten Island. I knew David was a primary suspect in the case, but we still didn't know what happened from the time they left David's to the time of Robert's death.

A search warrant was issued for David's house. He was not home at the time, only the wife was, and she claimed that he ran to the store. The police could wait, so they did. An hour went by and the cops asked the lady where David was.

She responded, "He'll be home soon. Don't worry, honey."

A car suddenly pulled into the driveway and David opened the car door. The cops immediately ran outside, and as soon as they did, the lady locked the door behind them. David started screaming, "SHE'S THE ONE!!! SHE'S CRAZY... SHE KILLED HIM!!" At that moment, the lady referred to as Sarah started firing an automatic weapon out the window at the police, hitting one instantly. I hid behind a police door where she couldn't see me at all. I grabbed the rifle from the holster in the car next to

me and she saw me. Shots fired at me and hit me in the arm. I dropped. No feeling in my arm whatsoever. I managed to pick myself up and grab a hold of the gun. I loaded it, aimed, and shot at the window.

Silence rang through the streets for a few seconds until a fellow cop called for the backup to move in. We went inside and found she was dead at the scene with a note on her chest which read, "He deserved it". The clean-up crew came and cleaned up. We searched the house and called it a day. Oh and trust me, that's not even close to the weirdest homicide case I've dealt with.

Daniel Buschbacher

Loop-Hole

Now just a fair warning real quick before I start, I suck
I know what you're thinking
"Hey, don't tell us that you suck before you start reading your poetry"
But, If you'll think back to our first quarter you specifically stated that
 we aren't allowed to say that in a preamble
So, I came up with this little solution to solve my problem
Of using suckery as a defence mechanism against sharing my feelings
As I feel that I owe it to all of you to give you a fair warning beforehand
Haha this was a poem

Darkest Nights

Your hair as the water
Off the shore of our beach
Your body glistens like the wet rocks not too far off
But yet again you sweep me away
In your crystal deep blues
And sweep me under your cool waters
But growing inside myself
Drops back down through the loops of my imagination
Beneath the hood I once clung to
Because the beach is all that's left
The water, the sun, all the wonderful fish and glistening shells
They all knew that once you were gone there was no reason left to stay
But you instructed me to
So I did, stupid
Should have known there'd be no joy
Without you

Verlapito

I'm supposed to write a love poem
Talk of all the reasons you're made as mine
To express the silly, supernatural
All-powerful, Divine
The way you
Swept away the darkness of my mind
Of course my feet had followed suit
And grown to love you
It's not a mystery
No act of God would fall upon me
No willing deity would bless me
With such a gift as you

Rob (A Reprehensible Dingus) Dies At the End (Maybe)

That's the thing about them gays, they're always trying to put their fingers in my buttock. My doctor's gay, he tried to finger-bang me the other day too.

"I'm just trying to check your prostate," he said.

"Checking my prostate, my ass!" I tol' him. "I didn't survive this long to be fingered by some MALE doctor guy."

Anyway, now my family is crying, but they knew I'd rather have some sort of butt cancer than be turned into a queen.

Extravagance

Sometimes I can still feel it...
The ravioli running down my leg,
The feel of broccoli crunching in my toes.
These were simpler times.

Rainbows, but Very Concentrated to Red

A far too familiar taste
Relinquish my mouthy teeth tongues
Sriracha Sauce

I'm (a coming out poem)

Geronimo here we go It's
A me Mario
You gotta go

Gracie Ceja

Red

Red is a flower,
sweet and graceful,
like the high notes
of a low song.

Ode to Lemon

bright,
like the sun,
its glow hidden
under a peel of plastic
and leather,
combined in the color
of mustard and fruit.

liquid sour,
in a citrus sphere,
a tiny basketball.
the first bite
the result
of God
shooting hoops.
the heavenly sour
shocks you with surprise.

You

You're not like the others,
I can't give you up.
Your jovial spirit pulls me in,
and I can't let go.

I laugh harder than you
at your jokes.
You make me glow,
and I show it proudly.
You made me forget
how to be nervous.

You put the soul back in the day,
when all my joy had been taken away.
I was cut and bruised,
until I thought of you,
You took the pain away.

I don't know what to do now.
I don't know what to do now.
The world continues but I can't change,
and I know I won't see you again.

morning

leaves glow
in the serene sun,
bird chirps
are on the radio.

fireflies

the fireflies surround me
like the eraser dust
on my poem

time

time cannot take you
your voice will always be etched
in my heart

Saturn

I try to lie to myself,
but I feel the hate in their eyes.
It seethes through their bones
like the hiss of a teapot,
and surrounds them with its impressive aura
like the rings of Saturn.

Broken

you attack yourself on the inside,
beating up your insecurities.
then you try to pull yourself back together,
but you snap back like a rubber band
with every little mistake.

Frustration

a vibrant, knotted yellow,
it itches my blood,
sets my nerves ablaze,
forces everything
into gritty, twisted roots.

Anger

intense fire,
a red glow in my veins.
so strong,
about to burst out.
no water will help because I'm the gasoline.

Sadness

a magnet in my chest,
a metal emotion.
I need to run away,
or cry it out,
mercury melting from my eyes.

I Still Like You

Back then, I liked you so much
that I couldn't think,
but now that it's been so long,
I still look at you the same.
I don't know how to say this, but
I still like you.

I know I said I was over you,
but that was a lie,
to myself as well as you,
because I still get stunned when I see you.

Even back then, my friends warned me
of how you weren't the best,
but I was too blinded by your beauty
to realize how mean you were.
but now that I've walked away,
I finally see it,
but that won't stop my heart
from wanting you,
my feelings are still the same.

Even though I know you have some flaws,
I don't know what you've been through.
and maybe a naive part of my heart still hopes,
or maybe I just can't let go.

I no longer dream of you,
and I have a new obsession,
but when I see you,
it's just like before.
I imagine being right there next to you,
wrapped up in your world,
and a small part of me wishes you had chosen me instead.

Thursday

Liking you was like Thursday
so close to Friday
I was so excited,
sitting close to to you.
you touched my shoulder,
but I wanted to touch your lips,
but I held back
I knew I hadn't got there,
probably never would get there with you.

I felt so close to you
or did I just imagine it?
Thursday and Friday are right next to each other,
but we were never that close.
you were more like Saturday,
I wanted you but was never close enough,
always on the edge with excitement,
wanting you but there was always school the next day.
I was still in the middle of the week,
and all I could do was dream of you.

We were so close, but not at all,
and now I don't know where you are.
now I'm just monday,
I just missed you,
probably will be
a while til I
see you again.

Mirror

they always say
“love yourself,
everyone’s beautiful in their own way,”
yes, they say it everyday,
everyday.

but it doesn’t change anything
when I look in the mirror,
I’m still the same,
doesn’t matter what others say.
I can’t stand it, I can’t stand it.

Even if a million people say I’m gorgeous,
I still won’t be able to deny
what I see
is ugly.

I can fix my hair,
and try to
change my mind,
but my eyes, my eyes, my eyes
will never deny.

how can I be positive
about my body,
when my eyes say
it should be hidden,
like my past?

I know I should be nice
to myself.
“looks don’t matter.”
but my eyes are so mean to me
and the mirror too, what can I do?

they say you don’t have to
care what other people say,
but their words are not the problem,
it’s what I see everyday.

Electricity

I don't even think of you that much anymore,
I'm detached from how I felt before.

but when I see you,
it's like a lightning bolt,
shocks my heart back to life,
I feel it all again
in a heartbeat.

and I wish I'd see you more,
even a hi hits me like never before.

Were you a dream?

I used to obsess over you so much,
but now I rarely think of you.
You slipped from my mind like a ghost.
Were you just a dream?
just something to distract me from the pain?
It would explain
how you're so beautiful,
and funny,
and how you were in my mind
all the time.
Why else would someone like you
talk to me?

You seemed so perfect for me,
we have some things in common,
and the same sense of humor.
But, you were perfectly out of reach:
about to graduate, and you had a girlfriend already.

I rarely think of you now,
but when I do, you pass over my mind like a shadow.
A shadow of a spring dream,
of a girl I could kiss,
a girl almost too good to be true.

Xitlally Chavez

A case of growing up

Every day, Lily would walk to her classes, taking the same route she has walked since first grade. It goes a bit like this: she walks to the end of the block, which takes 79 steps, then she turns left, and after walking exactly 63 steps north-west, she takes time to admire the bush speckled with pink blossoms for approximately 10 seconds. After admiring the bush she crosses the street, which takes 27 steps, and follows the dirt trail that leads to the school, 486 steps. However, today was a little different for dear Lily as she had worn her new shoes since she had outgrown her old ones. Lily's foot used to be 9.25 centimeters, she measured it herself. Now her foot had grown to 11 cm and did not fit in her precious, sparkly, light up sketcher shoes anymore. Her new shoes were plain old sneakers: black and white and boring, she wears them anyway.

As Lily closes the gate to her house she looks down at her new boring shoes and begins counting her steps. When she reaches her seventy-ninth step she looks up to turn left, but is greeted by a white picket fence just feet away from her left turn. She pivots on her left foot and counts her steps to the turn.

"One, two, three, four, five. Seventy-nine minus five equals... seventy-four, seventy-four steps." She turns left. Were her feet really that big?

This time Lily looks at her feet while walking, as if her feet had walked a few extra steps without her noticing. She begins counting and as she reaches the 63rd step she looks up. The bush was many feet behind her. She angrily turns around and stomps her feet on the ground. She starts counting her steps towards the bush.

"One two three four five six seven eight nine ten elev-." Lily trips on a dip in the sidewalk. She scrapes her knee. Lily lifts herself up and brushes off the small pebbles stuck on her hands and knees, and tries not to cry. She hates crying. She hates her new shoes.

She furiously sits on the edge of the sidewalk to examine her knee. A little torn here and there, but no heavy bleeding. Lily draws her knees up to her chest and puffs. She hates her new shoes. They're black and white and boring and big. They make her steps too long and they made her trip. She hates them, so she pulls them off.

Lily had never been the kind of child who would throw a fit but these shoes, these black and white and boring shoes were just terrible. She thought of leaving them there on the sidewalk but she knew she would be scolded by her mother for that. So she picks them up and stuffs them in her little backpack. She walks back to the sidewalk where she had fallen and starts counting.

“Eleven twelve thirteen...” she stares at her feet, hesitant to see if the flowers are there. She takes in a deep, long breath, and opens her eyes the bushes are in front of her. She almost cries, but she doesn’t. Lily hates crying.

In addition to being a child that rarely throughs a fit, Lily hardly gives up on things, however this drastic change was too much for her. Her shoes are too big but her feet fit perfectly inside of them. Did that make her feet big? Were her feet the reason why she kept missing her turns? Why she tripped and scraped her knee? Lily assumed her shoes were responsible for this mess but no, her feet were to blame. Her feet, her very own two feet that she grew herself have betrayed her. She looks at them in horror. Lily yanks her backpack to her stomach and zips it open to pull out her shoes. She can’t bare to look at her feet right now. She slips on those black and white and boring shoes that fit her feet perfectly and runs the rest of the way to school, not counting her steps.

Eating my emotions

I

Happiness is cotton candy
A light and airy snack which comes in the softest hue of pink and baby blue
That dissolves from the slightest drop of liquid sadness
Yet leaves behind a sticky memory of happiness on the tips of your fingers

II

Hate is a jalapeño
Green with jealousy
Green with disgust
Even the smallest of bites can unleash an unbearable
heat that spreads to your stomach and toes
and fuels even the tiniest spark of--
hate
A heinous emotion that leaves you in tears

III

Sadness is a soggy piece of bread that sunk to the bottom of your drink
The slimy, stomach turning sensation is enough to ruin even the most
delicious, happiest meals
If possible, spit sadness out as fast as you can

Two haiku

I

Clouds in the sky
Thoughts in my head
What's the difference

II

She mourns at midnight
Releasing her tears into the lonely sky
A song of melancholy

Honolulu: walking in the streets of paradise

The hot muggy air is intertwined with the stench of car fumes
That can be smelled from all the streets in the vicinity
It surrounds you
Forcibly gripping every inch of unclothed skin with its warm, clammy hands
Pushing its grotty, polluted air into each of your nostrils
Slowly creeping its way down every capillary until it slinks its way into your lungs
And then it sits there, and sits there, and sits there and-
After pleading and begging for the pungent air to abandon your body
An exhale can be heard
You sigh with relief
Until the dense, dingy and foul air makes its way back down

Still got time

We are fragile and we know it
Yet we still go on
Tears leave our eyes
Sorrow and pain fill our hearts
Numbness, black, nothing

Yet we see the sun rise
And we see the sun set
And so we go on,
Chains bound around our ankles and necks

We are fragile people
Yet we still walk
towards tomorrow

The lord's prayer

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

--*Our Father*, Christian Prayer

O holy father who rests in the sky
Keeping a blind eye on all your lambs
Benevolent shephard, saviour of my soul
Why do you keep us locked up in this cage
Thy kingdom come, yet does not appear
Lost in this vast space that holds us
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
But the skies do not seem to be set ablaze

The tale of a watcher

She would sit around and watch
What she was watching
Who knows

Sometimes it was the big black birds
And the small brown chickadees.

The big grand trees rustling in the wind
The sun waving down from the sky

But most of the time
She would watch the people

The students and teachers in her classes
The girls who'd sit at the next table during lunch
Her friends that surround her

She would sit and watch
What they wore, what they speak
What they like to hear

She would sit and take it all in
The new fads and name brands,

Velvet lavenders and bright yellows
The honey and bees, save the earth
Plant a tree

Pretty tan girls and pale grunge boys
The epitome of today's beauty

She would sit and see
And memorize all these things

And once she was done
She would copy

A fear of death

People do not fear death
They fear the pain
And regret
That comes before
They are afraid of gasping for air
As their hearts begin to slow
The uncontrollable desire
to shut your eyes one last time
The fear of the unknown
The feeling of shame and embarrassment
Of their pitiable lives
What they should shouldn't have done
Desperate for time
Too much time
A call from the abyss
A dive into the unknown
Let me live
Let me go
I'm not ready
Ready to go
What comes next
Why do we not know

Morgan Clark

Embrace

Breathing in your exhales,
Our matter dances as one.
You consume me,
Like flames to a forest
And take me the way a
River does to mud.

Wild Thing

I wish I could press my fingers deep into the hollows under my collarbones.
Skin so soft, my fingers sink in like it's playdough.
And then I grab the slough and tear apart my chest like wrapping paper,
Releasing all of the creatures inside that crawl out and slide across my body.

Revelation

I have shed my raincoat.
Now,
My skin is finally free to feel the rain.
I remove my glasses.
I think I can see the clouds better
Without them.
Often, I do miss the warmth of my coat
And the view from behind my glasses.
But, I like the way the drops dance
On my arms and swing from my eyelashes.
And I like the way I think things look.

I Am

I don't want time to stop.
I don't want a moment alone.
Because I just am,
When it's just me-
I just am.
I look around and all I see is my world
Rumbling
Tumbling
Crumbling into the ground.
I keep desperately scooping up the walls
But they sink and slide through my hands
Into a puddle around me.
And all I can do is look down into the
Liquid of what was me and
Stare at the reflection of
What I've become.
And I just am.

Iceberg

I mirror your smile
Like a reflection on water.
It is only on the surface
Of the rolling ocean I am.

Mother,

Kiss my eyelids

For I fear my answer if they ask me the color of the sky because

I don't stay inside the lines of my coloring book very well...

And they don't like the markers I choose.

Tie my shoelaces and pull me up off the ground--

I promise I will always take care of you because you have always

Cared for me.

A Moment

Crushed during the night in despair,
A broken window.
Strength and stability stolen.
The window could simply be fixed, a new one put in;
Standard as they come.
But I'd rather sit here for a while
And let people step around my broken glass,
Laying on the sidewalk
As I glare in the sun.

Losing You

I believe that if it rained,
The light in my heart would go deaf.

A Breath of Bliss

Pushing the coals around with a stick the way a child plays with food on their plate,
The flames glow on my face and touch today's sunburn.
I curl my toes into the sand and tighten the blanket around our shoulders.
We lay around the fire like lizards in the sun as the group murmurs.
None of us want to go.
But the wind is still blowing out there on the beach
And I know we should head home.
I let go.

It Was the Wrong Number

It was a wrong number that started it all. Some person who was calling from the middle of nowhere. A person that probably had a thick accent and worked in a metal sweaty locker who was calling to tell him that he had won a free stay at a hotel that didn't exist. All he needed to give him was his own numbers. The stupid numbers. 1261, his address. 23, his age. His credit card number. His social security number. The stupid numbers. Not the the number of times he said I love you, not 148- the amount of times he smiled at a stranger. Not the number of people he touched or the 68 times he has cried in his life.

"Press 0 to end this call."

It was now a machine with a lonesome static that droned on into his phone. He had a coffee cup in between his legs and the afternoon sun shone through the windshield into his eyes. His arms were dark, broad, and tired from the days struggle of moving rock and bags of concrete powder.

"Jesus fuck," He muttered.

He hid his eyes with the back of his hand in an attempt to see the road. The phone droned on.

"If you would like to be removed from the calling list, please press or say 4."

He had a wrist on the wheel and one in his face and a shoulder scrunching to hold the phone.

"God dammit."

He writhed around, the truck swerved as he went, in attempt to press 4. He was drained and frustrated. His hair of ocean black rolling waves sitting atop his head carried the days dusty problems and his arms bore occasional tiger stripes of mud.

"Press 7 to hear this message again."

Cars swarmed past.

"Four," He muttered.

"We're sorry, the number said appears to not match."

"Four. Son of a bitch, FOUR!"

He couldn't see the road. The sun streamed on in and he continued over past the double yellow.

"Are you still there? Press 7 to hear this message again."

The wheels humed on and he looked down, trying to rid himself of this distracting harassment. He looked down and took his hand from defending against the sun to just press the number 4. He was in the other lane. He heard the warning horn scream, looking up all he could do was stare into the eyes of the other driver. Numb, frozen, and watch the metal on the bumper and hoods of their cars kiss, and then fold into an explosive embrace, dancing in destructive flips and turns, across the lanes and into dust.

Photographs in the local paper displayed the metal graveyard the next day and described the phone discovered about 150 yards from the mess that still sang it's dull notes.

“Congratulations Jacob A. Bryant. You have won a free all inclusive stay at our Mandela Hotel. Press 8 to confirm your information now.”

It was the wrong number.

Katharine Diamond

Unhealthy

You do not have the power to control me any longer.
Your harsh words constantly going through my mind, and
Meanwhile, you text me saying you want me back.
I believed the relationship we had was healthy, but
It was so toxic I couldn't get away.
You threatened me with your harsh words.
You had me believing you over my friends
Meanwhile, you texting them saying you liked them.
You say I'll be sorry if I don't give you another chance.
But the truth is I'm sorry I was able to be guilt tripped.
I thought I couldn't go on without you, but
I couldn't continue that harmful, unhealthy relationship.
To be happy again you only have to move on.

Eu Cantando

Hoje eu vou cantar
Mas eu não sei qual música cantar
Eu quero ficar seguro
E cante as músicas que eu conheço.
Estou com medo de tentar novas músicas
Mas quero que minhas músicas sejam diferentes de antes.

Me Singing

Today I am going to sing.
But I don't know what song to sing.
I want to stay safe,
And sing the songs I know.
I am scared to try new songs.
But want my songs to be different from before.

I Don't Use

I don't know how I got here.
My mind is spinning and spinning.
All I want to do is puke.
I am seriously messed up.
This is why I don't drink or use drugs.

What I Mean When I Say My Happy Place

When I say my happy place
I mean the place I can spend all day.
Whether it's downright hot or absolutely freezing.
The place people won't judge me for being me.
The place where they don't judge me on my past.
And the place where I can get away from things.
The place where I can get away from things.
The place where my clothes can be dirty
And it won't matter at all.
It's the place where getting hurt is inevitable.
The place where you'll get random bruises.
I mean the place where I can get away,
With wearing baggy shirts and pants with stains.

Being Who You Are

It's okay to be different.
Whether you're gay,
Whether you're transgender,
Whether you're a lesbian.
Whether you're a tomboy or a girly girl.
Being yourself is better than hiding who you are.
If people are hating on you,
For being yourself.
Then say screw them,
And go on with your life.

I'm Pregnant

Ella was 20 years old. She was walking with her boyfriend Tyler along the beach. She looked over at him.

“Hey I have to tell you something and you’ll need to sit down.”

Tyler stopped walking and sat down.

“So yesterday I went to get my next birth control shot, but they wouldn’t give it to me.”

Tyler looked up at her and she started crying. Tyler pulled her close and wiped the tears away.

“It’s okay baby girl you can tell me.”

Ella looked around to make sure nobody was walking around. She took a step back and took a deep breath.

Ella looked at the ground “I’m pregnant.”

“You can’t be pregnant.”

“Well I am,” said Ella.

Tyler looked up “Well is it mine?”

Ella took his hand “Of course it’s yours.”

Tyler pulled his hand away “Stop lying to me. I know it’s not mine.”

“How do you know babe,” asked Ella.

“I know because I can’t have kids at all,” responded Tyler, staring right at Ella.

Ella’s mouth dropped open. “I can’t believe you never told me that. Why did you never tell me that? You should have told me. I deserved to know.”

“Don’t act all innocent you cheated on me.”

“I never cheated on you it was a fucking prank.”

Tyler looked at her, “Well that’s fucked up. I have been trying to find a reason to break up with you and I finally have one. We are done bye Ella.”

And with that, he walked off, never seeing Ella again.

Tommy and Nikki

Dear Journal,

It's me Tommy. I can't believe I get to go home in 2 days. I'm both happy and nervous. I haven't seen my girlfriend in 6 months. She says she wishes I could be there for her birthday. I can't believe I had to go back to the army when she was 4 months pregnant. I can't believe I am going to be meeting my baby girl for the first time. Nikki doesn't know that I am coming back. I am really nervous about how she is going to react.

Dear Journal,

It's me Tommy. Today I get to see Nikki and meet my daughter. My mother and Nikki's family is bringing her out to her favorite restaurant. My mother helped me plan the entire plan. They are going to sing happy birthday to Nikki and I will come behind her and put my hands over her eyes and say happy birthday. I hope she isn't too mad at me about this.

Dear Journal,

It's me Tommy. Last night was so much fun. I can't stop looking at Elle, she is so freaking beautiful. She looks just like Nikki. When she realized that it was me she cried, hugged me and didn't want to let go of me. She handed Ella to me and I have to be honest I did cry a little I am so happy that Nikki said yes when I asked her to marry me. I just didn't want to be away from her and not have her be my fiance.

Why Did You Have to Leave Me?

Sitting inside the house with my friend who is like my sister, we watch tv. We then practice our cheer, but when we are in the middle, we hear horses fighting. We walk outside into the backyard, we see two mares fighting. We quickly walk over to the fence. I call out to Dream, but Dream doesn't come. I try whistling, but Dream still doesn't come, so I run into the pasture and get in between the fighting. The horse, Jasmine, rises on her hind legs. She is about to come down on top of me until she saw my friend. She then gallops over to her so I have the opportunity to grab Dream and calm her down. We manage to get the horses apart and into different pens. My friend then walks over to me. While I am calming Dream down, we realize that we are really hungry, so we saddle up our horses and head into town. When we get into town, we tie our horses up in front of the restaurant so we can see them while we eat. We are seated very quickly and are out within an hour. After we eat, we go to the supermarket. My friend waits with the horses while I get food. I put it into the saddlebags on our horses. We head back to the house. We quickly put the stuff away. We then go outside, get the horses, and head to the field. We decide to have a competition. We decide it should be who can jump the highest jump. We set up the jumps. The last jump is set up at almost seven feet tall. Dream and I clear the jump with room to spare, but when Jasmine and my friend jump it, Jasmine's hoof gets caught on the top pole. My friend comes down and Jasmine comes crashing down on top of her. I call the hospital and they come and get her. By the time I go to the hospital, after taking the horses' tack off and putting them away, my friend is dead. After her funeral, I go home, and ever since Jasmine has been depressed.

You Broke Me

Ever so slowly,
You broke me.
I believed you.
You lied to my face.
I thought you cared about me
But you just used me.
I let you in, but
In the end, you broke my heart

Out of My Reach

The whole world is dark.
It feels like I'm gasping for air.
Where it's impossible to reach.
I don't know how I'm feeling,
Nor what I should do.
But all I know is that I'm lost,
In this stupid world,
Where everything goes away.

When I Think of You

When I think of you,
I see the view.
When I see the view.
I want a tattoo.
A tattoo you can't undo.
I want it black and blue.
That will do but no can do.
Out of the blue I bump into you

Dolphins Are Our Friends

Have you ever seen a dolphin,
Swimming in the wild and not in shows?
They are actually very beautiful in the wild,
When they aren't in captivity.

When in the wild they will,
Swim in the waves from your boat.
And come very close to you.
They will also try to get attention.

You can see them jump in the air,
And play with each other.
They are mammals,
Just like us.

The Orcas and dolphins,
Are one big family.
The Maui's dolphin or popote
Is the world's smallest rarest and
Smallest known subspecies of dolphin.

People are afraid of them
Because they can hurt you,
But if you respect their boundaries
They will not hurt you

They want to be friends
Just like we do
They want to be pet
Just like we want to pet them

Even if they seem harmless
You should respect their boundaries.
It's just like people,
Respecting each other's boundaries

So if you don't like to be hurt,
Don't hurt them and,
They won't hurt you.

This is What I Call Fun

The ride went okay,
I almost got bucked off.
I told her not to get close,
But of course, she did.
I got soaking wet,
My boots filled with water.
I climb on,
And continue to ride
For the rest of the time.

Back When

Back when the earth was new
And heaven just a whisper.
The birds were just a fluster,
And the squirrels in just a hustle.
The boys got in a tussle.

Riding

We go up and we go down,
Every breath is heaven.
Wearing boots and a hat.
We go fast, we go slow, escaping.
We're free from problems.
We're galloping away from the world,
From toxic relationships.
Running away from homework.
Leaving stressful responsibilities behind.
All on the mind is where to go,
A bag on my back,
Water and food on the horse.
All I can hear are the beats of my galloping horse.

Adopted

To you, it's just a stupid word.
To me, it's what people judge you for being.
You say you want real kids,
Who aren't adopted.

Well, what are we?
Are we not real?
You can see us, you can touch us
So why aren't we real?
Are we just not real enough for you?

So explain to us what you mean by real.
To get away from all the crap talking,
About adoption or being adopted
I blast music and ride.

If you can't accept adoption
Or you can't accept who I am
And where I come from
You can leave right now instead of later.

Benjamin Evans

A Parade of Haiku

radiant sun
cool coastal breeze
Mendocino revived

*

hummingbirds and honeysuckle
grow swiftly as the year passes
like moss on a wise tree

*

bursting with solar radiance
a star is born
cosmic invasion

Spanish of the Heart

como humano
siento que tengo una conexión bastante
profunda en la Tierra
siento al dolor de madre naturaleza
su inquietud me da pesadillas
que me hacen llorar
tenemos que mejorar

Membrillos

la temporada del membrillo
es una temporada especial
derrota sus semillas ancestrales
al suelo
donde se sostiene
la energía
de la vida

marron,

verde,

y amarillo

colores del membrillo

Testimonial

Back when the Earth was new
and heaven just a whisper,
shadows crept up from underneath
and came only seeking disaster.

For the tall trees in the North,
swayed in the utter silence
pleasant for once
enjoying a celestial gaze

The sea kept seeing
and the
reeds kept reading
for everything was doing what
they were supposed to do

The voices of the mountain were
humming a poem

A poem of self-discovery
and wisdom

That of which we all could learn
from

Orange

Orange, it's the color of fruit.
Papayas, Mangoes, Persimmons and of course
Oranges
They always are hard to peel but can be cuties...
Oranges can be the best color
Flamboyant to express one's sense of fashion
Oranges can also alert, if you are
Hunting or helping a plane take off
Orange can bring many sentiments
Such as happiness, or love or excitement
Or anger, as if it were a bursting
Volcano erupting lava everywhere
Orange, is the color of fruit

Summer Haze

July was a smoky month
everyday sweat drizzled down my forehead
and onto my lips.
I could taste the salt
and the heat was intoxicating.
The air thick and charred,
burned my throat
with every breath.
The kids however still swam,
all content
without a single problem
in the world.

Coastline Gold

At the top of the hill
you could see the entire city.

The city glimmered like a pearl
amongst oysters.

The wind was blowing
from all directions
cooling me off.

Gusts of air dried
the sweat off my
forehead.

To think that all these people came here
from all over the world.

so many people

so many ethnicities

so many beliefs

so many cultures

so many possibilities

It's so funny to think that Coastline Gold
created Coastline Gold

Untitled

Thomas wandered through the asylum's hallways, leaning up against the walls, wailing in pain. His stomach was punctured, and he knew that his attacker was trailing behind. He stumbled onto the floor and began to drag himself towards the direction of his room. From behind, he could hear the pounding footsteps of the hooded man ascending the stairwell, in quick pursuit. Knowing that he didn't have many options left, Thomas used all of his remaining energy and rolled over onto his stomach and reached into his pocket. He pulled out his wallet and took a credit card out and proceeded to snap it in half. Leaving one jagged side to it. He curled it in his hand, and laid back, pretending to be dead. His attacker now had turned the corner and began to walk towards him, twirling a blade. Thomas could hear the creaking floorboards as the hooded perpetrator came closer, allowing him to know the distance between the two. Desperately, not knowing if he was going to survive this second encounter, he made a prayer in his head and wished for his life to be spared. The footsteps ceased. Thomas swallowed nervously. He just knew that as long as his family was safe, everything would be okay. The hooded figure grabbed Thomas's foot and shook it vigorously and then let go, letting it hit the floor. The figure moved closer and reached for his neck to check for a pulse. He noticed that the hooded figure was a red-haired woman. As soon as Thomas noticed that she was reaching for his throat, he acted. He swiped the serrated edge of the card across the woman's hand and kicked her in the hip as a last attempt to get away. Crawling as fast as he could, the grunts of this attacker clouded the room. He thought that he was going to die. He was already bleeding all over the floor and Thomas assumed that his end was near.

Green is Gross

Ever since birth, Mike knew that the color green was disgusting. It didn't help that his parents forced him on the daily to eat vegetables of mainly emerald tone. Broccoli, celery, zucchini, green beans and spinach. He learned to associate the color green with the feeling of disgust and fear as a child, but he could not escape the oppressive sentiments that came with forest green, of the tones on his bedroom walls. These coats made him anxious and forced him to be submissive. It seemed as if the paint dripped from all around, creating an ambiance as if it the room was only a forest. Mike grew traumatized of this occurrence and once he reached the age of ten, begged to his parents to change the color of his walls to blue. However, Mike's parents believed that having blue walls influenced a depressed and saddened behavior, which they did not want for their kid. So, going along with his parents' wishes, the walls stayed green, and seemed to grow greener by the day. The walls had a glossy effect and reflected light into all directions, like a fern with the morning light shining off the dew. Mike still every night lay there in pain, knowing that deep inside, the green was eating away at him like an amoeba on a feeding frenzy. His parents later self-evaluated him, diagnosed him with severe ADHD, and began to have him heavily medicated.

Bad Luck

Today was a crazy day. I got hit by a car, and I broke 3 of my ribs, and I fractured my left leg femur. The man who hit me was driving a red VW Bug with a modified exhaust that roared through the street. It came so fast and I never had any time to move. The funny part is that the man was in his late 70's and actually had his license revoked due to his increasingly poor vision. Either way, I find it ironic that I would get hit of all people. The star player of Monte Vista's varsity basketball team, out for the rest of the year. Honestly, this broke my heart, and my leg but I wasn't gonna let this blind man bum me out for the rest of my life. This occurrence just unfortunately happened which has recently been eating away at me, but that's going to stop. My injury is not going to dictate my life and the goals I have set for myself. So yeah...

I didn't realize how random, things can turn out, but here I am, sort of in one piece.

Apocalypse

The earthquake hit, making all the tallest crumble like graham crackers killing the last of the ravished survivors.

The Earth had its last straw with humans.

Like an organisms immune system it was time to kill of the infection.

Similar to the second coming of the plague of Egypt, except this time worldwide.

Humanity had ceased to exist.

Sands shifted and blew, the rings around the trees looked dark.

Valentina E. Evans

"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." - Malala Yousafzai

Lluvia

Like a layer of glass
Varnished on the trees
Indecipherable melodies
Rhythms and soundless symphonies

I kissed the rain
And she kissed me back.

Venus

An auburn, copper ray of radiated light
It grows broken in the night sky, a rusted constellated river.
It cries out, burning in lust.
Tawny clouds of chemical rain and dust that fills its skies.
Nebulous--
She fades away in heartache.

Saudade

Sometimes it feels good to cry.
To write poetry with your tears
and a novel with your heart.

My lips, soft and abandoned

I am reminded of what it is to feel your absence--
To feel a part of me leave that will never return.

Wistful reminiscence
of emptiness, and lovelorn.

Your alluring body relished in the rays of the sun
A silhouette embedded in my soul
Imprinted and stained--

I will continue to cherish you,
your words
your being.

I will be here,
Waiting to remind you
That you are nothing less than magnificent to me.

You Are;

A fossil hidden under the river stones,
Willow trees and oaks in the sun.
My old love.

Embodiment

Nature embraces me as I sit
cross legged over the sandy shores.
Staring out into the azure sky--
Reminiscing.

Aqua is not the color of fall,
but of summer adventure
pure and solemn--

I watch the coastline glimmering in the sun.
Sparkling, and shining along the coast lines
it reminds me of caves
and hunting starfish.

It reminds me of
kayaking into the horizon
and sapphire tickling my toes.

Or in some sort of alternate universe
I am Columbus crossing the sea.
A salty and noble god
holding the sun in both hands,
following the North Star home.

Summer is the prettiest blue.

Estamos Juntos

A sea of blue appears--
With hands held tight
The quiet limp voices pierce their
way through the crowd.

Children on shoulders
Sweaty palms and fists held high

The Brown girl chants.

Brown and kissed by the sun
Brown and full of pride
Fearless
But feared

Voices echo
Signs dance in the air
Swaying left and right.

But they're too ignorant to understand
that there is still time to change.

To Girls

Withered away
my idle youth has spent
countless hours wondering what others
will think of me.

Countless moments scrolling through propaganda induced devices
and glowing screens of unrealistic fantasies.

Forgiving others when I should've forgiven myself.

For my flaws, wishes and aspirations--
A powerful and wicked mind
tricks you and I
into hating ourselves

When the truth is we are the most divine thing to have
ever walked this earth.

From Afar

A rosey gold shimmer-
her lips warm lusciously shining in the
transparent light of the window

I admired her caramel skin.
Silk and woven by an ancient hand.
I wanted to hold her in my arms.

In front of my very own eyes
I watched the universe bow down to her.
I watched her glimmer and
I longed for her.
I longed for her to see me
as I did her.

Sky High Blues

Feeling blue and sky high.
Crashing cacophonies of yellow mellow dramas
Color Colorless Color
Loud wondrous sights of sky high blues.

Extravagant, whimsical moods
Of calm serene green.
Tall in stature, funky cackles of laughter
appearing in the green serene green world.

Full of color but oh ever so grey,
My world is large and wide.
Purple hues paint the Earth,
Grey white white.

Green serene, sky high blue
And a little *lilac* for me and you.

Splotches of paint here and there--
We mix and swirl into a pot of stars--
Silver grey
Colorless color, bright bright white.
Shining up in sky high blues.

A Wise Auburn Tale

There is only on word
One breath--
Under the crimson shadow of the sun
Where the wise old veins of the falling leaves,
like the creases on my palms
tell a story.

A Lost Childhood

Wooden dewey cabins
and green woodlands.
Acres upon acres of grass valleys stretching over the hills.
She ran, arms wide
caressed by the sun.
Olive hazel skin,
and viridescent eyes.
Her feet were bare skipping stones along the ground.

Below the cooling shadows of the pine trees
She sat curiously observing
the stillness and tranquility of the forest around her.
The trees never seemed so quiet.

No.

Have you ever heard the words enough is enough?
For the scars she bears are left
by your fingertips and she is bleeding gold--

Whispering inedible sounds into her ear
She cries.
Delicate and ruined by a sickening lust.

The melancholic memories are burned deep into her skin.
Persuasively unwanted.
Kissing her neck purple and blue
Withering away into nothingness.

Plethora of Haiku

The circular sun
Sucks life out of the smoke
Blood red

*

The Chaturanga
And quiet sounds of the world
Meditation

*

Ash falls from the sky
Dark black smoke
November Fire

*

My black soul sinks
Into the waves below me
To be forgotten

*

Her eyes were blue wells
Pulling me deeper in
Verdant gaze

*

Orange smoggy air
In a sad twilight zone
Smoke fills our lungs

*

Between the clouds
The sun and the moon are dancing
Untouchable love

A Special Gift

To sell flowers at the farmers market, I layed out daisies, tulips, lilacs and lilies. The flowers opened up their petals to the sun and the fragrant waft of their perfume captured the shoppers' attention.

"How much are these beauties?" a man asks me.

"Three for 2.50 and one as a gift." I smile.

"Why thanks." He beams and retrieves the money to pay me.

"My wife will love them," he replies. "They will smell just lovely upon her tombstone."

Land and Sea

Deep in the green womb
the wild ferns grow atop the jungle leaves.
Birds spread their wings
and coconut milk drips.
Bamboo sticks up strong
like a barrier between the land and sea,
but you're miles away from shore
in the heart of the earth.
It's damp, cold,
dark and unforgiving.
The wild gives no mercy,
for you must learn to survive.

Untouched Jackpot

I look up towards the sky. Birds chirp in the distance and to my right I can hear the slight buzz of the bumble bees kissing the gardenias. Walking along past them, they continue to chirp and buzz as if nothing had even fazed them. The rays of the sun pour over the trees and onto my skin, glowing a brilliant gleam of light yellow, gold.

I walk along the forest floor, and graze my fingertips against the wise old tree bark. I notice the mosquitoes dancing together in the sun beams, rejoicing in the first signs of spring.

I continue down the narrow pathway alongside a flowing stream making its way through the molch, around every tree bend down towards the creek. I follow the stream to the base of an enormous waterfall where I can see a light mist bouncing off the rocks and refracting rainbows in the air.

I close my eyes and listen to the pitter patter of the water up slapping itself against the stones as it trickles its way down into the iridescent pool. The sounds of the forest songs desorient me.

I place my palms into the cold pool, and watch as the ripples create patterns. The water soothes my fingers, and I gently clean off my arms and dip my toes in too. The forest surrounds me from all sides, and I spot the sun disappearing behind the palm leaves. I feel as though I am lost in a treacherous hidden jungle, but the birds songs entrance me. I wonder if anyone has ever been here before? If they have stood where I am standing?

I doze off in a day dream, imagining myself to be the first ever Amazonian jungle explorer. I imagine myself finding this clear pond, almost like sifting through pebbles and coming across a piece of gold.

An untouched jackpot.

Vines intertwine and climb the trunks of the trees around me, and the red parakeets sing. The tall grass tickles the backs of my knees. I make my way over to a large boulder and sit atop a dry shaded spot. The splash of the waterfall lands onto my thighs cooling them from the blistering sun. As the clouds darken and the sky grows darker I know that it's time to head back to camp. However, I wish I could stay right here, alone, forever.

Yet, as usual, I hear Peter calling my name in the distance. In the glitter of the pond I notice something unusually blinding in the corner of the pond. I reach down and grab ahold of a tiny white shell. As Peter's calls grow louder and louder, I tuck the shell inside my pant leg pocket and start off towards the noise.

"Coming," I yell. I can't help but think that maybe this is a sign. That maybe this place isn't so treacherous after all.

Rose Gamble

luna

blinded by her beauty
an innocent lily
lost in a sea of roses

contained

it's like being trapped in a cage that is unlocked,
i cannot escape because i have trapped myself

faint

i watched
as the light
which filled
your eyes
faded to a soft grey

hollow

invade my chest for it is empty with only echos
blanket me in black for my mind is absent

overcast

fog fills her bloodshot eyes
consumed by your absence
lonely once again

untitled

i don't like the memories
because they bring back the tears so easily
it's a constant war
a war between remembering and forgetting

untitled

it's like a flood
it comes in slowly
but suddenly i am drowning

untitled

i am who i am
you are what i am
we are what we can be
they can't make something we can't be

untitled

time is like currency
what you get out of it
solely depends on how you spend it

porcelain

Scattered around us was what remained. It wasn't much; mostly broken, scorched bricks and piercing metals. I crumbled to the ground envisioning what used to be. I sifted through the fragmented scraps. The loss was immense. I couldn't help but cry out. Although it'd been 13 years since the accident, it never got easier. Among the rubble, was the last memories of our old life, slowly corroding away. Nothing had survived but us, I still wonder why we had been spared.

Lexie Garrett

Chad

Fewer and fewer people started going to the club parties ever since Chad decided he was too old for it. Everyone loved Chad, except me. He's always thought that he was better than everyone and always showed off. There have been rumors that he's dead, but I think he just went crazy after he went off his crazy person meds and ran away into the forest to be a "forest monkey" like he always talked about before we put him up for adoption.

“Please”

His light blue eyes matched his light blue shirt making his “Please,” almost convincing enough to give him the tip of my ice-cream he had been asking for. Then, I ate it and said “Sorry” with a grin on my face and a shrug of my shoulders.

That Summer Day

The warm wind was blowing in through the open windows
driving through town.

The sun was blasting making our foreheads begin to sweat.
And the music was turned up loud enough
that we could feel our hearts beat in our stomachs.

Driving 45 in a 25 was our first mistake
And the second was not being prepared for the car
that wrecked ours and almost our lives
That Summer Day.

Heartbreakers

She met the first with a virgin heart but being someone's first kiss, first boyfriend, and first love was too much for him and she then had her first heartbreak.

She met the next with a fragile heart, but little did she know, he was the biggest heartbreaker of them all. He would pull her in with his mischievous words and beautiful hair and then when she least expected it he broke her fragile little heart.

She met the last with a broken heart. He was the band-aid she was looking for to cover the scars that the rest had created. He was different, she loved him. But after he fixed her, he left like the rest. And now he only comes back when she's enjoying life so he can push her back down.

Perfect

The moonlight shining across your face so perfectly making it seem as if it's only but a dream. The music is playing loud yet all I can hear is your soft hum. I don't know how, but all I can think about is you. Every time I read something about love, you come to my mind. Every time I read about heartbreak, it's you.

Beautiful

You. Yes you, you're beautiful. Uncover the marks you made, they're beautiful too. Uncover the stretch marks, and the bruises, they're beautiful too. They're part of you, don't hide underneath the sweater or the long pants, because you're beautiful. The second you start accepting and believing that, the better you'll start feeling.

Unique Hendee

details

i sat there examining
the translucent white checkered curtains
outlining the window of my kitchen
the sent of my mother's dinner
lingered throughout the room
my eyes were fascinated and focused
on the sun beaming
through the tiny holes in the curtains
it looked as though
i could observe each stream of light
glowing through each small hole
detailed into the delicately made fabric
my average sized feet
were propped up on the dining room table
the warmth of the wood that the table was built of
reminded me of the joyful filled summer days
i sat there reminiscing the current events of my life
my small but bright mind was only filled with the image of you
i sat there evaluating every detail of your wonderful self
and all i could think of was i want to be just like you

blue

dreamy blue creates the essences of your love
obtaining the star dazed eyes that long for me
my everyday dreams contain dashing images of our times
forever would be cool but the moment
will forever beat the future
for every moment creates the future
every moment spent with my only
is the only moment worth dwelling upon
times fly with the windows down
fresh air from the adventures we explore
open my mind to wondrous possibilities
forever is what i see in your blue eyes
and those eyes pull me to you forever

endlessness

my body becomes a gaping hole
filled with jealousy and envy
like a razor sharp carving knife
the images that fly through my eyes
like a moving picture cut open my feelings of worth
as though my stomach is drained of all the nutrients
it has ever consumed left with nothing but the emptiness
with a darkening tornado contracting all the light we have left
the dry swallow i proform
when i force all my unwanted words back down my unheard voice
is why
my ego now feeds
my dreams of fear and banished worries
that elope my demolished subvert mind
my life line comparable to an old web
abandoned by a spider
being pulled till it has stretched too much
and separates with rapid despair
my *fucking* thoughts yelling to me
telling me to get out
to leave the shattered estate our love endeavors on

the story of her to you through my eyes

i see you, young and delicate appearing like a newly bloomed flower,
evidently looking so pure.
she took one look at your introspective eyes and couldn't resist consuming
your integral soul.
to leave you empty feeling like nothing you've ever felt before.
your looks took an interest and you became her pray, so naïve and deprived
of something you did not know of in that time you fell like a 4 year old on
the sidewalk skinning your knees.
but jumped right up ready to be pushed again.
i feel that pain within you for you gave me that same feeling.
it's as though the universe showed you what you had done to my
conscience but through a different perspective.
although you are unaware of the affliction you inflicted onto me, i know
the pain she imprinted into you was enough and much to extravagant.
forever i have loved you since you impoverished my feelings when we
were young and unaware of what love really was.
and that is how i know you will forever love the girl who took your
principle and left you with nothing to give me.
because of her we found our enhancement but we have both been
discontinuity left
while i lay in bed drowning in thoughts of what you and her were once,
with my stomach and mind dropping with every smile you gave her.
no amount of tears or hate will make her vanish from the past she left you
with.
so while my love for you is feeble and always afraid you'll go running
back to what corrupted you,
i keep my eyes in paramnesia and appear as though our connection is
inseparable.
im petrified all hours that you think of her while kissing me and say i love
you to me the way you once said i love you to her.

happiness

shouldn't be required from him
from his fingertips typing along your spine
your happiness shouldn't rely on his lips
from his lips drips the ecstasy your heart longs for
if day by day
although the soft warmth of his breath
makes your body erupt when he consumes you
he isn't there when you'd like to talk about your day
i know you think him touching you on the outside
will make up for him not being capable
of touching you on the inside
why do you let yourself believe he cares
believe he cares about your inside
if day by day
all he seems to do is imprint his sent into your nose
so while you lay in bed listening to low music
as cold liquid from your feelings
forces your mascara drip, painting a picture
although beautiful to ponder upon is quite a displeasing site
all you can do is replay the memories
he has reflected into your mind
because of that smell
the smell you long for
day by day
do you think he notices
notices the blank
yet sad
obvious expression that he leaves you with
do you really believe that your happiness
can be obtained from such a being
a being who doesn't even understand yourself
when let alone you don't even understand your own self
how do you expect to receive real happiness from another being
if you yourself don't know what you are looking for
find that day by day happiness within yourself
before you rely on another
you are worth more than you think
find it
within your day by day

to know

do my eyes tell you my story of sorrow
do my dark brown depressant deep pools
of memories transfer to you
as you grown sounds of pleasure
into my innocent ears
with the satisfaction painted across your beautifully detailed face
i lay here imagining the future of another life
you, me, us depending on one another
to feed each other with never ending energy
that could power the sun if needed
imagining our love growing so steadily but fragile
oh how we could melt the snow of a 30 foot storm
our love could destroy and illuminate all
the sorrow and pain in this world
i ponder the words you spill so effortlessly
the warmth they bring me
us although such a small meaningless word to most
us just the sound of us coming from your lips
lights a fire in my soul
for we, us, our, me and you
we, we could create the best most incredible history, and story
we, yes we would be the cure to the thoughts
the thoughts that my intellectual self chases for all hours

The Untold Tale of Rob Kin

(Based on the tale Robin Hood)

He was casted out to be our savior and heard around the city to be a hero. Robin Hood was the symbol of relief and freedom in my people's eyes. I just wish the truth would have gotten to us all sooner.

It all began one evening when Mrs. Burro was fighting to keep her son, Tommy, alive. The doctors in Westville liked to extort people out of their money. Mrs. Burro's husband, Tom, had died while away on a business trip just two springs before. Mrs. Burro could not afford the doctors' high prices. Tommy was to die within hours if the doctors could not help him.

That evening was the first our people had come into contact with this "Robin Hood" as he called himself. Mrs. Burro was visited by a hippy who smelled like burned weed. He asked her for a bit of food, and introduced himself and Rob Kin. Mrs. Burro being the generous woman she was, gifted Rob Kin with a bowl of soup she had made for her family dinner, along with a large piece of bread. After Rob had finished his food, he thanked Mrs. Burro kindly and exited out her front door. Mrs. Burro looked down into the bowl Rob had handed her as he left her home, and she found it full of gold coins. That was the first giveaway from Robin Hood, and definitely not the last.

Weeks later, he also gifted a struggling man a trunk full out gold coins to help save his restaurant. Good deed after good deed was being done by this Robin Hood, yet something strange started to happen to the people he would help. One by one they all turned up missing. No sign of anything, not a trace to where they could have gone. Yet this Sr. Robin Hood would still be walking his way into my town helping people without them having any say in the matter. Although everyone whom he gave gifts to would turn up missing, no one seemed to put it together. I did, though. I knew this Robin Hood wasn't all he was talked up to be. And my people would see it soon enough. I had it when my favorite neighbor, John Douglas, went missing just two days after he and his wife were given enough money to save their house. The disappearances were adding up day by day. I held a town meeting that day when John didn't return home. I tried to convince the people that it was in fact this Robin Hood who was the person behind all of the recent disappearances. Not a single town member believed me. It wasn't till the first 10 bodies showed up returned to them at their front doors, chopped into pieces with only their heads still in a solid piece, so they could be recognised.

It was time to hunt him down and burn the place he called home. My first step in action was to scout the forests and find anything, even a little clue, as to where I could find him. When the hunt for this Robin Hood began, I could feel fright in everyone who was accompanying me. For

months we search for him, through the cold winter nights and hot summer days. The only upside to the adventure was that his gifting had seemed to pause. If he knew we were looking for him, he wouldn't be giving out to people anymore, so he could stay hidden. The strangest thing happened on the first Sunday of that spring. Everyone who had gone missing had been delivered back to us. They were dropped right outside the town line. The families of the victims came to retrieve their loved ones' bodies. I am glad they received a proper grave burial.

P.S. We have yet to find this Robin Hood.

Jacob Vargas Hunter

Where Did He Go Wrong?

Do you see that man right there? The bashful looking one standing by the river? His name is Dave, he is basically your average Joe, he wakes up every morning and drives to his office job that he dislikes so much he doesn't know why he hasn't frolicked over to the window and then jumped out the fucker. He has a wife and two kids. He dislikes his children but not as much as he dislikes his wife, who he loathes entirely. Last but not least, he has a massive amount of debt he needs to pay off. That's all you need to know about Dave, the rest of this story will be about how he got to where he is now.

It was just another bright and sunny day. The birds were chirping, kids were playing outside, and then along came Dave who made the world seem grim. Anybody who looked at Dave's emotionless expression got goosebumps. It's quite a shame, really,. Dave was at some point in his life a happy man, though it does not seem like he is able to remember a time when he was happy. Anyway, Dave was driving home, thinking about how he was going to finally throw himself out that window, when he realized he was thinking about doing something so immature and pointless, he just had to take his mind off of it. He turned his stereo on, and he immediately recognized the song and the artist, the song being *Once in a Lifetime* and the artist being Talking Heads. Dave didn't think much of the song until he started to listen closely to the lyrics.

Later that day, Dave let his body drop to his bed and stared at the ceiling from late afternoon to late at night. He was unable to sleep because he was in complete awe of the lyrics. Truly astonished by how much he was able to relate to the lyrics. There was one line in particular that really shook him every time the five words reached his ears. "Same as it ever was", that line was repeated twenty-two times throughout the song and poor old Dave found himself repeating the line to himself. Dave had a sudden realization: the song was a wake up call that he should get out there and live his life the way he planned it. Dave grabbed his carry on bag packed everything he thought was essential. Before he left he wrote a note to his wife and placed it on the counter, the note read, "I am sorry to say that I am leaving you and you will never see me again. It may seem a bit rash, but you must understand that I have been very unhappy for a long time and this is something I need to do. Fare thee well. P.S. I never loved you and I always labeled you as a whore."

Dave hopped into his car and drove away, though he didn't get very far. His car broke down, but he was able to get a ride from a man who was driving home. The car ride didn't last very long either. Apparently Dave said something that the man driving the vehicle found offensive, and the

man pulled off to the side of the road and threw Dave and his possessions out of the vehicle and into the slick mud. Dave quickly got up and continued his journey on foot. He reached a small town and was about to stay at the local motel until he noticed a dead rat in his bed and shit stains that nearly covered the entire bathroom. He left his room and went across the street to a local bar.

After four shots of whiskey, a man walked up to Dave and attempted to put the moves on him. Dave kept denying the man's advances, which put the man into a distressed mood. The man rounded up his friends and they dragged Dave outside and beat the living hell out of him. There were no hospitals in the area, so Dave had to hitch another ride to the next town to receive medical attention. A man let him ride in the back of his truck but the truck came into contact with a large bump in the road which ultimately ended up with Dave being air bound. An intense feeling of sadness came over Dave and he began to cry. He was right next to the forest, so he decided to wander around in that area. Dave was always very content when in the forest.

Dave never felt so lonesome in his entire life, and as he continued walking he felt as if he was walking down a dark corridor that was leading him to his very own fiery pit of dismay. A strange yet beautiful noise slowly crept into Dave's ears. Geese were flying overhead. Dave started to run after the beauties but was unable to go any further because there was an obstacle blocking his path. A river he was unable to cross. At that very moment Dave felt as if the world had come to a halt. It was so silent and so peaceful. Dave began to stare at the water. He started to move forward, one slow step at a time, and a tear would shed with each step. He entered the water, laid back, and submerged himself in the water. While he was under, he thought about all the mistakes he made over the years, but suddenly they all disappeared and many of his happy memories came back. It seemed as though Dave was going to come back from under the water but he was in too deep. He took in his final breath and with it his final mistake.

It Felt So Real

It was on a dreary night of November when a teenage couple (Samantha and Hank) decided to frolic around their small town while the rest of the world was completely silent. They were just teenagers, so young and naive they didn't realize the consequences other people would face due to them just wandering around town. The young couple finally took a break from their playful chasing because it had begun to rain. Luckily, they took shelter inside of an old abandoned theatre that was both hideous on the inside and outside. Both of them felt so relieved to finally be out of the rain and the theatre was actually quite comfortable. Samantha started to look around because she found the theatre to be very interesting, mainly because her mother Lisa was a drama teacher but Hank finally realised the theatre was comfortable and began his attempt to grope Samantha, which didn't go so well. Samantha really wanted to just explore the theatre, which is why she got very irritated with Hank and punched him on the shoulder. Hank was never good at realising when he was acting inappropriately, especially when it came to touching, which is how he obtained the nickname "Handsy Hank".

Samantha wasn't able to resist, she grabbed Hank's hand and they both ran out the door to tell her mother about the theatre. They ended up telling her mother Lisa about the theatre and the next day Lisa decided to go down to the theatre just to see what it looked like. Lisa walked inside and began to analyze her surroundings. She thought it was a very nice looking theatre, but she didn't think anything really stood out which wasn't a good thing because she was planning on purchasing it herself. She kept scouting the room and, finally, something caught her attention. The black walls: there was something visually mesmerizing about them and it almost seemed like they were calling to her. She was unable to resist the call, she walked up to the center wall and looked closely at it. She could see people on the inside. It was like looking at a giant tv screen. She turned away for a split second and then turned back only to see that the people were gone. She knew it had to be just her imagination and her lack of sleep so she ignored the thought of the people and purchased the theatre.

Shortly after making the purchase she had already begun working on a production of Sweeney Todd. She already had her cast and crew all set up as well as props and other things for the production. Lisa began a love affair with the lead actor Tom. Sadly Tom playing the lead role didn't last very long. It's quite peculiar actually, everything that was overhead meaning lights etc. were completely stable and what happened was one of the beams fell and hit Tom. He ended up getting a concussion, broken arm, and a broken leg. He was replaced by some actor who was clearly trying too hard to impress everyone. That wasn't the only terrible thing that happened. There was a new problem everyday. Sometimes a costume

would be ruined, the lights wouldn't work, cast members would be fatally wounded during production and one cast member and two crew members were reported as missing. One day Lisa woke up in a really good mood thinking nothing could go wrong. This was one of the worst things she could think. When she approached the theatre she noticed a bunch of firetrucks outside. There was a fire and the inside was damaged and the cause of the fire was unknown. Lisa began to cry softly because her hard work was completely ruined.

Lisa had to escape that part of town for a while. She went to an old vineyard she would sneak into and play in when she was younger. She loved it because the leaves surrounding the area were beautiful. This area did make her feel at peace but it was only momentary. She realized she would have to face her problem head on. She went inside the badly damaged theatre and saw some dancers they were so beautiful and Lisa realized they were the people she saw in the wall. The dancers looked directly at her and morphed into some hideous creature and lunged at her. That's when Lisa woke up.

The Heron

The Heron stands in a clearing
Waiting to soothe my soul
What will happen when it leaves me?
Plain empty like my role

Flaps to signal, there is no more
Take hold of the glancing
The Heron unites with the sky
Not flying but dancing

Off to help the next lonely soul
It left its symphony
Now firmly planted in my head
One true epiphany

Avery Johnson

Christmas Lights

My Favorite Holiday is Christmas.
Why?
Because I love the Christmas lights!
The way they sparkle in the night as I drive past them.
It makes my day.
And no I don't just like the presents from everyone.
I'm talking about Family and Friends,
The snow angels and snowmen making.
Snowball fights too.
The way the snowflakes drift down beside the house,
And the way the moon shines in the moonlight.
Christmas is just a beautiful and peaceful Holiday.
I NEVER WANT TO GROW UP!

You Tied the Knot

My heart was sad
But now it's not,
When I saw you
You tied the kot.
With me now
Forever and ever,
Our love shall be together forever.

You are Mine

You are mine
I am yours,
Everytime I see you it starts to snow.
When I look at you I start to blush,
Now my heart is starting to rush.
When we kiss
The room starts spinning,
When we kiss
Our love is winning.
Now our love is never ending,
So look ahead for a new beginning

Then and Now

One year ago you wanted me,
And I said no.
This year you finally got me,
After months of heart breaks and pain.
I finally have the someone I want to spend the rest of my life with,
And he is my world.

Like a Rose

A female is like a rose
Beautiful like the petals
Bitchy like the thorns.
They're some good ones and bad ones
But be careful what you pick
You'll never know what your going to get.

Colors

Red, like the color of my middle school shoes.
Orange, like the color of my special cup I use.
Yellow like the color of my special blanket I use every night.
Green, like the color of half of my boyfriends hats.
Blue, like my favorite color.
Pink, like the color of half my shirts.
And
Purple, like also my favorite color.

Happy New Years

Happy New Years!
You know why I love New Years?
Because I get to be with friends and family.
Well sometimes friends and sometimes family.
We stay up and count down to the new year.
Why?
Because we know the next year will be better,
Just wait.

Destiny

From the first time I got a puppy,
To the last time I had played with him.
From the first time I had seen a kitten,
To the last time I had fed him.
From the first time I had laid my eyes on you,
To the last memory we have of each other.
From the first time we held hands,
To the last breath we took.
I love you
And you love me,
Maybe this time it's destiny.

Blue

When I think of the color blue,
I think of the ocean.
I look at the cliff and turn to see your face,
Then I stood next to you and looked at the sun's reflection hit your face.
When I think of the color blue,
I can't think of anything else but you.
Seeing that big smile on your face brightens my day,
And I can never look away from your blue eyes.
When I think of the color blue,
I start to feel the ocean's misty air against my face.
And I start to think,
I finally found the person I've been waiting for.

My Heart

When I'm depressed
I start to cry,
But when I see you
My heart soars to the sky.

I loved you

I loved you
I loved you
You loved me
I really thought we were meant to be.
When I saw you with someone else.
I started to cry and hurt myself.
I miss your lips on mine,
I'm sick on the inside but on the out i'm fine.
We had planned the future.
Wedding and everything,
But now that we have split
I have a new adventure.
Not being with you, not being together.
But I still love you,
Do you love me?

Now I'm not sad

Life is good,
Life is bad.
But you make me happy,
So now I'm not sad.

Not meant to be

I loved you
You loved me,
I really thought we were meant to be
But then you left
And went to someone else,
I started to cry and hurt myself.
I miss kissing you
But I see you now,
I think I might have the flu.
I loved you
You loved me,
I really thought we were meant to be.

Balloon

Roses are red
Violets are blue
If you were a balloon
I'd fly away with you.

Apple

Roses are red
Violets are blue
If you were an apple
I'd pick you.

Valentine

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Be my valentine
Because I love you

My love

We may fight everyday
Sometimes nonstop.
I may yell at you for no reason
But just so you know I love you.
I've left you a couple of times
And you may have feelings that I will do it again.
And that isn't good.
But I never want to leave you again.
You are the flame to my candle
And candle that helps my way.
Through good and bad times
You are there,
And my family is no better.
I want you to be in my life
And I want you to be in my future.
And my love,
I will love you till the day I die
And that's a promise.

Makayla Kelly

Dead Flowers

I've forgotten the feeling of love.
 The warm, fiery glow in my chest
 was extinguished by your cold soul.
I can't remember the feeling of your
hands on my waist, or how your eyes
 changed from a simple brown to dark
 gemstones when I looked long enough.
I forgot the feeling of butterflies in my
stomach, which were actually more
 like crickets. Tiny quivers shot through
 my body every time I looked at you.
I forget what it's like to be loved, for
someone to want to place their hands
 on my waist, to see the sparkling
 gemstones in my plain brown eyes,
or feel like there are thousands of
crickets inside them when they
 look at me. Maybe I've forgotten or
 maybe I don't want to remember
because I want to forget the pain
that came after the love.

untitled

Eyes closed as I start floating through my
mind, soft foams of orange begin to form.
Shadows disappearing and moving in the blue light,
slowly continuing to create an ideal imagination.

A dream as some call it, a combination
of transparent colors and shapes.
A movie that doesn't need to make sense to the
mind, playing on a screen that doesn't exist.

Dreams fill the mind with fragments of
daily life, distorted like ripples in a pond.
Creating a soup of stars and yesterday's
breakfast, forever feeding the hungry mind.

green

the plump needles covering a pine tree
the grass that tickles bare toes
the buttery treasure inside an avocado
the shy, velvet fronds of a fern
the thorny stem of a perfect rose

you

I don't know why you are a butterfly,
it seems to fit you though.
Colorful, delicate, and free,
seen with beauty and respect.
Perched on my shoulder,
whispering sweet dewdrops in my ear.
Poppies and peonies towering over us,
their fragrant petals attracting bumblebees,
but the butterfly is superior to a humble bee.
Your wings individually painted with ethereal hues.
How do you not see that you are a butterfly?
Luring the eyes of those within vicinity,
heart, mind, and soul all fluttering together.
Metamorphosing into the best you could be.

Dear future me,

Please don't turn monotone and grey like some adults.

Remember all the late nights, sitting on the counter eating cereal with your best friend.

Don't lose the stars in your mind.

Don't forget the summer adventures with friends, laying in the warm sand like lizards.

You may feel as old as the winds, but your mind is still full of vibrant pinks and blues.

Your heart may be scared but it still has the same neon glow inside.

Always remember who you are, young and old.

People Watching in Marbella, Spain

I open the glass door of my
pristine white hotel room.
As I walk on to the balcony
I feel the sun warm my body.
I have eight minutes before
I have to be in the lobby.
So I sit, look at the street below,
and watch the people strolling by.
Mothers with sleeping babies in strollers.
Teenagers smoking hand-rolled cigarettes.
Businessmen rushing with briefcases in hand.
It all appears the same as back home,
but I can feel that it's not.
The people here are happier,
I can see it in the simplest things.
Smiles are genuine and fill
you with a contagious joy.
Even steps seem to be taken
with a certain act of glee.
It was at this moment that I realized
I wanted to call this place home.
And I felt the urge to return to Spain
before I had even left.

A Collection of Haiku

among the floral forest
the most vibrant life
was you



behind those blue eyes
is the place where
the ocean holds the sky



a bee on a flower
pollen covered legs
yellow nectar on his chin



music is the screen door for the mind,
trapping unwanted thoughts like insects.

Miranda Kindopp

Prey to Anxiety

A weak strangled deer stands frozen,
Before a field of stagnant predators

--They hunt with nothing but their eyes--
These--
Fiendish partakers,
Looking for a tremor of the leg or heart

The jackals and coyotes await their moment
to cackle,
at the fawns clumsy shivering hooves

Blood pumping in loud symphony!--

prey shudders
at the loud cacophonie,

A wisp of despair, settles in its fragile chest
Shoulders aching as they strain
To stay-- Perfectly, Still,

But its knees begin to quake--
and air heaves- from acidic lungs

Left standing-- I am,
Words leave me,
--No breath or syllable can get past--
The tip-- of my wet nose.

And as I rush to say what I must--
So that I may escape the fire under my feet--
and the avalanche over my head,

The air escapes my lun--gs--

Wither

The sad souls,
These sad poisoned souls
Of late nights--
and later mornings,
Finding themselves captured
in their own surrender,
To their guilty and self assured needs.

They are the ones who have managed to ensnare themselves
within an obvious trap
in their rush to cut themselves free from a necessary reality,

And they who were once blooming
because their gardeners tended to them,
Oh -- they were so carefully, tended to,

They are sick now
Do to a putrid weakness in all of us--
but forgivable in none,

Their gardeners cannot help them now,
Further action will only further wither their
Angry red roots,

The gardeners are helpless here
outside their flowered fences,
Within the withered woods.

Stunted Growth

Hold me fast
By the tip of my ruin
Don't let go--
I, Dare, You
don't let me go
slip-falling-fallen
In rage, I am left to lay
Terrified of my petty faults.
Oh ignorance,
I lie with thee
In ripening Pain,
And I sink--
Deep in the mud of this --Bog
Could I still reach the inquisitive dragonfly?
It zips-- past my face,
Too quick--

I Stay
Stagnant forever as This,
Pitiful, Ignorant me

Glass Imbecile

Little glass birds quake
Against the mallet--
Brittle little feathers break
These itty bitty feathers hold no merit

Sticks and Bones -- can't break stones
You stupid little canarie

You & Your Other Self

It's not fickle with its picking,
as it comes a sticking--
It's noes in all your fancy drawers and dressers

It takes when your away
And leaves your things astray

It will not go away, you cannot help but let it stay

It knows what you are hiding
And it will continue finding
The answers and the secrets

That you've ripped away to ribbons,

Because this dark dark part
Exists only in the heart
Where you don't want to see it
No one can defeat it

It's not a separate entity
in all its antiquity

It knows you better than anything

In Awe, I Shrink Before It

Watching a worlds single wonder
Take a pause, and wait for nothing but mother gaia's next breath

I am caught in this moons narrow net
circled over my thin ankles and proud throat

A prisoner aboard this ship
It sails free, over stone and storm,
Captains now a passenger,
Helpless without hands

Flesh leaves no tremble to warn another of this feeling

Chest feels rushing
Without -- running
Panting breath and wide forever eyes.

Before it Ever Began?

To the me before the worlds air had touched my skin
before the first screaming breath

Back inside my drunk of a mother

Wish to be back before it all occurred
to wrap the cord around my neck

A tragic accident.

Rebecca King

3:23 pm

clouds move at walking pace
i run swiftly, as time and space
elude me.
and as the earthly ribbon unties from my hair,
i'm free.

honk, honk, beep, beep

My grandmother's nose.
No, not her good looks.
Not the way the wrinkles in her face spell out her name,
Not her long and detangled dirty-dishwater-brown (faded to grey) hair-
A woman. A strong heart.
Holding up even stronger mind.
A tornado of health and happiness.-
Her nose.

Not the funny way she says "dishwasher"
Not her unique personality
 the way she tells me "i love you" ...
And never her blue eyes.
 ...and when you tell her that you love her too,
 they ripple like diving into a clear creek filled with ducks and "oh,
look at the ducks!"

A nose. A goddess' nose.
A bulbous nose, one you can find on a pig
Found on a face so round, and so lovely,

A nose, found in the middle of my heart
A nose,
I share with my grandmother.

this poem is titled “this poem is titled ‘untitled’ and it isn’t actually untitled. ignore me. read the poem.”

ADD up the amount of times I’ve heard this hideous acronym.
The ugly excuse for my mind to flake. excuse
Excuse me while I leave to go touch that tree 10 feet back,
i won’t be able to go on if i don’t.
I’m sorry I couldn’t answer the question, my pen is just so interesting.
I’m sorry, could you repeat that?
could you repeat it again?
I’m sorry I’m acting different today. i forgot to...
I have to take drugs each morning to try to feel normal
normality
it’s so crazy that a society would invent something to make itself go crazy
normality is a concept we made to feel that there
is a home plate to run towards.
we run first second and third to get to home,
trying oh so hard to feel good, how everyone but you seems to feel.
but there is no home.
of course there’s no home!
this is life, not a game of baseball!
there is no normal.
we are never normal.
what is normal?
what is not-normal?
without normality and perfection, how can we describe something as
unusual? or imperfect?
I got distracted in the middle of writing about being distracted.
My mind is full of dogs and the color green and chicken wings and
your beautiful face
My favorite sweater and Roger Waters and fall weather and
Everything it should not be full of.
Full
My counselor told me, and i think everyone, about this cup in our heads,
or in our hearts,
or in our ass or something.
,He told us about a cup that gets filled every time something bad happens.
maybe someone asks about my brother, or I’m no longer friends with
someone who always made me happy, or it’s fathers day, or maybe i got a
bad grade in spanish, or maybe my favorite plant died, or i got soy sauce on
my blanket
Whatever happens, my cup gets filled
And it spills. Like the soy sauce.
Trivial things like “*studying*” and buying as many hoodies from goodwill

as i can can numb the pain
and keep my cup level for a while
And keep me happy for a few hours.
But what's next?
After I come down from that happy high in those happy clouds
Life is the same as when i went up
or even worse.
that cup overflows, and so do the tear ducts in the bags beneath my eyes.
Sometimes i have to leave class because my mind wanders to that drinking
fountain all the way across campus.
And on the way there I saw my best friend.
And I see a spider with a particularly beautiful shade of light brown.
And I get there, to that drinking fountain, but my mind is gone.
it's gone for good that day.
good luck on that test fourth period.
Attention-deficit / hyperactivity-disorder
"treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured."
ADD goes hand in hand with bipolar disorder, anxiety, autism, OCD,
Antisocial personality disorder, tourettes, and depression.
very common, very common, common, very common, common, common,
very common.
It is a simple Google search to those outside it all.
These chemical imbalances make me think,
no, feel,
no! believe.
That no matter what i try to do to stop it, i'm going to die.
All i think about. Like, all the time,
I will die a death of deathly death.
so will you! but try not to think about it.
And i'm wasting years of worrying about these chemical imbalances
And how crippling they are, and how stupid i feel because of them
because i'm not like everyone else
It doesn't even matter.
I wish I could believe it didn't matter.
I wish I wasn't so distracted by the tie-dye-esc colors throughout my
seemingly,
Getting-smaller room.
are the walls closing in?am i seeing things?am i seeing what's neartocome?
Nope. I'm just hallucinating.
My mind is keeping itself occupied.
I am keeping myself occupied.
i am my mind
i am floating around in a sack of bones and meat,
get me out of here!

Candles, Flowers

i've forgotten what The Quiet sounded like.
more gasps,
and moments of silence,
followed by lifetimes of fear.
“that could've been me. that could've been me.”
gunshots ring through crying ears,
listening eyes dart across the television;
classrooms,
faces,
names,
and lives,
flash on the screens before us.
and we vow to never forget The Quiet
and never to lose hope that it will return.

w*dn*sd*y n*ght

bleeding onto piano keys
my desperate fingers write mournful poetry
 about the way you used to sing to me.
i've traveled far
 in muddy shoes, with broken souls,
to get here,
and i've seen no other do the same.

the rain
 the rain
is destroying me further
and further
 with each
 plunging
 d
 r
 o
 p

and further i go
feet above knees,
tripping over my caterpillar laces.

rain drops onto my calloused hands
and my tasteless tongue.
 my tongue,
 singing songs i keep forgetting the words to.

my friend,
a disappointed keyboard with a fading middle C
tells my hands that it's favorite colors are black and white.
 my fingers reply,
 "our favorite color is grey."

i fancy an engagement under a dimly lit kitchen light

“i love you.”

three small words with infinite definitions,

put together delicately to make a perfect combination any three small words could have;

words which fit so comfortably on the tongue, it feels they're meant to be there.

like they were meant to live in your mouth, ready to be said at any contented moment.

i lost my enchantment for the words, quite frankly, and

it seems everything is temporary now.

it seems things will say they love you just keep you warm for a while.

and why waste such perfect words on such misplaced, unhappy, miserable, temporary things.

i hear it much too often

and it will mean nothing to me tomorrow.

have you seen this bird?

she, a beach lover; cold and vulnerable.
it, a seagull; a bird of squawking and discontent.

star crossed soulmates.

she sat on the rocks amongst the crabs and salty water,
staring at an unknowing seagull.

the seagull turned around.

eye contact.

the longest 30 seconds of these twos short lives-
two miniscule lives and an infinite sea on a microscopic planet in mini solar
system in a medium sized milky way in a pretty big universe.

she began to think of the seagull and everything it's been through.
what it'd seen and how it felt about being a seagull
where was it going in life? had it yet to decide?
did the seagull know what love was and had it had the chance to find it?
she wondered if they had similar life experiences.
did this bird have a bittersweet love for the sea?
did it prefer the mossy rocks to the great blue?
did it wonder what lies beyond?
did it wonder if its life really even mattered?

but the seagull thought of fish, then flew away.

i would title this but the poem is so short you'd forget
that the poem even existed. But now the title is longer
than the poem. oh gosh i-

the song you were singing to yourself has been stuck in my head all day
your guilty conscience spread like the flu

untitled

the underbelly of the moon
big yellow coward
controlling the waves

The Art an Eight Legged Friend Makes

I sit in a nearly empty bathtub
Fully Clothed, and
Fully Fearful,
looking up at the barrier between the me and the sky.

A cobweb hangs freely from the ceiling.

It's a noose.

It taunts me,
swaying side to side in a draft...
I consider pulling it down, oh,
I consider spraying it with Hot Water,
but why should I?

Who Am I To Destroy A Spider's Art?

But God, does it taunt me.

I study the bumps on the barrier above me and discover a memory.
A memory of thinking I would live forever... yes,
The Sun on my Skin made me feel like the Princess of Eternity!
But now I sit,,,
Fully Clothed, and
Fully Fearful.
Inside,
And Alone.
Grey, and maybe a little Blue,
I'm surrounded.

The colors hug me tightly
And use their cold hands to wrap the cobweb around my neck
And the memory begins to *fade*...

I'm a princess again.
But it's different.
It's brighter here.
I'm-

Kyle Kirkley

Skid Row: A Kilgore Trout Story

Not long ago, Marcus Glabb's space cruiser landed on Ronald Sinclair's house, crushing the (formerly) impressive dwelling into the shape of a flattened house, which is exactly what it had become. This turned out to be an unfortunate mistake for Marcus Glabb (the spaceman from Balundia), but (surprisingly) it didn't turn out so terribly for Ronald Sinclair (the human from Earth). Things rarely turn out terribly for humans on Earth like Ronald Sinclair.

By the time Ronald Sinclair came home from a day of feigned work, where he half-heartedly pretended to account the profits of his father's lucrative business, the St. Sinclair Automotive Mall Family of Dealerships, Marcus Glabb, the Balundian, had moved his space cruiser to an empty lot down the road and activated its cloaking mechanism. No one would notice it there unless they happened to bump into it. Being a responsible and conscientious Balundian, Marcus waited for Ronald on the crumbled remains of the front step of the crushed house, hoping to find some way to rectify the situation.

When he saw his house in its new flattened shape, and after he took nine or ten deep breaths, Ronald found air enough to ask, "Who is responsible for this?" Actually, he kind of seethed the question rather than asked it. One wouldn't call it a welcoming style of speech, let's say that.

Marcus, though, held up conciliatory, yellow-gloved hands in a sign of peace. He wore yellow dish gloves to cover the fact that he had reproductive organs in the palms of his hands.

You see, The Balundians were exactly like the people of Earth except that their reproductive organs were in the palms of their hands, they had blue skin, and they were generally kind and altruistic. It is possible that the first two of those differences can account for the third. Who's to say?

"What is this?" said Ronald, indicating the flattened condition of his house.

"It's completely my fault," said Marcus, who didn't understand that on Earth, no one should ever admit culpability, even in the most obvious of circumstances. "My space cruiser landed here. Accidentally, of course. My navigational systems calculated the probability of someone building a structure on this environmentally vital meadow to be near zero. Clearly, something went wrong in the calculation."

"The hell it did," said Ronald. "You crushed my house!"

"I am sorry about that," said Marcus.

Marcus did not realize that he was about to get his first lesson in the cruelty of humans. Ronald climbed onto the pile of wreckage. Marcus thought that Ronald might be looking to salvage items of great sentimental

or financial value, but instead, Ronald retrieved a splintered piece of lumber about the size of a human leg. Marcus' spaceship had wrenched it free from the place where it used to help hold the house up in its house-like form. On one end of the board, bent nails protruded where they had once joined it to a wall stud. The other end was a jagged mess of fractured wood. You, being a human and hence already schooled in the cruelty of humans, know what Ronald did with that piece of wood.

After Marcus was unconscious and bleeding on the ground where he had previously stood, Ronald called his insurance company and, eventually, the police.

When Marcus awoke, he felt awful, of course, due to the combination of concussion, lacerations, and bruising that now characterized his blue face and head, but also because he had smashed poor Ronald Sinclair's house. On the other hand, he also felt optimistic. He never would have imagined how easy and swift his lessons in cruelty had turned out to be. His directive had been to spend one Earth year studying human cruelty, and it had taken him mere hours to end up like this (beaten and bloodied) in this cruel place, which turned out to be the soiled floor of a holding cell in the local jail.

Imagine what a year of this will bring, Marcus thought as he assessed the wet, sticky substance between his face and the floor as a mixture of blood and human saliva. *I'll have enough research for a lifetime of writing. My career is made!*

That's when Marcus noticed that his yellow dish gloves were gone. Someone must have removed them while he was unconscious. This was disconcerting to Marcus. He understood that his blue skin color marked him, quite literally, for malice, which could work to his advantage in his pioneering quest to understand what and why, exactly, cruelty exists, but he also knew that the sexual organs present in his palms may be more than the humans could countenance.

A pair of black shiny-toed work boots carrying a man arrived at his cell. The man unlocked the door, stepped inside, and used one of those shiny toes to poke Marcus.

"You awake?" said the man.

Marcus attempted to answer affirmatively, but something was wrong with his jaw, so he ended up saying, "Brgleslmp."

"Hmm," said the man. "And what's going on with your hands, anyway?"

Marcus pressed his palms to his chest in order to hide his reproductive organs.

"I already saw," the man said. "And I don't like it. Not one bit." The man used his shiny toe to pin one of Marcus's hands, palm up, to the floor. It was his right hand. "Ugh," said the man with the shiny-toed work boots. "Disgusting."

The man said these things, but Marcus was confused because the man's eyes shone with wet light. He did not have long to consider this

conundrum. The shiny toe of the man's boot slid over the sensitive spot in Marcus's hand and began to dig in. Marcus gasped in pain. He grabbed the man's leg with his other hand and tried to wrench it off, but the toe only dug more insistently into Marcus's reproductive hand. Marcus screamed and the man grinned and Marcus's legs shook with the pain and finally, mercifully, Marcus passed out again.

By the time of his trial, Marcus had learned a library's worth of information about human cruelty. For instance, he learned that human cruelty is unequally dispensed depending on two primary factors: comparative levels of dermal melatonin (as suspected by the Balundians' initial research) and comparative levels of wealth. While he waited for the trial, Marcus worked out this basic equation:

$$4(D+10) - (W/2) = C$$

where D = the amount of melanin present in the skin on a scale of 1 to 50 (50 being the most),

where W = the material wealth in thousands of American dollars

where C = the level of cruelty the subject should expect to experience (200 being the level at which one can expect to be murdered by the state without any evident reason or repercussions).

To see how the equation works, consider the following example: for a man who is fairly rich in melanin and who has a total wealth of \$32,000 (including all property, cash, and investments less any debt owed), the resulting equation would look like this:

$$4(42+10) - (32/2) = C$$

$$208 - 16 = C$$

$$192 = C$$

Our test subject, then, can expect to be mistreated, jailed, beaten, passed over for promotion, skipped in line, suspected, ignored, avoided, accused of crimes, spat upon, etc. The good news is, though, that his relative wealth should be just enough to keep him from being summarily executed in his front yard. Maybe. The equation is an oversimplification, so its predictive power is limited. For instance, Marcus's equation fails to consider gender, sexuality, weight, neighborhood of residence, astronomical sign, fashion sense, hair length, grooming habits, familial responsibility, and intellectual aptitude.

At his trial, Marcus explained that he was an astronaut from Balundia. He apologized for landing his space cruiser on Mr. Sinclair's house. The judge was skeptical.

"You don't look like an astronaut," the judge said.

"But can't you tell by the color of my skin?" said Marcus.

"Justice is color blind," said the judge.

"Then what about my hands?" Marcus held out his hands, palms up. His right hand was misshapen from its encounter with the shiny-toed boot, but still, it was clear that there was a reproductive organ there.

The bailiff vomited.

The stenographer gasped.

The judge said, "Order! Order!"

Mr. Ronald Sinclair of St. Sinclair, sitting at the front of the gallery, smirked.

"We'll have none of this deviancy in my courtroom!" the judge bellowed.

Marcus put his hands down in his lap.

Encouraged by the court's disgust with Marcus, Ronald stood up from his seat. He said, "You messed with the wrong guy." He pointed his finger at Marcus. "This town was named after my great-grandpa, and that means you messed with the wrong guy."

In the end, Marcus was ordered to remunerate Mr. Sinclair for all damage to the house, which came to just over \$625,000. Because Marcus could not pay even a single dollar of this amount, and because he was also found guilty of deviancy, he was sentenced to two years of prison.

Prison turned out to be an excellent laboratory for Marcus' study of human cruelty, and he spent many fruitful hours in the prison hospital recovering from a series of violent encounters with angry and frustrated men (including prisoners, guards, and others who seemed to be there on some sort of alien-viewing tour). By the time he was released, Marcus was certain that he had enough material to write a convincing and conclusive analysis. He had even refined his equation to such a degree that he could predict any fellow prisoner's likelihood of survival within a 2% margin for error.

When he exited the prison, he was given his yellow dish gloves and a city bus token. Everything would soon be great. He would fly home to Balundia, write his book, conduct interviews with celebrity talk-show hosts, and bask in the kindness of his own people. He would be a hero.

After a 29-minute bus ride and a 47-minute walk, Marcus arrived at the empty lot where he had hidden his space cruiser. To his grave consternation, the space cruiser was gone. In its place stood a brand-new house. Marcus knocked on the door and Ronald Sinclair answered.

"So, you're out of prison then," said Ronald Sinclair.

Marcus nodded.

"Seems a shame, only two years for destroying someone's entire house. I don't know what the world is coming to. No one wants to take responsibility any more, I guess that's the problem."

"Where is my space cruiser?" Marcus asked.

"What space cruiser?"

"The one that crushed your house."

"Oh, so now you admit to having crushed it!"

Although Marcus had never denied it, he did not reply to this accusation. He was too tired of understanding the cruelty of man. He wanted kindness or at least a comfortable chair to sit in. Yes, a comfortable chair would be kindness enough.

He said, "I just need my space cruiser, so if you could tell me, that would be great."

Ronald Sinclair grinned and ran his fingers through his hair. "I'm sorry, but I don't have any idea what you're talking about. As far as I know, space cruisers don't even exist."

Eighteen months earlier, Marcus would have tried to convince Ronald Sinclair of the existence of the space cruiser and the justice inherent in allowing him to have it back, but Marcus had learned his lessons well and no longer believed that humans were capable of values other than self-preservation and personal gain. He tried to think of a way to frame his need in terms of how it would help Ronald Sinclair, which was the only negotiating tactic a human seemed capable of responding to.

"Well?" said Ronald Sinclair.

Marcus couldn't think of a way that he could help Ronald Sinclair gain a single thing that Ronald Sinclair could want. He said, "I guess I'll be going, then."

"Where?" asked Ronald.

"I don't know."

"You know where you belong: Skid Row. That's the kind of place for people like you."

Marcus had heard of Skid Row while he was in prison. It didn't sound like a pleasant place. He backed off the front porch of the house, unwilling to turn his back on Ronald Sinclair. As he did so, a pedestrian had to swerve out of the way to avoid him.

"Watch where you're going, jerk," said the pedestrian.

After days of wandering the streets, hungry, harassed, aimless, he saw a small band of ragged people being shooed down the street by a police officer. The officer was in his patrol car rolling slowly along behind the ragged people, nudging the stragglers with his bumper, speaking to them through the public address system built into his car. He was saying, "Not in this neighborhood, not in this neighborhood, move south, let's go, south." Marcus followed warily until the officer, satisfied that they were headed in the right direction, or bored by the easy conquest, sped off to some other noble task. As soon as the officer was out of sight, Marcus hurried to catch up to the people.

For the next two days, Marcus and the drifters wandered the neighborhoods of St. Sinclair. He was grazed, once, by a bullet from the gun of a fearful sandwich-shop owner, but otherwise, he suffered no additional harm. The drifters were as easy to move, usually, as toy balloons. And perhaps they were like balloons filled with some gas slightly heavier than air, meandering with the inertia of whatever force last nudged them until they came to rest against the foundations of the old Fairchild Hotel.

There, they could snooze and mumble to each other all day long. The basic scheme was this: they were to stay there and not bother anybody anywhere else—until they were murdered for thrills, or until they were

frozen to death by the wintertime.

Marcus found this arrangement satisfying in comparison to prison and in comparison to the time he spent alone before he found the drifters. They were an unstable lot, true, but their cruelties seemed to stem mostly from misunderstandings, mental illness, and legitimate fear, which Marcus considered far nobler than the cruelties experienced elsewhere. He resolved to add this observation to his book. If he ever wrote his book.

Once, after a couple of weeks with the drifters, Marcus was dismayed to see Ronald Sinclair walking along the sidewalk, approaching the side of the old Fairchild Hotel. Before Marcus could hide, Ronald spotted him.

“Well, here you are again,” Ronald said.

Marcus nodded.

“It’s like you go out of your way to harass me,” Ronald said. “I can’t even walk down the street without seeing you.”

Marcus nodded again

“And you stink.” Ronald made the universal gesture of olfactory disgust, waving his hand in the air before his nose. “First you ruin my house, then you keep showing up, even at my new house, even on the sidewalk on my way to check on my sock factory. What do you have against me?”

Marcus shrugged his shoulders. He realized that, for all his research on cruelty, he still could not understand Ronald’s perspective.

Ronald looked around at the clusters of drifters and the urine-stained brick of the old Fairchild Hotel. “Well, you know what, I’m nothing if not magnanimous. Besides, this seems like the right place for a guy like you. I’ll see if I can’t make this situation a little better. No promises, but you know, they did name the city after my family, so I have a fair amount of pull.”

Marcus nodded again.

The next day, Ronald appeared once more. This surprised Marcus. Ronald’s steps were jaunty, as if it were the first day of spring even though the razor edge of winter was beginning to be drawn across the flesh of St. Sinclair. He had a long, unwieldy object in his hand, and he was followed by three burly men. The men had heavy tools.

“I have come, as promised, to improve your situation,” he said.

He pointed to a place at the corner of the sidewalk and nodded to the men. They set to work without a word. Ronald stood like a Conquistador, hands on hips, while he watched.

Marcus also watched, but he did so passively. He knew that no good could come from this, but he no longer cared if cruelty, instead of care, crashed down on him again.

When the workmen were finished, a beautiful new street sign marked the corner as “SKID ROW.”

Ronald looked at the sign with admiration and nodded approvingly.

Marcus also looked at the sign with admiration and knew that, even though he hadn't made it back to Balundia, he was home. He settled his back against the concrete wall and wondered whether he would be murdered or frozen to death. He decided that it didn't matter much and resigned himself to wait as patiently as possible to discover which would be his fate.

zoe louise krofchik

breath

certain days
i feel that i'm a waste of air-
that some sort of gandhi is losing breath
because a god is forcing his breath onto me.
i question god every day
wondering why i continue breathing
when breath is so precious
and i am not.

that day in may

i imagine what we would've been
if things had gone another way.
if the stars had aligned or
we had met on a different day.
if i had kissed you that day in may
or you had held my hand on that plane.
perhaps we could've been an 'us'
if things had gone another way.
i panic with the shoulda, coulda, woulda's,
and the shouldn't, couldn't, won'ts.
it's hard to say, but i think
you looked at me in a special way.
i question your movements from months ago,
and wish i had seen them then.
i wonder if you think of me the same
i do of you-
with wonder of what we
should've
could've
would've been
if our lips had met that day in may.

untitled 3

if only someone could love me
the way you love yourself.
my god,
if we all had that lust for ourselves,
the world would
glimmer.

a mother's warning

those kind of boys
solely lust.
it seems as if all they think about is sex.
when they talk to girls, they lean in and
ask them questions that should only be whispered among friends.
those kind of boys
see women as checkpoints on their quest to get a girl in bed.
they shove their tongue
down drunk girls' throats and
they don't understand the word
no.
those kind of boys
will buy you flowers on the first date and
give you forehead kisses until you put out.
those kind of boys
drive nice jeeps and
always know who to ask for weed and
will shackle your heart so no
other man can ever smile at you again.
those kind of boys
will haunt you long after you break up
because you'll have nightmares of
waking up with his hands down your pants.
your lips will still bruise from stoned kisses.
you'll be able to feel the sting of drunken slaps.
those kind of boys
are everywhere,
and you never see them coming.

to alejandra,

you deserve to be someone's number one,
 you don't deserve these secret phone calls--
you deserve loud proclamations of love at four a.m.,
you deserve pda downtown and forehead kisses on trains.
this boy you love so much,
has another line of two's and his number one.
and let me tell you, you don't need him,
when your number one is out there, somewhere
waiting for you.

to josefina,

when she closes her eyes each night,
her future lover holds her hands.
she doesn't believe in soulmates,
but she cannot deny the way
her stomach becomes a gymnast
when he returns to her dreams each night.
she knows she's never seen him before-
his face is blurred but
the way he smiles makes her blush in her sleep.
it seems so real;
the way her hips feel his warmth,
his cologne wafts in her thoughts,
his laugh plays on repeat in her head,
and when she finally wakes up
alone each morning,
she can still smell
her soulmate's cologne dancing in her room.

he's prettier than michelangelo's *david*

he laughs,
adam's apple bobbing
like halloween

shellshock

shellshock rips into my soul
like a lion eats a gazelle.
my burning eyelids are full
of the memories i refuse to tell.
landmines explode inside my head,
my stomach goes up in flames.
the nurses refuse to have me fed,
my hands still engulfed with chains.
when i blink,
the white returns.
i can't think,
while my organs churn.
my heart can't get closure
because my bunkmates are dead.
even though i'm not a soldier
there's still a war inside my head.

untitled

the way she looks at him and the way he looks at her
burns holes in my heart.
his voice dances clumsily in my brain
but she always gets the slow dance.
she's perfectly- imperfect
with a cute laugh and short skirts
and
i'm imperfectly- imperfect
with a snort when i laugh and plus size shirts
my eyes don't sparkle like hers and her lips aren't chapped
how can i compete with that?

her

she deserved the stars,
the sun,
the moon,
but he could barely reach the sky.

valencia in the summertime

freckles sprinkles across forearms,
one hundred and three degree sun,
warming our bare arms and open souls.
we smile and laugh along with the sun,
wishing time could stop so
we could soak in the love
we feel here and how
our puzzle pieces all fit together
like no one we've met before.
all our homes are miles away,
but our hearts remain in valencia,
our souls are buried in the cold white cinderblock walls,
our hearts remain in studios,
in the coffee,
in the couches,
on the stages,
in the dorms.
we don't belong at home,
we belong in valencia in the summertime.

america: for allen ginsberg

america with the arrogant confidence of an olympic skater gliding past lay
people in union square,
america who sings to generations of slaughters while holding the knife,
america with its traditions of hatred passed down
 like grandma's famous apple pie recipe,
america who kidnaps the innocence of young boys who don't have an identity,
america who is blindfolded to the love of other worlds,
america with the high numbers counting the price of human existence,
america who is allergic to smoke, but takes a drag fifteen times a day,
america who forfeits the next generation in exchange for bullets and ar-fifteen's,
america with those famous songs, sung behind gritted teeth
 and knees touching grass,
america who holds a grudge like a teenager ignoring the world,
america who lets women drown in their own blood until it's dry,
america with the red, white, and blue napkins and tablecloths
 and cups and plates and forks and
 knives and spoons and food and streamers and
 dreams.

waiting for love poems

“you do not have to fall in love today, you only have to wait,”
they tell me
as if it will appear,
but what if they never find me?
i’m drinking coffee alone,
meanwhile my love that could have been
is sleeping with someone else
while i just sit around and
wait.
the girls with experience
promise,
“it’s not all what it’s cracked up to be,”
but
kisses still linger on their lips
and to me they are a stranger.
they can still feel the fingerprints of affection engraved on their hips.
meanwhile my body cannot fathom another intagled with mine.
the pretty girls-
with gold bracelets and
tiny wrists-
still taste the words
‘i love you’
on their tongues and
can write better love poems than me.
so i ask them,
“tell me about love poems.”
so they try to explain
love poems
to me,
but
my heart has never beat
with another,
i cannot hear the nothings in my ear.
they tell me
“write what you know”
but
how can i write love poems
when no one writes them for me?

the school shooting generation

we see ourselves on tv,
plastered on every screen,
flashing the same photos
of the same kids.
they easily could've been us,
and perhaps it will be us one day--
but for now it's strangers.
strangers, with their classmates' blood on their
faces, backpacks, clothes
but not on their hands.
for every tombstone erected,
for every pure soul torn from us,
one of those adults--
who are supposed to protect us--
does nothing.
they turn their heads and ignore us.
they ignore:
the screams of friends at funerals,
the hallways that echo gunshots,
old assignments strewn about classrooms,
teachers who can't lock the door in time,
parents who have no kids to parent,
diplomas that no longer have recipients,
crushes that will never be fulfilled,
kids.
kids stained in blood,
who are begging for help.
and they do nothing.

cantaloupe

you scooped my insides out
like a cantaloupe and
made me a live marionette
engraved with your name,
and i don't think i'll ever
be able to cut off your strings.

flowering dogwood

i saw him among the friday lights,
the lights he used to run under in simpler days.
he walked among the himself of four years ago,
now with a stiffer spine.
he's gasping for comfort,
the comfort of home,
the home he left three months ago.
his clothing clings tightly to the stranger he inhabits,
the glint of mischief in his eyes
remains at bootcamp,
laying in the dirt and the boyish tears,
and that letter,
the letter from a lover,
floating in his mind,
her cruel shapes on paper,
haunting his body.

i saw him again,
this time he's nestled among the
empty seats of the empathy gym
we both love so dearly.
when his eyes met mine,
his old smirk returns,
old jokes rest on his tongue,
but
it doesn't take a mother to know
that these three months have shrunk his body
and his soul.

he's really not the boy i met last year,
the boy i met showered in
fluorescent lights and
xeroxed scripts,
who smiled in between strips of darkness,
and whose hands were always warm.
he's not the boy i met last year
because that boy
died on the frontlines of
his dreams of
becoming a man.

eastern bluebird

i saw him again.
but this time he was waiting--
waiting for me.
his lips formed my name that morning
as he searched the ruins of his old life--
for me.

i can just imagine him watching me
fold like a card tower
at the sight of his crew cut--
the glimmer of the girl he met last year,
the girl who glowed when he
twirled her hair and fell asleep on his shoulder.
the girl who let him tease her with
red ink and illusive script--
but
that girl is older now,
on the verge of eighteen,
adulthood looming over her round cheeks.

i'm not the girl he met last year.
i watch the mischief drain from his eyes when he realizes
that i don't shift my weight for him anymore,
because i now know
that i am no longer the red sea--
i don't split myself for a man
drowning in the phantom of friday nights.
he can see now that i'm the one made of stardust.
he watches his mask fall off,
for now i see that he is adam,
but i am not eve--
i was not created from his ribs solely for the purpose of being his.
i'm really not the girl he met last year
because
that girl is leaving the garden on her own terms,
she's leaving adam behind,
she will eat the apple
until she turns to dust.

winter&spring&summer&autumn

she floated in all the boys' heads.
she had this magnetic pull to her hips,
that drew the boys into her everywhere she went.
the girls were always jealous of her amber tiger lily eyes.
she wore flowery dresses that showed off
her hips and sun kissed skin.
the boys reached for her knuckles and
the girls glared at her perky personality.
but it seemed that i was the only one who noticed her scars.
the thin lined scars on her forearms,
stained with tears from
beatings and bullying.
scars on flowers.
pale skin;
bloody and melancholic
against a low cut sundress.

death

before your knees go out,
before your brain shrivels up,
before your breath goes silent,
before your eyelids close for the final time,
i hope you'll look upon the sky and search for the answers
 i've been looking for,
i hope you release the tension in your shoulders,
i hope you'll forgive the guilty and celebrate the saints,
i hope you'll remember every time you've ever smiled,
i hope you hear mom singing lullabies,
i hope you list all those who have ever loved you,
i hope you let the anxiety die alongside you,
i hope you realize you deserved all those breaths and all those days,
 your days have been numbered since the start, but
i hope you didn't let them go to waste,
i hope you took your final bow on earth with
 peace and grace,
i hope you know the world will feel your absence,
but the world will still go on.

Olivia Kubin

Weightlessness

Your deep honey brown eyes locking with mine
You threw away the key
The way you talk about the sky like you've met it
The way you look at the stars
I could only hope you look at me like that
But how would I know?
I will forever be off in my own world
Trying to recreate the deep honey brown
And making friends with the sky
And admiring the stars

Happy

When I walk outside, the sun has been shrouded in billowing clouds,
The earth is musky and heavy,
The way rain smells on concrete,
I approach the vacant road and sit down,
Letting my hands fall slack at my sides,
I wait a while in that empty road,
Waving my worries away.
I am content,
Sitting here in the middle of the road,
In an undisturbed silence,
Soon, I feel small drops of water,
On my hands, face, hair,
The rain swells with power and torrents of wind rip through the air,
Waving my hair about,
Forcing me to close my eyes,
And just like that,
It stops.
I am happy.

A Love Poem From Someone Who Has Never Been In Love

I fall for you like sleep
Slowly, then all at once
Just a glance and my eyes glisten like stars in the summertime
Just a touch and my heart soars
But I am just a ladybug in a garden
And you are a sunflower, tall and proud
Reaching for the sun and never bothering to look down
I fall for you like a wave in the sea
But though the tide pulls me in
I can never reach you
Hearing your name brightens my day
And seeing you is like hearing your favorite song for the millionth time
Knowing every word by heart
But living it like you heard it yesterday
But this poem is just a ladybug and you are still a flower
As I am just a person
And you are still a star

A Pair of Haiku

Stars and freckles
Constellations crafted
By the long set sun

*

Murky lake water
Midnight minds
The towels are left in the sand

Songs That Touch My Soul

The Night We Met by Lord Huron
Wait by M83
Sleep on the Floor by the Lumineers
Need You Still (ft. Keith Fontano) by Ivan B
Save Myself by Ed Sheeran
Feeling Whitney by Post Malone
I Fall Apart by Post Malone
All I Want by Kodaline
Jocelyn Flores by XXXTENTACION
Changes by XXXTENTACION
Train food. By XXXTENTACION
Coaster by Khalid
All of the Stars by Ed Sheeran
Toes by Zac Brown Band
Soft Skin by Timmies
Angels by Khalid
Come Away With Me by Norah Jones
If I Ain't Got You by Alicia Keys
Sign of the Times by Harry Styles
im so sick of this by guccihighwaters
idontwannabeyouanymore by Billie Eilish

Midnight Minds

We were sprinting down the dark street of Hickam Drive, towels in hand, and heading for the lake. We all knew it would be cold, but none of us cared. Our midnight minds were running wild. With every step closer to the sand, the more excited I got. I could feel the pine needles pricking the soles of my feet, but it made me want to run even faster. The giggles of my friends quieted as my legs flew down the concrete drive.

I could see the water reflecting the moonlight and my feet hit the sand. It was still warm from the sunny day before. I slowed because I didn't want to leave them behind, not because I was having second thoughts. I dropped my towel on the sand just as my three best friends arrived. I started sprinting again, this time to the dock where the water was deep enough to jump into. My friends followed and our voices became louder as we strayed from the neighborhoods of sleeping families. My feet hit the rough wood that was the dock and I didn't slow down this time, I would only have second thoughts if I did. I could feel Jackson's body running beside mine. He grabbed my hand. When our fingers interlaced, my hand fit in his.

We were heading straight for the edge and it was getting nearer as the presence of what we were today was left to sit with our towels in the sand. Closer... closer...

My feet left the wood of the dock and I was suspended in mid-air, frozen in time. Jackson's hand gripped tighter as we entered the murky lake water. It was cold when we were running but the water blanketed me, welcomed me. I heard two other splashes which I could only assume were Crystal and Jared. I came to the surface of the water and took a breath. My eyes opened and I could see my friends, their eyes wide with delight.

We were panting loudly from running and I was starting to develop a cramp in my side, but I brushed it off. The group gathered under the dock to find a boat. Our boat. We climbed in and helped each other not capsize it. The box was there, along with a couple of sodas. Tonight was the night we would leave the box of treasures at the bottom of the lake. A time capsule, if you will. It had our photos, notes from each of us, and a few other things. Some things that should stay at the bottom of the lake for good, some that should come up. Jackson volunteered to swim it down since he knew where to put it by heart.

"You do the honors Ives," Crystal urged, using my nickname. The others agreed, though I could tell Jackson wanted to do it all the same.

"We can do it together, Jackson."

"No Ivy, you should do it. It's your bucket list, anyway." He sounded disappointed.

I gave in, grabbing the box by the thin handle. Standing up was a bit of a task since we were in a boat. Jared helped me into the water.

“If I don’t come up in one minute, come get me, okay?” They agreed.

I took a large breath, knowing I’d be down there for more time than I would like. All the same, I was still doing it. I bobbed up then down into the water and immediately opened my eyes, but I knew it wasn’t going to help. The cold water was as murky as ever; I knew where I was going. I made a beeline for the edge of the dock and went straight towards the center. I put my hand out in front of me so I could feel it when I got there.

Jagged pieces of rock stabbed at my hand as I pushed off the massive structure of rock to get to the bottom. Seaweed brushed my thigh, and I shied away. A little cave opened up in front of me and though I could see little, I knew where it was. I paddled into the cave with the metal box in hand and reached around a bend in the rock to feel a space about as big as my head. In my left hand, I held the box tightly. My right felt around for another box. This time, already in the underwater cave.

Four years ago, my friends did the same thing that we were doing today, leaving a time capsule for others to find years later. The only thing was, there was a list for us to finish before college. A bucket list. We hid it in the same spot that we were hiding our new one.

My hand touched the cold metal. It had algae growing on it. I grabbed it and let it fall to the sand while putting the new box in.

My lungs were burning.

I grabbed the box and pushed out of the cave, shooting towards the dark night. I gasped for air when I broke the surface.

“Got it!” I shouted towards the boat.

Jackson’s hands punched up in triumph; I paddled to the boat. Hands enveloped me and hauled me up into the boat. Crystal took the box out of my hands and set it on the hull. Once I caught my breath, Jared opted to open it and we let him, just wanting to read the list.

Jackson handed Jared the screwdriver to pry it open, knowing all too well it was stuck shut, but Jared popped it open with ease.

“Guess all that football was worth something after all,” Jared laughed, but we all knew better than to laugh with him.

Jared had broken his leg in the spring right before the big game. The one that scouts were coming to. He had been the best on the team by far, but the injury prevented him from getting any scholarships for college. He was going to Oregon State with an undecided major.

The box was open and all we did was stare. I was the first one who leaned forward to grab the list. My hands closed around the paper, folded in fours; I pulled it out and unfolded it. The pen that we had used was a little smudged and the paper was damp, but I could still read it.

“C’ mon Ivy, just read it!” Crystal urged.

Scrawled on the paper were twelve items; we had all written three. Crystal’s perfect script started it off, mine followed, Jackson’s after that, and Jared’s last.

Bucket List for the Summer Before College

By Crystal Severe, Ivy Hudson, Jackson Hughes, and Jared

Rodriguez

Sneak into the school's pool
Pull a senior class prank
Go to Prom
Burn all of my homework in a bonfire
Throw a drink in someone's face
Carve my name into a tree
Volunteer at an animal shelter
Get into Harvard
Throw a party
Watch the sunrise on the lake
Go mattress surfing
Fake a British accent

I felt all of us go still, leaving the only sound the waves, a quiet whisper against the shore. Jackson was first to speak, but his voice was barely above a murmur.

"We've already done some things on the list. Look," he pointed at the list, "Pull a senior class prank." They had put the school property on Craigslist and the principal had gotten calls all day to inquire about the property. "And go to prom. We did that."

Crystal added, "You got into Harvard, Jackson!" He smiled.

"We have to finish this by the end of the summer! What do you think Ivy?" Jackson prodded.

"I don't know, guys. It was a long time ago and we probably won't get it done by the end of summer."

"You're the one who never wants summer to end."

I paused. I knew he was right. They were silent, waiting for my answer, pleading for it to be a yes.

"Okay," I sighed. I bit my tongue to keep myself from complaining.

They jumped up in joy and rocked the boat a little too hard, causing us to lose our balance. We all jumped into the water, laughing and sputtering. Somehow the boat didn't overturn. Our night ended by walking to the nearby convenience store to buy candy and soda. The rest of the group went home and fell right to sleep, food still in hand. I fell asleep after all of my friends, not a worry in the world. Only pure joy from our full night. My eyelids finally fell and my breathing slowed, leaving a dreamless sleep ahead.

Jenna McEwen

Rhyming Couplet

From the depths of my heart my love flew fast
To your heart from my heart our love will last.

A Fluttering Heart

I would ask you over
But my tongue is too weak
And my heart is lovesick.

Little Love Box

He had held it, small and white in his hands. He had held it, its light, boxed frame transferring from hand to hand. He had held it, the marble inside rolled back and forth.

Tink. Tink. Tink.

He had held it, his heart beating slow and sure.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

He had held it, waiting for her to come. He had held it, not letting go. But she did not come. The box stayed with him, small and white in his hands, traveling here and walking there. He held it, its light, boxed frame transferring from hand to hand. He held it, the marble continued to roll.

Tink. Tink. Tink.

He held it, and his heart continued to beat.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

But then he let go. The box hit the ground, no longer white, but grey. He was not holding it, and the marble did not roll. But his heart still beat.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

And then he held it, small and grey in his hands. He held it, its light, boxed frame transferring from his hand to hers. They held it, the marbles inside rolling back and forth.

Clink. Clink. Clink.

They held it and their hearts beat.

Thumpthump. Thumpthump. Thumpthump.

Memoir

The chill of the wind seeped into my bones and
I brushed it away with a sweep of my hand
Sudden and soulful the earth broke in two
Crying out in a pain paramount to the heart.
The noise was like a cascade of peanut shells
Cracked and crumbling, bones breaking, and
Mountains crashing into oceans --
Subdued to mere stones and dirt piles.
Around the corner I collapsed, the abrupt burden
Of the earth now weighing on my narrow shoulders.
Needing to be lifted from their colored sorrows
I cried for them, cried out in pain, pain too tremendous
To be heard -- only felt, an internal earthquake
Terrible and shaking, rattling and demanding --
A stop to this infinite madness.
I yelled out and my heart continued to weep
How could this happen to us -- to us who
Worked so hard to keep the world standing
To keep the roots of the trees in the ground
And the shine of the sun on our cheeks.
To be blessed with the petals of ruby roses
And only ever wonder about when the rain will come
But the earth broke in two due to the hateful spite
Of arsenic enemies and death caused by common
Acidic poison -- tidal waves turned into smoke before
We could find a cure and now it is too late.
Around the corner I collapsed --
The earth has broke in two, sudden and soulful
And now there is nothing we can do.

Millennia

When eternity dawned on us, the lions curled up and wept.
The specificity of time stunned our limited brains and we
blinked in the sunlight as we stepped out of our square houses.

Majesty

“You are about to inherit a nation” my father told me.
His firm hand on my shoulder I looked up into his eyes.
I knew worry lined my face but when I looked up at him no feeling of that
sort, no concern and no fear was featured at all.
He saw my nervousness and smiled at me, his eyes full of warmth.
“Oh, my son, you will do just fine.”

Euphony

The hearts beat, the hearts pulse, and they pump blood for a while.
Then as subtle and soft as a bubble flows down a sink, as gentle as a
summer breeze through fall leaves, and as calm as ocean tides lapping up
warm sand they slip away.
Subtle, soft, gentle, and calm the hearts stop beating and no longer pump
blood.

Two Roads Diverged in a Yellow Wood

I walk along the road. You do not have the will to walk! You do not have
the will to live! And I don't, so I collapse right there along the road. But I
keep living. Why? I think to myself, lying in a heap, along the road. You
only have to smile! You only have to laugh and cry when everyone else
does! Why can't you do this? My heart keeps beating there along the road.
It seemed to me that when everyone else laughed or cried it was meant
for someone else. Me, I laugh for myself when I want to laugh. Me, I cry
when I need to cry, not when someone else wants me to. I blink, there
along the road. Tell me about despair, that's what everyone says, but then
no one listens. I had tried to talk, to connect with someone, to pour out my
heart and meld it with theirs, but they turned their head and laughed and
cried with someone else. I lay there crumpled along the road.

Winter Break Vacation

My burning skin
The whistling wind
Snow.

My New Novel

He was trapped under the car...
The tiger lept...
I hate cliffhangers.

Avalanche of the Gods

A sudden flash of light
The mountains grumbling concern
My whole life -- gone.

SpicE

My heart burned
It was hell
Hot sauce is a no.

3rd Period Hunger

Hunger. Starvation. I can feel myself withering away. I just know it. No one can feel my pain. No one shares my misery. I can feel my stomach dropping away into nothing, but still it rumbles, demanding food.

Demanding life. Demanding sustenance.

“I need food...” I mutter. No one looks at me. “I want food.” Everyone ignores me. I can feel myself fading... and fading...

But then I’m not. I’m not fading. I’m not starving. I’m not withering away. But I am hungry and I just want a snack.

The Apple

Her arm was extended. She was holding an apple in her upturned palm. Its dark red skin contrasted with her white hands. Her fingernails were painted black.

“Here, you have it,” she said. He reached his hand out, palm down, and took the apple from her. His pointer finger brushed against her hand in the exchange. A smile played on her ruby lipsticked lips. “Eat it,” she said. He looked into her eyes for a moment.

He bit into the red skin of the apple. Crisp sweetness flooded his tongue.

He chewed slowly, savoring the refreshing fruit. He swallowed.

And gagged.

He began to cough, trying to regain a steady breath. It was as if all of a sudden icy soda was being poured into his lungs through a tube, bubbling and cold, each inhale causing more liquid to spill in. His breathing became more ragged and he pulled at his collar, tugging at his tie. She took a step toward him. He writhed backward panicking, bumping into the wall. Fear pricked at his heart and it skipped a beat. Calm down, he thought, just calm down. He let his hands drop. He put them on his knees, trying to even his breathing. Getting panicked about choking could lead to actual choking.

Stay calm. She stepped closer to him. He hadn’t choked on the apple.

The apple.

It was on the floor now. He had dropped it when he began to gag. Her black stilettos were mere inches away from it. Trying not to cough wasn’t making anything better. He breathed faster and heavier now, the inhaled and exhaled were growing closer and closer together. He couldn’t get enough air. The room swayed and suddenly tipped to the right. He stumbled and dropped to his knees. What is happening to me? he thought, I didn’t choke on the apple. He hadn’t choked on the apple. She squatted in front of him. The white flesh of the bitten apple was exposed. Now desperately gasping for air he dropped to the floor. He wheezed. His chest

heaved. Black spots spun through the air. His breathing shortened and slowed. What is happening to me? he thought. His pulse radiated through his body. It was the only sound he could hear. She smiled as she picked the apple up from the ground and brought it to her lips. The white flesh against the red. She took a bite.

Lost At Sea

A thick black eyelash on my finger,
Two sets of hands holding me back,
A drip of green paint on your cheek,
Tigers finding their way in the dark.

War in a Rainstorm

I have seen the wind and I have tasted its rain. I have held the cold and I have heard its whisper. I have felt cries of laughter and bustling pain. I have lived through a war.

I have seen the soldiers and I have tasted their blood. I have held their swords and I have heard their hearts. I have felt blurry lives and wanted deaths. I have lived through a rainstorm.

Evading Delusion

The raindrop fell, purple in my hands
I looked up to the sky, trying to find my broken voice
The yellow clouds tumbled and the sun rained some more
I walked through the black grass, my hands outstretched --
Gathering up as many purple raindrops as I could.

My red heart laughed as I walked, tripping through the grass --
Like I had only learned to walk just yesterday
I could hear it, bustling and bright and indigo
I held my raindrops close, cupped in my hands
And stepped into the river daring my entire life.

In the depths of midnight I kissed my purple raindrops
And sang a silent lullaby, a mute prayer of royal blue
Without my voice I sang, my sound a siren to the ocean
I walked along the river, my feet trailing inky shadows
Leaving a mark of where I was and where I had been
Holding my purple raindrops.

Summer

A rustle of trees
A cooing of birds
Silent air.

Matches

A spark lighting the fight
The flames burning the snow
Wolves in the night.

Uncertainty

Her vivid tears frightened him. He didn't know what to do. There she was standing in front of him. Everything he ever wanted. But she was crying. His heart beat for her. He couldn't shand her like this. She seemed so small and broken. He took a quiet step toward her. "What's wrong?" She stumbled forward as though it hurt to move. She collapsed in his arms and he held her. He held her close.

Quarantine

I looked around unsure. I let out a sigh, wrapping my arms around myself. I could see my breath in the air. The wooden floor creaked under the weight of my steps. Dust coated the couches and bookshelves. Somewhere behind me a door slammed. I flinched. My heart beat faster in my chest. My eyes glanced quickly about the room. A feeling of rushed nervousness hit me. "Hello?" The whisper came out of me shakily and without practice. I hadn't spoken in three days.

For You My Dear, Anything

And I, and I, and I, will never ever never leave left begone from your side at your side by your side. But you, but you, but you are not was not is not waiting for me for me by me.

I, I, I, cannot feel your spirit, your heart, your eyes. You are lost, swirling, twirling, confused at your mind.

I am running, running, running for you from you to you at your side from your side by your side. I reach for your hand, your hand, to catch your wrist to be by your side at your side with your side. And I run and run and run and run but your fingers slip away. From me. From your side at your side by your side. I miss you.

And I, and I, and I will never ever never leave left begone from your side at your side by your side. Unless you need me to. Then I will.

Contemplating Picturesque

Magenta. Magenta. Magenta. Blue. Is magenta blue? No, definitely not. Waves of purple... and red... or pink. Wait, red! Yeah, red for sure. But some people think not. Turquoise is distinct. And solid. But soft and solid and turquoise. Cold to the touch and smooth like tile. Solid. Auburn. You can feel the tumble of auburn like wind through hair and air and trees and wind. Tumbling. And auburn.

If lust were a color what would it be? Bold and powerful without a doubt, but what else? Magenta. If lust were a color, would it have lace? No, love would have lace because both are so fine and pure and delicate. Love and lace. Dusty. Auburn. Sadness I feel would have the sound of a lake and the smell of rain at night not the sound. Soft. A lake. Solid turquoise.

8:00 a.m.

The morning air drifted through the open window gently fluttering the curtain. The breeze came slowly over to me, like a butterfly bouncing forward on summer air. The breeze touched my cheek, caressing my skin and sending a sharp brush of cold along the path of my tears. I remembered why I had been crying. I sniffed and angrily swiped at my eyes, pushing the weight of the tears away. For now at least. I lay back on my bed and inhaled deeply, my breath shaking a little. I looked again at the window and from this angle could see a ray of sun climbing through. It alighted on my white sheets and set a soft warm glow upon them. I sighed and rubbed my hands through the sheets. I would make it through today at least.

A Moment to Myself

I skipped through rows and rows of sunflowers. Wow, that sounds *super* cheery. I mean, I was happy, I *am* happy, but skipping through fields of flowers seems a bit too cliché to accurately describe what I was feeling in this moment. Sure, the sun *was* setting. The sky seemed like a beautiful watercolor, the warm hues of oranges and pinks smeared across the horizon and gave the air a golden glow. And sure, I *was* smack-dab in the middle of a bunch of sunflowers and that was exactly where I wanted to be. Skipping though? It was more like me freakishly sprinting through the fields, laughing at the top of my lungs. And even when I collapsed in exhaustion after my blissful sonic speed energy gallop, I could not wipe the ridiculous grin off my face.

Studio Dressing Room

Voices under voices and words over words, we all speak loudly, excited to tell our tales. Sometimes though none of us are really talking because we all are speaking too loud at once to understand anything. But we don't mind. We are where we want to be, together in that little room laughing at each other's' misfortunes and sharing our thoughts. It's as though we share our hearts for a moment, that's what it feels like sometimes, standing there connecting with quick stories and rapid shouts. When the chance of time and self-doubt brings us upon the verge of departure, we stand closer knowing that these moments are precious, these moments are ours. We stand there shoulder to shoulder, laughter blending with tears. I wouldn't want to be apart from them, those are my friends.

Tyler Mcminn

Mansion

Magnificent pillars aligned, the Ribcage Of The Mansion
Dead trees claw at the exterior as It's Scraped By The Branches
Winged statues, cracked from the inevitable rolling Marble Of Time
Wilted flowers in the garden refined by the tongue of decay and the Gargle
Of Blight,
The building weeps & shivers in creaks & whispers with a Gust Of Wind,
Slivers of moonlight shun in strips from above the mist with a sharp aura
that could Puncture Skin,
Lunar phase similar to medusa's gaze, these thoughts of putrid snakes make
skulls Rattle In Torture,
Jaws snapping and hissing straight from the Shadows Of Horror,
While the entrance doorway is black ice hollow as an Empty Tomb,
When it opens only cold malevolence comes crawling forth for your
Impending Doom.

Left Behind

Gaping skull maw,
The icy sword of death,
An unfortunate soldier.

Ghost

The days are growing darker, everything is Grey & Black,
A patience Made Of Glass, shattered by my own burning rage of Flame &
Ash,
A Raven With Broken Wings sitting at the gates of hell as I Wait For An
Opening,
Speak on my name and get a Taste Of The Ghost In Me,
I feel evil in my veins but I don't follow your bullshit because Satans A
Joke To Me,
The only time I rap with the devil is if I Spit On A Pentagram,
Reach for the stars and catch my tongue before I Script With My Better
Hand...
Pissed Off & Depressed, nervous scratching until I rip my Skin Off Of The
Flesh
You'll enjoy being Enveloped By Demons
until they burn your friends with the same fire they Melted Your Dreams
With,
You'll never be spared with a Hellish Allegiance & there's no going back
once you Fell In The Deep End,
So don't expect me to Save You From Your Ignorance,
You among many others never gave a shit about my Faith Or What I Did
With It,
To you I'm just a ghost, I'm rarely even considered a Presence In The
Room,
My differences leave me outcasted and Disconnected From The Youth
While my depression is infused into my head and it can bruise you with
the Essence Of The Gloom,
I'm a lonesome ship trapped inside a Vodka Bottle, the Rotten Model
With thoughts ever so Wrong & Awful...
Each and every day I am just Treated Like A Ghost,
The odd one out, getting heated by the Demons I Approach,
Closer than ever to death for various Reasons I Invoke,
But this is only the half of it, the full story's hidden Deep Behind A Cloak,
And to prevent harm on others: the rest of the words I am forced to Keep
Inside My Throat...

My Forbidden Desert

In the scorching sands of My Forbidden Desert, the sun ignites animal Hide
& Skin & Feathers
Spawning something haunting only told in old stories in Hieroglyphic
Letters -
A different realm that feeds off fear and Devours Ravenous Energy,
A building place for ideas yet not a sandbox, more like an Hourglass Of
Infinity -
Wandering lost, no train of thought with a Poltergeist In My Head
The possession infests my Skull & Spine & My Neck, hung up by spirit as
my Soul Divides Into Threads
This place is horrid, empty skies where black Vultures Dive Into Death,
Strike the body of memories, Pull And Pry It To Shreds, gnarly beaks and
claws Pulverizing The Flesh /
In the Depths Of My Mind, deep down there's a Crevice Inside,
A Malevolent Shrine for horror within a Desert Of Time,
Where darkness is solace, and passionate love is forever Bending The
Light...

Beneath

Rain pattered on the windows, trickling down in the back of the hearse,
Not a single mutter or cry his casket had earned,
Nothing more than a victim of a ravenous curse,
He'd talk of all the wrath and the hurt, the mad in the world
But He spoke of many lies, a savage at work who'd barely scavenged his
worth
A malicious tongue in the skull of his corpse, decaying with the maggots &
worms
He said he was down to Earth... for that reason only he's now a man of his
words.
No epitaph was carved in his gravestone, it's deemed as worthless,
A fallen angel who tarnished his Halo with a mind like a demon circus,
& Though he was finished, people could hear a scream from beneath the
surface,
And the chipping and clawing Of his Spirit scratching at the coffin lid,
Crafting something ominous, they say his grave talks back if you're
passing & you cross with it, trying to grab you through the gravel in the
rocky mix,
Nevertheless Here lies, the savage who forgot to live.

Ashes

Together, we slid the silver table into the scorching crevice. Rusty worn
metals scraped each other as the room illuminated with a glowing golden
red radiance, like the color of hatred. The flaming heat intensified as
smoke invaded my nostrils, and I coughed when my eyes become glossy
with tears from the foul stench of decay. One more push, followed by the
clicking of an iron hatch sealing it's latches as it closed. The blaze crackled
from within, and the shadows no longer danced and quivered on the walls
in response to the flickers of fire. Now, the room itself shivered. Unease
and disturbance had frozen my veins in fear, now eager to break the
coldness once more, seeking warmth from the yellow shine outlining the
edges of the chamber door when the cremation had begun. I fucking hate
this job.

Spirit Poisoning

Walking through iniquitous pestilence, I had no idea of such wicked
malevolence
that could poison my skin and my flesh with it like blistering vesicant.
My heart has now been placed in the aisle of sickness,
Caught in the web of fear turning vile and twisted,
Wandering in the fog misguided my mystic grotesque smiles of mischief.
I see An odious deity wearing a mask of seven faces
As my spirit escaped my chest, body collapsed in separation,
I was the soul that the snake punctured his pathogenic fangs in.
And the sands blacken with blood from a coalition of the pharaohs of
Egypt,
As righteous as my mind is, corruption dawns as I eternally battle with
demons,
because where the light shines the brightest... the shadows' the deepest.
Yet not black, but jade is the scales of that which lurks within,
Below the deepest crevice in the trench of the cursed abyss.
While any form of life who's mistaken it for an urban myth,
falls to the roaring twisted sibilation of the serpent's hiss.

Riley Mendoza

III

With clogged airways, gasping desperately for air
With invisible forces pressing against your brain
As it leaks out through your nose
Dripping uncontrollably
Nostrils tickled by the dry air
Trying to hold everything in
Trying to prevent the explosion
You try, and you try
Until you can't try anymore
Until you erupt in a flurry of microbes
Infecting
Corrupting the freshness around you
Achoo

What I Mean When I Say Guilt

It's painful
The kind of painfulness that continuously eats away at your soul
That boils your blood
and leads you to question your entire existence
The kind of painfulness that you feel with every nerve
That leads you to despise your entire being
Showered in darkness, you lay curled up
Waiting for their wrath to rain down upon you
But it never does
Because they don't know what you did

Mon

Ever heard the story of the monster under your bed
That creeps its way into your dreams at night
The invisible puppeteer
Pulling your strings
Implanting its evil into the depths of your bones
Sending shivers down your spine and goosebumps up your arms
Tainting your fragile innocence with its potent darkness
Poisoning your mind
As your brain rots from the inside out
It takes control of you
Corrupting your very being
Telling you to think wickedly
To speak atrociously
To act maliciously
Yet the blame never falls unto you
Cause it's not your fault
You can sleep at night knowing it's only the monster under your bed
Knowing that you never wanted to do or say or think any of those sinister things
You can sleep at night feeling like the victim
The victim that everyone forgot to save
Until the epiphany
Until you realize you're the monster under your bed
The monster in your head

Descent

I'm walking down a set of stairs, mindlessly.
Letting my thoughts wander away
Into the deep, dark abyss.
I continue to walk towards nothingness, towards emptiness
Where all feeling fades away,
Leaving fear and worry.
Fear of others' forgetfulness,
Worry about my own.
But would that be so terrible?
To disappear into the darkness.
To let yourself fade away.
It's tiring to always avoid tripping on the steps,
To always avoid the neverending fall.
But would that be so terrible?
To stop evading the gloom.

It Just Exists

There's an itch
An unscratchable itch
Deep within my throat
Just begging to be let out
No matter how hard I scratch
Or how sharp my nails
The itch never disappears

There's a pain
An incurable pain
Hiding behind my eyes
Twisting up every nerve
Barely allowing my eyelids to part

But I have to live with it
All of it
Getting out of bed every day
Getting dressed every day
Leaving the house every day
Seeing their faces every day
Because it's all supposed to be easy, right?
Because it's just the cold, right?

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Rock after Wallace Stevens

I. A weapon
To access easily
When evading a threat.

II. A stone
Smooth or rough to the touch
Uniquely constructed.

III. A traveler
Skipping across rivers
To reach its destination.

IV. A rock.

V. It's just a rock, dude

VI. It's a fucking rock

VII. Stop.

VIII. I told you to STOP GOD DAMMIT.

IX. Why won't you listen to me?

X. PUT THAT PEN DOWN OR SO HELP ME...

XI. Do you want me to call your mother?!

XII. I give up.
Congrats, are you happy now?

XIII. You've completely crushed my spirit,
You...you... ROCK

Underwear Guy

Ryland and Kieran were the first to arrive at Addison's house. Then Lennie. Then Jessie and Taj. Each showed up with their snacks in one arm and their paper clipped dares in the other.

"Since we're all here now, are you guys ready to start?" Addison asked.

The other five all nodded and sat down around the living room coffee table. One by one, they piled their dares into the bowl in the center of the table.

Taj smiled. "I'm so siked for this."

"I know." Kieran said. "I've been waiting all year to see who'll win the money tonight."

"I heard Ryland's got some good ones this time." Lennie said.

Ryland chuckled. "You have no idea, dude."

"After all these years, and I'm still the only guy." Addison mumbled.

"Get over it, Addison." Jessie pushed him away. "Okay, so let's get this started already. What's the order?"

Kieran thought for a moment. "Let's do...Taj, Lennie, Me, Ryland, Jessie, and Addison."

Taj drew a piece of paper from the bowl first.

"Okay." Taj nodded. "This isn't that bad."

She got up and left the room. The others talked amongst themselves until Taj came back with a pair of scissors.

Jessie raised an eyebrow while Taj took a thick chunk of hair and began to cut off quite a few inches of it.

"OH MY GOSH. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" Lennie asked, hands gripped to the side of her head.

"The paper said I had to cut my hair." Taj held her hair up to examine it.

Lennie stared at her, wide eyed. "I didn't mean that much."

Taj returned to her seat and they continued picking dares in order. It was finally Addison's turn. He scanned the bowl before grabbing a paper that rested on top of the pile. He unfolded the piece of paper slowly.

"Can you hurry up?" Jessie asked.

Addison sighed. He read the paper silently. "Are you kidding me?"

"What does it say?" Taj asked.

"I can't tell you." Addison said.

"Interesting." Ryland smiled.

"Well, are you gonna do something?" Lennie asked.

Addison stared at the piece of paper.

"Yeah. What are you waiting for?" Ryland asked.

Addison got up and took off his shirt.

“Ooh, I like this one.” Kieran said.

“Do I really have to do this?” Addison said while looking around at the girls.

“Well, you don’t *really* have to.” Ryland said. “If it’s already time for you to admit defeat.”

Kieran laughed. “Are you gonna be the first one out again, Addison?”

“No. I can do this.”

He walked out the house with his shoulders held high, slamming the door behind him.

“You guys might wanna take a look out the window.” Ryland said.

The other four rushed over and pulled the curtains aside. Addison was running down the street in nothing but his underwear.

They all burst into laughter. When he came back around the block, Kieran opened the window and the girls cheered for him. Addison walked back inside with rosy cheeks.

“I am never doing that again.” Addison said.

Ryland grinned. “Thank you so much *for* that.”

Addison sighed and left again. He ran another lap around the block in his underwear, and came back panting.

The girls were all laughing.

“So, it’s that kind of dare.” Kieran said.

“We have to figure out what the trigger is.” Taj laughed. “That was just great.”

They completed a couple more rounds of dares before people began to surrender.

Jessie was first to lose when she didn’t want to let Lennie use a permanent marker to draw on her face.

“Dude, at least you’ll be leaving with your dignity. You know, for what it’s worth.” Ryland said to Jessie.

Addison ran another lap around the block.

Taj was second to lose when she was too lazy to go to Safeway and serenade the first cashier she saw.

Ryland furrowed her eyebrows. “You really chopped off a chunk of your hair just to sacrifice the win for this?”

Addison ran another lap.

Kieran was third when she didn’t want to make an account on a matchmaking website for furies.

“For someone so freaky, Kieran, I’m surprised that’s where you drew the line.” Ryland said.

Addison ran another.

And Lennie was fourth when she didn’t want to post an ugly picture of herself on Instagram.

Ryland patted her shoulder. “It’s probably for the best.”

Addison ran.

Finally, the only two left in the game were Ryland and Addison.

Addison leaned against a couch cushion with sweat dripping down

from his forehead. Kieran and Taj drooled over him in the corner of the room.

“How are ya, Underwear Guy?” Ryland asked.

Addison struggled to catch his breath. “I’m... feeling...great.”

“Good.” Ryland smiled. “I guess it’s my turn now.”

She shoved her hand into the bowl, grabbing a random paper. She unfolded it with the same smug expression she’d been wearing all night.

“Ew.” She scrunched her nose. “It says to eat the first bug I find outside.”

Addison laughed.

“Sorry. That was mine.” Taj said.

“It’s fine. I can do it.” Ryland said as she crumpled up the piece of paper.

“Really?” Addison asked.

Ryland tried to smile. “Of course... I’m the reigning champ.”

“Right, I forgot you’ve won the last three years.

“But before I lose all self-respect, I want to tell you something Addison.” Ryland said.

“What is it?” Addison raised an eyebrow.

“I just wanted to say that I knew you could do it. Every year, you’re the first one to lose, but look at you now. You’re one of the final two.” Ryland smiled at him. “I’m so proud of you...for making it this far.”

Addison sighed, standing up.

Ryland laughed, and Addison ran around the block one more time.

When he returned, he stayed on his feet with his hands on his hips.

“Well? Are you gonna do your dare now?”

Ryland laughed. “There’s no way in hell that I am doing that.”

“Are you kidding me?” Addison asked.

Ryland shook her head. “Anyway, I’m tired so I’m gonna head home now.”

“Yeah, me too.” Lennie said. The rest of the girls agreed.

They each left \$1 for Addison, the winner, and went their separate ways.

Once he was alone at home again, he took out the piece of paper that ruined his night and read it again.

Keep this one a secret: For the rest of the game, you have to run around the block in your underwear every time someone says the word ‘for.’

Addison crumpled up the paper in his hand. He never wanted to hear that word again. He would never had been free as long as that word was spoken. Now, there was nobody left to speak and he was free.

Barf

She threw up for the fourth time that day. The first time was after she woke up feeling too tired to go to school despite already staying home the day before. The second time was after she screamed at the maid for forgetting to wash her favorite crop top. And the third time was after she saw hot Tommy's abs while they were swimming laps in the pool for P.E. It was only 11:00 a.m. Reyna couldn't tell what had made her so nauseous. She had just finished ranting on Twitter about how bothersome it was that her parents still hadn't gotten her a personal limo when she felt the need to rush to the bathroom. Maybe it was something she ate or drank, but all that was on her mind was her basketball team's playoff game that night. Reyna flushed the toilet, gulped down some water, and shoved a mint into her mouth before returning to class.

After a long day, Reyna finally returned home and began to prepare for the game she knew she'd have to single-handedly win as the star player of the team. She barely made it to her porch steps before her half-digested lunch flew out of her mouth onto her new Gucci slippers. That was the fifth time. Tears streamed down her face as she took off her shoes and threw them at the maid, ordering her to fix them through loud sobs. Reyna tossed another mint into her mouth and hobbled to her room to get dressed for the game. She slipped into her jersey and a clean pair of slippers before leaving the house with her Louis Vuitton basketball bag.

Relaxing in the back seat of the family limo, Reyna instagram-stalked the ugly whore, Miranda Lane, who stole her boyfriend last month. Two minutes into scrolling through her feed, she broke out in a cold sweat as her mouth began to fill up with saliva. She gripped her stomach with concentration, almost losing control every time the driver braked.

Once they reached their destination, the driver wished Ms. Duarte good luck at her game, but she couldn't understand him because she didn't speak peasant. Reyna's stomach lurched with each step she took, but she pushed on knowing that the team would undoubtedly lose without her.

In the team room, there was an abundance of snacks, but a single plate of rice crispy treats caught Reyna's eye. Her face lit up immediately as she made her way over to the sweet snack, feeling better already. She devoured the whole platter within minutes.

Shortly before warm-ups were about to begin, Reyna ran to bathroom and flung herself into one of the stalls to barf up her delightful dessert. That was the sixth time. She hurried back to the gym after rinsing out her mouth. There wasn't enough time to get a mint. She had already missed half of the warm-up time, so her coach pulled her aside to ask to where she had been. Reyna mentioned the bathroom and told him that she had felt nauseous all day, but that she was also starting to feel better. She smiled innocently, and jogged onto the court to join her team for the rest of

the warm-up.

When the game started, Reyna was noticeably slower than usual, but that hideous tart, Miranda, was playing like a rockstar. Since her coach knew Reyna wasn't feeling well, he decided to play Miranda instead of her. Reyna stewed on the bench thinking about how much of a potato Miranda was for stealing both her boyfriend and her playing time. She began to feel light and airy, as if she'd float away if it weren't for her churning stomach tethering her to the ground.

The other team's coach called a time out, so Reyna and the rest of the bench stood up to huddle around her coach and the five players in the game. As her mouth began to fill up with saliva once again, she knew there wasn't any way that she'd be able to hold it in any longer. The burning acid made its way up her throat, and Reyna yacked onto Miranda's back. That was the seventh time.

Reyna wobbled to the side, feeling as if a weight had been lifted off of her. She collapsed on the court in heap, with her insides still stained on her lips. Her coach rushed over to her. She didn't have a pulse.

ZLK

I asked Zoe if we had any memories together. She said 'no' and told me she hated me. Then she cackled.

Maile Olson

Winter

Cold
Everything is cold
And wet

I walk home listening to the squish of my wet boots on the cobblestones
Feeling the wind lash rain into my face
But most of all, the cold

Cold
I wish it were cold enough to snow

I like it in the morning--
When the sun breaks through the trees
And bathes the ground in a million glittering diamonds

I like it in the afternoon--
When we all bundle up and go outside
The sting of the compacted snow hitting my cheek
The satisfaction of my own hitting someone else

I like it in the evening--
When the clouds starts to fall again
Large, puffy flakes
I like to catch them in my palm
Watch the patterns crystallize
Then melt

I like it at night--
When I go outside
To simply listen
To the whispers of the darkness

I like to let the shadows play tricks on me
Making me think
There's a cloaked figure
Silent, gliding over the snow
Its cloak barely brushing the ground
Like a phantom

Then I get home
Go inside
Where it's warm
Dry off by the fire
Listen to the rain
And wonder--
Will it be snow come morning?
Or will the rain stay?
Dreary
Wet
Dark
Cold

Untitled Poems

Hope is like a lampshade
One minute, it's flaring up with a bright intensity
The next, it's gone
Dark
Extinguished

*

Stars are like sliding glass doors
Most of the time, they're there
You just don't always see them

*

In an ocean of people
An explosion of sound
Silence

*

Too many days are gone
Don't try to race a clock
You'll never win

*

The sunrise shatters
The mountain peak
The clouds pass by

The End of Life

I never thought my life would end like this
Who would, really?
A swimming champion drowning in a shipwreck
Surfers drown all the time, I remind myself
Even Eddie Aikau couldn't escape the yawning jaws of the storm-tossed sea
My head is bruised and bloody
My lung scream for air
My arms and legs feel like lead
My head breaks the surface-
A split second passes when air punctuates the bone-crushing force of the water
Only for me to be thrown under again
Rocks loom like great giants in front of me
I cannot stop the current
I am sucked down in a whirlpool
I cannot breathe
I don't want to die today
But I can't see a way out of this
I don't know where the shore is
Not even the general direction of the shipwreck
I don't know which way is up or down
Or left or right
Death opens its arms to me
The night ocean beckons, singing softly
A lullaby impossible to resist
I freefall into its clutches
I never thought my life would end like this
Until it did

How to Capture Time

When you read my title, I know the instant thought that goes through your head

How *do* you capture time?

Truth is, I don't know

True answer, you don't

Time is uncapturable (if uncapturable is even a word)

You can record time and play it over and over again till you'll never forget it

You can freeze yourself in that one moment and never think about anything else

You can let time move forward and go on without you

But is that really what you want?

You tell me, I don't know what you want

Say someone important to you dies

You feel like everything will stop

That time will cease to exist

But no

They say the world will keep turning

Life goes on, with or without you

Technically, it's not life, or the world

It's time

The clocks keep ticking

Stupid words of comfort still fall out of your friends' mouths

Time won't stop

It won't wait for you

Even if everyone is dead and gone and forgotten

Even if the galaxies have exploded from all the waves of war and violence and everything that tears societies apart

Not even the universe can stand in time's way

Because time only has one way, one path

A path that no one, nothing else can follow

Time goes on

So maybe you could say that time is the greatest, the strongest thing ever

Invincible

Because time goes on when nothing else will or can

Because time walks a path that no one else can touch, not even the lightest brush of a fingertip

The path of infinity

And that is why time is impossible to capture

The Wolf With the Glowing Emerald Eyes

The rain lashed its whips of water against the window panes
The moon shone its cloud-white light through the cracks in the walls
It sings, I realized, the moon sings
An eerie, majestic song
Welcoming the rain
A calling, almost
So I crossed my dark and creaky floor
Peered through the slits in the curtains
A pair of eyes
Glowing, beautiful, horrible emerald eyes
I drew back fast, heart racing, tripping over the floor
But the moon's song drew me back again
A creature, a blue-black wolf
With the glowing emerald eyes
Teeth: long, snow-white fangs stained red
Flashed-then gone
With the rain
The moon shone brighter-blinding me
I looked away
Back to the wolf with the glowing emerald eyes
But it had left me
Turned its face to the moon, tilting its great head back
And howled
A song somehow more sinister and skin-chilling even than the moon's
Several voices joined in
Embracing the moon and its light
Then came the silence that shattered the night
I looked to the wolf
But it had gone
And with its absence, returned the rain

Untitled

Blue
My favorite color is actually ultramarine
A kind of blue, almost purple
Like the red lobster's eyes
The hue of the clouds in the west at twilight
Ultramarine is a peaceful color
But blue...
Blue could basically be anything
Except something that isn't blue
It could be the ocean blue on a calm day
It could be the hottest flame in the depths of a campfire
Whatever you want
But the best blue...
(or at least in my opinion)
Deep underwater in the South Pacific
The sunlight shining through in rays
Staring into the unknown
Your eyes (or goggles, mask, etc.) have to be clear
The time and lighting have to be just right
No murk in the unknown beyond
Just blue
You watch the fish swim past in their schools
You feel the sharks lurking at the edges of your vision
Subtly following their prey
You hear the song of the humpback whale
Miles away
It's peaceful
And then...
There's the rumble of the motor boat
Or the slice of the rudder on the city-sized cruise ship
Or some plastic floating around
Maybe stuck around some fish or turtle
And you know--
The peace of that blue
Will never come
Will never leave
Will never stay
That blue...
The ocean blue
Sky blue
Storm blue

Ultramarine
You see it in your mind
You feel the sharks
You hear the whales
You smell the sting of the salt in your mouth and nose
Reality can be an illusion
Don't get lost in your mind
The trickery
Of the blue

Rue: A *Hunger Games* Spinoff

High up the trees of District 11 is the only place I've ever felt free. Some days, when the wind is blowing just right, I feel as if I could spread my arms, leap off my branch, and soar into the unknown with all the other birds. But I could never leave my family like that. My mother always says if anyone wanted to escape this life of "freedom and opportunity" according to the Capitol, and slip past the electrified fences that keep everyone in all the districts where they should be, I could. But then, I would inform her I could never find a new home without my family beside me. She didn't pursue the point after that. And she knows, without me saying, probably better than anyone, all seven of us would never make it. Not in a million years. My siblings are too young, my grandmother too old. There are just too many of us. Too many need to be cared for and not enough can fend for themselves. I try not to think too much about it. It's better to stay in reality than flutter off in to fantasy. It's just too good to ever happen.

But right now, with this mindless task, my brain drifts, like the leaves that float to the ground in the autumn wind. Right now, I lose myself, flying over the branches to the best fruit. I'm faster than any of the other kids in my acre, and the overseers know it. I'm the first one here in the morning and the last one to leave when it's so dark I can't even see my own hands in front of my face. I don't get paid any more, I don't bring home more food. If the lives and sanity of my family weren't at risk, I might actually sort of enjoy this job, day after day, without fail. It never bores me, nor does it particularly interest me.

My worst fear is my name being drawn in the reaping tomorrow. I protect my family in every way I can, but what will happen to them if I can't even protect myself?

Jonathan Portillo

The Secret

Once, there was this young couple named John and Kim who were married and planned on having kids together and living their life to the fullest. They got to the time in the marriage when they were ready to have kids. They had all the money saved up and they felt like they were in a comfortable place in life, money-wise. They attempted to have kids only to be let down multiple times. They got it checked out and the wife had a problem where she could never have kids and no surgery could fix it.

After a while, they decided they were going to adopt a kid because they still really wanted kids. They adopted a boy named Jacob when he was very young. He was about 3 months old because his actual parents died in a car crash. They were very happy with their decision to adopt and felt like they were starting fresh new lives and everything that happened to them. The young boy grew up with his new parents and all together, they lived happy lives and had nothing wrong. There was only one thing that the parents had on their mind constantly. It was that young Jacob had no idea that his “parents” weren’t his actual parents. John and Kim never told Jacob that he was adopted.

They held off this news for years and years and it got to be so long that they would feel bad telling him because they didn’t know how he would react. They also knew that they would have to tell him eventually, but they just didn’t know how. Jacob grew up not really knowing and never thought of it because he didn’t know of any other parents. It wasn’t until when he was in 8th grade people started questioning him because he didn’t exactly have the same skin tone and looked nothing like his parents. Jacob still blew it off because to him, that was his real parents and nothing was changing his mind. In his freshman year of high school, Jacob started learning about what adoption was and then began to be curious because of what other kids were saying. Jacob went to his parents and wanted to just be straight up and asked if he was adopted.

John and Kim started to become very nervous but knew that had to do what they had to do and tell him. After hearing the news, Jacob began to get mad because his parents never told him. But soon after, he calmed down and just went to his parents and gave them a hug. He was glad he was with his parents and didn’t want anyone else. They all lived happily ever after.

The Championship

Everything started when I was a young kid with big dreams. I have been playing baseball since the age of 4 and have always been addicted to it and never stopped. I would play through recreational leagues until middle school where I started doing summer ball as well. Around that time in 7th grade, I set my mind to wanting to play professionally and do it for the rest of my life. Whenever I would tell other people that, all they would do is laugh and say that I wish. They didn't know all the time I was putting towards this practicing and making myself better.

Ever since then, I was working as hard as I could to get as good as I could to be able to prove all those people wrong. I would practice every second that I had free time. Then came high school, where the competition was as hard as it'll get. I knew going into tryouts that I had something that I had to prove and I had to do the best that I could. I was getting nervous soon before it started but I knew that I was gonna do well because of all the time I was practicing, so I just would need to show what I got and then pray for the best. I went to the tryout and then after I went home because they said they would call us telling us how we did and if we made the team. A couple hours went by after and all the nervousness kept building up inside of me. I got a phone call from a random number;

“Hello?”

“Hi, this is Coach Watergate calling you to say that you made the varsity and we are excited to have you on the team.”

“ARE YOU SERIOUS!?! Um, I mean thank you I appreciate it, can't wait to start.”

“Haha, all right cool. Practice starts tomorrow right after school, goodbye.”

“Thank you.”

Well there it was, the magic call that at the time I didn't know but would change my life forever.

The next day came and I went to practice right after school to start my high school career. Practices went well and we were preparing for the season that was soon to come. We only had 10 days before the first game and there was a lot to be learned which the main thing was to learn how to be a team and build trust in each other. I could tell through the first practices that it wasn't going to be a good season, and I didn't have much confidence in us. I slept and kept practicing by myself so I could make myself better even if my team wasn't.

The day of the game came pretty fast and we got to the field and started getting ready. Even after our warm up, I still wasn't feeling too good about my team because of some of the errors that they were making on simple plays. We played the game and it was close until the end. I was up and there were two guys on base with two outs. I hit the ball and won the game for my team. We celebrated for days. This was the best day of my life at the time and something I will never forget.

The Garbage Stealer

For a couple years now, I would have this same routine to take out the garbage. I would go out every Monday and Thursday and empty all the trash cans. For a couple weeks now, I would take the garbage out on Monday and on Thursday it would be gone. The reason why I found this weird is because the garbage trucks would only come early Friday mornings. I was confused by the fact that all my trash would magically disappear from the trash can. I went around my neighborhood asking if the same thing was happening to them and they all said no. I tried to investigate more by putting security cameras out front to see if it was an animal getting into them. So one night, I turned on the cameras and went to bed. When I woke up, I went to go check the cameras and what I saw was even more disturbing than animals.

To be continued...

I checked the cameras and at first, it was pretty boring, so I skipped forward some. I stopped skipping because I saw something interesting in the camera.

I see a dark shadow figure moving in the far background. I look in and what I see is crazy to me. I see a human figure walking slowly towards my trash can and behind this figure is a bunch of other smaller figures that looked like animals. They all wait for what seems like 10 minutes, looking at the trashcan, and then I see what looks to be the human figure talking to the animals and then opening my trash can. Once the human does that, all the animals jump into it, viciously, and within minutes are done and all hop out. It only takes about 2 minutes for them to clear it out. They all suddenly leave after that, out of sight. I decide to just not bother anymore and let them do their thing. This is my crazy story of why my trash gets “stolen.”

The 81-Word Story

We know a couple that went to the store on Tuesday night. They wanted to get some food to make for the night. They were picking things to make pasta and were just about done when they heard a loud yell. They turned and there was tall a guy standing with a gun trying to get money from the cash register. Cops came soon after that to arrest the guy. They went home scared. This wasn't just their average Tuesday night.

Kenya Ramirez

Primary colors

I was yellow, Red, Blue
Those were my main hues
Yellow and red
Blue is no longer a constant
Lots of yellow, not too much red
Maybe that's how the world should be
I was almost completely yellow
Until she painted my throat red
The red is toxic
I'm against the washing machine and I can't breathe
The red hurts but it's not quite crimson
Saying "I want my yellow to come back"
Implies that I wasn't able to wash off the red
I am yellow stained red
And as long as people don't know it, I think that's ok

What they mean when they say please

From a young age,
Children are taught that little word.
“Please, may I have a cookie?”
“Can I please go outside to play?”
“May I please pet your dog?”
They are taught to be polite
And they are taught to give thanks,
For they learn when they say “please”
It’s more likely they’ll get a “yes” for whatever they’re asking for.
So it’s sad to see that when they say
“Please stop”
“Please go away”
“Please don’t touch me”
They are met with a denial.

I ain't one for romance

Oh,
How glad am I to see
That everytime you claimed
That your heart burned for me,
You would never take notice
How hot my cheeks grew for you.

Sorry about that

“I love you” he'd say
“How can you” She'd respond “you don't even know me”
“I do” he said. “I do, and I know I love you”
She said nothing
“Do you love me too?”
Her answer yes, but she'd rather die then let him know

You suck lmao

- 1) I love you.
You are my family
You are my friend.
Someone there before I was born
- 2) I love you.
We play together
You hold my hand
Our mother smiles
- 3) I love you
You've developed a personality.
You are still my family
Even if you are mean to me sometimes
- 4) I love you
You still let me play with you
Our mother no longer smiles
- 5) I love you
Our family split apart
But at least we still had each other
- 6) I love you
I think I was sad
But my sad wasn't as important as your sad
I guess
- 7) I love you
Why are you angry all the time while I am happy all the time?
I don't have any fun playing with you anymore
But i'll still play if you promise to be nice
Our mother cries whenever you do too.
- 8) I love you
But you're hurting me now
You're hurting our mother
I hope we can smile together again someday
- 9) I'm afraid of you
Our mother is afraid for me
How could you do that to your own sister?

- 10) I want to forgive you.
Your anger shines through every day
It's getting hard to smile when you're around
- 11) I'm ignoring you
You hurt our mother too much
Can you see her tears?
Can you see my bruises?
- 12) I really tried
She really tried
Our mother still wants to love you
- 13) I hate you
I hate you for begging for forgiveness
I hate you for begging, but never trying
I hate you for blaming anyone else but you
And I hate you for letting me think you ever loved me too

Yeah, no thanks

After reading so many love poems
And ripping little papers to mark my favorite ones
It really makes me think of you
And just how much I don't relate to them

Like, three nameless poems--

I feel the veins of my heart
The twindle of my muscles
And yet I am only a skeleton

The towel
I thought would be my warmth
Betrayed me by being damp

He went on a journey
Looking for riches and more
But was buried in a grave just as small as anyone else's

Yuh play this at my funeral my dude

A song can mean plenty to a guy

Depends on how attached you are to music

If you're me, then you're way too attached

If you're him, then you're married to music

But if you are you, then you've got your own perspective

Listen to a song that means alot to you

A song that resonates with your soul

That song that makes you confidently whisper

“this is my song”

Can't ya see her smilin'?

And so the forever smiling girl didn't smile
Everyone crowds around
"what's wrong?" they ask
"nothing of course!" was always her response
"are you ok?" they asked
"i'm always good!" was always her response
And it was true!
But can she show one little serious face every once in awhile?
Smiling forever starts to hurt the cheeks!
It's especially ever so exhausting
When no one believes her smile
But there she goes, laughing it off
Just like usual
She finds the questioning tiring
But I suppose in a world
Where everyone convinces themselves they should be sad,
It's hard to believe when someone convinces themselves to be happy.

RIP waterfowl

From egg to waterproof friend,
A duck paddles gently through it's pond
Nothing special, just a mallard
Nothing special, it swam, quacked and ate all day
Nothing special, it couldn't speak, it wasn't on some special duck's quest
It was just your average unspecial duck
An average unspecial duck, flying through the sky
So ordinary, it couldn't tell it was duck season
Prime time for ducks, the hunters see see an ordinary duck
It was nothing special what happened to the duck next

That good pal that sat next to me in creative writing

Scratch scratch scratch
She tells me not to itch
But i scratch scratch scratch anyways
“then perish” she says as I bleed away

For someone who ain't into love,
you sure write alotta love poems

You tell me you love me
I say I love you too
But I always wonder
Whether any of those statements were true

Michael Ramsey

The Chamber

Innocent attendees of this atrocious camp,
this mass torture device designed to imprison you all,
do you even know your fate?
Do you know what is to come? What might happen to you and those you
call mother, or child?
Do you even know?
There you are, trapped behind that wall of lies and blind hatred, that wall
of steel wire, that wall of discrimination.
You wear your confusion and your fear on your face for all to see.
It is clear that you have an idea, a vision of what your future holds, but will
you know in time?
Or will you be lost like so many others, to an invisible killer? To your
silent death you march, a death no one will know but you.
I hope that you will have seen your fate before it consumed you, withered
you down until you were nothing more than your old companions' ashes.
I know that you knew, somewhere deep down, that this was no ordinary
trip to the shower room,
not your usual routine, but to something unusual, perhaps even dangerous,
or deadly.
I know that you were afraid, but I hope that you found whatever you were
searching for within yourself, in your dying moments.
I pray that you have found what you seek.

Found Poem Project

Phrase list:

There was a moment's panic. (19)

they had discovered that this was the last stop. (20)

our turn was coming. (62)

how could anyone believe, in this merciful God? (56)

I had forgotten that people slept in sheets. (57)

next to me were two corpses, side by side, the father and the son. (74)

opposite me, slumped over, dead. (70)

Where is God now? (48)

How could I say to him, Blessed art thou, Eternal, Master of the Universe, who chose us from among the races to be tortured day and night, to see our fathers, our mothers, our brothers, end in the crematory? (49)

It was the first time I had ever seen him weep. (15)

We could not stand anymore. We had to give in. (41)

And often we believed them. (59)

I can't go on any longer, I can't... (63)

They had orders to fire on any who could not keep up. (63)

And We Believed

We could not stand anymore, we had to give in.

How could I say to him, blessed art thou, Eternal, master of the universe who chose us from among the races to be tortured,

day and night to see our fathers, our mothers, our brothers, end in a crematory?

I can't go any longer, I can't.

Where is God now?

Next to me were two corpses, side by side, the father and the son.

It was the first time I had seen him weep.

How could anyone believe, in this merciful God?

They had orders to fire on any who could not keep up.

There was a moment of panic.

They had discovered that this was the last stop.

And we believed them.

Nia Rich

Not to Say Yes

Maybe I should have said yes. Maybe, had I said yes, he would have taken me everywhere and nowhere, to the edges of my dreams and back just with a simple sentence. Maybe, had I said yes, I would have been happier. Maybe something good might have come out of it.

Not to say that I thought he was *all* bad. I just thought he was a distraction- or would be. I didn't need that kind of distraction.

Not to say I'm too uptight- well, I get stressed when my grades drop below a 94- but no, I'm not too uptight. I'm just focused- yeah, focused, that's it. And he wasn't my focus at the time. He still isn't- he never was. And I can't let him become it. I can't risk my future just for some simple gratification.

Not to say that my current focus isn't gratifying. I guess my constant 4.0 can sometimes feel empty, and hollow, and straining, but I'm proud of myself, I think. I feel good about myself when I get a 4.0, and that's what's important.

Not to say I feel bad about myself if I get below one. Although, one time I had a B+ (89.3) right before report cards came out, and had several panic attacks and hated myself until it finally became an A just as grades were released. But no, I can still feel fine when I don't have a 4.0. Just fine.

Not to say I wouldn't be fine if I had said yes to him. I would have been fine, great even. But there were a few things in the world I knew- a few things I was certain of.

1. Eating too much chocolate is bad for you.
2. Focusing on the future almost always guarantees you have one.
3. Boys like Ryan have no reason to talk to girls like me.

Not to say they shouldn't talk to me, or I don't want them to- just that they have no reason to. Well, maybe beyond help with (copying) homework, boys like Ryan had no reason to talk to me. They wouldn't, they don't. That's just how it is.

Not to say Ryan didn't talk to me- of course he did, he had to, to ask me his question. But to be fair, with the current certainties I had, he shouldn't have, so it must have been a joke, right?

Not to say he didn't seem sincere. But you never know with boys like Ryan, boys who sit in the back of class just so they can be loud, boys who interrupt the teacher just because they don't want to do work, boys who are always never focused. You never know, with boys like him, if they can fake a heartfelt confession of their "feelings." So I did not say yes.

Not to say I couldn't have said yes, because I could have- I just chose not to. I chose not to say yes because I knew it wasn't real, he wasn't being honest, he wasn't *really* asking. It had to be a joke. Or maybe a dare. He had no reason to be serious about what he was asking me. He had absolutely *no* reason to want *me*, of all people. So I made the choice. I chose

Not to say yes.

I Know I Don't Know

Sometimes I wonder what I know, and that makes me wonder what I don't know, and then I wonder and wonder and wonder until I fall asleep. But that's okay because I sleep a lot. Mommy says it's good for my bones. That's one thing I do know. Sleeping is good for my bones.

There's another thing I do know- milk is good for your bones. Because it has calico, or something. I also know my kitty is calico. Is my kitty good for my bones? That's something I don't know. Maybe I should ask Mommy.

There are things I know about Mommy. Like Mommy has brown hair, and it's long. I know Daddy has no hair, so it's not long. I don't know how Daddy lost his hair. Maybe I should ask him. I like to watch Mommy brush her hair. Mommy has very pretty hair, and I got hair like her. I'm glad I don't have hair like Daddy.

Mommy has dark spots under her eyes. I don't know why Mommy looks like this, but Daddy is starting to look like that too. Mommy coughs a lot. Sometimes she coughs into her hand, and I know that's bad and you're supposed to cough into your elbow, but Mommy doesn't care. She coughs into her hands and then she wipes them on her pants and sometimes if her pants are light enough there are spots of red left over. I don't know how someone can cough red. I'm glad I don't cough like Mommy.

I have been spending a lot of time at my friend Marrison's house. Her Mommy is friends with my Mommy. I go to her house after school, and Mommy and Daddy are somewhere else, but they won't tell me where. Every time Marrison's mommy picks me up she gives me a big hug and when she looks at me her eyes get all wet. I asked her why her eyes were wet. She said I don't know.

I go home before the sun goes down. I know that because I look out the window of Marrison's mommy's car and I can see the sun two finger spaces above the mountains. I like to measure with my fingers so I know how many finger spaces it is from the mountains.

When I go home Mommy and Daddy look at me. Sometimes their eyes are wet too, and sometimes their faces. I know this, but I am not supposed to know this. They try to wipe the wetness away but I still see, sometimes. I didn't know grown-ups could cry. Now I know.

I know Mommy gets hurt every time she laughs. I know because every time I make her laugh she says ow and puts her hand on her chest. She used to just laugh and laugh and laugh, and it was a beautiful laugh, and she had a beautiful voice, and I know that because she used to sing to me. She was a very good singer. I know that because it's true. But now Mommy talks quiet and doesn't sing to me and tries not to laugh. I don't know if she even smiles at all anymore.

Mommy is tired a lot. I know this because she lays down a lot, and people lay down when they're tired. Maybe she wants to sleep. Maybe she needs stronger bones. I asked Mommy if there was something wrong with her bones. She said no. I do not know why Mommy is so tired all the time. Maybe it's because she's so skinny now. Mommy used to have a soft belly and plump legs. Now her belly is gone and her legs are like chicken legs, except they're not yellow. I know that because I've seen chickens before, and they have skinny yellow legs.

Daddy is never tired anymore. He doesn't even sleep at all. I know because one time my Kitty woke me up meowing loud, and I went outside my room to feed her, and the TV was on. I went to see what show was on and Daddy was watching something. He was watching something and he was awake when it was dark outside. And I check sometimes to see if he watches TV past bedtime, and every night he does. He told me that was against the rules. But now I know that it's not.

I know Mommy brushes her hair a lot. I know because I like to watch her. But now, it comes out of her head in big chunks into the brush. I asked her if my hair will do that if I brush it. She says, no honey. I haven't brushed my hair in a long time. But Mommy and Daddy haven't noticed, and I know that because if they did notice they would tell me to brush it. They don't tell me to brush my hair, so they haven't noticed.

Mommy's hair is almost gone. I wonder if she is losing hair for the same reason Daddy lost his hair. So I asked her if she was going to be bald just like Daddy. Her eyes got wet again and said yes, she is. So now I know they both will be bald.

And then, we were all sitting on the couch together. I didn't go to Marrison's house that day, and the sun was a whole hand space above the mountains. Mommy and Daddy sat on my sides and I was in the middle, and they said they want to tell me something. So I said okay. They said Mommy has cancer. I asked, like the cat? And they said, no that's calico. I asked, like in milk? They said, no that's calcium. I asked Daddy if he had cancer. He said no. Then why was he bald? I didn't ask that. I asked what is cancer? They said it's a kind of sickness. I asked Daddy what kind of sickness made his hair fall out. He said it was his jeans. I didn't know pants could make your hair fall out. Now I know.

Sometimes I wonder what I know. I know my cat is calico and my milk is calcium. I know to only wear dresses because jeans make your hair fall out, and I know that sometimes Mommy had black hair and sometimes she had red hair and sometimes she had yellow hair. But Mommy doesn't have hair anymore, because we went to Mommy's funeral and put her in the ground in a big box. Daddy said she went to heaven. That's one thing I do know. Mommy is in heaven now, with the angels, and she is singing with them.

Deaf

A call in the dark
A cry for help into a void
Nothing.
So I guess I'll have to do this on my own
See how many times I can pick myself up without a helping hand

Loneliness
Is the worst kind of sadness
They say misery loves company
But nobody talks about what misery does when it's alone
The answer is nothing.
It just sits and stews and stays sad and suffering
And it probably grows.

Pain.
Pain is something most don't enjoy going through alone
A parent's hug when you skin your knee being one of the most comforting things
But when someone falls and cries out, and they get nothing, no hug, no comfort, even when
 there are people around
Well, that's the loneliest thing imaginable
So, how sad it is when cries for help fall on deaf ears.

Hooked

It's got me hooked hooked addicted
I'm hooked I'm stuck
Addicted
There's my blood
My blood is pretty
I want my blood to stay with me
Stay hooked hooked addicted
Stay please stay please stay
Remind me that I am human
Please

Don't leave me
Don't leave me hooked hooked addicted
I am only human
Hooked hooked addicted to myself
And my pain
And my blood
Stay please stay please stay please
I am only human alive living inhumanely human
So please don't please don't
Please don't leave me hooked hooked addicted
Alone

Everyone has something they're hooked hooked addicted
To
Two times a month two times a week two times a day too two to two too to
Too many too much
Too far gone
I am gone
I am away
I am hooked hooked addicted to being lost
Gone away far away lost lost cast away
Cast a shadow far away
Fly away into nothing
Where I can be hooked hooked addicted no more.

No more, no more, enough
But I am hooked hooked addicted
Stuck in the red sea
Sea, see, sea
See me
See me as myself

Myself me
See me as me
Please please please
See me please see me please see
Can you see me
Please see me as me and not my hook hook addiction

A diction is a word choice
A word choice
A wrong choice
And now I'm hooked hooked addicted
To nothing and too much and too little too late
I am hooked hooked addicted
And I'll stay on my hook
Until I am hook hook evicted
Pulled off and away from my hook hook addiction
Away, take me away, to a place, a way to fix my hook hook addiction

There must be a way
Some way some way
Someday I'll get over my hook hook addiction
But today is not that day
No way no way
No no not today
No no
Never never
Never never not today
Not a way to get over my hook hook addiction
No way to get over my hook hook addiction
So I will stay hook hook addicted
Forevermore a hook hook addition to my life
Life life living vastly lonely alone

Alone with my hook hook addiction

Love Me

Love me
Like you'd love your dreams if you could reach them

Hate me
Like I've hurt you several times before

Ponder me
Like philosophy, an enigma

See me
As myself and only me

Feel me
Like velvet, soft and red and elusive

Hear me
Ever screaming, ever silent

Desire me
Like an itch you'll never scratch

Devour me
Like your favorite home cooked meal

Please
Please please
Just love me
It's all I ask
All I ever ask

Scars Like Flowers

Scars are like flowers
That bloom red
And wilt white

Scars are makeup streaks
From tears of crimson

Scars are like stories
Some forever untold

Scars are like secrets
Whispered past bedtime

My scars are battles
Lost to myself

Each scar a defeat
In a never-ending war

Water

When you looked at me was frozen
Still as stone and warm as winter wind
I melted under your gaze

But now that's gone and I am boiling
Steaming into the air and drifting away
I've evaporated from your life
Angry and hot as hatred
So keep your distance

Or I'll scald you.

Rainbow

Your hair reminds me of a sunny wheat field in a light breeze
Every wisp of wind making the stalks sway and reflect in the sun in a million
different ways
It reminds me of a golden glow, so beautiful and bright that I could only ever
recreate it in my dreams
Your eyes hold hope, somewhere between green and blue with specks of
every color in between
The way your eyes catch the light makes them sparkle so profoundly, it's
impossible to describe, but I can try
And I can paint a poem across the sky like a rainbow
Use every color and every sound in the infinite spectrum
But no combination of words could fully explain how you make me feel
No amount of syllables I could string together could encompass how happy
you make me
You could count all the stars in the night sky and you'd never reach how many
times you've made me smile
And I'm a little bit guilty about it
Because I'm with someone now
But I'm not acting on my feelings so it's not cheating, right?
I've wanted to be with you since that fateful day in the sixth grade when our
eyes met and you smiled
And my heart stopped in place to admire it
Your beauty indescribable and so stunning I couldn't breath
And every time I see you it's like I'm still trying to catch my breath.
I'm guilty, because I'm with someone now
And still I know you don't swing this way
Because you oh so politely rejected me in seventh grade
And that's okay
But it doesn't mean my heart has stopped aching for you
It doesn't mean I don't see your beauty shine through
Way past skin deep all the way to your heart
Bright yellow, brighter than your hair or your eyes
As bright as your soul
And it hurts to look at it directly, it's like the sun
But I'll always be wanting to steal a glance.

Michael Riedell

Not Quite Night, Not Quite Dawn

Not quite night, not quite dawn,
The darkness holds its breath,
A sliver of silver guilds the east,
And all is still.

The first birds, I know,
Are readying their throats,
But none right now dares sing
Even a single note.

Let the prophets speak
In their ancient tomes
Of what shall be come day--
Perhaps they know.

For now I pause with the stars;
The breeze sits suspended,
And the trees listen to silence:
It offers, offers....

This.

What I Mean When I Say Stone

After Geoffrey Davis's "What I Mean When I Say Truck Driver"

Too long I spend swaying here
with words built of air
and a choreography of lips

as if clouds could gather
at my wish, gather churning more
dense with each new utterance

until finally weighted like stone.
Words are only words, even
when stacked into poems that balance

truth from the too true.
We call this play a craft
and kid ourselves an architecture

as sure as a cathedral's
supports it. We build on sand
mostly, and hope to God

some kind of god will come
and breath into it
the life we sought to exhale.

Finding Fingers

The first time I found a finger
it the middle one, I knew--
long, thick, rude,
a finger overgrown with attitude.

The second finger I found
was a thumb, actually,
fatter than the first but shorter, squat
with a bent knuckle like a knot.

The third, the pinkie,
by then was hardly a surprise--
except of course for the delicate,
diminutive size.

The index finger I found pointing
to the ring finger not far away
and it was marked by a tan line
where it might have worn a wedding band.

Did I call the cops?
No, no. I began
looking for the fingers of the other hand.

Backyard Bird Poem, Fire Edition

The backyard birds in this poem
Are flying through a darkened sky,
Smoke background, strange sun.

They splash, as usual,
In the birdbath and dry their wings
Balanced on the fence.

But that bamboo fence
Has an orange hue, and their songs
When they do sing

Aren't as lively as normal.
If birds could imagine,
They would imagine their nests

Burning and themselves
Helpless. If they knew birds
From over those eastern hills,

They would know birds
Who had fled their nests, their homes,
Who were somewhere in bird hotels

Flipping channels from nothing to nothing,
Turning off the tv, and finding
The black screen so like thick smoke.

autumn leaves--
say again how people
don't change

*

coming down
the mountain bike's
new squeak

*

frosty morning
two mothers also wait
for the school bus

*

Wildfire--
they all ask to go
to the bathroom

*

why teach metaphor--
the smoke of Paradise
blackens our window

Liam Schwarm

Why didn't you

Why did you do it? Tell me... I want to know why didn't you stop yourself. You should have stopped but you didn't; why didn't you stop it? Don't you know you hurt me? So tell me; did you want to hurt the ones you love? If you didn't... than why didn't you stop yourself?

Lonely boredom

Oh boredom, just how lonely can you be? to need someone but not have them, it must hurt to see your friends leave. they must think that your annoying; oh boredom, if you want I could keep you company?

Emily Winningham

Book of Lies

1. *"I love you"*

The lie fell off his lips as he walked out the door and out of her life. He was going to be back, so he said. He would always love her, so he said. But then he walked out the door. At the age of seven she had to realize that love was temporary. Love was cliché. Love was painful and unforgiving. Love was not something parents would show their child, because if mom had really loved her then she wouldn't be getting high twice an hour without any consideration for her daughter. If mom really loved her, then she wouldn't be gone every night, or for weeks on end. If mom really loved her, she would tell her, and if dad really loved her, she wouldn't be here.

2. *"I'll always be here for you"*

Well where was she now? At a bar. Not with her daughter. Instead, her daughter is stuck in a strangers home, but she wouldn't feel like her house was not her home if her mother wasn't a foreign character in her life. Though the words came out of her mouth like slush, she still believed her. If someone said they would be here for her, they should. They would. Right?

3. *"You're beautiful"*

How could she be beautiful with the scars on her face and the bruises on her cheek? How could she be beautiful if she hid from the world and sheltered herself from all things precious to the angels? Her forgiving nature disgusted her. No matter how many times she was beat and lied to she forgave and she forgot. It was beautiful.

4. *"She loved you"*

If she loved her, wouldn't her memory be more than whiskey breath and purple cheeks? If she loved her then wouldn't she want to mourn? But she did mourn. In a celebratory way. Celebrating the scars that would soon heal and hoping that she could move on with her life. A chapter that would open her eyes to love and happiness.

5. *"I love you"*

Finally love seemed apparent. He was there. He was always there. He loved her. He said it. Over and over. The words rolled so smoothly and so gently. It was sacred. Love was real. Love was possible for a broken girl from a broken home. So she left the broken home, for a home where love was, sadly, in the air. Love had poisoned her through and through. But she

thought it had saved her.

6. *“You’re going to be okay”*

Just a word. Just a word to define her. Just a word, a special circumstance that would sadly define the rest of her life. The words uttered from the lips of a local physician.

7. *“I’ll never leave you”*

How familiar. How oh so similar. How could she ever believe the words of a man who believed in love? If this man who loved her believed in love, then he would believe that she could get better. She would be okay. But without love, she drowned her sorrows in poison, not the love kind, but the booze kind.

8. *“Remission is possible”*

The words were said with little reassurance. With little evidence. With no confidence. Her bones, infected. Her liver, infected. Her nervous system, infected. Her blood, infected. Hair falling out and still, “remission is possible”. But it wasn’t, it never was, because if she would get better, then why did he leave.

9. *“You are cured”*

Cured. Cured as in healthy again. Cured as in normal again. But she wasn’t normal anymore. Normal girls don’t have to worry about taking pills every day. Normal girls don’t have to worry about whether or not they could have children. Normal girls don’t have to worry about dying. Normal girls shouldn’t have to. No one should have to.

10. *“She had a wonderful life.”*

What was a wonderful life measured by? Was it measured by how many loved ones someone had? She had none. Was it measured by the great things they achieved? She had no achievements. At every funeral, the speakers will say beautiful things about the so-called great person that has passed from their lives. But most people aren’t that great. It’s a miracle that people lie and lie out of “respect” for the dead person, when really, they should be saying how blessed they are to be rid of this burden of a person.

At her funeral, she would’ve wanted honesty from acquaintances, not cookie cutter speeches from strangers that she never liked. These strangers were just posing as her friends.

Life isn’t what she had hoped it would be. She had hoped for love, memories, and fulfillment. She had achieved anything but when she passed from the world.

Ungloved

Tiny hands
Pink from the cold--
That bites at his hand
A young boy
Fighting to keep his head up--
And his heart open
An ungloved hand--
Becomes
An unloved man

Violets

The violets I left last May are gone
It's been so long but I still feel your death
It sits on my shoulders
Pushing them into the ground from which you finally rested

Awareness

Nature isn't aware of time
Because just as the sun sits
And time moves
You moved on
And I sat
You only noticed the flares and flames
When it was too late

Patron Saint of Liars

You scold the boy
for leaving the girl
at your command
Lies slipping off your tongue
Scalding the lips of your victims

Clear

The last clear thought I had
Somewhere between then and now
A planet between this star and that one
The stars whispered to each other
My clear thought
They knew it was the last
But it wasn't the last
Because I saw you laugh
And I thought you were beautiful
That was clear
Like glass
Fragile and cold
Like glasses
Opening my eyes

Encounters with Love

The first time I saw you smile
It was the last
Chance meeting
A brush against the arm
A slip
And a flirtatious comment
The first time you laughed in front of me
Also the last

Night

Night is more alive
Than the day
Because although the day is illuminated
By that one, glorious, glowing star
The billions of the night fascinate me more

Self Portrait

She's sick of being good
She wants to crash
Crash into oblivion
Turn love to hate
Or hate to love
So maybe she can feel something
Feel good or bad
It doesn't matter anymore
She's tired of the everyday
She wants a change of name,
Face, and identity
So maybe she can be something
Finally feel something

Winter

When the flower wilts
And the petals fall
When your branches start to break
And the leaves all fall
I'll let go
Because although I'll miss you-
I don't want to hold you back
Back from the fact
That it's your time
Time to leave
So I'll let you go now
And let you leave
I wasn't there
But I just knew
Your flowers had been wilting
For quite some time
And your branches had been broken
Longer than I'd like to admit
I couldn't mend you
Though I tried
So I let go

Poetically

She rose out of the ashes
Like a flower on a spring morning
How tragically
She fell back into the ashes
Because Winter decided to come back

Shush

She could not hide her shadow
For it followed her
Shamefully

Biographies

Avery Barrett, a senior with probably entirely too much going on, was obsessed with Bigfoot as a little girl. She loves conspiracy theories, George Ezra and sitcoms. Avery's writing career began, as many others, on the wonderful website of Wattpad. She likes to think she has improved since then, but that probably is not the case. If you want to know the truth about Avery Barrett, she is a 5'1", cropped-pants-wearing, showtune-singing, vine-referencing, insane individual.

P.S. Don't use any of her sad poems against her when she runs for president.

Amanda Bednar is full of good ideas but is practically illiterate when it comes to writing them down. Her grandpa once told her to "never be right 'cause you're always gonna be wrong." She plays the theremin in a band with six of her friends called We Only Play Minecraft Music. They only play on the second day of the fifth month during a full moon. If anyone envies Kurt Vonnegut's ability to write stories that are comprehensible, it's her.

P.S. She really likes history memes, dogs, and inserting herself into other people's conversations just to blurt out one of the many facts she (for some reason) has stored in her brain.

Alondra Beltran probably likes all colors of the rainbow. She probably owns a house and has tiny hands. Probably hates bacon and girl group haters. Probably drives her car around town between one and two in the morning. And she probably has enough money to buy a chocolate bar. P.S. She probably thinks that curiosity killed the cat, too.

Jacob Burton: I am a 17-year-old who has trouble writing because I get distracted easily, but when I get writing I feel like I'm in another place and all my distractions go away. I enjoyed most free writing creative stories, as I felt I was able to use my imagination the most.

P.S. I need this class to graduate.

Daniel Buschbacher is a small man made of Jell-O, he needn't have bones nor anything else that people usually need to be people (Heart, brain, intestines, etc.). He's been dehydrated and put in a package and yet, still, he is a person. Think about Daniel the next time you make Jell-O and eat him whole (Ya f*cking cannibals).

P.S. My favorite color of Jell-O is Red and my address is 1441

***** Ukiah, CA. The password to all of my school and personal

accounts is YellowBelly7153 and I really wish my grandchildren (YOU, READER) would come to visit more or at least call your granny.
P.P.S. Don't listen to Tyler, he lies. Also I love you.

Gracie Ceja: I am just some smart idiot who writes her life in poems and loves pizza.
P.S. I'm an alien.

Xitlally Chavez, better known as Lally, is a young lady who very much dislikes writing in first person, and also strongly dislikes grammar and structure. On any day, of any season, in any weather, Lally enjoys a nice, crisp pickle and walking her two dogs, but not at the same time. Besides these two undeniable truths, Lally does not really understand who she is right now. Maybe she'll know in a couple of years.

P.S. I want to write a curse word but I don't know if that's allowed... so take a guess as to which curse word this is: ****
The answer is-

Morgan Clark has experienced a multitude of chaos in the last four years but has somehow managed to be molded into a somewhat sane person at the end of all this. She will be living her upcoming years in a sun-splashed technicolored world at a four-year university, finally doing whatever she pleases. If she has learned anything at the age of 18 it would be the following:

- don't worry if people are paying attention to you, everyone is too busy thinking about themselves
- go after the things you want like you're a white working man in the 1950s
- appreciate the meals your mama makes you
- always make time for alone time
- prioritize sleep... seriously
- try not to have a "resting bitch face"

P.S. Don't do anything stupid.

Kat Diamond, also known as Katharine Diamond is a 17-year-old junior. Her hobbies include "cuticle care and e-networking". Just kidding, her actual hobbies include photography, horseback riding, swimming, watching tv and hanging with friends. She always carries salt around with her incense Sam and Dean need her help. She tends to joke with her friends about "Fight the fairies". Her favorite type of dessert is "Pudding!!!" Her role model is Alecia Beth Moore (AKA P!nk). She lives a life without a care in the world. She always says getting hurt is inevitable so why not go full speed ahead. She is the type of girl who doesn't allow anybody to keep her down. If somebody says she can't do anything she proves them wrong. She has "made a wrong turn once or twice." She is a caring, funny person who is a follower and not a leader.

P.S. "I'm not a slut, I just love love."

Valentina Evans is a wild and whimsical soul who attempts to be clever, but is really not. She loves to ride ostriches every Friday at 4:35 in the afternoon and on her Saturday mornings she bakes muffins for her neighbors Daisy and Joe. She is genuine and caring and donates 11 dollars to strangers on her walks to school every morning. She is sweet and sincere and loves to be one with Nature.
P.S. Her favorite number is green!

Benjamin Evans (Benja) You see, Benja is a very hilarious person, or at least, he thinks he is. He is charismatic, charming and also a buffoon. Benja enjoys long walks on the beach, cracking a cold one with the boys, and chilling with his dog Bruno. His favorite type of candy is a bologna sandwich doused in tartar sauce.
P.S: Benja's middle name is Toomahdre.

Rose Gamble I am sixteen and a sophomore at Ukiah High. To say the least, I am not a very artsy person. Especially when surrounded by the amazing writers and poets featured in this book. I tried my best to partially compare to their unbelievable work throughout this year. My favorite part was not writing for myself but rather hearing the best of their work. I also loved learning new techniques to better my own writing, as well as learning about the history of the many great poets before us.
P.S. They made me make a P.S, and I didnt wanna be difficult :)

Lexie Garrett is a 16-year old who enjoys writing fiction, and poetry. She is in journalism as well as creative writing and has been published twice in bigger newspapers and seven times in school newspapers along with interviews and internships offered for writing. She's a junior in high school and plans on being a journalist or child psychologist and traveling the world in her future.
P.S. Remember, in life we don't get a postscript.

Unique Hendee I am eighteen years old. I am a junior attending Ukiah High School. I am devoted to writing my poetry. It was my own personal therapy. In my opinion, writing is the best way to express yourself without having to worry about anyone else's judgement. I am thankful I was given the time during school hours to pursue my favorite hobby.
P.S. I can't wait to graduate.

Jacob Vargas Hunter is a walking meme who enjoys watching videos that have interesting titles such as *Watch A Woman Tell Her Husband She's Pregnant While Conan O'Brien Pours Good Milk Down The Sink*. He is usually very kind except for when it comes to food. If you touch his Turkey sandwich, he will most likely assemble his own time machine and travel back to the past to kill off your ancestors in order to

prevent your conception.

P.S. If you watch *Paul Blart 2* while listening to *The Dark Side of the Moon* album, it lines up perfectly.

Avery Johnson

P.S. I transferred and was still able to write this. I am really happy I get to show you what I wrote.

Makayla Kelly Hello dear reader, I am a 17-year-old girl with a small passion for poetry. I never thought I would enjoy poetry as much as I do, let alone take an entire class on creative writing itself. But here I am and I'm very grateful and happy that I did, it was a year well spent. I met amazing new people and got to watch my writing skills blossom.
P.S. I judge people on their favorite cereal and their usual coffee order.

As a rodent, a simple mouse, **Miranda Kindopp** found it easy to be overlooked. Her daily life was a consistent trend of going unnoticed and observing those whom existed in the focus of others. She wonders what being noticed by someone would be like.

P.S. To all the words I never said, all the letters never sent, and to those who never got to hear nor read them. I sincerely apologize for holding myself back.

Rebecca King is not technically a poet because *technically* she is a bunch of hamsters running around inside a human body. What you've read of "hers" was actually the works of hundreds of hamsters who are slowly feeding from the inside out on Rebecca's flesh.

P.S. we miss you.

--the hamsters :)

When **Kyle Kirkley** isn't writing, he's most likely teaching writing or hanging out with his family. His short fiction has appeared in a number of reputable journals and magazines, and his short story "How to Read a Love Letter" was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He is currently working on a novel about America's obsession with celebrity.

zoe louise krofchik is an eighteen-year-old actor, director, writer, frequent orange county dweller and descendant of ireland, czechoslovakia and many other white-people countries. she is a lover of the arts, especially theatre. she is most notably recognized as that "loud obnoxious theatre kid who can always be found in the little theatre." Her acting credits include playing a reingoat, getting stood up at the altar, being the mother to anthony sanchez's twins (and having matching hawaiian shirts), having an addiction to school supplies, being a cavewomen, stripping to her long johns, switching bodies via genie, stealing her neighbor's underwear and

planning to give birth to her boss's clone. she also writes poetry from time to time, they tend to be sad (sorry mom), but she's the happiest she's been in years! she's struggled with anxiety her whole life, but the past two years she has blossomed and is excited to move to new york city in august. zoe will graduate ukiah high school in 2019 and will be continuing her education at wagner college in staten island, new york.
p.s. shoutout to riley mendoza for laughing with her in postscript.

Olivia Kubin I am a 14-year old freshman and this is my first year writing seriously. I have written in little sketchbooks since I was little and have attempted to write novels (with no avail). This year has expanded my horizons for writing and made me more adaptable to writing prompts, using more descriptive adjectives and verbs, and overall writing to my heart's content. I do ballet in most of my spare time, so after many trials and errors, I found a way to relieve the stress and chaos of dancing through writing! Often times I find myself itching to write something and go immediately to poetry. I highly recommend it, even if you don't consider yourself a writer.

P. S. My greatest advice I could give you as a writer and a person: make a bucket list (a list of things you want to do before you 'kick the bucket'). The entire Midnight Minds story is how I strive to live. I have a bucket list (quite a long one actually) and it's my pride and joy ;). I have experienced so much more than I ever would have without it. It doesn't have to be that crazy or long or anything like that! It can be a simple list with things like "Plant a tree" or "Dance in the rain". For me, I started a Google Doc with everything I wanted to do in my life. I've experienced so many things, and without that goal of confronting the un-confrontable (is that a word?), I would never have lived my life like I have. Thank you for reading. Happy writing!

Jenna McEwen:

I have been alive for seventeen years so far.
I can fly in my dreams sometimes.
I love my family and am grateful for my friends.
I have brown hair and blue eyes.
I get super excited when I talk about movies and TV shows that I've watched.
I absolutely LOVE going on roller coasters.
I enjoy baking late into the night.
I love traveling by plane.
I am capable of driving a stick shift.
I call people sometimes just to say hi.
I attempt to dance through the thick and thin.
I smack my pointe shoes together when they are new.
I love riding my bike.
I am down for an adventure any time of the day.

I want to be able to do a chin up.
I love traveling.
I like to eat yogurt with string cheese.
I have performed in a few school plays.
I went to see The Last Jedi at 10:30 p.m. after performing the Nutcracker.
I desperately want to go ziplining again.
P.S. I'm a dork.

Tyler Mcminn is an edgy rap musician who joined Creative Writing to sharpen his poetry skills. He writes (on his own time) a subgenre of rap called Horrorcore, which involves glorifying darkness and horrific crimes and so forth. You should totally visit his youtube channel or Soundcloud, his name is ShadowX.
P.S. Parental discretion is advised.

Riley Mendoza is the smartest, prettiest, funniest, and dare I say the coolest person in the world. As the hidden gem of Ukiah High School, she spends her free time being better than everyone else at home, at school, and around town. When she's not busy taking pictures with her fans, she likes doing normal things that ordinary people do too like watch movies, hang out with friends, and eat food. She dabbles in art and -- Okay, I can't write this anymore. Sorry for wasting your time.
P.S. Zoe thinks Riley is so sick.

Maile Olson is a 14-year-old freshman at UHS. She's lived in the same house her whole life with her parents, younger brother, and cat. Sports has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. She's currently playing volleyball and non-competitive swimming. She loves swimming, volleyball, running, skiing, traveling, hiking, the ocean, writing, listening to music, and summer. She's been to every single state on the west coast multiple times (except for Alaska) and Georgia. She's also been to New Zealand, England, Sweden, Denmark, and is going to Costa Rica with her family and friends this summer.
P.S. She hates the cold more than anything plans to live somewhere hot year round for the rest of her life after high school.

Jonathan Portillo is a young lad in high school who is passionate with sports and music. He is a 16-year-old as a junior in high school. Fun fact about him is that he fell on his head as a baby off an outdoor pool table.
P.S. Always watch your food around him.

Kenya Ramirez likes your mom
P.S. Easily bribed with toe pics

Michael Ramsey was a destructive child, filled with anger and spite. In fifth and sixth grade, he became more mellow, and sort of depressed, but he got out of it once he hit seventh grade. He made some good friends and had a fun time. Currently, he is enjoying his freshman year.
P.S. He really didn't want to write this.

Nia Kanani Hoktuce Rich

AYA YO YO YO YO WHAT TIME IS IT? SHOWTIME!¹
I'm Nia. I live in Ukiah and used to live in Oklahoma and Hawaii. Frick heck is one of my favorite phrases, along with indeed. I kind of forgot to write this and it is now 9:18 PM and I'm going to turn this in.
Now it's the day after at 1:24 PM and I'm REALLY late. I'm going to go see Avengers Endgame today. Probably gonna cry again.

¹ John Laurens, Hamilton: The American Musical
P.S. I love you.

Michael Riedell spent the first half of his life in San Diego and then figured out he should head north. He hosts Ukiah's long-standing monthly literary reading series, Writers Read. He's the author of two books of poetry, and last year he edited a book titled *Deep Valley* which collects poems of the first seven Poets Laureate of Ukiah. (He was number seven.) In his spare time he strums guitar and goes on long hikes in his little garden.
P.S. In March he went to Lawrence Ferlinghetti's 100th birthday party.

P.S. Hello my name is **Liam Schwarm**, also known as the blind poet.

Emily Winningham is a macaroni and cheese loving, yeehaw-ing, lover of words and animals. She has no outstanding writing style, and no, she is not sad or depressed, just a writer who can't help but write about the sad stuff. She spends her spare time contemplating why she hasn't dropped out of school yet.
P.S. Life is too rad for you to be sad.

